

WSC-H & I Newsletter

REACHING OUT

VOLUME I

NUMBER 3

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, INC.
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Welcome

We would like to welcome all of you to the WSC-H&I Newsletter. We hope that what this simple newsletter contains can assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts throughout the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. At the recent World Service Conference held in Van Nuys, California a revised version of the Hospitals and Institutions Guidelines were passed for publication and distribution for the Fellowship as a whole. The expansion and revision of these H&I guidelines will tremendously improve our ability to carry the message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

In recent issues of this newsletter we have been asking for input that can be used to help us carry the message in print to the addict who is unable to attend regular N.A. meetings. We are asking for input in the form of articles about local, area or regional H&I activities, articles regarding problem situations that occurred while carrying the message, and were resolved—real answers to real problems—solutions that have worked and continue to work. We also invite articles from inmates in correctional settings, as well as articles from residents in treatment facilities, describing what their involvement in Narcotics Anonymous means to them. How has N.A. helped you? What do you feel can be done by H&I committees to further help you in your recovery? How can the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery from the disease of addiction be more accessible to any suffering addict no matter where they are? These and many more questions can be answered by you, the Fellowship, by sending input to this newsletter. Let's pull together to see how effective we can

become as a Fellowship of recovering addicts in carrying our message to the addicts who are still suffering! Send all input to:

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NEW MEETINGS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS:

MARYLAND	W.P.D.C. Hagertown, MD
MICHIGAN	M.D.C.F./Genesis N.A. Group
MISSOURI	Ozark Correctional Center
NEW JERSEY	Southern State Correctional, Delmont, Spring House, Mt. Carmel
NEW YORK	Washington Correctional Facility
OKLAHOMA	Joseph Harp I.M.H.U.
OREGON	Oregon State Hospital
TEXAS	Beto Unit 1

INSTITUTIONS INQUIRING ABOUT STARTING MEETINGS:

CALIFORNIA	Susanville C.C.I.
FLORIDA	FCI Lowell, FL
NEVADA	White Pine Honor Camp, Ely, NV
NEW YORK	Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility
OREGON	Oregon State Prison, Salem (men)

Excerpts from Letters:

From California:

I've been at the Folsom ranch for two months now; I'll be getting out this Christmas. We have another Twelve Step meeting once a week, but we don't have any N.A. meetings as of yet. Forms were circulated at the beginning of April for inmates interested in attending N.A. meetings, to fill out and return to a Mr. W., Inmate Coordinator. The forms stated that the local N.A. Fellowship was interested in starting an H&I meeting here. We'll see what happens.

I have a copy of the N.A. Basic Text, and it's a big help to me. I'm staying in touch with my sponsor through letters and phone calls every two or three weeks. I'm trying not to become complacent; I work the steps to the best of my ability on a daily basis. I have my ups and downs, but I believe that by practicing the principles of the N.A. Program in all my affairs, becoming part of the Fellowship, and in the future getting involved in service work, the life I want will become reality—one day at a time.

Best wishes always,
K.H.

From Idaho:

I received the second copy of H&I *Reaching Out* and it was sure a joy to me. I found out that when I was trying to get the group here at I.S.C.I. started, that I needed the help of the local N.A. Fellowship and H&I from downtown to get it started. Then I had to prove to the Administration, that there were inmates who wanted to change their lives without someone telling them they had to do it. Once they found out that we really did want the N.A. Program and we had been in contact with the local Fellowship, they decided to let us try it for 30 days. If all went well then we would be able to set up a regular program every week. Well, as you can see by my letters, all did go well. On August 7, 1985 we will be one year old.

I'm proud that I belong to N.A., and I don't care who knows it. I'm doing it for me, then for my family and friends.

I will close for now and await the next copy of *Reaching Out*.

Yours in fellowship and service,

D.S.

From California:

This time next week, I'll be back out where we all belong—at home. I can't rightly say that the time here in San Quentin was one of my finer times, but since the start of N.A. here, everything seemed a little easier to handle. I'll be paroling with a lot of good memories and respect for the great job that all the outside speakers and my fellow convicts have shown. One of the biggest things that I have learned through the past meetings is that you can't do it alone. When you walk out of these gates, you're like a quarterback jogging into the field. Without a lot of support from your offensive-line, eventually you'll find yourself face down and hurting. So I'm going to build my 'offensive-line' with strong people (N.A. members) instead of relying on a bunch of practicing addicts for strength and support. With N.A. and 'A Greater Power,' and a bit of good old-fashioned luck, San Quentin will remain just a memory. With that little message I'll get on down the road. It might not all be smooth, but I can finally see it.

Respectfully,

D.N.

From Oregon:

Greetings from Oregon and a deep thanks for the Basic Text. There's a lot to do here towards making N.A. an available choice to the prison population, but we're on our way. It's very gratifying to be able to do my part towards bringing N.A. within these walls. I've been sick for many years, yet I only heard of N.A. about one year ago on the outside. I'm only here for a short time on a P.V., I'm anxious to see N.A. grow here before I leave, for in N.A.'s growth—lies my strength.

Thanks to you all for my faith, hope and love. N.A. is the best drug this addict has ever found.

In solidarity,

W.B.,

From Arizona:

My name is J.S. and I am an inmate in the Arizona State Prison. I have received a second issue of the bi-monthly H&I newsletter. My purpose in writing is to share my experience with the H&I newsletter. Basically I'm an honest person and I came to N.A. through a friend. He would always ask me to come to the meetings. I helped this friend by supporting him through the Twelve Steps.

I have been using almost 26 years and most of the time on the weekend. It's really good to be able to express myself in this way. I have really grown. I'm able to share the spiritual side, as well as other sides of me. I'm able to try to live a drug free life. So on behalf of our N.A. group here at the Arizona State Prison we would like to say thanks.

Sincerely,
J.S.

From Michigan:

First of all we would like to apologize for our procrastination in sending in input. I hope you understand that we are still recovering and we all know how easy it is to 'put off today, what can be done tomorrow,' that's something the group is beginning to work on (tomorrow never gets here).

We are still babes as far as the group is concerned (12 meetings strong). As of now we are only able to meet once a week; but that's a condition we hope to have changed soon. What makes this group work so well is we are on a strictly voluntary basis, with virtually no supervision or interference from the institution. Presently we have sixteen regular members, but we continue to pass the word throughout the institution.

As a group, we are experiencing difficulties in contacting someone, in N.A. to sponsor us. The administration of this institution seems to recognize the power behind N.A., and that the group is an asset to the institution. Any help or advice you can relay on this problem would be greatly appreciated.

We'd also like to thank you for putting us on the bi-monthly newsletter mailing list. After receiving the first one we cannot totally express the strength it has put into our group. We hope that in time, we'll be able to contribute and share our experiences with other fellowships; through the use of the newsletter.

In service to the fellowship,
The Genesis Group

From Texas:

By the time you receive this letter I'll be free once again to practice the principles given to all of us in this wonderful program of Narcotics Anonymous. Let this be a letter of hope and gratitude to members of the Fellowship everywhere. For it is through the hope and love of N.A. that recovery and a new way of life is found.

I have one message to share with other addicts everywhere, regardless of their stage of recovery or where they happen to be at the time. The

message is simple and plain, 'Just for Today you don't have to use, anymore!' It's that simple. Just keep it simple and the program works itself.

People may wonder, what did you learn during three and one half years of being locked up. Away from all who care, and from everyone you care about. The truth is I did learn a few things. I learned if you can't be happy here, then getting out won't change anything; it will only give you a chance to distract yourself. Happiness starts within and flows outward. I'm not jumping up and down with overwhelming joy, but I do feel an inner source of peace and serenity much more real than anything I ever felt during the days I was using. The second thing I learned was conquering the dire need for love, the idea that I must have love, I must be cared for and accepted by other people. It is this idea that causes addicts like me more problems and trouble than anything else. I believed that if all my friends would get high and I didn't, I wouldn't have anyone who liked me, and that would be terrible.

The truth is if I like and accept myself, I don't have to do anything to get (or make) someone like me. It would be nice to have everyone love me and be willing to do everything for me, but the real world doesn't work like that. Before anyone else can accept me, I have to accept myself.

I wish the people I leave behind in the institutions the best of luck in their recovery. If there is any final word I can leave anyone, that word is hope. Yes there is hope—if you have the capacity to be honest with yourself and the patience to give yourself a break. The program works if you let it. It is my hope that even just one addict reading this might benefit in some small way by these words.

Good luck to all in your recoveries.

Yours in recovery,
H.D.

From New York:

I am writing in response to your letter dated April 18, 1985. I, too, was sorry they transferred me from Wyoming. I refuse to let that get in my way of starting an N.A. group here at McGregor. I have made, and still am making, the necessary plans here to get the program going. I am in a camp, so freedom to move around is much easier to accomplish. We are trying now to get an available room to hold a meeting in, once that is done, the rest is easy.

I hope to one day help addicts and start more groups in Albany after my release. Thank you very much for your help in this matter.

In service to the Fellowship,
G.H.

From the Volunteer Region:

I would like to bring you up to date on the H&I activities which are going on in our area. I was fortunate enough to attend the Tennessee Women's Prison meeting a few weekends ago. It was my first meeting behind the walls. It was great! I even shed a few tears of joy. That was the best meeting I have ever been to. The high I received from the love in that room was

greater than any high I ever got from any drug. That day has made all the pain I ever had seem worthwhile.

We, the Volunteer region, have sent these courageous ladies 15 of the N.A. Basic Texts. I am glad to report that the Nashville area has been offering a great deal of support.

We are currently writing three prisons in our region to offer to carry the N.A. message into their facilities.

In loving service,
J.S.

From Virginia:

I received my bi-monthly newsletter. I must admit I'm quite surprised with the input from this organization. Somehow I feel as though I've already conquered my drug problem. I feel very positive about myself now that I am part of this organization. N.A. is real for me. I thank you for allowing me this chance to change my ways of life. I only hope I can, in return, contribute to this program, just as I have received a lot from it. My progress here has really shown me that I can become a productive member of society.

Respectfully submitted,
C.M.

From Florida:

Our area is very happy to see *Reaching out*. It helps us feel more in touch with the H&I community worldwide.

We would like to share a few of the difficulties we have had in our H&I efforts and what we have learned from them. Early on we had a few very enthusiastic members who started some H&I meetings with a strong commitment, but very little support. Of course, eventually they experienced burnout and the meetings folded. We learned from this that we must be realistic when we start a new meeting. We ask questions like, 'How much support will we have from other members?' or 'Will this take away from our already-established meetings?' This is not projection but realistic planning.

Two factors are important in H&I work: consistency and communication. We have found through experience that sometimes a meeting can do N.A. more harm than good, especially if the meeting does not have consistent support. Along these same lines we have had a lot of frustration over the fact that H&I has gotten little support. The lit can money is great, but the lifeblood in N.A. is one addict helping another.

Sometimes it is difficult to involve members and get them to make a commitment to service. Again consistency and communication are very useful. Our H&I committee meets on a regular basis and we make sure the local Fellowship knows where to find us. Our committee shows stability in its meetings by being consistent with time and location, as well as, format. Communication is important though, letting other addicts know what H&I is and how beneficial it has been to our personal recovery. Getting people we sponsor involved helps them, as well as, the fellowship.

The H&I cans, if well announced, also make people aware of our efforts.

H&I folks are special people and do important work. If you are a little frustrated with how slow your areas H&I efforts are going don't throw in the towel. Just keep on keeping on. God will provide the answers and solutions for us. Our part is to take the steps to meet him halfway.

In service to the Fellowship,
S.S.

From Washington:

There have been times that I have been alone at H&I meetings, and I know some people know the feeling. There have been times when H.P., my book and myself were there, and it has been good to have the hope of so many addicts with me. By just having my N.A. book with me at meetings I go to alone, the addicts can hear the stories. If we don't go they will not hear the hope of a new life after dope.

It's up to all of us to just go to one H&I meeting a month, then all the H&I meetings would do so much better. I'm active with H&I because that is where I came from. I need to keep in mind where I came from and where I can go back to if I use. Please go to an H&I meeting. This is what I do. 'Keep coming back.'

J.F.

From California:

We are the Fireline Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous at Sierra Conservation Center, Jamestown, California. Our group has a membership of about 30 inmates, and we meet every Tuesday nite. We talk about things like the prison we are in today being nothing like the prison of being addicted; about not have to come back to prison if we do what is suggested by the program today.

We would like to express a very warm and grateful thank you to anyone who carries the N.A. message to hospitals, jails and institutions. It's almost impossible to express what it means to have outside guests. Their very presence is living proof that N.A. works. Some of our H&I members drive 135 miles in one direction to stay clean and carry the message to us. We also would like to thank you people who are putting together the *Reaching Out* newsletter. We pray that our fellow N.A. inmates who are in hospitals, jails and institutions will support you and take some action to help keep this newsletter together.

Our Fellowship has had to go through those growing pains. We think one of our biggest problems is the lack of understanding. It's a bit hard sometimes to tell the newcomer that we must be willing to go to any-length to stay clean, but in spite of our difficulties we are growing.

In closing, we would like to express a very special thank you to B.B. and the group from S.F. We love you. Also we would like to say it's truly a miracle to come to prison the way some of us did, with not much hope, and find something so wonderful as this program.

With gratitude and love,
F.F.

Note from the Editor: We would appreciate any input for the next issue of *Reaching Out* by mid-August. We will be putting together the September-October edition at that time. If we are to be effective in carrying the message in print via the forum provided by this H&I newsletter, then your input as a concerned member of the Fellowship is needed. Help the addict who cannot attend regular NA meetings by sharing the experience, strength and hope that was freely given to you.

If you are a recovering addict who is housed in a correctional or treatment setting, let us hear how Narcotics Anonymous has helped you in your life. If you are a member of an H&I committee, let others hear how you or your committee have carried the NA message of recovery. **GET INVOLVED AND HELP US CARRY OUT OUR FELLOWSHIP'S PRIMARY PURPOSE!!!**