

---

**WSC-H & I Newsletter**

# **REACHING OUT**

---

**VOLUME 2**

**NUMBER 7**

---

*World Service Office, Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409*

## **Welcome**

*We would like to welcome all of you to the WSC H&I Newsletter. We hope that the contents of this simple newsletter will assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts throughout the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.*

**Dear Reaching Out,**

I have lived a very lonely and mostly miserable life. I've been incarcerated three times for a total of six years and eight months. I'm twenty-five years of age and I have spent virtually all of my adult life behind bars and in various drug treatment centers. I'm presently a client in an in-patient treatment center here in Kansas. I'm still in the process of trying to reprogram my character defects.

Up until now, my life has really seemed bleak. But, for some reason, I'm gaining confidence in myself as I successfully complete the various tasks toward my goals. I'm still young in the program, it's almost as if I can really notice and even feel myself growing emotionally. My thinking is centered on the principles of Narcotics Anonymous which are

---

taught here in the program. I've even decided that, for my recovery plan, I will follow through "after care" and I have submitted an application to a halfway house to assist in my recovery needs.

My only advice to fellow addicts is to try recovery. It's sure a lot more productive and successful working the Twelve Steps then anything I ever tried on my own.

C----  
Kansas

Dear *Reaching Out*,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share recovery by mail.

My name is M----. I have been incarcerated here in the Arizona prison system for six years. I am happy to say that I have been clean for nearly four of those years. I am a member of a Narcotics Anonymous group here, and we are all quite close and productive. We meet once a week, but as any addict knows, it's sometimes easier to be clean than happy.

I'm serving a twenty-year sentence for second degree murder. I'm currently in a minimum custody institution, and with some help from my Higher Power, and the Narcotics Anonymous Program, I will remain here for the remaining seven years of my sentence.

I must admit that it was coming to prison that saved my life, but it has been the N.A. Program and the local H&I committee that has kept me alive. I enjoy life today, which is something I couldn't have said some years ago.

Thank you all for your time, and thank you for the Program of N.A. May your God keep you and bless you.

Sincerely,  
M----  
Arizona

Dear *Reaching Out*,

My name is J----, and I am an addict. When I was new to the program, I used to hear phrases from the people who had been around a while. These included: One Day at a Time. No Pain No Gain, Jails, Institutions and Death.

I would cringe when I heard these phrases. I think this

here I'm going to school. I've found God and I'm staying clean. It isn't all a bed of roses but it sure is a lot better than active addiction. I'm so relieved to be able to turn things over to Him. I know that if I keep on trusting Him things will be alright. I sure feel a lot better about myself. I'm grateful to have my life ahead of me! Things are looking up! My family and I have been getting closer. I'm real grateful to have a Basic Text! It's funny how I'm grateful for the little things today. I've been talking to a couple of people about N.A. The other day an addict asked me how come I keep feeling so happy. I told him about the program. We decided to have a meeting. I shared about my First Step. And about how I didn't want to use any more because it was so evident of the chaos and destruction ahead if I kept on. I told him about the program and how we recover with the help of each other. I'm grateful to be a part of recovery today, even though it's through the mail. I'm still part of recovery and I'm in the solution today. I don't feel like I used to feel, DEAD! I'm grateful to wake up clean and free. I'm really thankful for the gift of recovery. I cannot express in words the way I feel when I think of how I used to feel and how I feel now! I may be locked up, but I'm free and I'm alive! I'm grateful to have people who care today.

Love and prayers,  
T----  
Michigan

*Dear Reaching Out,*

I have just been reading Volume 2, Number 5 of the *Reaching Out* and a letter from Robert in London. Since this letter was written a lot of changes have taken place with the London Area H&I Committee. North London has grown from four meetings a week to eleven meetings during the past ten months, and it is still growing rapidly! We are in the process of splitting the North London H&I Committee into two areas which will give London four area H&I committees. North London presently meets once a month, on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 at H. C. C. If any visitors are in the area, you are more than welcome.

I am very much involved in H&I service. Many a time, when I've been in a lot of pain and haven't felt a lot of hope, not knowing which way to go, H&I has brought me back to reality and has shown me what I can offer if I make the choice to work in this area of service. It has helped me tremendously in my own recovery. It has given me a lot of

gratitude. When I attend H&I meetings I realize how far I've come today from the days when I was in and out of institutions. I know today that I have a choice and this gives me the gratitude I need today.

*Reaching Out* has helped me so much, reading of other people's experience, strength and hope. Sometimes, when I just want to give up, I read something that helps me to go on. Our committee in London is not very well supported and having feedback worldwide is an incredible boost.

Hopefully this letter will be printed before our present H&I committee changes too much. We have five hospital meetings, two prison meetings, one in a Twelve Step treatment center, one in a Twelve Step halfway house, one in a drug-dependency unit, and one in a youth custody center.

Thank you once again. *Reaching Out* has helped me so much over the past couple of years.

Love and hugs,  
Sally M.  
London

Dear *Reaching Out*,

I wasn't sure just how to start this letter as I've never written one to people I didn't know! Writing this letter was suggested to me by the panel chairperson at the N.A. meeting which I attended. I am currently serving a three to twelve year sentence here at W---- for a DWI with fatality resulting and I have attended N.A. for over a year now. I had been after my caseworker to bring in some N.A. people and we now have a very successful meeting every Tuesday night. In fact, the attendance at the N.A. meeting is great. We have ten inmates going each week, which is a lot, considering our population is only eighty to eighty-five. It is a speaker-discussion and the outside interest has been good. Anyway, I brought up the subject of having to do so much on our own around here and the panel chairperson suggested I write to you people when I felt the urge to talk to someone. It's impossible to have a sponsor here because we have to make all phone calls collect. It's also very hard to find the sincerity I need for a talk like that. I've used drugs for almost twenty years now, and despite being in treatment twice before, I'm just starting to honestly come to grips with my addiction. I've been almost nine months without any drugs, which is hard here because there is a lot of drugs as well as homebrew. I'm due for parole next July and I'm sure it will be very strict

and intense, so I'm also very scared about it. The facility here in Vermont was originally a treatment based program, but more and more it has been leaning towards other types of offenders. It kind of leaves the addicts out in the cold to do most of the work ourselves. That's why the N.A. meeting has been so important to me. The one advantage I have is that I have a lot of people pulling for me, family included.

I'm feeling better and better about myself every day and I pray that I'll stay straight tomorrow. It seems so hard some days. This letter has helped me to stay clean today. I hope it helps whoever reads it as well.

S---,  
Vermont

*Dear Reaching Out,*

I am writing *Reaching Out* concerning my relapse and recovery. My relapse came about when I stopped going to meetings and working my N.A. Twelve Steps. I went around my old drug friends, and before I realized it I was back to using. After staying clean and drug free for over three years, I relapsed. I simply stopped working my program and it caused me to get high. Today I'm in a treatment center working on my recovery. I'm accepting the fact that I am a drug addict. Thanks to the Twelve Steps of N.A. I have a positive drug-free future. I close this letter with a very new beginning of life and a fresh start: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ... The courage to change the things I can ... And the wisdom to know the difference.

Anonymous  
Kansas

*Dear Reaching Out,*

My name is U---, and I'm an addict. Before Narcotics Anonymous came into my life, I was lost and turned to the evils of society. I realized at an early age that I didn't like alcohol, however, I never knew that I was opening the door to another addiction that would surround my life with jails, institutions, bouts with death, loss of wife and children, homes, cars, jobs, family relationships, clothes, jewelry, monies

and a vicious cycle of such for the last twenty years. I had lost so much of my self-respect, that life had become a complete catastrophe. Living everyday to put drugs in my decaying mind/body. Nothing more mattered to me, but to serve this inmate sickness that lives deep within the walls of my being. This is my first sincere encounter with Narcotics Anonymous. I took a shot at it seven years ago, for all of the wrong reasons. I am slowly, one day at a time, regaining some serenity and positive direction in my life, thanks to God and N.A.

May someone realize, as I did, that it works when you sincerely want it. My door is open. Please walk in.

U---  
Pennsylvania

Dear *Reaching Out*,

My name is M--- and I'm a recovering addict. My story, although not unique, is a little different. I hit my bottom at age fourteen, two and half years ago. By the grace of a loving Higher Power, working through our steps, and our fellowship, I'm still clean today. I'd like to share with you how Narcotics Anonymous has worked in my life.

For one reason or another I had low self-worth, feelings of inadequacy and even self-hatred before I picked up for the first time. Naturally, I fell in love with using because it took these horrible feelings away. Finally I felt comfortable with myself. I was always okay when I was loaded. I could get along with people and I didn't hurt as much. Little did I know that I had started a journey that would almost take my life. Obviously God had other plans for me.

When I wasn't high or stoned, when the problems started, I was still faced with me. I would use as much as I could to make myself okay. I was dying on the inside.

For me there were no fun times in the first few months. My addiction was serious business from the start. Once I found the high, I lived to use and used to live.

After the first year of my using my mom decided to pick up and move to Miami. I just knew things would get better. You know? I tried so hard to make my family proud of me. Yet I was drawn to the drugs with a stronger progression than ever. My disease was progressing. I resented my family for taking me away from my house. I hurt those who loved me most by totally shutting them out. I started running away a lot. God, the situation I wound up in. I am

grateful I am alive. Anyway, I became suicidal and super depressed. The only time I opened my mouth for a long time was in violent rage. No drugs I could find took away what was happening inside me. My mom dragged me to a psychiatrist. I would just sit in the chair and cry. I felt like the worst piece of you know what ever on the face of the earth. They told me I was an addict. I just laughed it off. I was in a lot of trouble. Then one of the therapists challenged me. I agreed to sign a contract that said I'd come home every night, go to school every day and make at least three meetings a week. If I didn't do this I would go open-mindedly and willingly into a treatment center. Two weeks later I wound up in the hospital for three days because of an overdose. I came straight out of the hospital and onto an airplane to head for rehabilitation. I was frightened out of my mind, but I was willing to do anything to stop hurting. To me those days in the treatment center were the first few days of my life. It was then I had made a sure decision. Narcotics Anonymous meetings were brought in by the local H&I subcommittee. I remember my first meeting. My chin was to the floor because everything everyone was saying made sense. I wasn't alone. There were others just like me. They were learning how to live and I was told to keep coming back. I especially appreciated the sharing and the hugs. I felt generally cared for. I didn't have to use anymore. I was so happy to see that there really was another way. I decided to work it. Narcotics Anonymous has so much to offer. Recovery is wonderful and for that I'm grateful. I know how to live today. Sometimes it's hard, but I have the tools. It's very true--you can't keep what you have unless you give it away.

M---  
Florida

*Dear Reaching Out,*

I am an inmate serving time awaiting to go in the main stream of the penal system. I have been an addict for over twenty-three years. I had just finished serving ten years on a nineteen year sentence when I was paroled about two years ago.

I thought I could come back to society and use drugs moderately. That was a big laugh for I didn't even know then that I was an addict. I was just being cool and hip like everyone else I knew. I started off drinking and smoking, then worked my way up until my habit and sickness wanted

more, and more. The insanity started all over again. I was telling lies, stealing from anybody and everybody, including my family, because they were the easiest to lie to. I had no respect for anyone including myself. I had no feeling, thoughts and cares for no one. I hated myself and others unless I could use them for my drugs and parties. There came a time when I hurt someone else and I was locked up again. I awaited bond in the local jail which took about three days to make. During that time I took a thorough inventory of myself and realized I was sick and needed help.

While awaiting bond I asked a local treatment program to talk with me and accept me to see if I was sane because I didn't figure anyone in their right mind wanted to spend the rest of their life in prison as I was doing. While in treatment I was brought to N.A. That was eleven months ago. And through the grace of God and the Fellowship of N.A. I've been clean. I found I am okay and I can love, and care for others. I no longer need to hate myself and others. I found out, through the Twelve Steps and the Fellowship of N.A. that I need not ever be alone again or scared of my feelings or of being accepted. I had the privilege of attending my first eleven months of N.A. meetings outside in the street before having to be confined as I am now. I'm trying hard now to bring N.A. to the institution that I am confined in. At times it seems to fall on deaf ears but I continue to carry the Fellowship of N.A. with me and my strong, knowing belief that "it works if you work it." So, as I go, all I can say to the addict in and out is "keep coming back."

Virginia

*Dear Reaching Out,*

My name is L--- and I am addict. I am thirty-four years old currently serving a twelve year sentence in California State Prison. I'm not writing this to build up any image or to suggest anything other than the fact that this program will work if you are honest and have the heart to work it.

I am an addict and I always will be. Today I'm not a practicing addict and I owe this freedom to my Higher Power and this program. I'll give you some history of my life in hope that you may see I do qualify.



I started using drugs as a teen, fourteen years old, and I am the kind of addict who used to get as high as I could. There are few drugs I haven't used. I am a mainliner, mainly because my head tells me to use any other way is a waist. I don't use drugs, I abuse them to the maximum and when I'm on a run I am a slave to drugs. I have served over fourteen years in correctional institutions because of my addiction. You see, if I'm strung out, I don't care about you or your things. I'm going to take them and I'm going to hurt you and I'm not going to care if you suffer because I need my drugs. I don't care about getting caught, I am insane and there is nothing anyone can say or do to stop me because after all what I am doing to myself is far worse than anything you could do to me. I've been involved in an armed robbery where my crime partner was gunned down. I have broken into people's homes and stolen their money and property for drugs. I have overdosed and been pronounced dead once, only to wake up and call the man who saved my life names. I have hurt countless people in many ways. I have endangered the lives of my family, I have hated and planed to kill cops for trying to protect society from me. I've been to various institutions, and I'm still in one.

I'm not stupid and I'm not tough. I suffer like many from the disease of addiction. Today I am clean, I am ashamed and I have remorse for my actions. I don't want to be an addict, and I don't want to be a convict. I want to live and love and share the things I earn and learn with people who care. I want what this program has to offer me. I can't go back and live my life over and that hurts. As I sit here in this cell I know that people are out there following in my foot steps and it brings tears to my eyes because I know the pain they are feeling. I know what it's like to use drugs and feel like the narcs are going to rush you and kill you or, even worse, lock you away from your lover (drugs). I know how it feels to wake up sick and be controlled by that next urge to use. I know how it feels to wish you were dead because I've been there. I've seen it at 6'2" 130 pounds looking dead and wishing I was, hurting and sick and so powerless.

I felt that way until the police came and rescued me. They locked me up and once again saved my life. Did I thank them, hell no, I hated them and swore to get even. Now I ask you, is this insane? I think it is! But check this out: I don't have to use today. I can if I choose and there is nothing that can stop me if I desire it. It's up to me to choose today and today I am clean. I'm clean because I'm tired of having no control in my life. There is one thing I can do to make my life better today and I think it's great. I have to admit I am powerless over drugs and that my life is unmanageable. Can

one say a prison life is manageable?

I have to believe in a Power greater than myself and trust that Power to restore my sanity. I can't run my life, I'm powerless so I have to turn my will over to this Higher Power. Now my ego really comes into play there 'cause this insane mind of mine wants to control. It wants to say, "Fix me God! Do it now or else!" So I have to work extra hard on realizing I am powerless! I have to apply all Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous in my life and God has to help me. I can't do it on my own. I can walk the yard at this institution, but it takes more heart to ask God to help me take these steps. My sponsor tells me to get on my knees and I think, "Does this lame know what he is asking? He wants me to get on my knees and pray. What will the guys say? How can I walk the yard if they see me?" So I tell him just give me God's open line number and I'll call Him up and discuss this like a man. Then he reminds me about being willing to do whatever it takes and he has twelve years clean so he has living proof that this program works as long as I am willing to work it.

Yes, it's hard to do. A person like me fights and there is pain in letting go, there is pain in asking for help. It's a real blow to my ego and pride. When I get on my knees and talk to God He doesn't talk back to me directly. I tell Him I want to be well now! And all I hear is my voice. But, I'm clean today and I believe it's a direct result of my willingness to take these steps. God talks to me through people and I have to listen to hear the message. I have to be willing to apply these principles to my life in all affairs.

This program gives me a blow by blow description of what I have to be willing to do and it shows me proof that it works. I can have what I want. I can live a clean life today. Today I have a choice and that choice can set me free of the bondage of drugs and I'll never have to come to prison again. That's worth a lot. Take it from me, I know!

L---  
California