

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

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APF (Asia Pacific Forum) NEWSLETTER

32st Edition

“WE ARE ONE”

APF Statement of Purpose

The Asia Pacific Forum is made up of the NA Communities from the Asia Pacific Zone. These guidelines are devised to facilitate the agreed purposes of this service body. The following is the stated purpose of the Asia Pacific Forum, which these guidelines honor:

- 1) We, the NA Regions and communities of Asia Pacific, have joined to discuss issues of mutual concern, address our common needs, exchange ideas and share experiences to further our primary purpose.
- 2) This forum is intended to complement the existing service structure of NA. Goals to encourage develop and support NA in this part of the world:
 - a) To encourage and support translations of NA literature into our languages.
 - b) Encourage and support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific.
 - c) Encourage, maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and Regions within this part of the world.
 - d) To continue working with NA World Services in our efforts.

APF Vision Statement:

Our Vision is that one day:

- a) Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- b) NA communities worldwide, NA world services and the APF work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery;
- c) Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

Mark your Calendars: APF 2009 WILL BE HELD IN THE PHILIPPINES IN MANILA FROM FEBRUARY 10TH THROUGH FEBRUARY 13TH, 2009. THERE WILL BE A UNITY DAY PLANNED AFTER THE APF MEETING! Go to our website www.apfna.org for continued updates and much more.

Philippines - Ang Simula ng N.A. sa Pilipinas

The Start of NA in the Philippines

I am a recovering drug addict. I was born in Manila, the Philippines in 1963. My parents separated when I was six-months old and I was left with my maternal grandmother together with my three sisters. My grandmother was a widow of one of the country's foremost political leaders since my grandmother was very busy serving her political constituents; it was the household help that raised me. Because of my parents' absence I felt abandoned and rejected as a child. This is where I feel my core issue of low self-worth, toxic-shame and loneliness emanates.

Early in primary school I felt different from the other kids in my school. At this time in my life I also began feeling a unique loneliness which I continue to feel to a lesser extent in my life today. As I saw my classmates with their families I felt "apart from" rather than "apart of."

I first tried marijuana at age 14. An older friend of mine sold me some in school and I smoked a couple of joints with two of my classmates. Marijuana made me laugh and the secrecy of using pot made me really feel cool and tough with my peers in school. In that early age I felt I was living a dangerous life and made me feel proud and "above the rest." From a good boy I now became a bad boy. A few weeks after, I got into downers and together with pot which I used daily I was slowly losing interest in school. My grades declined dramatically, and I was regularly tardy in class. My father discovered my drug use and decided to send me to boarding school in the United States at age 15. I was sent to the US because my father wanted me to develop "character."

Even with a large school populace I felt very much alone. The feeling of inherent loneliness continued. I found myself slowly making friends who were into pot. I overdosed for the first time using a drug called arthane. Arthane is psychotic drug. I hallucinated for two full days in the school clinic. After which I was asked by the headmaster to leave the school.

I then proceed to a prep school in New York and there I made a vow to control my using. I would diligently do my school work throughout the day and do drugs in the early evening. The drug sessions lasted through the late night. I used cocaine periodically during the week; and LSD and alcohol on the weekends. My grade was mixed but was good enough for me to graduate and was accepted in a decent university in Boston.

At 19 I discovered heroin which I instantly fell in love with. Injecting heroin and sometimes combining it with cocaine became my ultimate drug of choice. My addiction was now out of control. I started dropping my courses in school and my academic performance was dismal at best. I stopped seeing my psychiatrist. Eventually I dropped-out of university.

I went back to the Philippines to seek refuge but my father didn't want me around. I lived-off friends with a meager allowance but somehow was able scrape enough money to continue my heroin habit. I was in and out of hospitals for detox but my addiction carried on. I also contracted a liver ailment due to my needle use and quickly hit bottom. I was falling and I had no one to turn to. Finally my father offered to send me to a therapeutic community in upstate New York. Having nowhere to go and going through severe withdrawals I grudgingly obliged.

In the detox was my first encounter of Narcotics Anonymous. Although I didn't hear much in the first meeting it was suggested by the resident- psychologist in the hospital that I consider a treatment center based on the 12 steps. After my detox I chose to attend a 28-day rehab where I was asked to do my first step based on the NA program. "I am powerless over addiction and my life is unmanageable." In the detox and in my days in treatment I was in deep sorrow. I felt I was caught between a rock and a hard place. I was only 21 years of age and I felt it was too early in my life to get clean. Although I was not completely willing to quit using I didn't want to go back to where I came from. I was sick and tired of the consequences of my addiction. I felt I had lost so much. I did not respect myself anymore and in all my life I felt so alone. I did not know where to go. In rehab we had 3 NA meetings a week. I did not share much but I always introduced myself as "I am Joey and I am a drug addict." After completing the 28-day rehab program I made a genuine decision to continue in a 12-step halfway house in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During the days I worked as a bus boy in a fast-food restaurant earning minimum wage. I would scrub floors and toilets. I would scrub pots and pans. My defenses that worked well in the past and bode well during drug use started dropping. I've felt I reached bottom and started to cry. My only refuge was to attend an NA meeting every evening and shared my sorrow, remorse, and hopes. I had to give up my old ways of thinking. I had to shatter the thought that I could use and drink again. My old lover heroin had stabbed me in the back. Although overwhelmed with despair I knew I had to continue on and have faith in a power greater than myself. I have lost all power but in NA they underscored the phrase "just for today my thoughts will be on my recovery."

I completed my treatment in Minneapolis and headed back to my country the Philippines. In Manila there were no NA meetings but there were meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I connected with a few AA members but quickly realized my lifeblood was the NA program. With the guidance of NA literature I began an NA meeting on Thursday nights at a local church. The first year was rough since only a handful of individuals made inquiries about the nature of this meeting. I left NA literature in psychiatrists' offices. I left NA literature in detox facilities and government rehabs. I went on 12-step calls to poor communities in Manila. Slowly in the second and third year some addicts out of rehabs started attending. By the fourth year NA started to blossom and more meetings were established. To date there are as many NA meetings as AA meetings in the Philippines.

In the meantime my life and recovery started to stabilize. Since I got clean in 1984 I was able to go back to school and complete my college and master's degrees in the US. My career began to take off and I own a few companies providing jobs to a lot of people. I am a father and because of my recovery I am able to raise my son in a nurturing way. I continue to be active in the recovery community and am committed to do so on a daily basis. NA has given me a second chance in life. NA is my life blood. The feelings of loneliness, shame and depression have dissipated. I now have self respect and I'm genuinely confident that with NA and my higher power more will be revealed to me as I thread through this path of self discovery.

Ako ay isang nagpapagaling na adik. Ako ay ipinanganak sa Manila , Philippines noong 1963. Ang aking mga magulang ay naghiwalay noong ako'y anim na buwan pa lamang at iniwan sa pangangalaga ng aking lola sa ina kasama ng tatlo ko pang mga kapatid na babae. Ang aking lola ay biyuda ng isa sa mga kinikilala at pangunahing politiko sa Pilipinas. Dahil sa palaging abala ang aking lola sa pag-aasikaso sa kanyang mga kaanib sa politika, ang aming katulong sa bahay ang siyang tumulong na magpalaki sa akin; at dahil sa pagkakawalay ko sa aking mga magulang pakiramdam ko ay isa akong abandonado at napabayaang bata. Sa paniniwala ko, dito nag-uugat ang aking naging pangunahing karmadaman – ang mababang pagpapahalaga sa sarili, pagiging mahiyain at malungkutin sa buhay.

Sa simula pa lamang ng aking pag-aaral ay dama ko na ang aking pagkakaiba kung ihahambing sa aking mga kasamahan sa iskuwela. Sa mga panahong ito rin ako nagsimulang makadama ng isang kakaibang uri ng kalungkutan sa aking buhay na patuloy ko pa ring nadarama ng bahagya hanggang sa ngayon. Habang nakikita ko ang aking mga kaklase sa piling ng kanilang mga mahal sa buhay, lalo lamang lumalalim ang aking paniniwala na ako nga ay naiiba sa kanila.

Una akong nakatikim ng marijuana sa edad na 14. isang nakatatandang kaibigan sa aming paaralan ang nagtinda nito sa akin at agad kong sinindiha and dalawang stick kasama ng dalawa ko pang mga kaklase. Pinaligaya ako ng marijuana at ang pagtatagong paggamit nito ay nagbigay sa akin ng labis na pagkakatuwa sa sarili at nagmistulang ginawa akong isang tigasina sa aming iskuwelahan. Sa murang edad na iyon pakuwari ko'y nabubuhay na ako sa bingit ng kasamaan at ang ipinaranas nito sa akin bunga ng mga pangyayaring iyon ay isang labis na pagmamalaki sa sarili. Mula sa pagiging isang masunuring bata ako ngayon ay naging isa nang pasaway. Ilang linggo pa ang lumipas at sinubukan ko na ring gumamit ng downers at kasama ng "damo" na araw-araw ko nang ginagamit noon ay unti-unti na akong nawalan ng interes sa pag-aaral. Bigla-bigla ang pagbulusok ng aking mga grado at madalas na rin akong tinatanghali sa pagpasok. Hindi nagtagal ay nadiskubre na ng aking ama ang paggamit ko ng droga at nagpasiya siyang ipadala ako sa isang boarding school sa Amerika sa edad na 15. pinadala niya ako dito sa pag-aakalang ito ay magbibigay ng karagdagang "character" sa aking pagkatao.

Bagamat napakalaki ng populasyon ng aming paaralan ay labis pa rin ang kalungkutan na aking nadama. Ito ay nagpatuloy hanggang sa unti-unti akong nakakilala ng mga kaibigan na gumagamit rin ng droga. Una akong nakaranas ng pagka over dose sa isang droga na tinatawag na Arthane. Ang Arthane ay isang psychotic drug at dalawang araw akong naghahallucinate sa loob ng aming school clinic. Matapos ang pangyayaring ito ay pinaalis na ako ng aming head master.

Mula rito ay lumipat ako sa isang prep school sa New York at doon ay nangako akong babawasan na ang paggamit ng droga. Matiyaga kong ginagampanan ang aking mga aralin sa iskuwela sa araw at gumagamit lamang ng droga pagsapit ng dilim. Subalit ang mga drug sessions na ito ay nagtatagal nang halos buong gabi. Madalas akong gumagamit ng cocaine ilang araw sa isang linggo at LSD at alcohol tuwing katapusan ng linggo.

Hindi pantay-pantay ang aking mga grado ngunit naging sapat na ang mga ito upang ako ay makaraos at matanggap sa isang disentang Unibersidad sa Boston .

Pagdating ko ng 19 ay nadiskubre ko ang heroin at agad-agad ko itong nagustuhan. Ang pag-inject ng heroin at kung minsan ay paghahalo nito ng cocaine ang siyang naging ultimate drug of choice ko. Sa panahong ito ay hindi ko na makontrola ang aking adiksiyon. nagsimula akong mag drop ng aking mga subject sa iskuwela at ang aking academic performance ay halos pasang awa na lamang. Tumigil na rin ako sa pakikipagkita sa aking psychiatrist. Hindi nagtagal ay tuluyan na akong tumigil sa aking pag-aaral sa Unibersidad.

Bumalik ako sa Pilipinas upang makapagtago subalit ayaw akong tanggapin ng aking ama. Nanirahan ako sa aking mga kaibigan at nabuhay lamang sa kaunting allowance na ibinibigay sa akin. Subalit sa kabila nito ay nagawa ko pa ring masustentuhan ang paggamit ko ng heroin. Labas pasok ako sa mga ospital para magpa-detox subalit nagpatuloy pa rin ang aking adiksiyon. nagkaroon din ako ng sakit sa atay dahil sa paggamit ko ng karayom at daglian akong nag rock bottom sanhi nito. Wala na akong malapitan pa. Hindi nagtagal ay inalok ako ng aking ama na magparehab sa isang therapeutic community sa upstate New York at dahil wala na akong mapuntahan at ako ay dumaranas na ng withdrawals ay pumayag na lamang ako sa kabila ng aking sama ng loob.

Sa detox na iyon ko unang nakilala ang Narcotics Anonymous. Bagamat wala halos pumasok sa aking kalooban sa unang pagkakataon na ako'y dumalo sa miting, iminungkahi sa akin ng aming resident-psychologist sa ospital na subukan ko ang isang programang base sa 12- steps. Pagkatapos ng aking detox ay pumasok ako sa isang 28-day rehab kung saan ay pinagawa sa akin ang unang hakbang ayon sa programa ng NA. "I am powerless over addiction and my life is unmanageable."Labis ang aking kalungkutan habang ako ay nagpapadeto at tinatapos ang aking programa. Pakiramdam ko ay naiipit ako sa pagitan ng isang malaking bato at mahirap na lugar. Ako ay 21 pa lamang at paniwala ko'y masyado pa akong bata para tumigil sa paggamit ng droga. Bagamat labag sa aking kalooban na tumigil sa paggamit ay ayaw ko na ring bumalik sa aking pinanggalingan. Pagod na pagod na ako sa mga kasawiang palad na idinulot ng aking adiksiyon. masyado na akong maraming nalustay at sinayang. Nawalan na ako ng respeto sa aking sarili at mas lalo ko lamang nadama ang aking pag-iisa. Hindi ko na alam kung saan ako pupunta. Sa loob ng rehab mayroong nagaganap na 3 NA miting sa loob ng isang linggo. Hindi ako gaanong nagbabahagi subalit palagi kong ipinakilala ang aking sarili na, "Ako si Joey at ako ay isang adik." Nang matapos ko ang 28-day rehab program buong puso akong nagpasiya na magpatuloy sa isang 12-step na halfway house sa Minneapolis , Minnesota . Noong mga panahong iyon ay nagtrabaho ako bilang isang bus boy sa isang fastfood restaurant kung saan ay kumikita ako ng minimum wage. Naglilinis ako ng mga banyo at naglalampaso ng sahig. Naghuhugas ako ng mga kawali at kaldero. Ang aking pagkukunwari sa sarili na siyang nangingibabaw noong ako'y gumagamit ng droga ay unti-unti nang lumisan sa aking kalooban. Pakiramdam ko ay humantong na ako sa pinakamababang antas ng aking buhay at nagsimula akong umiyak. Ang tanging pinanghahawakan ko na lamang ay ang dumalo sa mga NA miting tuwing gabi at ibahagi ang aking mga kalungkutan, pagsisisi, at mga inaasahan sa buhay. Kinailangan kong talikuran ang aking maling paniniwala sa sarili, at ipinasok ko sa aking pag-iisip na kailanman ay hindi na ako maaaring gumamit at uminom ng alak muli. Nawala na sa akin ang lahat ng lakas subalit sa NA ay binibigyang-diin ang kasabihang "Just for today my thoughts will be on my recovery."

Natapos ko ang aking programa sa Minneapolis at mula roon ay bumalik na ako sa Pilipinas. Walang NA miting dito noong mga panahong iyon subalit mayroong Alcoholics Anonymous. Nakihalubilo ako sa ilang mga miyembro ng AA subalit hindi nagtagal ay naunawaan ko na ang aking buhay at dugo ay nasa programa ng NA. Sa pamamagitan ng paggabay ng ilang kasulatang pang-NA ay nagsimula ako ng isang NA miting tuwing Huwebes ng gabi sa isang lokal na simbahan. Ang unang taon nito ay hindi gaanong naging matagumpay dahil sa iilan lamang mga tao ang nagkaroon ng interes tungkol sa programang ito. Nag-iwan ako ng mga NA literature sa opisina ng mga psychiatrist; sa mga detox facilities at mga government rehab. Ipinakilala ko ang 12-step sa mga mahihirap na komunidad sa maynila. Unti-unti, sa ikalawa at ikatlong taon mula ng naitatag ito ay

may mangilan-ngilang mga adik na nagsimulang dumalo sa mga miting buhat sa kanilang mga pinanggalingang rehab. Pagdating ng ikaapat na taon ay dumagsa na ang mga taong dumadalo sa miting at nagsimula nang magkaroon ng mga miting sa iba't-ibang lugar. Sa ngayon, halos may kasing-dami nang nagaganap na NA miting dito sa Pilipinas katumbas ng mga AA miting.

Samantala ang aking buhay at recovery ay nagsimula na ring maging maunlad. Mula nang ako'y tumigil sa paggamit noong 1984 ako'y nakapanumbalik na sa iskuwela at natapos ang aking kolehiyo at masters degrees sa Amerika. Nagsimula na ring magtagumpay ang aking career at sa ngayon ay mayroon na akong ilang mga kompanyang naitatag na nagbibigay ng hanap buhay sa maraming tao. Ako ay isa na ring ama ngayon at dahil sa aking recovery ay nagagawa ko nang palakihin ang aking anak sa isang wasto at mabuting paraan. Patuloy akong nananatiling aktibo sa programa ng NA at sa samahan nito sa araw-araw na kaganapan ng aking buhay. Binigyan ako ng pangalawang pagkakataon sa buhay ng NA at ang NA ay ang aking dugo at buhay. Ang aking pagkalungkot at pangungulila ay naglaho na rin. Nanumbalik na ang respeto ko sa aking sarili at ako ay buong pusong naniniwala na sa pamamagitan ng NA at ng aking higher power, marami pang mga magagandang pangyayari ang mabubunyag sa akin habang tinatahak ko ang landas ng pagbabago at pagdidiskubre ng aking sarili

An Addict from India writes PAACNA-II: “One Promise, Many Gifts”

Yes it was 2 moons ago when I returned from the hang-gliding take-off point convention of NA Pokhara, Nepal. In terms of natural beauty, the convention venue was out of this world. At 7000 feet above sea level the mountain top village of Sarankot was perfect. The season was the monsoons and the misty rain clouds passing thru my hands were magical.

I thought that there is no way I'll ever make to my hotel in the pitch dark of a powerless Himalayan night going downhill, no way. How can I ask for help twice in one day? This one wayward thought seemed to take away all the goodness of a beautiful day away from me. Screw the nice dry warm bed in View Top hotel I'll sleep on the floor here tonight I thought but no can ask for assistance, not again man. Don't you know I'm the original been there, done it all, cosmic traveler from the previous century?

Day 1: The new day began with excitement at the thought of the convention beginning in a few hours. As luck would have it, the overnight torrential rains had washed away the outdoors tent-house with the stage and all was a mess. I had seen similar situations before (at the Pelling, NA Sikkim convention in 2004) and the never say die spirit of the fellowship kicked in with enthusiasm & vigor. In the meantime at 9AM, inside a small conference hall at the venue hotel, the PAACNA-2 committee held a PI presentation for the villagers, the local women, the elders, the police and local administration. I sat thru this 90 minute session and was impressed in the way the light, sound; slide show of the history of NA's birth & development in Pokhara was patiently translated into Nepali by the PI volunteers. They simply surpassed themselves & left me feeling utterly blessed with gratitude. Just how well this PI presentation went down with the local population became evident later to me and I will come back to it later. By 3PM we were good to start with hoots, clapping and a serene prayer. As I looked around I was amazed at the number of teenage members and guys in their early twenties, this was a super charged lot and all

super clean. Himalayan recovery the NA Way!! In the opening meeting of this convention I was asked to share on 'Recovery & Addiction' and for 20 minutes I had a mountain top ball. I met a 15 year old with 1-year clean and a second to none 15 years old kid with 7 months clean time. Miracles indeed!

Day 2: My much awaited reunion with Sushil P, (the RD of NA Nepal) on this day was great. We were happily meeting after the APF in Kula Lumpur earlier in the year. My recovery held an intimate interest for visiting Nepal apart from hooking up with my sponsees & making my 3rd. Nepal area NA convention. I needed to get up & close with the members in structured regional service to place a personal idea before them all. And as it's all about carrying the message, Sushil introduced me to the RCM's & other trusted servants of NA Nepal's 6 ASC areas. Later this day I was told to speak on 'Steps 8 & 9' ~ and I could hardly stop once I'd started. The appreciation for it afterwards from the young crowd made my day. I love my recovery and feel abundantly blessed. A few guys asked me to be their sponsor & while it's an honor & a privilege, I have my hands full. There is no point taking on sponsees unless you have time for them & can do justice to this commitment. Having many sponsees from different countries are by no means feathers in my recovery hat nor does it make my recovery "more than" what it is. My 20 year old sponsee with 2 years clean who shared his 1st. Step with me at this convention made everything in my life worth while and he left me floored with his enthusiasm.

Day 3: With help from Keshav B, the regional chairperson, we were able to hold an informal meeting with all the 6 ASC areas to discuss a single point agenda. Since visiting NA Thumpu, Bhutan in May, I had a feeling that perhaps NA Nepal could help with PI in Thimpu. The new fellowship in Thimpu is in the doldrums due to the recent unfortunate incident in which a rehab inmate was beaten to death. Immediate result of this was that 8 out of the total NA Thimpu fellowship of 18 NA members were sent to jail. The fallout left the local fellowship devastated since NA received extremely negative publicity. The Press + Government & in the public eye, NA & rehabs are one & same entity and we know nothing is further from the truth. My wife & I felt that as both Bhutan & Nepal share a common language & culture, the latter was in a unique position to help with the former's PI activities in rebuilding their devastated NA image. This is actually a Herculean task and one which cannot be taken lightly. (But hey ~ light at the end of the tunnel is reward itself which you can take laughing all the way to kingdom come.)

Furthermore, NA Nepal has members with solid PI experience as the growth of NA in Nepal amply proves. Their pre-convention PI was so effective that as I walked back to my hotel one afternoon I passed a villagers hut. I said; "Namaste" to the man sitting outside & he said something which almost blew me off the mountain. He replied in Nepali; "Namaste Bablu-ji, how are you...come join us for lunch." The next day the same scene repeated itself outside another villager's hutment. How do you explain this except for a brilliant PI effort by the local fellowship? NA Nepal which has hosted both the 2003 + the 2007 APF conferences successfully and followed up each with the Katmandu area conventions is well known to many of us. Encouraged by the open-mindedness shown to idea of PI in Thimpu at this informal meeting in Sarankot, I thanked all the Nepal members who took time & trouble to patiently hear me out. On my part, I said I would as the NERF RD-Alt. requests the Indian Region to invite & sponsor both Nepal & Bhutan at the next SIRSCONA table in Mumbai. Well, here too the

response I received was positive but now the time has come for the regional meeting next week and things do not look very promising. The main reason seems to be the time lapse between the RD India receiving I am keeping my fingers crossed all the same, more so, as NA Bhutan has confirmed their participation next week in Mumbai.

I realize now that whatever has to happen will happen & like all else it's a slow process which works best over time. For NA fellowships in Nepal to formulate a PI agenda for NA Thimpu will take long term planning. The funding for this trans-border PI endeavor is huge and will need to be sustained over an extended period of time. From my limited experience I can say that India is ideally situated to coordinate between the NERF / Nepal / Bhutan. We, in India need to take a bird's eye view of the subcontinent as a whole for the Himalayan PI ball to set rolling.

An Addict from Big Island Hawaii

Fostering the Willingness. Foster: to promote the growth or development of; to bring up, rear, nourish. Willingness: cheerfully consenting or ready; Serve: to act as a servant, to render assistance, to have definite use, to provide with a regular or continuous supply of something. Of course we all serve for different reasons. In the beginning I got into service because I was volunteered. Someone thought this would be good for me and I said ok. This was a 'greeter' commitment where I learned to hug strangers. Then at six months clean I was the secretary of very small meeting. Again someone believed in me. That was so sweet. I felt like maybe I had a chance at this. Still really had no idea what service really meant, for me or the fellowship. At two years I was cleared to go into Sonoma County jail (my sponsor signed me up) and that commitment is where I found service could keep me clean. I had a commitment there for 15 years and there were nights I was dying inside my heart, my mind, and my whole being, with the pain of living life on life's terms; and that jail commitment taught me about gratitude. And that gratitude brought the focus back to the other spiritual principles that kept me coming back. Empathy, compassion, truth with others, listening.....and joy.

I also learned, by others example, how I didn't want to behave in service. I watched others manipulate, drive themselves crazy with control (mostly lack of it), watched committees pretty much run by one person, not because there weren't others to help, but because they couldn't let go of the reins. I witnessed others' defects cause them much pain as they struggled in their personal recovery through service. I need to mention that it is recovery-based service, not service-based recovery.

I have learned in NA that we build people up. Let them know that they are needed and have something to offer. Praise their assets and encourage them to see the good in themselves and their usefulness to the fellowship. Welcome their opinions and ideas and remember that the unity of this fellowship sustains itself by being inclusive, rather than exclusive. How do we do this at the group, area, and regional level? One way is continue to be part of our fellowship at meeting levels. All the knowledge I gained about service. I learned from addicts in my home meetings who were doing it. Does our local fellowship know who we are? It might seem like a stupid question, but without our recovery meetings and continued participation staying current with our fellow friends in recovery, how can we possibly be an example, a mentor, not just someone who gives back information from other sources.

Do we share our self? Not just data about service, but how we are actually doing in life. The people I have most admired in service had certain qualities that appealed to me. Other qualities may appeal to you, but I admire vulnerability, honest sharing about the difficult stuff, people who actually say they don't know or have the answer, but will find out. People who have humor and don't take themselves too seriously. People who accept others mistakes with no judgment. People who will talk to me directly, people who have good listening skills. People who are willing to think out of the box. Addicts with qualities of humility, compassion, humor, love, curiosity, spontaneity, joy of life, and maybe most importantly, *the ability to say the difficult stuff lovingly*. Like that old saying says, 'you collect more bees with honey'. I love NA. I love being in loving service to NA. Doesn't mean that it isn't work or it isn't challenging. But the joy and gratitude of living clean guided by these spiritual principles gives me a purpose and a means to grow along spiritual lines, I would not have imagined for myself in my wildest dreams. Kimmy

NA China Update October 2009

We held elections for servants in NA China 2008-2009. Taking two months to complete and getting input from members and administration of the APF, NAWS, na_pi_org, nachatroom, and NA China Regional members we are set for our next cycle of service. We now have two official Areas in NA China Region; HKANA (Hong Kong/Kowloon Area) and Shanghai Area. We have nine groups and thirteen meetings in NA China. Three of those are in the native language and others sometimes have translation.

Preparations for times ahead are moving forward. A preview of the 5th edition of the Basic Text of NA, including all 38 stories is finished. NAWS translations will turn it into a draft copy. Some Chinese addicts are reading it and some are said to cry. It's a far cry from a few IP's and a key to our plans to further our primary purpose.

In 2003 a Police Officer in Beijing became friends with an addict in jail and give a Basic Text in English to Xue Li L. She didn't understand very much of the text so the Police Officer, from her heart, translated the Basic Text into Chinese. In giving we receive! Paul S. our new LTC Chairperson and Xue Li L. deserve special recognition as shining stars of NA service, without whom the translation may have been lost and forgotten.

There's been talk of trying to bid for the APF to come to Shanghai, China for 2010. Although short on servants it may be possible! At the same time working with the APF we could have our first official NA China Convention, sightsee in China's largest city and visit The 2010 World Expo. More will be revealed!

The 2nd Unity Day for HAKNA was held on August 31st. and thirty five people attended. We have four groups and six meetings in Hong Kong/ Kowloon more than in any other city in China. Shanghai Serenity Group celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the start of the groups' first meeting. Shanghai Area has three groups and four meetings! Kunming restarted and has one meeting! Beijing restarted and has one meeting!

I'm sad to say, I will not be seeing you at the APF for the first time since Bangkok 2006. The Manila APF will be held in the Chinese New Year of the Cow. I wish all regions the best of times and a

productive forum. Together we can! Here's hoping to see you in Barcelona at WCNA 33 in August 2009 and pray for us China 2010!

ADVENTURE IN JAPAN- Sam B from China

Going to the 5th Japan Regional Convention 9/26 to 28, 2008 with my visa having no reentry stamp to China and family in Shanghai! What was I to do but go anyway! With about 350 meetings a week and 1,000 members NA is strong in Japan and I'd be seeing Masaru, Yogi, Brut K. a founder of NA in Japan and others. I was met by the Convention Chairperson Matsu and Yogi. What a blessing for I had fears. I knew a few of words and "no visa" wasn't among them. I was given a lighter that says "Just For Today-Message of Love" as I relaxed a little, feeling things were going to work out and I would be helped by NA members to solve my problem. In my need to get to the Chinese Consulate, Matsu decided to take me directly. Higher Power was in the car! The Consulate said; go to the Embassy in Tokyo for a visa to China. What to do? Check in the hotel. Get in the Convention way of fellowship, work details later. My will and my life were guided by Higher Power. Life on life's terms has to be lived. I prayed. Japan's an island and being from the Island of Rolling Hills (Manhattan) I embraced the concept that I was safe with passion and spirituality.

Japanese and Americans named me Shirotaka in 1972 while living in Hawaii. Shirotaka is a White Hawk that lived in Japan & China and became extinct 400 years ago. I told my Japanese name to the locals and some knew that the Shirotaka hawk did exist and accepted it as my Japanese name. My spirit was on the wind!

Dinner in the land of the rising sun was better than Honolulu, WCNA 31. We went to the final Convention Committee meeting. The 5th Regional Convention of NA Japan was on! We held a NA meeting, my first in Japan. Listening to shares in Japanese I felt the spirit of our program of recovery the NA Way. It was great! I shared in English without translation. The Convention Center in Nagoya filled with members. Strategy to the Chinese Embassy was in motion. Brut K. adopted me and would take me to Tokyo. With the grace of higher power, the message of love was everywhere. What nice vibrations! I had let go and God was letting me feel unconditional love. I got the message that I'm loved. I was happy as can be. With Sushi for dinner and Brut K. guiding my way I prepared the tea. It was an honor and amazingly it came in powered form and delicious. Members from Korea showed up, 10 strong. The international flavor of the Japan Regions convention was cooking. Saturday opened with merchandising and the Japanese make really beautiful items. At the APF in Malaysia a Serenity Prayer Key Tag in Japanese was designed in a beautiful blue and gold. My wife Margaret turned about 50 of them into pendants attached to Chinese woven strings laden with jade. I was grateful, now knew how I was going to pay for the trip. What a relief for my thinking was, I was going to eat it if the Japanese writing wasn't perfect on key tags made in China by an American who doesn't speak proper English. Speakers and translators interrupting Japanese, Korean and English were on the spot and I was able to understand the shares. We discovered the coffee was all decaf so loads of freeze dried got

mixed by addicts with the coffee habit. Leave it to clean addicts to find the way to serenity via a decent cup of coffee. Sunday was time for closing meeting hugs and picture taking. I was called Shirotaka. Our time at the convention was over. Brut K., Kiku and I picked up a mother of an inmate in the prison in Gifu. It was heart rending to see her so soon after she and Brut entered to visit her son. Off to the Harmony Hotel, a big room, a great dinner and a Japanese bath. The view was fantastic with a river and Japanese castle on a hill.

On Oct. 6th applying for my visa went well. That afternoon I had a chance meeting with an official from the UN Narcotics Control Board who's from Europe. We discussed the value of one addict helping another.

To Gunma and Fujioka in the good hands of Masaru Y. I stayed in a converted hotel, now a DARC. It's tranquil with forested mountains all around. We visited the largest statue in Japan, 42 meters tall and a thrill. Inside we climbed to the shoulders. It was spiritual and reminded me of when I climbed stairs inside the Statue of Liberty. Now I have two beautiful unforgettable girl friends.

At this location residents and staff are part of a Taiko drumming troop that performed for visitors at DARC. I've played music all of my life and they were better everyday in everyway. The visitors got out of their seats and danced in a spontaneous way that brought them closer to feeling, we do recover.

My flight to Shanghai was changed to the 13th and left me no choice but to return to Gunma for a few days. Extras included natural hot spring baths by a riverside, great food, and oh yea, drums in a stone bath. Hopefully I'd be asked to sit in again. Miracles do happen and we played on for hours. Sounds ranged from Rock, to Caribbean, Blues and Jazz. Those cats can cut go00od grooves! Lastly, I'd be driven back to Tokyo and attend Japan's Regional meeting. Matsu would be attending and I would go back to Nagoya with him and stay one last night before a bus ride to the airport and my way home. Stories of being guided along our way are believable. We share experiences that carry us to points beyond dreams. Life is for the living and I sure had a chance to live life the NA Way for 19 days in Japan.

For this recovering addict there is nothing like going to a new land with a visa that has no reentry to return to where I came from. Just For Today-Message of love... The 6th Japan Regional Convention is in 2010... Shirotaka Sam

An Addict from Katmandu shares with us a story of H&I

H&I and NA members Namaste!!!

My name is Suyash and I am recovering addict in the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in Kathmandu, Nepal. I have been clean for 5 years although I was introduced to NA in 2001.NA was

introduced in Kathmandu (KTM) in August 1997 as an official records but it had been said that NA was first introduced in Kathmandu, Nepal in Sep 1994.

NA is running ups and down in Kathmandu but the fellowship have grown up. It has been said at earlier days there were few recovering addicts from 5 to 10 but now we have more than 1000 members in Kathmandu area. We have 13 meetings running weekly in various locations. Recovery is a reality now which was never before dream by the recovering addicts and society itself. The groups are served by its Area Service Committee which was formed in 2001 by the two Home Groups. Now the Area Service Committee has formed its subcommittee to help suffering addicts to find NA and carry the message of Recovery. We have a PI Sub-committee which informed public about the NA. We have a Newsletter Committee which helps addicts to know about NA updates and a collection of Real recovery stories throughout the world. We have website committee where members can find meetings and services online easily. We have an LTC which translates English literature to our own Native language. We have an LSC which supplies NA literature to NA Groups and members. We have H&I which carries the message to institutions such as; hospitals and detox units, jails, and treatment facilities where addicts cannot attend regular NA meetings.

I would like to share in this article our small experience called H&I in Kathmandu.

When I was Area chair in 2006, we went to all hospitals where they do detoxify to addicts and five jails inside the Kathmandu Valley. We talked with staff but were never able to get permission to go inside and carry the message to addicts because of politics circumstances of Nepal. But now it seems that the political situation in Nepal is better and we thought it is the right time to go and do H&I projects. This is my second time as Chair person of Kathmandu area service committee. I got a phone call from one of my friends I meet in NA, he is no more involved in this fellowship but he told me that from jails some drug addicts called him to bring some NA literature but we don't know to whom we should give the books to. After 1 month I again got a call from that addict requesting to send some NA books in that jail. It is one of the biggest jails we have in Kathmandu. I called another NA friend who is the area secretary as well as RCM for KTM Area and we made a plan to visit this drug addict. We went and met with this individual in jail and I remembered that this guy was clean before and attended meetings but due to irregular meeting attendance he relapsed. We talked with him and he told us there are many addicts in jails and 15-20 members have already went to Rehab. We were glad to hear this because in KTM most of the Rehabs use 12 step programs so it will be easy to run NA inside the jails. We request him to run NA meetings inside but he replied that they cannot do that? We asked what we can do to help carry the NA message. He told us we should contact the jail deputy and get permission to do NA programs in jails. We said we are very willing and make our best efforts to do that. We gave him some NA literature to read and we told him to share the literature with other addicts.

Then we went to see the jail deputy office but unfortunately he did not come in that day but we asked another staff about the process to do programs in jails and he told us we should bring one request letter to do programs in jail from our organization and meet with the jail deputy to get permission. We are real glad because 4 years ago it was very hard to do programs in jail because we should register with the Nepal Government and as you all know we are not a registered organization. Now it seems the process is quite easy and we got the vision of hope to carry the message of NA in jails. In the meantime when we try to leave this office we saw one big whiteboard where detailed information had been written. We tried to find out how many drug addicts there were inside the jails and we found out that there were 186 drug addicts and 32 are foreigners, among them 5 were female and 27 are male. Nepalese addicts were 154; 29 are females and 125 are males and we realized that H&I was a most

important project for our Area service committee to address. We can carry the message that any addict can stop using drugs and find the new way to live no matter where they are. We can imagine if one jail has 186 drug addicts there will be many more in the four jails we still have to visit?

So next day we had our subcommittee meeting where we shared about the experience we got from visiting the jail and all our members were excited and felt an urgency to carry our H&I project forward so we can better carry the message of recovery in jails where many people haven't heard about NA. Now it is our responsibility to carry this message to addicts who are seeking recovery so that they don't have to die without having a chance to hear our clear and simple message of recovery.

Suyash R
Mobile # 00977-9841288210 Kat-man-do,Nepal

An Addict from Maui, Hawaii

When I sat down to write an article about my involvement with the APF I realized that that nothing I had done for the APF compared to what I received from working with the people who were committed to building the Asian Pacific Forum. As with much of the service I have done during my years in Narcotics Anonymous, my involvement with the APF was not planned by me. I got clean in NYC before I moved to Australia so I always had a choice of daily meetings and the gift of a strong support group. I had a home group with long term recovery to share with newcomers and a sponsor I could see every day.

All that changed when I moved to Indonesia to take a job. I called a friend in service in Australia to complain, my friend suggested I start a meeting in Jakarta. Easier said than done but my higher power had a plan for me. I was able to attend the APF meeting in Thailand and this is where my APF journey began. There were only a few countries involved in the APF at that time including Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Japan, and Malaysia. Hawaii was very supportive from the beginning and much of the service structure was from there. I found a place to start a meeting but no people to attend it. It was the encouragement of the other members of the APF that kept me opening that meeting week after week. Finally one week, the miracle happened when 20 young Indonesians walked through the door. There were only a few of them that spoke English but we somehow knew how important it was to work together and it did not take long until the meeting started to grow.

Over the next seven years I lived in several Asian countries and attended the APF meetings every year. My friendships with APF members have been some of the most important relationships in my recovery. I met my sponsor in an APF meeting. Her encouragement and support has kept me working steps and doing service where ever I go.

There are now more than 20 countries in the APF with wildly diverse cultures but one common purpose. Language differences, religious differences and political differences have been dwelt with through our traditions and our love for one another. We know that the ties that bind us are stronger than the ones that would tear us apart.

None of this has been easy. We are all addicts and there have been times when whole countries disappeared from our meetings list. Communication has not been easy, as some of the countries in the APF have limited access to computers or telephones. The Western countries and Hawaii carried much of the work and the financial responsibility for many years. Third World countries are the majority of APF members and they struggle with the language differences and service structure. NA's commitment has never wavered and we are now beginning to see NA members in the APF step up to serve in positions that were once held only by Australians, New Zealanders or Hawaiians.

I live in Hawaii now and am more involved in my own area. I look back on my years in the APF as being one of the many gifts I have received from NA. The relationships with the addict I served with are all precious to me. My friends in China, in Thailand, in Australia are the faces I rarely see these days but when I do see them at NA events we always make time to remember the days we few determined addicts worked together to give addicts in far away countries a chance to get clean and spread the message of recovery to others.

I never expected to be a member of the APF or travel to the countries I have done service in. I never expected to live long enough to of service to anyone. I have learned the meaning of unconditional service. I love that my life has meaning through NA service.

These days I open the doors of my local meeting on Maui. I meet the addicts, welcome them to the meeting and help them to feel part of NA. It is really not that different than what I did in the APF. Narcotics Anonymous changed my life. I am a grateful addict. Kerry S

Thank you all for submitting your articles to the APF Newsletter.

We are looking for articles for our upcoming newsletter in January 09. Please forward your articles to talitom@aol.com.

Respectfully and Gratefully Submitted,
Tali

Asia Pacific Forum Website:

<http://www.apfna.org>

For contact information, events, meeting schedules, past newsletters, and much more...