

12 steps
&
12 traditions
"this is just the
beginning"

HAPPY FIRST ANNIVERSARY

12 issues of

A Gift Called Life

RECOVERY IN THE CAPITAL AREA

agclnewsletter@aol.com

October 2007

NEW JERSEY

Issue No. 12

One Addict's Experience with Step Twelve

"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

AGCL: How are you doing today Freddie?

Freddie W: *It's good to be amongst the living, I'm doing good.*

AGCL: How was your spiritual awakening as a result of practicing spiritual principles?

Freddie W: *My experience with spiritual awakenings was due to the fact that I wasn't using a substance anymore.*

AGCL: What does selfless service as mentioned in the 12th step mean to you?

Freddie W: *Selfless service is something that you do for somebody and you don't expect anything in return. It's like if you give a donation and you put it down as anonymous and you don't attach a name to it or anything of such nature.*

AGCL: Was there ever a time in your recovery after working the 12 steps with a sponsor that you made a decision to only practice the spiritual principles in some of your affairs? What were the results?

Freddie W: *Yes, I have had several experiences where I didn't practice the spiritual principles, when I don't practice spiritual principles in my life bad things surely happen.*

AGCL: For instance... ?

Freddie W: *Failed relationship, cheating, fornication acts, instead of humbling act of asking God for forgiveness. I've had plenty of experiences with that. I've had an experience where I didn't practice spiritual principles in a meeting down at 541 E. state St. and started fighting in a meeting and the police came out. Then I had to go back and humble myself and apologize to the group, it happened more than once and there are people who have been around who can attest to that.*

AGCL: The Basic Text states that by this time most of us realize that the only way that we can keep what was given to us is by sharing the gift with still suffering addicts. In what ways have you given back throughout your time in recovery and how do you give back now?

Freddie W: *Basically what I do is buy basic texts and distribute them to the new comer they say that the new comer is the most important person. I sponsor a couple of guys that are members of Narcotics Anonymous; I've done everything except World Service. I have been GSR, alternate GSR, (Group Service Representative), ASR, (Area Service Representative), Activity Chairperson, and Programming Chairperson of the first Convention. I mean carrying the message of recovery means just more than inside the*

rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I give back to the community by working with young adults on my job. I can go on and on but it is not about boasting.

AGCL: Ok we don't want you to boast.

AGCL: Could you carry a sufficient NA message just by reading and just by writing the 12 steps?

Freddie W: *No! From my personal experience I can't, I can't speak for anyone else. It's about personal experience here in Narcotics Anonymous. It's not about stuff that I come into a meeting and make up. Can you top this? I played that game before. It's ok to be yourself, I use to quote stuff out the Basic text my sponsor told me, your experience will do just fine, you are not going to shrink up and get into that basic text. But as I stayed clean and go down the road of recovery through this journey I've found out there is more than one way to carry the message of Narcotics Anonymous. Carrying the message is for any addict who suffers, because I can be that addict who is suffering at any giving day. We also need those people who can quote page 79 third paragraph in the It Work How and Why, that 's just not who I am anymore.*

AGCL: What about living the 12 steps? How do you live to make it to a 12th step

Freddie W: *Leading by example is living. This means you don't have to express anything verbally. That's showing up after years of clean time to a meeting, I don't have to be loud and obnoxious wanting to be recognized, I can sit down in the meeting, be anonymous. Somebody that's new can watch me and they can learn from that. For years, that is what I did I came to the meeting and I wanted to be recognized but that's not what the 12th step talks about.*

AGCL: What does the 12th step talk about?

Freddie W: *The 12th step says we try. It didn't say we did. It said we try to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs. So if I'm talking about an affair I'm not talking about a sexual affairs or an affair you can just develop by meeting someone. Because the 12 steps of NA are about relationships we are not talking about romantic relationships. We are talking about collectively. There is no room for individuality in NA. So I say we try to carry this message some of us are going to get it and some of us aren't it takes what it takes. I have a cousin that I grew up with that is active but I can't just like put him in a headlock and bring him to a NA meeting and make him get this thing. I can't pour this on him he's got to want this. You are not going to stop doing what you doing until you get tired. If you're not tired you're not going to stop.*

AGCL: What are some of the ways that we can carry the message?

Freddie W: *Some of the ways that we can carry the message is by giving back to the community by first of all staying out of trouble. We are talking about NA and not being under*

surveillance which is a tradition actually. But what we can do we can carry the message by our behavior and how we act and how we treat one another. You know the 12th step is not as deep as a lot of people think it is. It means just what it says. But when I add things to this step and delete things then we are going to have a problem. The 12th step says we try to carry this message which means if I can reach one addict out of one hundred or a thousand, I've done my part no more no less.

AGCL: What is the message that we carry in the 12th step?

Freddie W: *The message is that "an addict, ANY addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. And it promises freedom from active addiction. Nothing else. Nothing else. The Basic Text says that. It don't promise you a car, No house on the hill with the white picket fence with a wife and a girlfriend (laughing) It doesn't tell you all that. It's basically really simple. All the steps are in order for a reason and when we get to twelve and it's not the end of the steps it's just the beginning because you have to go back to one.*

AGCL: Thank you Freddie for sharing your experience, strength and hope on Step Twelve.

Freddie W: *Thanks for letting me share.*

Note: Basic Text Pgs. 49 Step Twelve

Para 1. In the Twelfth Step, we practice the spiritual principles of giving the N.A. message of recovery in order to keep it. Even a member with one day in the N.A. Fellowship can carry the message that this program works.

Para. 5. Learning to help others is a benefit of the Narcotics Anonymous Program. Remarkably, working the Twelve Steps guides us from humiliation and despair to acting as instruments of our Higher Power. We are given the ability to help a fellow addict when no one else can. We see it happening among us everyday. This miraculous turnabout is evidence of spiritual awakening. We share our own personal experience what it has been like for us. The temptation to give advice is great, but when we do so we lose the respect of newcomers. This clouds our message. A simple, honest message of recovery from addiction rings true.



A Gift Called Life

One Addict's Experience with Tradition Twelve

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

AGCL: How are you doing Joy?

Joy P: I'm doing fine.

AGCL: Joy, Why is it important that we keep our Anonymity?

Joy P: *The most important thing is that people who are professionals or have qualifications outside of NA can come to a place where they can have the freedom to be free, to speak and share their experience, strength and hope without being judged.*

AGCL: Explain what is meant by principles before personalities?

Joy P: *From my understanding it is not about other people personality, but ours. We have to put the principle before the personality. That means when we are in a group setting we have to learn not to become so self-centered become so involved about it's about me, about me, about me. We have to learn to understand that this is a group that is design to help another recovering addict.*

AGCL: In the twelfth tradition it talks about collective guidance, what is meant by that?

Joy P: *Collective guidance is from the God of your understanding. Having a group conscience also consists of having God involved because if you don't have a God of your understanding or a higher power being involved it will become chaotic.*

AGCL: It says that anonymity guides our fellowship interactions in society, can you explain that?

Joy P: *What it means to me is that when we go out into our community we are not identified as recovering addicts. We are just identified as people in society who are trying to live accordingly to the concepts and principles of Narcotics Anonymous. What we learn to do is take those things that we learned especially the principles, spiritual principles we've learned here and we learn to adapt them into our society.*

AGCL: It also states that anonymity is one of the guiding principles behind the way our groups practice the seventh tradition. Please explain that.

Joy P: *Fully self supporting. That lets us know that we don't look for outside help. Anywhere we go we ought to be fully self supporting. That means that we hold our own, we take care of*

ourselves. We don't look for recovery houses or detoxes or any types of those places to support us. Even in churches we don't look for the church to support us that's why we have our own basket so that we can still be in our own community.

AGCL: How do we apply anonymity in service?

Joy P: *Anonymity in service, Once again we learn not to bring our professionalism into our service work. We can learn to deal with that as a separate entity. We deal with it just like one day at a time. We deal with the fact that when we are working together as a collective group, we don't care if you're a lawyer, doctor. We don't care about any of those things. That's why we always say seek outside help for those things.*

AGCL: This tradition says without anonymity the unity upon which personal recovery depends on would dissolve. What does that mean?

Joy P: *Groups would fold, we would lose. Just think about it, if we all broke each others anonymity everywhere we go. And for instance we become in bad behavior what do and what we say then and what will society say about us? They are going to say see addicts. Addicts are always going to be addicts they can't change. So we need to monitor how we carry ourselves even in society.*

AGCL: I noticed while doing this interview that anonymity plays a part in all of our traditions.

Joy P: *Absolutely, absolutely they do. If you look at every tradition and think about how our common welfare should come first personal recovery depends on NA unity. Look at that common welfare comes first, if I don't have personal recovery how could I deal with the unity of Narcotics Anonymous?*

AGCL: So I have to keep my anonymity?

Joy P: *That's right exactly.*

AGCL: Does this tradition stop me from having my own personality?

Joy: *No. No each individual has a right to who they are. Not only dealing with personality but defects and all, they all play a part in who we are. But it's how we deal with those defects and how we deal with being who we are our personal attitudes and behaviors. How do we adapt? Can we handle a group setting? Can we really focus on our primary purpose, or on own personality? If we lose our primary purpose we've lost it all.*

AGCL: Do you have anything else to add to this tradition?

Joy P: *I just think it's a good thing to have we go on in life a lot of people don't want to be acknowledged as an addict so it's important that we try to maintain an atmosphere of recovery by protecting us as a whole because if we don't protect each other we have nothing else.*

AGCL: Well Joy, thank you so much for sharing your experience strength and hope on the Twelfth Tradition with A Gift Called Life and the Capital Area.

Joy P: Thank you for letting me share.



Note: Basic Text Pg. 72 & 73 Tradition Twelve

A dictionary definition of anonymity is "a state of bearing no name". In keeping with this, the "I" becomes "we". The spiritual foundation becomes more important than any one particular group or individual.

As we find ourselves growing closer together the awakening of humility occurs. Humility is a by-product which allows us to grow and develop in an atmosphere of freedom and remove the fear of becoming known by our employers, families, or friends as addicts. Therefore, we attempt to rigorously adhere to the principle that "what is said in meetings stays in meetings".

Throughout our Traditions, we speak in terms of "we" and "our" rather than "me" and "mine". By working together for our common welfare we achieve the true spirit of anonymity.

We have heard the phrase "principles before personalities" so often that it is like a cliché. While we may disagree as individuals, the spiritual principle of anonymity makes us all equal as members of the group. No member is greater or lesser than any other member. The drive for personal gain in the areas of sex, property and social position, which brought so much pain in the past, falls by the wayside if the principle of anonymity is adhered to. Anonymity is one of the basic elements of our recovery and so it pervades our Traditions and our fellowship. It protects us from our own defects of character and renders personalities and their differences powerless. Anonymity in action makes it impossible for personalities to come before principles.



A Gift Called Life

Spiritual Principles
Puzzle

- ACCEPTANCE
- COMMITMENT
- COMPASSION
- DESIRE
- EMPATHY
- FAITH
- FORGIVENESS
- GODAWARENESS
- GRATITUDE
- HONESTY
- HOPE
- HUMILITY
- INTEGRITY
- LOVE
- OPENMINDEDNESS
- PATIENCE
- PERSERVERANCE
- SURRENDER
- TOLERANCE
- TRUST
- WILLINGNESS

G E I Y E M P A T H Y M T F S
O C N T I L O V E Q S N O S C
D N T I W T E T U U E T E F E
A A E L V A G P R M I N S C F
W T G I T M N R T W D O N O H
A P R M Q Q E I A E X E R T O
R E I U O N M J D T I G M S N
E C T H D M T N D T I G D U E
N C Y E O Z I E A V W T B R S
E A R C I M S P E R D Q U T T
S X H M N I C N H T I A F D Y
S J P E R S E R V E R A N C E
X F P E S S E N G N I L L I W
O O B W S C O M P A S S I O N
H K A T E C N A R E L O T N J

CAPITAL AREA SERVICE SUB-COMMITTEES

<p align="center">CAPITAL AREA CONVENTION COMMITTEE</p> <p>Beverly Q. Chair. Carmen P. V. Chair (609) 558-8084 (609) 516-5515</p>	<p align="center"><u>HOSPITALS & INSTUTIONS</u></p> <p align="center">Chairperson Kalane W.. - 609 638-7443</p>	<p align="center">CAPITAL AREA CONVENTION PROGRAMMING SUB-COMMITTEE</p> <p>Roy H.-V. Chair Nate -Vice Chair 609-977-7302 609-851-7109</p>
<p align="center">FUNDRAISING SUB-COMMITTEE</p> <p>Kim H.- Chair. Cindy F. - V. Chair 732-278-9428 609-775-6479</p>	<p align="center"><u>OUTREACH</u></p> <p align="center">Chairperson Ari D. 609-743-0345</p>	<p align="center">CAPITAL AREA CONVENTION INFORMATION</p> <p align="center">Kevin A. (609) 943-8906</p>
<p align="center">CAPITAL AREA ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE</p> <p>Van. J.- Chair Sylvia R. -V. 609-278-0703 Chair 609-475-2359</p> <p align="center">We are in need of support and trusted servants</p>	<p align="center"><u>PUBLIC INFORMATION</u></p> <p>Mike L. - Chair. V. Chair. - Sherry A 609-516-0495 609-394-7237</p> <p align="center">We are in need of support and trusted servants</p> <p align="center">Be a part of the NA Help-line!</p>	<p align="center"><u>HOTEL & HOSPITALITY</u></p> <p>Elizabeth C.- Chair Betty L - Vice. 609-599-9691 Chair 609-964-9297</p> <p align="center">We are in need of support and trusted servants</p>
<p align="center"><u>WEB-SITE</u></p> <p>Cat D. 609 637-0016 www.capitalareaofna.org</p>	<p align="center">CAPITAL AREA LITERATURE REVIEW COMMITTEE</p> <p>Naadira M. Jennifer A. Sherman R. Robin F. Brenda W.</p> <p align="center">SEE ANY MEMBER IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE LRC</p>	

WE CELEBRATE CLEAN TIME!

MIRACLES IN OCTOBER

Gary M.	10-02-90	17 yrs.
Rick C.	10-03-93	14 yrs.
Doris O.	10-04-93	14 yrs.
Van J.	10-04-93	14 yrs.
Cynthia F.	10-06-02	
5 yrs.		
James C.	10-07-06	1 yr.
Yvette G.	10-09-07 (7-09-07)	90 days
Brenda W.	10-10-07 (7-10-07)	90 days
Sheila B.	10-10-95	12 yrs.
Robin F.	10-16-07 (4-16-06)	18 mos.
Thaddeus B.	10-18-06	1yr.
Darryl R.	10-19-93	14 yrs.
Icolene M.	10-28-88	19 yrs.
(Icoene's date was printed incorrectly last month)		
James C.	10-29-07	90 days
Jen A.	10-30-07	5 yrs.

MIRACLES IN NOVEMBER

Sharon	11-01-93	14 yrs.
Cindy F.	11-06-02	5 yrs.
Stacy C.	11-10-02	5 yrs.

OUTREACH

GROUPS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE GROUPS WITH YOUR ATTENDANCE WHEN GROUPS FOLD ADDICTS DIE

Sign of the Time - Mini Police Station, Stuyvesant & Hoffman Aves, (Trenton) Mon. Wed. Fri. 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm (St. IWHW)

How are you Living - Shiloh Baptist Church Lower Auditorium (Trenton) Calhoun & Belvidere Sts. Sat. 7 pm - 8:30 pm (OSD)

Early Morning Recovery - Bethany Presbyterian Church (Trenton) Hamilton & Chestnut Aves. Tues. 8:30 am - 10:30 am (BT/OD)

Fresh Start - First Presbyterian Church 100 Scotch Road - Ewing Tues. 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm (OSD, Hrl)

The Only Requirement - Bethany Presbyterian Church (Trenton) Hamilton & Chestnut Aves. Wed.. 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm (TDOS)

Hightstown Group - First Presbyterian Church Main St. (Hightstown) Thursday 8:00 pm - 9:15 pm (L,D)

New Direction - Bethany Presbyterian Church (Trenton) Hamilton & Chestnut Aves. Thurs. 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm (OSD)

Our Message is Hope/Our Promise is Freedom (Ewing) Local 175 Union Hall, 42 Artic Parkway, Saturday 7:00 pm - 8:30 (St/Tr/IWHW) IS NOW A NO Smoking Meeting Candlelight,

Stop & Surrender - 1 Kingsbury Sq. East Tower Sat. & Wed. 11:30 am - 1:00 pm IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF TRUSTED SERVANTS

Drug Free Group of NA - 24 Club of Princeton Rt. 206 and Rt. 518 Entrance in rear Next to Good Year. 7:30-9:00

*******NEW MEETING LOCATION*******

Just for Today - Turning Point Methodist Church 15 S. Broad Street Friday 8:00-9:00 pm

CAPITAL AREA EVENTS

Date	Event	Place
10/13	Gratitude Day @ Princeton Deliverance Center, 301 Southard St. 1:00p - 8:00p Donation: \$5.00	
10/19	Holla Halloclean Bash-70's and 80's Costume Contest and Dance @ Ham. & Chestnut 9:00p - until Sug Donation \$5.00	
10/20	Stop and Surrender- Speaker Jam 11:30am - 10:00 pm Food will be sold	
11/10	Literature Review Committee 1 yr Anniversary 9:00am-11:00am 111Perry St -Basement	
11/23	Work your Turkey Off Dance @ Hamilton & Chestnut Ave 9:00 pm- until	

OUT OF AREA EVENTS

Date	Event	Place
11/23-11/25	N.E.N.J.A.C. In the Spirit of Unity XIII Doubletree 200 Atrium Drive Somerset, NJ 08873	



Serenity Prayer

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.



Third Step Prayer

God, take my will and my life,. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live.

If you would like to join the Capital Area Literature Committee you may see any member of the committee. The CALRC meets at 9:30 am every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month at Friendship Baptist Church on the corner of Broad and Perry Streets. (In the Basement). Naadira M.-Chairperson (267)456-3151, Sherman R.. - Vice Chairperson (609)668-7077, Jennifer A. - Treasurer (609)977-6444, Robin F. - Secretary (609)-392-1591. You can submit your stories, poems or anniversary dates via email at : agclnewsletter@aol.com . All submissions should be received by the first Monday of each month. Receipt by this date does not guarantee that your submission will be in the next issue BUT IT WILL APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER upon approval of the committee. So look for it future issues of AGCL. ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE NA (RECOVERY) RELATED. OUR TENTH TRADITION STATES THAT NA HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES HENCE THE NA NAME OUGHT NEVER BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.....In Loving Service The Capital Area Literature Review Committee



A WORD FROM OUR LRC CHAIR

First and Foremost I want to thank God for Narcotics Anonymous. I want to thank my good friend Sherman R. for introducing me to service work. When I was a newcomer he told me that I was going to be the coffee maker at our home group and that I needed to make the coffee for 90 days. He told me that service work was important and that it would help to keep me clean. I wanted to stay clean so bad I made the coffee for 90 days. This was my first commitment in NA. That was 4 1/2 years ago so when he told me at an Area Service meeting that he was considering volunteering for the Chairperson of the Literature Review Committee position that was open I told him I would be down with him. He started recruiting and we became a group of trusted servants. That was in September 2006. At the November 2006 Area Service Meeting the first issue of "A Gift Called Life" was distributed. A few months later I had to step up into the Chair position. I was scared to death. For a quick moment I had turned this thing into an "I" program and thought I had to run some stuff. Thank God there is no "I" in TEAM and Thank God for the 2nd Step. Working on the Literature Review Committee has been more rewarding to me than I could have ever imagined. It keeps me in touch with the literature all the time. I love the Literature. It is the literature along with the experience, strength and hope of the members of the fellowship and the spiritual principles of honesty, open mindedness and willingness that keeps me clean today. It has taught me about commitment and it gives me many opportunities to practice the spiritual principles of this program. It is something I truly love to do. It is an honor for me to be a part of *this* method of carrying the NA message that **"An addict, ANY addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live"**.

During this past year we met with the Chairperson of the Regional Literature Review Committee and he gave us a lot of good information. He shared his experience with us on having workshops and how we could also have members in our area to review proposed new and revised literature outside of putting on a workshop. We held two workshops to review the 6th Edition Basic Text* that will be available soon. Although, there was not a huge turn out of members for the workshop it was very successful. There were however, several members in the area who were supportive and read parts of the book and gave us their feedback and we forwarded it to World Service. We also reviewed the revised IP Pamphlet "Youth in Recovery". Our members went out to meetings and distributed the pamphlets to both the younger and older members of our fellowship to get their input. That information was also submitted to World Service. As new and revised literature continues to be introduced we will continue to come to the members of this area for your support and input so that the Capital Area has a voice in Narcotics Anonymous' new endeavors with literature.

One of the things that really knocked my socks is the feedback about our area newsletter that we've gotten from areas outside of ours. It had never dawned on me how far our newsletter would reach. Not because I was doubtful about it, I just didn't really think about it because it was a newsletter for the capital area. So when we received emails from members in places like Bakersfield California asking for information on starting a newsletter in their area and with the Chesapeake Potomac area saying how they really liked our newsletter I was overwhelmed. After our committee was formed, another member of our fellowship, who is very active in service gave us a booklet from World Service on NA newsletters and other information that helped us a great deal and we were able to pass that information along to the Bakersfield area.

On a personal note: I would like to let you guys know how grateful I am that an addict like me would be given a opportunity to serve. For me being a Trusted Servant is huge. I had been a servant of many things but "Trusted" that's a whole different ball game for me. I LOVE the Capital Area. No matter where I go or where I live this is my home. I was born and raised here, I used here and this is where the members of this fellowship breathed life into me. You gave me hope when I had none, showed me how I could stay clean a day at a time and taught me that I could have peace if I wanted it. You taught me how to be a respectable woman and a productive member of society and for that I am forever grateful. Thank you for letting me serve.

In loving Service, Naadira M.

A WORD FROM OUR LRC VICE CHAIR

My name is Sherman and I am an addict. In my earlier recovery I used to read the Capital Area newsletter that came out every month. There was one guy, Pete M., who was working on the newsletter all by himself at that time. It had recovering addicts' experiences with the steps and other topics that were helpful for my recovery. When the guy that was writing the newsletter stepped down, someone else stepped up but the newsletter stopped.

I kept hearing that the position for Literature Review Chair was open when I went to area each month. I was thinking that the newsletter helped me and it might just help someone else, so one day while I was putting in the literature order for the home group I belong to, I saw a friend of mine, Naadira. She and I started talking and I told her that I was thinking of volunteering for the position of Literature Review chair she thought that it was a good idea. Since she thought that it was a good idea, I told her I would only take the position if she would be the Vice Chair for the sub committee and stick with me and she agreed. So I went out to the Area Service body and told them that I would like to volunteer for the Literature Review Chair position.

By the time that Area Service was over we had formed a committee of 6 people. However, we needed to find a meeting place. Naadira asked the Friendship Baptist Church if we could meet in their facility and they granted our sub committee the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays of each month. In October we met at 9:30 on the 2nd Saturday to start working on our first newsletter. All of the members in attendance at the first meeting were: Jen A., Naadira M., Joanne K., James, Theresa H., and I.

During this year members have come and gone, but we are still going strong. Presently the members of the Capital Area Literature Review are: Naadira M., Jen A., Robin F. and Brenda W. Brenda is a newcomer who really enjoys reporting. So if you are a newcomer and are interested in getting involved please come out because we "need" you too! There are no clean time requirements to join our committee. I have heard a lot of good feedback about the newsletter and some things that people didn't like as well. We invite anyone one who has any input to come out to our meetings.

During the year I had to step down from the Chair position because we have policies in place and my schedule conflicted with the meeting times. It all worked out though because Naadira was willing to step up for the position. I am currently the Vice Chair.

Being apart of the Literature Review Committee I have learned a lot about other people's knowledge of the steps and traditions. I also got to know other people's stories better. Service work helps me commit to something. I also learn how to apply the spiritual principles while doing this form of service work.

They said find your niche in NA we all have one. What ever you like doing in NA that will help another do it, I can't tell you what a great joy it is to be in service. You must find what it is and feel it for yourself, I can't explain it.

In loving service, Sherman R.



A Gift Called Life

WHAT RECOVERY MEANS TO ME

Recovery in the Capital Area has been a beautiful experience for me, my life has change for the better and I've gotten a chance to embark on the step process which has and still is an ongoing journey.

Spiritually and Emotionally the step process and sponsorship has taken me to a place in my life that I've never been before and its teaching me to practice being the best person that I can be in any giving situation.

Recovery is also teaching me to practice LIVING not being afraid to go out into society and live out the dreams that I once had but also live the dreams that I have today. My reality may not be someone else reality but my job is to stay in reality today just for today, be the best person I can be and be good to my Higher Power's people and live life on G.O.D terms.

Sheree P.

Why I give back

What are some of the ways that you give back to NA?

I give back my time, I open up the doors to my home group for the last five years, showing up for the new comer, taking someone to meeting if they need a ride, answering my phone when someone calls and just be there to lean my ear to listen to someone who needs someone to just listen. That is how I give back.

Why do you give back to NA?

Because NA helps save my life, without NA I wouldn't be here today. I love this program and I want to be one of those people to help keep this program going because if this program dies addicts die.

With 15 years don't you think that you gave back enough to this program?

I could never give back enough to NA it save my life, so how can I ever give back enough; I can't what is the price of my life.

You have children, a job, husband and a life outside of NA, Does giving back get in the way with your life sometimes?

No, I try to fine balance; I work around my children schedule and my work schedule. I have to give up something somebody else gave up something for me to keep the doors open, so now it's my turn.

What does giving back do for you?

It helps me get another day clean.
I thank you for giving back and for sharing

SPOTLIGHTS

FEED BACK ON OUR AREA NEWSLETTER

A Gift Called life is the best in the State of NJ.

Ted

I love A Gift Called Life Newsletter because it is evidence that NA unity is strong in the Capital area & worldwide.

Robin F.

A Gift Called Life is definitely an asset to our area. Its very informative to all recovering addicts in and outside of our area as well. I recently went to Asbury NJ to a meeting and noticed A Gift called Life on their announcement table.

Rhae J.

The newsletter is very informative and can develop new ideas for individuals who have little knowledge of NA and what is being offered. I truly respect and commend all effort that is put in this newsletter.

Truly Blessed Rick C.

A very well informed collection of recovering experience for newcomers and old-timers alike. Well done!

Ari. D.

The Newsletter is a wonderful source of Information to addicts. It also gives addicts an opportunity to share their experience, strength Hope with addicts in our area who would not otherwise get this information.

Carmen P.

I believe that the newsletter is a good thing for us. It helps addicts to understand how to work the steps and hear other addicts share their experiences.

Greg B.

I really enjoy the newsletter each month. I am glad that this idea was able to come alive. It's a great way for people to learn what's going on in the area and to read about peoples understanding of the 12 steps and 12 traditions.

Joanne K.

The newsletter is a very informative for our area at the capital of New Jersey for NA news.

Jermaine B.

I think the newsletter is a great way for addicts to share their experience, strength and hope and help spread the good message of recovery.

Mat B.

A Gift Called Life is the best one in our region.

Arunabh S.

I look forward to the newsletter every month It's such a highlight to my day and month.

Cathy D.

The newsletter is an essential way to learn and hear from other members

No Name Given

I think it's the best thing that has happened to our area in some time. It allows recovery to reach out where H & I and sometimes the recovering addicts can't go. I have had rehabs ask me for copies.

The Newsletter is Outstanding!

A Gift Called Life is a wonderful newspaper. I loved it.

Tara D.

Please Note: Due to space restriction you may not see your spotlight at the time of submission but we intend to print them ALL. So look for it in future issues of A GIFT CALLED LIFE. Thank you for your continued support. THE CAPITAL AREA LRC.



I found myself in a bottomless pit, of sorrow and woe and despair.

When a ray of light revealed to me the steps of a winding stair.

In vain I tried to reach those steps, by myself it could not be done.

I cried for help and a voice replied, "You are standing on Step Number One.."

"Who's that?" I asked. "What do you want?" "Can you tell me what to do?"

"Give me your hand," the voice answered, and you'll be on Step Number Two."

I help up my hand. I decided that I alone could not set myself free.

But I trusted that voice and it suddenly said, "You are standing on Step Number Three."

I stop there and rest, and look at myself. I don't think I can do anymore.

From somewhere above the voice came again, "You are standing on Step Number Four."

Wherever you are, you don't understand, I don't deserve to be alive.

For I am a liar, a thief and a con. The voice said, "You're on Step Number Five."

I'm not well, I'm not right. There's a lot wrong with me, Is there anything you can fix?

The voice came again and so gently replied "You are standing on Step Number Six."

All right then, I'll ask -- can you take these away? Can you make me feel closer to Heaven?

"I love you," the voice said. "Your Heaven's in you, and you're standing on Step Number Seven."

There's so many I've harmed, my family I've hurt-- all the pain and the grief and the hate.

"It's alright my child," the voice calmly said, "You are now on Step Number Eight."

"You must tell them you're sorry. You must make things right. And then in their eyes you will shine."

"I'll do it," I whispered. And then the voice calmly said, "You're standing on Step Number Nine."

I must keep a close eye on my motives and self 'cause there's wrongs that I may do again.

"Look at you," the voice said, "at how far you've come! You are now on Step Number Ten."

I pray and I ask for knowledge and strength. I want to keep my direct line to Heaven.

The voice is so close -- it's as if it's right there, saying "You're standing on Step Number Eleven."

And so here I stand, almost at the top. Into all of my past I did delve.

Now I want to help others who are still in the pit. And the voice said "This is Step Number Twelve."

Anonymous

SUBLIME

I feel kind of strange
Excited but scared
I'm looking ahead
And foreseeing the rare

A promising future
Of diligent glee
With aim and direction
A logical me

My fears, they have lessened
The pain, it has passed
I thank God above for
My dreams, they are vast

Today I feel hopeful
That I could be mine
That life on life's terms
Will be just sublime

Jo
083107

A LITTLE RECOVERY HUMOR Taken from Last House on the Block





A Gift Called Life

RECOVERY IN THE CAPITAL AREA



Addicts Experiences in Recovery



BACK TO SOCIETY

by: Garland B.

Growing up I was the youngest of five children. My mother and father worked hard to take care of us and we all attended school on a regular basis. Being the youngest I thought I should receive the most attention but I was wrong. My mother was a devoted Christian so we all had to go to church on a regular basis and as I got older church didn't interest me anymore so I started skipping church and hanging out with my friends. Before I knew it I was drinking and smoking cigarettes. At this time I was around 15 years old. I was still going to school, but it wasn't long before I was kicked out of school and started getting in trouble. By the time I made it to High School, smoking weed and partying was all I wanted to do. I started getting arrested for petty crimes like shoplifting and other small stuff. In 1982 I dropped out of school in the 10th grade. This gave me more time to get high and hang out in the streets and once again I found myself in trouble with the law and I went to jail. As a juvenile I knew that it wouldn't be long before I was back out on the street, but I was wrong, it was six months before I got out. It never dawned on me that I might have a problem with drugs because at that time everyone was smoking weed. In 1983 the judge sent me to a program for troubled teens for eighteen months and I thought that was the end for me. In 1985 when I was released I went right back to people, places and things. By this time crack was out and like many others I didn't think it could happen to me. I stayed out of trouble for a little while, I had a good job and things were looking good for me. My mother was happy that I was working and not getting in trouble but that didn't last long. I had started smoking crack and everything changed. For awhile my parents didn't know but it didn't take long for them to figure out that something was wrong. I ended up in detox for 7 days. Then I went to a program for thirty days but after staying for fifteen days I left. I wanted to get high. Not realizing that I had a problem and thinking I could stay clean on my own I was right back in the area where I used getting high. My mother never gave up on me even

after stealing everything in the house that I could get my hands on she continue to pray for me and believed that I would change and get help. I went back to the program I was in before for the second, hoping that this time would be different and I would stay clean. After completing the 30 day program I was back at home and still not taking suggestions like going to meetings and staying away from people places and things and once again I started getting high and this time it got worse. I started stealing from my family and when I couldn't get any money I started committing more crimes. Ripping people off had become my thing. If I could snatch a package or break into somebody's house I did it. My mother had started paying off dealers for me so that they wouldn't hurt me. When things had gotten that bad I had to find a new way to get money. I wasn't working so I started doing robberies a whole new ball game. When you are caught up smoking you are not thinking about the outcome of your actions or the people you are hurting. By 1986 everything had come to an end for me. I was locked up again for robbery and burglary and the idea of seeing the streets again was faint. The judge sentenced me to 10 years and I thought I would die. I had plenty of time to think about what I was going to do with my life. After spending 5 years in jail I was paroled on July 21, 1991. This became my new clean date. The reason for this was because there were times during my incarceration that I did smoke weed. So I told myself that whenever I got out that would be my new clean date. Because so many times when I got out I went right back to the very thing that played a part of me being in jail which was drugs, this time I got took the suggestions. I made a meeting, I got a sponsor, I joined a home group and I got phone numbers. I made 90 meetings in 90 days and my parole was proud of me that was less work for him having to come and look for me or violate me for a dirty urine. It wasn't easy though. Over sixteen years ago when I first started making meetings. I was broke and fresh out of jail and y'all told me to keep coming back and that it would get greater

a part of me believed what ya'll were saying a part of me didn't trust what I was hearing. In 1994 I got off parole and I still kept coming to meetings even though I didn't need to get my paper signed. My sponsor Gary, took me under his wing and we rolled everywhere, to conventions, out of town meetings you name it. I am grateful for the sponsor I chose because he introduced me to the fellowship on a broader scale. As I continued to keep making meetings and hearing more things I started believing in myself more and one of my dreams was to finish high school. I had nine years clean when I signed up in 2000 and in 2002 I graduated. While attending Daylight Twilight I decided I wanted to go to trade school. Even though I knew it wasn't going to be easy trying to attend two schools at one time, work a full time job and spend time with my three kids and wife I did it. And in 2004 after four long years in trade school I graduated and received a diploma in carpentry.

So If you are new or someone who is just being released from any type of institution. I suggest that you give yourself a break and keep coming back. This Program works for those who work the program. Get and use a sponsor, get phone numbers, call before you fall, these are all the things that I heard and still hear today as I continue to make meetings. Today, I work full time for the city of Trenton and I own a home improvement business so life has really changed for me since 1991 when I first started making meetings. My mother and father are very proud of me today and they are grateful for Narcotics Anonymous helping to save my life. Some times I wonder where I would be if NA wasn't available for an addict like me.

Thanks for letting me share.

Garland B.

