

The Stepping Stone

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS AND ITS PROGRAM OF RECOVERY, VISIT SANTACRUZOA.ORG OR CALL OUR HOTLINE, 831-429-7906.

“Service in OA has been a surprisingly powerful factor in our recovery.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeater’s Anonymous, p. 101

When I began attending OA meetings regularly, just over nine years ago, there was a long-timer who often said, “Thank you for your service.” I had absolutely no idea what she was talking about. Eventually, I learned that service is a tool of OA that requires action, as do all of our tools. Service enhances my recovery.

As a newcomer, service consisted of setting out literature, reading, timing shares, but most importantly, getting a sponsor, because sponsors need sponsees to help them maintain and expand their own recovery. Service can also be answering your phone and providing a listening ear, or showing up early or staying late at a meeting. In time, as we grow in recovery, it can also include taking a position as secretary, treasurer or Intergroup Rep or perhaps serving on an event committee.

Simply put, service is doing what you can when you can to fulfill the primary purpose of OA, which is to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer. It’s all service! A huge component of what makes OA work is its concept of service, providing first the hope and then the reality of recovery.

The responsibility pledge states: “*Always to extend the hand*

SERVICE

OA was there when I came in, and it will always be there. Or will it? I must admit I took it for granted that there would always be someone to open the meeting room, make coffee, put out literature and clean up afterward. I didn’t volunteer to do anything like that because I had too many other responsibilities and, besides, there were plenty of people who liked to do those jobs.

Then something happened: two people moved away, another began working nights and had to find a day meeting to attend . . . and suddenly there wasn’t anyone to do all the things I took for granted. I’m grateful that was all it took to wake me up.

For today: What am I doing to ensure the continued existence of my home meeting and OA as a whole?

For Today, p. 295

and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible.” I don’t have to go to extremes but rather help where I see the need, with gratitude for all that has been given to me. I learned early in program that I could dilute the intense feelings of obsession with food by stepping out of myself and into service to another.

Using a new tool can be helpful and invigorating, and if that

tool is service, it has the potential to enhance our own recovery and the recovery of our fellows.

Nancy K.

Service: A Path To Recovery

When I first started attending OA meetings, I was focused totally on myself. I was a lifelong compulsive eater used to avoiding new experiences, insecure and shy around people and terribly judgmental of myself and of others. In spite of all that, I kept coming back. In those early days, when a volunteer was asked for to fill an open service position or to perform a certain task, I responded with a judgment typical for a compulsive overeater: I was not good enough to volunteer and those who did were part of the “in crowd,” the “clique.”

After a few months, I got a sponsor and started working the Steps. I became abstinent from sugar and, slowly, sanity entered my life. As my program became stronger, I began to feel better about myself and thus less judgmental of others. I volunteered for my first service position as Intergroup Rep. I wanted desperately to be a perfect Intergroup Rep, but at my first Intergroup meeting my head was swimming. I couldn’t follow the agenda and I didn’t know what people were talking about. But instead of feeling like a failure and blaming others at the meeting for my confusion, Higher Power

helped me to be kind and patient with myself and to realize that all I needed was time to assimilate the information and get used to the pace. My second Intergroup meeting was very different. I was having fun!

A few months later, I stepped up as backup secretary for a meeting, another opportunity to struggle with my perfectionism. I made mistakes and learned that I could still be accepted. Even better, I could accept myself. From then on, I kept volunteering. At Intergroup, I volunteered for the Day in OA committee and collaborated on designing and facilitating the event. I worked on activities for Unity Day. I helped establish a Big Book study meeting.

As my service experiences continued, I kept working the Steps and I became abstinent, eating three meals with nothing in between. In November 2011, I was nominated to be the Newsletter Editor, a position that I accepted and still have. In addition, I am the treasurer of one of my meetings and speaker-getter for another. I worked on the 2012 Retreat committee and on the recent Day in OA committee.

I have never been happier. My life has expanded and I am a member of a loving fellowship of beautiful, imperfect people, who work every day to stay abstinent and follow the path their Higher Power opens up to them. OA has given me the life I always dreamed about but was unable to find. And so at the end of each meeting, when we say "keep coming back," I add my own personal motto: keep giving back.

Marion

TAKE THE WSBC FOURTH STEP INVENTORY SURVEY

**WSBC needs your help
to strengthen our
Fellowship and our efforts
to carry the message.**

**Available at [oa.org/
category/whats-new/](http://oa.org/category/whats-new/) until
December 31, 2012.**

Four Abstinent Women Working Together

Service is one of the great tools for us in recovery, and never have I enjoyed doing service more than working on the committee for A Day in OA. The committee meetings themselves were wonderful interactions of creativity, laughter and bouncing ideas back and forth. "Ooh, how about this?" one of us asked. "I can do the signs," someone else added. "I'll organize this part," yet another interjected.

Four abstinent women working together to create a gift for the OA community. Working together easily, each one willing to contribute her share, each one jumping in with both feet for the hard work in the days right before the event.

No one eating on the sly. No one stuck in the resentments and shame and embarrassment and hiding that so often accompany an active eating addiction. Four miracles working together to facilitate more miracles.

Yet, when I got the phone call that said it was time to work on the event, I had forgotten that I had volunteered for it. My initial reaction was, "Oh, no, my life is very full right now...this feels like too much...how will I find the time...I'm sorry I volunteered... maybe I should tell them I can't do it."

Then I took a breath, connected with my Higher Power and took a few more breaths. Okay, I thought. Remember what your first sponsor

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP We Are But Trusted Servants...

Santa Cruz County Intergroup keeps us connected, carrying the message of recovery and helping each and every one of us strengthen our program and find a new life in recovery.

Intergroup Board Positions Opening for 2013

We are recruiting to fill four Board positions for the 2013 term. Nominations will be made at the Intergroup meeting on December 16. The open positions, with brief descriptions, are:

- **Chair.** Presides at all Intergroup meetings and is responsible for establishing the agenda.
- **Secretary.** Keeps the minutes at the Intergroup meetings.
- **World Service Business Conference Delegate.** May attend the annual World Service Business Conference and make a report to Intergroup.
- **Region 2 Rep.** May attend one or both of the annual Region 2 Assemblies and report pertinent details to Intergroup.

Qualifications

- Be working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of OA to the best of their ability.
- Have six months of current self-defined recovery.
- Be a regular attendee of an affiliated group.
- The *World Service Business Conference Delegate* should have at least one year of current abstinence and at least two years of service beyond the group level.
- The *Region 2 Rep* is suggested to have attended at least six meetings of Intergroup within the past 12 months.

If you are interested in doing service through any of these four exciting positions, please contact Intergroup Vice Chair, Karen, by phone at 359-3791 or email her at karenmallory1@gmail.com.

said all those years ago: "Service is a gift for those you serve and an even bigger gift for your own recovery." And so I asked God to remove the fear that had triggered my initial reaction and to help me see my schedule objectively. I got out my calendar and saw the space in my schedule rather than the lack of space, and I returned the phone call with, "When shall we meet?" rather than, "I can't do it after all."

This process was a joy from the first meeting through the final after-event check to make sure the room was put back the way the Quaker Center staff had requested. We shared the workload, each one taking on the tasks that made use of our strengths. We listened to one another and gave honest, direct, yet gentle feedback.

Differing opinions were heard and discussed as a group, without judgment. When I was given feedback that my outline for the writing workshop seemed too complicated, it came as, "I know you've put in lots of time on this, and we think it would work better a different way," rather than, "This won't work. Change it."

Were there glitches in the process? Of course. Was there some irritation and annoyance? Of course. But it never got in the way. The Steps have taught us how to recover and to show up for life in a way that is very different from the fear- and ego-driven lives we lived in our disease.

The planning, preparation, and facilitation of A Day in OA by this committee of four abstinent women is a testament to recovery, to abstinence, to the Twelve Steps, and to the gift of service for both the receiver and the giver.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Margo C.

The Day in OA Writing Workshop: A Fun and Powerful Process

When I took my seat at A Day in OA on October 20, I didn't know that I would develop a real live working plan to take better care

of myself in the space of 40 minutes.

It was clear that a lot of thought and planning had gone into the workshop, and I really benefited from the process being broken into timed activities based on Steps Four, Five, and Six. First off, we found a partner to work with, which helped me stay focused. When my partner shared with me, I knew I was not alone.

The short intervals for each activity jumped me into gear. For the Fourth Step, we made a list of ways we neglected to take care of ourselves. OK, time up! Next, a list of ways in which we already treated ourselves well. Time up – done. Share our lists with our partners – Step Five. Very vulnerable, very trusting. We are quite different people, but had many items that were the same. We kept it moving to make it in the allotted time, and learned a lot in the telling. Common themes were: not moving our bodies enough; delaying the purchase of something we needed, like new glasses; overriding feelings, and staying up too late.

On to Step Six. Pick an item from the areas of neglect – perhaps the one we want most to transform. My item was "not exercising and not doing yoga."

After a short meditation on becoming willing for Higher Power to transform lack of care into loving care, we shared with our partners about the chosen item, our sense of willingness, and what gets in the way. I realized that I did not feel completely willing, with the fear of who I might become being one of the obstacles. In the sharing, the obstacles seemed to shrink.

Next, the plan. I love the sense of accomplishment that I created a plan of action, breaking it into steps I can actually do. First things first; I remind myself I can start small. Everything counts. Several of the steps are easy, like remembering that I can lift my three-pound weights for five minutes while watching television, and get up and dance for at least one minute during five commercials.

And last but not least: Celebrate! Celebrate my beautiful strong body. Celebrate this fabulous event, and my appreciation for everyone who put this great workshop together, for my workshop partner, and for everyone who showed up. And celebrate Higher Power, and this fellowship where I can do things I could never do alone.

Karen A.

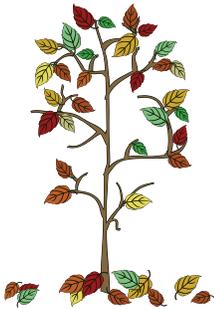
OA Launches 13-Week Radio Show To Help Listeners Better Understand Compulsive Eating and Recovery

The program, *Sound Bites from Overeaters Anonymous – A 12-Step Solution to Compulsive Eating*, is a weekly, one-hour program that will be broadcast online on Voice America beginning October 17 and running through January 9, 2013.

"Many people think everyone in OA is morbidly obese. They are surprised to learn that in OA, you'll find members who are obese, overweight, average weight, underweight, still maintaining some control over or totally unable to control their eating behaviors," said Naomi Lippel, Managing Director for Overeaters Anonymous. "Sound Bites from Overeaters Anonymous enables us to share first-hand the personal struggles of compulsive eaters, and the strength, hope and recovery they found using OA's twelve step program."

Wednesdays, at 1 PM Pacific at www.voiceamerica.com/show/2139/sound-bites-from-overeaters-anonymous. Shows will be archived for later downloading and listening. In keeping with Tradition 6, OA does not endorse Voice America.

Meeting Notes



Thanksgiving Meeting

Thursday, November 22
10:00-11:30 a.m.

AT THE RED CHURCH
Calvary Episcopal Church
532 Center Street, Santa Cruz 95060
Call the OA Hotline for more info
831-429-7906

Sunday 9:00 a.m. Meeting A SPEAKER EVERY SUNDAY

The Sunday 9:00 a.m. meeting at Sutter Hospital is returning to its old format of having a Speaker every Sunday except the last Sunday of the month, which will continue to be a Birthday Chip Meeting. Want to be a speaker? Call Marion at 334-7233. Want to hear a speaker? Come join us Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m.!

The Twelfth Step Tells Us To "Carry the Message"

December 12 is *Twelfth Step Within Day*, when we reach out to those within the Fellowship who still suffer. Here's what you can do during the week of December 9th:

- Look through the meeting phone list and find someone you haven't seen in a while. Call them and invite them for coffee. Ask them how they're doing.
- Suggest at your meeting that others do the same.
- Suggest that your meeting have a speaker on relapse that week.

Thursday 1:00 p.m. Meeting HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- **Thanksgiving Day.** There will be no meeting on this day. See you instead, at the Red Church at 10:00 a.m. (see above).
- **Week of Christmas and New Year's.** On December 27 and January 3, the meeting will be held at Bayside Baptist Church, 1335 Seabright Avenue, across from the Gault School.
- **We'll be back at Loudon Nelson on January 10!**

Find a Meeting

Meetings are drop-in and open to all.
Meeting information is subject to change.

SUNDAYS

9:00-10:15 a.m. Speaker/Discussion
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center
2900 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz
Free childcare with advance reservation by
5 p.m., Friday. Call 831-429-7906

4:00-5:15 p.m. 90-Day
Church of the Nazarene
115 South Morrissey, Santa Cruz

MONDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. Literature
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

7:00-8:00 p.m. Book Study/Speaker
Soquel Congregational Church
4951 Soquel Drive, Soquel
Focus: Addicts and alcoholics

TUESDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. Steps and Traditions
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

WEDNESDAYS

10:30-11:30 a.m. Voices of Recovery
Bayside Baptist Church
1335 Seabright Avenue, Santa Cruz
(across from the Gault School)

**12:00-1:00 p.m. Literature
Learning Our Literature (LOL)**
49 Blanca Lane, #303
Watsonville

**6:30-7:30 p.m. Writing
The Wednesday Night Meeting**
335 Spreckles Drive, Suite A, Aptos

THURSDAYS

1:00-2:00 p.m. Big Book & Brown Book
Louden Nelson Community Center, Room 5
301 Center Street, Santa Cruz

FRIDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. For Today book study
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

**12:00-1:00 p.m. Writing
Wonders of Writing (WOW)**
49 Blanca Lane, #303
Watsonville

SATURDAYS

9:00-10:00 a.m. Speaker/Discussion
Calvary Episcopal Church
532 Center Street, Santa Cruz

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Steps/Traditions
Watsonville Hospital
75 Nielson Street, Watsonville
Sequoia Room