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"I did a lot of things when I was using compared to some people, and hardly anything compared to others, but our stories are not what makes us addicts. It doesn't matter where, when, or with whom you used drugs—the only thing that matters is that you want to stop.... Addiction knows no age, and neither does recovery."

Joshua S, California
 (From *News and Views*, the Santa Clarita Area Newsletter)

"Regardless of age..."

The ageless face of addiction and recovery

"Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion." We hear that line over and over at most of the meetings we attend. As a matter of fact, we probably have been hearing it since we stumbled into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. But try as we might, it is still a struggle for many of us to be open-minded and willing.

Getting clean and living this program of recovery doesn't exempt us from the imperfections of our humanity. We try to focus on the similarities and identify with the feelings being shared at our meetings, but invariably we will drift and start to seek out the differences.

Lately it seems there has been an increase of people coming into recovery at a younger age. But what does that *really* mean? Age is merely a number. We can be "young" at any age, right? But what does that have to do with the disease of addiction and our NA recovery? Our desire to stop using is all that is required to become an NA member, and there are no definitive guidelines as to who can make that decision.

The decision to stop using and find a better way to live can come at any age. Could this supposed increase in younger addicts coming to NA be a result of not just the maturing of the NA Fellowship, but also the maturing of the members of that fellowship? Are there different issues that affect those younger in age than, say, those coming into recovery in their late 20s or their 30s?

We presented these questions, as well as others, with the theme for this issue and received some interesting feedback from a number of our members. We hope you will enjoy reading their experiences and the honesty of their sharing. The stories highlighted here illustrate over and over again that addiction does not discriminate or attack one branch of the population over another. While we did not choose to be afflicted with the disease of addiction, we can choose recovery, and we can stay clean just for today—no matter how old or how young we are. ♦

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Our readers write...

On birthday cakes and group autonomy

Hello to all my sisters and brothers in this wonderful Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous! I have been clean for many years, and I am forever grateful to Narcotics Anonymous for the privilege to recover. I would like to share my perspective concerning the article about birthday cakes in the January 2001 issue. (See "Birthday Controversies Take the Cake," Volume Eighteen, Number One, page 13.)

When I read this opinion, my mind ran through a succession of thoughts about some of the traditions that allow groups to function autonomously. The Second Tradition is about the conscience of the group and the spiritual guidance that is sought to make the right decisions.

The Fourth Tradition is about group autonomy and ensuring that the group's decisions do not affect other groups or NA as a whole.

The Seventh Tradition tells us, as groups, to pay our own way.

I have to respect the group's decisions, regardless of my opinions. I do believe that groups need to be responsible, and if they are struggling to pay rent, buy literature, or help finance the ASC, then they should rethink how they spend the money collected at meetings. They should take a spiritual group conscience and let their loving and caring God guide them.

Birthday cakes are an expression of group autonomy. We could hold long debates about cakes and how they affect other groups, NA as a whole, and the money collected in the baskets. I have learned how to surrender to the collective and work for the common welfare in my home group. I hope we all can grow together and ensure that recovery is available to all seekers.

*With respect and love,
Anonymous*

The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in *The NA Way*, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First name and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

The *NA Way Magazine*, published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as current service and convention information. Foremost, the journal is dedicated to the celebration of our message of recovery—"that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."



NA means home... at any age!

So what does being "young" in NA mean? Does it really make a difference? Isn't recovery about creating an atmosphere of identification rather than separation?

Just about every addict who comes to NA tends to look for the differences. Our disease seeks them out, makes them real, and sometimes allows them to guide our decisions about whether or not we stay in NA.

The three of us have written this article to celebrate the differences among young people. We would never presume that this is the full range of experiences or that this article speaks for all younger addicts. We just wanted to honestly share our process, our different choices, and what we've done to stay clean and find a home in Narcotics Anonymous.

Coming into the rooms...

Carrie: I can remember my first meeting like it was yesterday. After I had been sleeping for three days straight, the treatment center allowed me to go to an NA meeting. Sucked up, sweaty, and numb, I didn't know what to expect. All I knew was that I was desperate. I was desperate for something—relief or peace or just to feel a part of this universe from which I had isolated myself for so long.

Tony: I never wanted to be a "young people" in NA. When I came to Narcotics Anonymous there was only one guy who was younger than me. He looked completely different from me—we listened to different music, we dressed differently, he liked girls and I liked guys, and we had different family lives. Basically, we were completely different—on the outside. But it didn't matter, since I wasn't planning to spend too much time here anyway. I just wanted to get well and go back to all of my "friends."

Kim: There were already other younger members when I came to NA. They were going to NA dances together, sleeping with each other, and playing poker until 4:00 in the morning.

I am a morning person. Besides, I was so wounded by the time I got to NA that social activity was traumatic, especially in large groups and with the opposite sex. It was hard to be myself. And the funny thing is that, although there were other younger members around when I got clean, I still found a way to feel different.

I had to be patient and find people who shared my interests. I had to find out what I liked to do. And I had to tell myself that I did have a place in Narcotics Anonymous.

Finding a home...

Being 21 years old when I got clean, I was afraid that I would be looked at as “too young” to be an addict—and a few members did regard me in exactly that way! They didn’t know my story or me.

Just because I’m young in age doesn’t mean that I haven’t been through life and experienced as much as any “adult” has experienced. These people didn’t know how I watched my mom suffer with cancer for three years and then die when I was only eleven years old. They didn’t know that I

I began to reach out to other young, recovering addicts, as well as to those older addicts who had gotten here young and stayed. I went to dances, out for coffee, and out to eat constantly—anything—to keep my mind off my old lifestyle. Finally, I began to feel a part of.

I did what the program suggested—I went to 90 meetings in 90 days, I got a sponsor, and I started to work the steps.

I stuck around—and so did the younger guy. We started doing service work together. We went out for

was 20. I was the one with a car, so I picked them up every night. Maybe it was our shared love of punk rock music, or our awkwardness, or that we all really wanted recovery that bonded us together.

Some people say that those who remember how hard and degrading using was are the ones who will stay clean. We were all pretty young, but active addiction had left a deep mark on each one of us. We were scared of relapsing, scared of having to do the same things we did when we were using, so we stuck together.

We went to old diners after meetings and ate pie, took trips to meetings in other areas, and lived on Thai food. We drove in my VW bus to Washington to hear my sponsor share at a convention. Four of us went to the world convention in my bus, each taking sleeping shifts in the back because there was only room enough for two at a time. We told each other the truth, we shared our deepest wounds, and we stayed clean together those first few years.

“When I came to NA my age was the least of my concerns.”

Kim Y

had been betrayed by family members and forced to raise myself.

I destroyed just as much behind my addiction as anyone in this fellowship. Let’s just say that by the time I got to NA I was spiritually bankrupt. No self-respect, no dignity, and no voice—I had completely lost myself.

I heard people share about sticking needles in their arms for 30 years and being on methadone for ten years after that. Well, I never did heroin, so I began to separate myself from many addicts.

I heard people say things like “I spilled more drugs than you could ever do.” I thought, maybe I should leave and come back to NA when I’m homeless, selling my body, and have lost everything—20 years from now.

Well, thank God I didn’t talk myself into that one! Despite my so-called differences, I stayed. And I heard something here: the message of recovery.

coffee with all the “old” people and did the best we could. It was difficult when we were grounded and couldn’t go out with everyone after the meeting. But, pretty much, the members in our area acknowledged and welcomed us—not as young people, but as addicts seeking recovery.

It actually wasn’t until I had a few years clean that I started being acknowledged as a “young” person in recovery, mostly because other younger members started rolling in off the street. While they could have walked the same path that we did, they were able to walk in and find identification a little easier—there were others who were just like them.

It is so easy for me to focus on the differences, but I’ve learned over time to focus on the similarities. Now, later in my recovery, I know that’s what it means to find identification through diversity.

I eventually met two women in my area, and we went to every meeting together. One was 13, the other 15, and I

Discovering our message...

When I heard the readings at the beginning of every meeting, it confirmed that I have a place here. The NA literature says that we belong here “regardless of age, race, (or) sexual identity,” and that “we don’t care how much you used or who your connections were,” which means to me that it doesn’t matter how horrendous your story is or how many decades you’ve been using for! It means that if you used drugs and have the desire to stop using, then welcome!

I hear in meetings that one day you will be able to carry the message to someone who will only be able to hear it from you. I was way too self-centered to make that a reason to stay when I was new. It wasn’t until I started working the steps and getting results that I actually wanted to keep anything I had, and the only way to do that, you said, was to give it away.

I think that diversity is our strength; I don't think we can pretend that we are this nameless, faceless body of people—because we are not. We are like a mural that is larger than the sum of all its parts. We are like a picture that has been painted over an ugly wall called the disease of addiction. The picture is bright and beautiful, as well as dark and scary at times; the picture is life on life's terms. But each part—each addict—makes up a different color, a different shape, and a different piece whose commonality is that, together, we make up the mural called Narcotics Anonymous.

I am glad to be a part of that mural—I am the “young people” in recovery today. I am the addict who got clean at 17 years old and has six years clean today. I am the gay addict, the white addict, the addict who is a service junkie, the addict who is a special worker, the addict who “sponsors all the young guys,” the addict who is the child of addicts, the addict who has his own Higher Power—not one that's based on dogma.

I'm the addict who has found his “edge.” That edge is the thing that only I will be able to say to someone (or write to someone) who will hear or read this for the first time and finally get the message of recovery. I am glad that I have found that thing which someone may only hear from me. Today it gives me a purpose and a reason to continue to grow.

Today my diversity is more than my strength—my diversity is my gift from my Higher Power. My gift is the sponsees who have come into my life because they felt they could relate to no one else. My gift is the privilege of being able to contribute to this magazine—regardless of the reason!

One of the biggest issues facing younger addicts coming into NA is trying to recover while living in the old, often abusive family environment in which we grew up.

I couldn't keep living with parents who preferred me loaded, didn't re-

spect me, and didn't know how to help me. Fortunately, there were no laws stopping me from leaving. I could work, and I could legally make my own decisions.

My two friends, though, were in a different position. They had to deal with parent-teacher school conferences, being sent to psychiatrists, and living among their abusers. Sadly, only one of them is clean today.

I wouldn't want to even speculate why one stayed clean and one didn't. I just know that my friend who stayed here in NA now lives in her own apartment, completely supports herself, and is living her dreams. She is 20 years old now, and she's been clean for almost five years. She speaks two languages, has studied in Costa Rica, and is a different person from the wounded girl who walked into the rooms.

When I came to NA I felt used up and damaged. I felt hard, and scared, and angry. But the longer I stay clean, the younger I feel! I don't quite know what to make of the “oh, you're so

young” comments. I feel like it's belittling and condescending. I look at the older women with recovery in NA with admiration and respect. I want to learn how to practice their honesty, their self-respect, and their courage.

I met the woman who would eventually become my sponsor at the third NA meeting I attended, and I walked away from her muttering obscenities. Although I wanted someone to tell me the truth—I was dying for someone to tell me the truth—I wasn't very comfortable hearing it. She never once let me squirm away from the principles of this program under the guise of innocence, feigned naiveté, or mere *youth*. She held me to the same tough surrenders we all must make if we are going to recover in Narcotics Anonymous.

Anyone is capable of embracing the principles of recovery here in NA, especially those of us in our youth. We've got the energy for it, and we've got our whole lives ahead of us to live out our recovery.

Carrie B, Tony G, Kim Y, California



Picture this

NA communities are invited to send photographs of their meeting places. We especially welcome photos that include meeting formats, recovery literature, posters, dirty coffee cups, and anything else that makes the meeting place look "lived in." Sorry, we cannot use photos that identify NA members. Please tell us about your meeting, its name, the location and city, how long it has been in existence, and what your format consists of (speaker, participation, etc.).

Live and Love Group



At present our home group conducts our meetings very smoothly. We conduct different types of meetings, such as participation meetings, topic discussion meetings, newcomer meetings, open meetings, question-and-answer meetings, and, of course, business meetings.

In our meeting there are 13 to 15 members who attend. Each week we conduct three meetings—on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 3:00 to 4:00 pm in the winter, and from 4:00 to 5:00 pm in the summer.

Recently we took a snapshot of our meeting place. The group decided to send this photo to you, and we would like very much to have it published in the next *NA Way Magazine* if possible. We hope that you will consider NA as a whole—united we recover, divided we relapse! Thanks!

*Live and Love Group
Kakching Bazar, Manipur, India*



Growing up in NA

My name is Josh, I'm an addict, and I'm grateful to have 13 years clean. I am 28 years old, which means I got clean when I was 15. There was a group of people around my age who came in about the same time as me, but, unfortunately, few of us stayed. One person who did stay clean is my sponsor. He was the speaker at the second NA meeting I attended, and I asked him to sponsor me. He was also 15 and already had ten months clean! His sponsor (an ancient guru!) was very supportive of our sponsor-see relationship, but other "older" members in our area, who were in their twenties and thirties, were not. I guess they didn't understand why we couldn't sit still in meetings—even after we acquired some clean time. They also didn't take us seriously. I had more than one person tell me I needed to find a "permanent" sponsor. I would tell them that I already had one. One member even told me, "Well, I'm your sponsor now!" Those types of comments made us feel as if we weren't respected.

I also resented being told how "lucky" I was to have found NA at such an early age, and "If I had gotten clean when you did, I wouldn't have had to go through so much." Believe me, it was the topic of many negative "Youth in Recovery" convention workshop gripe sessions! But at some point, I realized that they were right—I had my whole life ahead of me.

In the meantime, we stayed busy working steps, learning how to live, and growing up together.

I didn't have a problem relating to older addicts who shared their experience, strength, and hope with me, and people always seemed to be able to relate to me as well. After all, I had been using mostly with people their age. I reluctantly shared about issues related to my age and my particular walk of life in meetings, such as being a recent high school dropout, parental issues, et cetera, and these members responded with nothing but love and support. They taught me that when I am hurting bad enough, it doesn't matter whose hand is reaching out to me—I need to grab onto what I can, and I also need to offer that hand to someone else in return when I am able.

My recovery/spiritual journey has empowered me to follow my heart, which has led me to a career of helping people on a daily basis. This meant getting my GED and going away to college with an eighth-grade education. Talk about scary! At that time I had three-and-a-half years clean, had just moved to a town where I didn't know anyone, and was six hours away from my home group. I did what you all told me to—went to meetings, found a new support group, and stayed close to my sponsor by telephone. I did great in school, graduated with honors, and came back home at the ripe old age of 21.

When I see younger people come into the rooms today, I have such hope for them. Sometimes I feel as if they look at me now and see one of those "old guys," but I let them know where I came from and that age is not important—saving our lives is. Even though I don't ordinarily stay up until 3:00 am drinking coffee with the young crowd anymore, I do know how important it is to keep those young people coming back so that the next one who walks through the door doesn't feel out of place.

Young people in recovery need lots of stuff to do—I know I did, especially when I had my days and nights mixed up. In a small town there may not be that many activities conducive to being young and staying clean, so the best thing for me was to hang out with people my own age who had some clean time. That’s another reason we need to make *all* newcomers feel as welcome as possible.

A year ago, my friend and I started a home group called “The Most Awesome Group of NA.” Maybe it’s because of the name, or maybe it’s because of our ages and the other young home group members, but it has drawn a very young crowd. We have an open discussion format, and I think the younger crowd has attracted some older members with young spirits. This is very cool! We have some great meetings.

It’s neat to see things such as an older member asking a younger one to speak at their NA birthday celebration. It’s also cool to see young people getting involved with service, as was expected of me when I got clean. Service taught me a lot about responsibility at an age when I desperately needed some.

Living my life according to spiritual principles and applying the steps in my life over time have healed relationships with my family and provided a healthy foundation upon which to build new relationships. I have been in a relationship with my wife for eleven years, since I had two years clean. This year, we had our first little baby. This has been an experience more amazing than anything else in my life! I have the chance to be there for my daughter the way my father was not for me.

I believe that getting clean has facilitated a miracle in my life. No one waved a magic wand over me or anything; I just believe that, through the support of God and NA, and with the little effort I put in, anything is possible, and all my dreams are coming true.

I have watched my sponsor raise a family, and I have become a part of it too. All of my role models since the age of 15 have been people in recovery. This fellowship offers an amazing group of people to learn from. We are still growing up together, and I believe that NA is an awesome place to do it!

Josh C, South Carolina

I had to go to NA meetings

In February 1991 my life was hitting yet another bottom. I wasn’t using as heavily as I had been before, but I was physically, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt. I didn’t think I could go on another day, and each morning I woke up wishing the day was over.

Due to the insanity of my disease during this time of my life, I was arrested for selling and using drugs. I was told that I would be spending the next ten years of my life in prison. I remember feeling relief at the idea. I thought, “Finally, I won’t have to use anymore. The drugs will be removed from my life and my using will end.”

Well, reality settled in after I was released and awaited trial. I realized that I had to find a way around this—people like me don’t go to jail! I started doing all the manipulating to get what I wanted. I hired a lawyer who told me to start going to meetings. He told me to get signatures on a court card since it would make the judge look more favorably on my case.

I went to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting on 11 February 1991. The leader of the meeting asked if anyone was there for their first meeting, and I raised my hand. I was appalled and embarrassed to be called to the front of the room, hugged, and given a white chip. I didn’t want anyone touching me. It made my skin crawl.

As I continued to go to meetings to get my signatures, I tried to manipulate the secretaries into signing my court card at the beginning of the meeting. I told them I would have to leave early to get home to my husband and child. I was single and had no children at the time! The secretary would smile kindly at me while telling me that they only signed the court cards at the end of the meetings. I came back for six months as my case dragged on, getting more signatures and listening to what other addicts were sharing.

In July 1991 I was in so much pain while coming to the meetings still actively using that I knew I would either have to stop using altogether or stop going to meetings. I admired how the people in the rooms could deal with everyday problems that overwhelmed me. Each week members

would approach me after the meeting and ask how I was doing. Finally, I made my decision—I stopped using.

As the case continued, I stopped collecting those signatures and eventually lost the court card. The signatures I collected never played any role in my case. They did, however, play a major role in my getting clean and finding recovery in NA.

Karen D, California

But I’m only 15...

Hello, my name is Jason, and I am an addict. I went to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting when I was 15. It wasn’t for me at the time, but I remember thinking that if you had a problem like *these* people, then it was good to have a place like this to come to. I went to that meeting because my brother was getting clean and wanted me to go. I went just to get him off my back.

Six or eight months later I was at my bottom—using against my will and using alone because I didn’t want to share and I didn’t trust my friends. During this time, I was thinking that I couldn’t keep on going the way I was going anymore. I had become desperate and lonely. I realized that I wasn’t a social user and hadn’t been in some time. Something had to give, but I didn’t know what.

Then I remembered the meeting I attended, and I felt a little hope that wasn’t there before. I thought about all those people who were celebrating days and months of clean time, and I remembered their smiles. I went to the next meeting.

We had two meetings a week in my hometown, and they were both during the week. On the weekends I continued to spend time with my old friends, and I became a chronic “relapser.” I would get two weeks clean and then relapse, then one week, then 30 days, and soon it began to seem hopeless again.

I battled with the idea that I was too young to be an addict. I hadn’t been to the same places that others had been. I was the youngest person in the meetings by three years, and we seemed to have a

pretty young group. I wasn't interested in going to a recovering addict's house to watch movies or whatever they did on the weekends, so I was doomed to be bored in recovery or relapse whenever I spent time with my old friends.

I began to try a little harder at recovery. I got a sponsor and started working the steps. My sponsor got me involved in the home group business meetings. We started planning a dance for an area function, and I started having fun.

I remember dreading going to my sponsor's house to go over a step. Not only did I *not* want this guy to know what I was about to tell him, but I knew this guy was going to laugh at me.

I'd never been arrested or put in treatment or anything, and my sponsor was a *genuine* addict. He was the kind of addict you can pick out of a crowd. He was, in fact, the perfect match for the definition of "addict" that I had in my head. He had used for 20 years longer than I had, and he had been to every jail and treatment center I'd ever heard of. That's why I picked him!

However, he didn't laugh. He shared some of his story with me, and we related to one another. It didn't matter that he was 20 years older than me, because what we had in common was insecurity, feeling different, hopelessness, and the disease of addiction. We were the same. After we finished the step, we hung out and played guitars for a while, talked about music, and went for coffee. I began to realize that I could enjoy recovery.

When the dance rolled around I was knee-deep in the planning and setting up for it. We had a great speaker meeting, and then we had a recovery countdown. I picked up the T-shirt for having the least amount of clean time and decided that I was going to take recovery seriously. I had been planning for the dance for two months and I had only 16 days clean. That was 16 October 1988, and I was 16 years old.

I struggled for a while at first because I couldn't change my "playmates, playgrounds, or playthings" unless I quit high school. When school let out every day, I would go home and get with recovering addicts and spend time on the weekends with recovering addicts. My using friends started to believe I was serious about not using, and they quit coming around and calling me.

I had some die-hard friends who I had to make deals with, like: We can hang out at school, but if you start telling me about a party or using, I will start telling you about meetings and recovery. I found that they didn't want to hear about recovery any more than I wanted to hear about using. It slowly got easier for me at school.

In a lot of ways I grew up in the program. I had a lot of things happen for me clean that are simply just part of growing up. I learned how to deal with going to the prom, graduation, turning 18, turning 21, turning 25, college, dating, marriage, and having kids, all with the support of countless recovering addicts.

I've learned that I qualify for recovery. I didn't have to try certain drugs, or go to jail or treatment, or lose homes and cars and families to my addiction. Those things are side effects of addiction. I found recovery early enough to avoid losing those things. I'm still an addict, and if I don't continue in my recovery, then those things are still waiting for me. I learn from those who went lower than I did how avoidable all that is, and it fuels my continuing recovery.

I am 29 years old now with twelve years clean, and I'm a very grateful recovering addict. I try to let young people who stumble into my home group know that it is possible to stay clean, no matter how old you are.

Jason S, Arkansas

“No addict is too young or too old to get clean and stay clean. We are all lucky to have found the gift of Narcotics Anonymous and this new way of life.”

Portia M, California

The age of reason

In 1981, I entered NA at 21 years of age in western Pennsylvania. At that time, I was one of the youngest members there. Other members were only about ten years older than I was, but somehow those ten years seemed to make a difference then—but today, at 40 years of age, 50 doesn't seem that far away!

As a newcomer, I was hassled by a small minority of what I lovingly referred to as "late freight." I called them that because it took them so long to use and know what they were. It was a defense on my part, but it permitted my bizarre, shattered ego to keep my seat in these rooms.

Everyone carries something into the rooms that makes him or her different and unique—some use it to stay, others use it to leave. That small minority made me angry and hostile because it was obvious I would not have made it much longer. Through the years, however, that original minority is not in the rooms anymore. They are gone, and I remain.

My disease—or possibly my lack of life experience—made me believe that I needed to experience everything that the "older" members had experienced in order to be eligible for membership in NA. Having gone down that avenue, I came to believe that sometimes you are better off *not* having had some experiences.

In service I was led to H&I, which I thought was ironic since I had never been incarcerated and I had only been hospitalized once in my entire life. I am one of the most conservative individuals on values and ethics that most people will ever meet. Yet, when I started doing H&I, there were few women involved, and most of the men looked like the Illustrated Man! Throughout that service work, I was told to relate to the disease of addiction, not to the criminal records, type of drug use, or any of the other issues we carry with us.

I believe that when we do not vigilantly uphold our Third Tradition, we all lose—regardless of our intentions. I've noticed that the members who try to bar the doors of NA to others are often the ones who end up having to find their way back through them. Through that vision I am

mindful of the scars I carry, and I try to keep from putting any obstacles in the way of anyone who wants to get through these doors.

All I ever wanted—young or old—was to be treated with respect. And as I got older, I was able to reciprocate.

I think that “young” is a relative state. When I was six, everyone was “old”! At 40, my perception of “old” has greatly changed.

I have a son who entered this program at eleven years of age. I watched as his desire to be active in NA was crushed by another member’s prejudice. He attempted to be a GSR and was removed from the position. The member who worked so diligently in developing a group conscience to remove him does not come to meetings anymore.

My son is diligent in his attendance. He is 18 years old now, and he has stayed clean. He has never noticed the age differences, with the exception of those members who remembered him being raised in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. He was the second NA baby born in Pittsburgh, the second male.

In speaking with him, I wondered how he found the rooms so quickly, and was it possible that I had done something right as a struggling single parent? He noted that he was aware the rooms existed, but although he had grown up with NA’s steps and traditions and knew the service structure better at three years of age than most members, it was different when it came time to internalize it.

Members ask me if I am not happy that my son came into NA so young. I need to say that I had mixed feelings. I was happy that if my child had to suffer from this disease, at least his recovery came early. But I was not happy that my child was afflicted with the disease I carry. I wasn’t happy about the emotional bottom he had to experience in order to walk into these rooms and stay, or the tremendous spiritual pain he had to experience before he found his way. And I was definitely not happy that NA members I had welcomed into recovery were now attempting to bar my son from the rooms because of their bias.

In the Disney-style fantasies that I still hold about the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I would hope that we hug the beautiful people as long and as hard as we do

the people who may not employ adequate personal hygiene. I would hope that we greet everyone with the same level of passion, regardless of whatever negative experiences and scars we carry. I know that it is not possible or reality-based, but being mindful of how we act is.

“Regardless of age,” it is my responsibility to provide an atmosphere of service to the newcomer and unconditional love to my fellow addicts. That is regardless of whether they are young, old, male, female, attractive, plain, quiet, loud, clean, unclean, physically active, physically challenged, with children, without children, intelligent, not so sharp, and on and on and on.

Mary H, Pennsylvania

NA:

An age-old solution

Thanks to my sponsor, God, my husband, fellow NA members, and the many faces that helped us get to where we are today. I address my thanks in this order because, for most days during this process, my sponsor was the only one I didn’t see as the enemy. I’m still a recovering addict, and so is one of my children, all by the grace of God.

My child was born to two using addicts and a long line of addiction. My child lost her birth father to addiction when she was six months old. In the next two long years she lived with other people, family, and strangers—whoever, whenever, and for however long it took me to get back from a run. She witnessed parties only an addict would attend.

I got clean when she was two, but my character defects stayed with me long after. This child attended NA meetings with me until she was ten. She was always surrounded by the love of this fellowship. Somewhere in my subconscious I believed she would be exempt from the horrors of active addiction.

Over the years our lives changed. I remarried, had another child, and moved across the country. Our life was changing, but not without conflict, and my child was part of that.

My child was getting so angry and resentful that, by the time she turned 14, she had decided to take the path of using. She was going to do it her way. Unfortunately, the world was not as kind and easy to manage as she thought. For her, addiction took hold quickly.

My “ghosts of addiction past” (à la Charles Dickens) came alive. I became obsessed with fear and guilt. I was remorseful over my past behaviors, and I realized I had not always made the best decisions. The pain and confusion of reliving my addiction as I watched hers develop was unbearable.

The dilemma of whether to let my child find recovery on her own or to get help for her was before me. What was the right thing to do? Was I going to let denial, guilt, and anger make my decision for me? Was I able to fight the fight?

I chose to confront the ugly monster of addiction. Like all parents, I didn’t want my child to go through that daily insanity.

Then reality hit: I can’t make this person *want* recovery. No one can say whether someone is an addict or not but that person.

Such agony! All I could do was keep her safe and pray that in the process she would choose our way of life.

We embarked on a three-year journey through treatment centers, counseling sessions, and family and NA meetings. We attended family and counseling sessions faithfully. We supported the process with love and honesty.

I can truly say this was one of the hardest things I had ever done. I confronted so many issues in my own program, my marriage, and parenthood. I was committed to the process, in spite of the hard work, and I wanted no regrets.

My hope was that my child would heal through the process of love and support, no matter what it took. I hung in there even when I was mad, hurt, and tired. She got thrown out of two treatment centers, but we continued the fight. My NA friends, and especially my sponsor, were instrumental in leading my child to the help she needed.

In the interim between treatment centers, she would attend NA meetings and try to find peers and establish membership. A group of young people was forming slowly. Many came as a result of parent or teacher intervention. These members were still in high school, most without a driver's license. She struggled with finding peers her own age, and she struggled with activities a young person could do.

I had my own struggles, with questions like: Was this the place I really wanted my child to go to? I had attended meetings for over 15 years, and I had met some people I did not trust. Did I want my child to meet these people? Would she be safe, respected, cared for? Would she be able to relate to anyone? Could she get the message of recovery here? Could NA offer to my 15-year-old what it was offering to members in their 20s, 30s, and 40s? I could only hope so.

For me, the spiritual principles of the program were always louder and bigger than anything else in the rooms. So I prayed, helped to look for meetings that young people attended, gave her rides, and picked her up. I acted as a parent and not as a member. I respected her anonymity as much as possible. She was able to find many people her own age and form a support group.

Finally, personal responsibility was catching on—she was attending meetings regularly, going to school, doing homework, coming home at night, spending time with the family, and bringing friends to our home. Life was back in process. The road was going to be different now; *she* was different, but she had the strength, support, and willingness to try.

Today this child thanks us for believing in her and wanting a new way of life for her. We laugh about what it was like, and reminisce about the people we don't see anymore.

A special thanks to my sponsor—but most of all, we thank God.

Mary Ellen P, California

“Some of the young women whom I have sponsored were looking for a parent-figure to help guide them. I have shared both my experiences and my opinions. I learned the hard way that it is much better to simply share my experiences! Doing this allows the addict to accept personal responsibility for his or her choices and grow through the consequences of those decisions.”

Anonymous

Meet the parents

Hello, my name is Rick, and I'm an addict. I am writing in reference to the theme "Regardless of Age—Youth in Recovery," particularly on the subject of sponsorship.

I sponsor eight men; seven are under 21. I would like to first mention that I completely admire *all* people in recovery, but especially young people. It took me 18 years to find Narcotics Anonymous. While I know that young people are no different from any other addict, the fact that they find NA, get clean, and stay clean still blows me away. No matter what age, sex, et cetera, we are all addicts with the same fears to face.

All of the parents I've met have been very accommodating to their children's needs in regard to the NA program's suggestions, such as allowing me to pick their kids up for a meeting, doing step work, or going to an NA function. These parents are so grateful that someone is willing to help their child.

My sponsor is younger in age than me. For me, his age didn't matter—what mattered was whether I relate to him. (The answer was, and is, yes!)

I am blessed to have so many young people in NA in my life. They help me just as much as, if not more than, I help them. The men I sponsor have helped me to not take life so seriously, and to be able to laugh at myself. It's sometimes painful to watch them make the same mistakes I made when I was their age, but the beauty of it is that they're doing it clean, one day at a time.

Rick G, California



NA

Worldwide Workshop



First Worldwide Workshop held in Canada!

Members from throughout western North America came together in Vancouver, Canada, from 29 June through 1 July for the first-ever Worldwide Workshop. This historic event lived up to its billing as something new and different. Over 400 members attended. We received the following feedback from Dave W in San Diego:

I just wanted to thank the World Board (and the WSO) again for putting on the first NA Worldwide Workshop. I had the opportunity to represent the San Diego-Imperial County Region, and I have to say that, beyond any question, it was the most significant NA event I've ever attended.

For those of you thinking about attending the upcoming workshops in Brazil, the UK, New Zealand, and the American Midwest, do so if you possibly can. The members of world services who attended really demonstrated how much they care about the fellowship and about reaching out to individual members. The individual workshops covered a diverse range of topics: NA service structure; medication in recovery; sponsorship literature project; NA history; conduct in service and as a member; public relations topics (H&I, PI, and Outreach); and too many more to remember off the top of my head.

The Q&A sessions were remarkable, with lots of information passed back and forth. The fellowship in North America was well represented, with addicts from all over Canada and the USA. It's been over since Sunday, and I'm still processing. Thank you so much.

By the time this issue comes out, the second workshop will have already occurred in London, England, 14-16 September. The New Zealand event will be just around the corner at Victoria University of Wellington, 2-4 November. The dates for the São Paulo, Brazil, and Chicago workshops are not yet confirmed as we go to press. If you have Internet access, you can find flyers and register online at www.na.org/event-reg.htm.

Here is the background on the Worldwide Workshop Project. The proposal for this experimental effort to create a workshop system to improve fellowship communications was part of the *Conference Agenda Report* (2000). Fellowship delegates approved the project at the April 2000 meeting of the World Service Conference. The theme for these workshops is "Making a Connection: NA Members and NA World Services." The purpose is to improve face-to-face communication between world services and the fellowship. Our vision is that these workshops will help world services be more responsive to the fellowship we serve. We want to create an opportunity for dialogue, training, and an exchange of experience, strength, and hope. We believe that these workshops can help lay the groundwork that will allow the new world service system to be more effective. The goal is to assist delegates, World Board members, and WSO staff to become more capable in their world service roles.

I was a teenage lit chair

For the seven years that I've been clean, I've noticed that those who are of service to Narcotics Anonymous generally stay clean.

I remember my sponsor telling me about a new meeting that was starting in my area. He said I needed to show up early, and when the meeting was over I needed to express the fact that I wanted to offer my help.

My sponsor's direction didn't stop there. He said he knew someone who was literature chairperson for my area and that they needed some help. I started showing up once a month to help fill literature orders at our area service committee. Before I realized it, I was being nominated (with my sponsor's guidance) as area literature chair. The only thing that made me different from the thousands of addicts who have filled this commitment throughout our fellowship was the fact that I was only 15 years old at the time and had about 18 months clean.

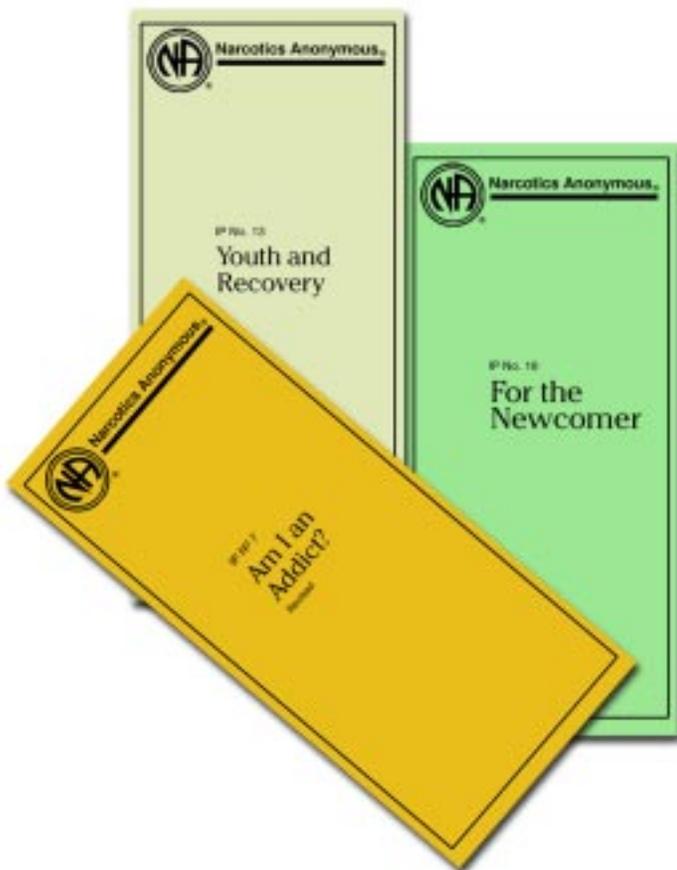
To some people that may not sound too difficult—that is, until you consider that I would now be responsible for picking up literature at the regional service office, which was approximately 45 minutes from my home. With the support of addicts in the fellowship—and, of course, my parents—I made that journey every month. It wasn't always easy, finding someone willing to spend a few hours of his or her Saturday to drive some kid to "pick up some NA stuff." But I put my best foot forward and did the best I could, even if it meant filling my best friend's 1966 Volkswagen Bug to the brim with Basic Texts and IPs!

I am grateful for every service committee I have served on, and especially for that handful of addicts who took a chance on another addict who wanted just to help—regardless of what disposition I may have had.

My service didn't stop there. I continue to be of service to NA, which doesn't mean that I just take commitments at the group, area, regional, or world level. It means that as a member of Narcotics Anonymous and as a productive member of society, I make sure that I act accordingly in public—whether it be throwing my trash in the trash can at my home group or driving like a halfway sane human being while I display an NA sticker on the back window of my truck.

Being of service in NA is so much more than just showing up at my home group every Sunday night to set up chairs; it is a way of life. It is a set of principles and guidelines by which I live my life and conduct my business. When I feel off balance and can't quite pinpoint it, I know that if I get to a meeting early and get out of myself, help set up some chairs and stay a minute later to help clean up, I miraculously feel just a little better when I leave.

Brian D, California



Not too young to serve

I came into Narcotics Anonymous in the summer of 1993—a tired, hopeless, powerless, and desperate young man. The noise of addiction was deafening in my head. I don't remember much from my first meeting except that someone came across the room and gave me a hug. They said very softly, and with love, something that reverberated in my head and brought me back to my second meeting. They told me to keep coming back, and that it would get better. I hadn't felt welcomed anywhere in quite a while, and the small feeling of belonging I felt when I left that meeting made me want to see what this NA thing was all about!

Before I even started using, I practiced dishonesty. I grew up on a hippie commune in Oregon, and as a result my family moved a lot.

Every time I moved I would feel so inadequate as a person that I would make up elaborate stories so others would think I was cool. I would invent a whole new personality for myself everywhere I went, so that by the time I got to NA I was confused about exactly who I really was.

When I was new, I began to get somewhat honest, but there were a few stories I continued to tell. These stories were my reservations, pieces of myself I would not expose in a true light. I was afraid that I wouldn't be welcomed in NA if people knew who I really was.

One night I found myself crying on the floor at a friend's house. I felt so alone, like no one really knew or understood me. I had tried dishonesty in my life, and I had tried working a selective program, and it had not worked. I decided to surrender to recovery, to do the Twelve Steps, and to commit to the principle of honesty. That was where my recovery began.

As I worked the Twelve Steps I began to awaken my spirit. I was doing the inside job of recovery, and I began experiencing freedom from my addiction and my own thinking.

I wanted to express my gratitude for this gift somehow. Someone suggested doing service to give something back to the program and pass on this gift I'd been given to another addict.



I became involved in learning about the traditions and took a service position. I began to understand that it wasn't so important what I was doing to be of service, just that I was giving away what I had so freely been given. Most importantly, what I learned was that effective service is inspired by the joy of personal recovery.

Through making myself available to serve, I eventually found myself around the regional service committee table. I was very intimidated and scared at my first couple of RSC meetings. I felt unprepared. I was 19 years old, representing my area, and I felt that I didn't fit in. Once again my addiction was working to separate me. I'll never forget when a woman asked me how I was doing, and all I could say was that I felt like running and that I didn't belong.

I remember the feeling of love and support I felt from her as she shared her own experience. She told me she felt the same way when she first came around. She looked nothing like me on the outside. She was a woman, a lesbian, a grandmother, and she was in her 60s, but she made me feel so at home and told me I was in the right place.

Now I want to address something in this article that I have a strong opinion about: anonymity and how it applies to a very common occurrence in meetings around my area, and I'm sure in many other areas. I'm talking about the focusing on a minority, any minority, in meetings.

Let me give you an example. How often have you heard something like this in a meeting: "I would like to welcome all the young people in the meeting today. You're so lucky to not have to go through every-

thing I went through." Stuff like that drove me nuts when I was new. It didn't make me feel welcomed; it made me feel different.

I assure you that when I arrived I didn't feel very lucky. I was barely alive and I was suicidal, having destroyed every relationship and opportunity I ever had in life.

I believe every addict in NA deserves an equal opportunity for a new way of life. We need to think about the things we say, even if it is well intentioned, and we need to look at whether it draws other members in or pushes them away.

I came into NA broken, unable to live life any longer, and through working the Twelve Steps I have been given a life worth living. I went back to high school after I got clean and graduated.

I dreamed of a creative career, and today I work in the field I dreamed of.

Another dream I had was of being an asset to the fellowship and representing my region at the World Service Conference. To date, I have attended two WSCs as a delegate for my region.

I dreamed of being a father and a loving partner. Today I have a wife I love and a one-year-old daughter. This has been the most work I have ever taken on in my life, but it's worth it!

Today I am 23 years old, and at the time of this writing I am a few days away from having eight years clean. Recovery is a process, and I am grateful to know today that I am not the finished product, that I am still growing and changing. I look forward to the changes that are still to come.

Dylan J, British Columbia

I don't feel young on the inside

My name is Raquel, and I'm an addict. I got clean when I was 18 years old. The first NA meeting I attended was a young people's meeting, because I wanted to be able to find people who were like me. You see, I assumed before even stepping foot into a meeting that the people in NA would be "old" people who drank coffee and smoked cigarettes while telling me that doing drugs was wrong! I know today that initial assumption about Narcotics Anonymous was incorrect.

I started going to young people's meetings to develop a sense of similarities and to feel that I belonged somewhere. I needed to know that not everyone my age had fun by getting loaded. Once I finally considered myself a member of Narcotics Anonymous and felt like I fit in, I started to go to different types of meetings. I went to newcomer meetings, old-timers' meetings, meetings with a lot of participants and meetings with a few participants, conventions, out-of-area meetings, and other NA functions. I started to give back to the people around me. My age didn't matter. I was a member of NA.

I noticed that when I was the speaker at a meeting, I didn't have to share my drugalogue—because it didn't matter what or how much I used, who my connections were, what I had done in the past, how much or how little I had, but only what I wanted to do about my problem and how you could help me. (Sound familiar?!) The disease of addiction does not care what color we are, how much money we make, what types of drugs we did, or how old we are. It is simply the disease of addiction, which I believe has to do with our brain and not our appearance.

I have been through some painful experiences in recovery—experiences I never went through when I was using. I go to meetings and talk about these experiences so that I don't have to use over my feelings. When I begin to share my growth and start to feel connected to this program, that's when I start to hear things like "I'm glad you got here when you were so young and you didn't have to go through all of the stuff that I went through," or "I wish I was smart like you and got here at your age."

The worst I've heard is "I've spilled more drugs than you ever used!"

My age doesn't mean that I didn't hit a bottom, and my age also doesn't mean that the feelings I had in my active addiction were different from yours or anyone else's. I don't look at the fact that I am young, and frankly I don't notice it until someone else points it out to me. I don't feel young on the inside. The experiences I have encountered while being clean don't allow me to feel young—I just feel human.

A friend shared a story that sickens me, even to this day. She had a friend who wanted to get clean, so she took him to a couple of meetings. This newcomer was 19 years old, but didn't look much older than 12 or 13 years old. The speaker decided to single him out from the group of people, pointed to him, and said, "Look at this kid. I am so glad you never had to stick a needle in your arm or go through any of the hell that I went through to get here." During the sharing part of the meeting, the newcomer shared his experience. He introduced himself as an addict and said, "I was born HIV positive, my mother was a prostitute, and I've been shooting dope since I was 13 years old. I'm 19 years old now. This is my second NA meeting, and I'm never coming back here again!"

My friend told me that this newcomer, just as he promised, has not yet come back to another meeting.

I believe that, by singling this person out, the speaker “broke” some of the traditions of NA. Our First Tradition states, “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.” No one in Narcotics Anonymous is better than anyone else. We should all treat each other with the same respect that we want for ourselves. There should be no pedestals placed under anyone in NA.

We are all human, and we all come from the disease of addiction in one form or another. You don’t earn your seat in NA—it belongs to you if you want it. We shouldn’t tear each other apart and say that one person belongs here and another doesn’t.

Why does age have to be a deciding factor on who gets to be here and who doesn’t? It is sad that some people believe this to be true.

According to this tradition, if there is no unity in your life, then it is going to be difficult or maybe even impossible to grow in your recovery. The unity in this fellowship starts with each individual. I believe the overall unity of Narcotics Anonymous stems from the personal recovery of that individual.

Tradition Five states, “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.” This tradition simply says “addict.” It doesn’t say a 19-year-old or 60-year-old or 85-year-old or a black or white or purple or green addict—just “addict.”

Addiction sees no characteristics. It doesn’t see wealth or poverty—it is blind to these things, and it is out to get anyone it can.

Our purpose is to carry the message to the addict who is still suffering—any addict.

I have shared this story with other recovering addicts, and a couple of times I’ve been confronted by individuals who didn’t appreciate my sharing because, it seems, they were guilty of singling out a younger member. They gave me their reasons why they don’t agree with me.

I am not here to change anyone. I talk about this issue because it is something I believe in with all of my heart, and I want members of NA to know how I feel. It hurts me to see how judgmental people can be

and how little unity some people possess. I am just trying to carry the message that, as a member of Narcotics Anonymous who got clean as a teenager, I am affected by the discrimination. It hurts.

The message I am trying to carry is to be aware of the things you say, not only to young members but also to newcomers in general.

I am well aware that we can’t say something that will cause someone to get loaded. People get loaded because they want to—because they made a conscious decision to do so. However, what we say can cause the feelings of an individual to be hurt.

We must remember that we used drugs so that we didn’t have to feel our feelings. For the newcomer, an insensitive remark could be their excuse to get loaded so they don’t have to feel.

In the long run, if we do not take responsibility for what we say, addicts may choose to run in their addiction and may possibly die. And I don’t want it to be said that my words were the reason for the death of a fellow addict.

Raquel C, California

Why all the attention?

Regardless of age! I’m sick and tired of hearing “oh, how great it is that you young people...,” and the younger members don’t like it either! “Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion.”

Why patronize them? Do we have a pamphlet for blacks in recovery, or Mormons in recovery, or homosexuals in recovery? No, of course not, because addiction does not discriminate, and no one segment of our fellowship needs special attention. These principles and this program of recovery work for all who are willing.

I’ve been a member of NA for 17 years, and most young people in my area (Everett Area, Washington/North Idaho Region) appreciate that I treat them as equals.

Mark R, Washington





H&I Slim

For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting him, H&I Slim is "the ultimate H&I kinda guy." He hangs out in hospitals and jails all over the world. You might say he's always in the know and always on the go. Got a question about H&I? Need some help? Write H&I Slim in care of the WSO.

Dear H&I Slim,

I am involved in H&I work in my area. Last week I took a speaker into the jail where we hold NA meetings. We use a clarity statement at this meeting, and he said that perhaps H&I should not use the statement in the format.

I would like to know if it is appropriate to use a statement of clarity in an H&I meeting/presentation.

DW, New York

Dear DW,

Many NA groups use a "clarity" or "identity statement" as part of their meeting format. Before your H&I committee decides to use such a statement at your jail meeting, let me provide you with a bit of background regarding these statements.

The "clarity" or "identity statements" that some groups use have actually been excerpted paragraphs from a bulletin titled *Some Thoughts Regarding Our Relationship to Alcoholics Anonymous*, written by the former World Service Board of Trustees. Although these statements are not conference-approved literature, they carry the weight of being written by the former WS Board of Trustees. A formalized "clarity statement" of this sort has also been used at many Narcotics Anonymous conventions.

Meeting formats in short-term facilities are relatively brief and probably would not use a clarity statement. In fact, in the *Hospitals and Institutions Handbook*, it is noted several times that all panel leaders and/or coordinators are responsible for ensuring that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members. This, in and of itself, can be considered a "clarity statement." In some long-term facilities, a significant number of meetings use formats similar to those on the outside. Frequently, a "clarity statement" of some sort is part of the meeting format. The reading of a "clarity statement" could help newcomers understand that although similar to thers, each fellowship has its own philosophy and possesses its own distinct purpose.

If you choose to read a "clarity statement," it is a good idea to explain why it is read. Any language that is offensive or that possibly could cause antagonism within the facility should be avoided. We must be aware of the conditions and circumstances we are surrounded by when we are in contact with addicts in an H&I setting. We have to take precautions to not alienate the addicts we are trying to carry the message to. To be successful in our efforts we must seek and find positive solutions by educating addicts as to what the Narcotics Anonymous message is and why it is unique.

Ultimately, taking these things into consideration, the conscience of your committee will decide whether using a statement of clarity is appropriate for H&I meetings in your area or region.

Thank you for all that you do in your H&I efforts.

In loving service,
H&I Slim

NA World Services still looking...

As of 8 August 2001, the **Project Coordinator/Writer/Editor** position is still available. Some of the qualifications include: experience in the publishing field; ability to write and edit; project management; strong computer skills in word processing and desktop publishing; prior experience working with NA volunteer committees or direct experience as a regional or world service trusted servant; and ability to work under pressure and effectively perform multiple tasks simultaneously.

Fellowship Services has an opening for a **Team Assistant** in Translations. This is a bilingual position. Experience is required in general clerical and office administration. The qualified applicant will also possess strong computer skills in word processing.

There are other employment opportunities available. We are currently accepting resumes, so please send in yours if you are interested in becoming a special worker.



CALENDAR

We encourage you to publicize your event by having it published on our website and in *The NA Way Magazine*. You can inform the WSO about your event by fax, phone, or regular post, or through our website. We encourage using the website because you can check to see if we already have a listing on your convention and, if not, you can enter your own convention information. It is then reviewed, formatted, and added to the online convention calendar on our website in approximately four days. Just go to www.na.org, click on "NA Events," and follow the instructions.

Convention announcements entered through the website and those received by other means are also given to *The NA Way*. *The NA Way* is published four times a year in January, April, July, and October. Each issue goes into production long before its distribution date, so we need a minimum of three months' notice to ensure your event will be published in the magazine—that's three months before our publication date. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

United States

Australia

Queensland: 9-11 Nov 2001; Queensland Area Annual Convention; Greenmount Beach Resort, Gold Coast; hotel rsvns: +61.7.55361222; event info: +04.0.2667120, +61.7.55611251; speaker tape submission deadline: 25 Oct 2001; write: Gold Coast Area Australia, 32 Alicia St, Southport, Queensland, Australia 4215; qccac@hotmail.com (e-mail only)

Bahamas

Nassau: 1-4 Nov 2001; Nassau Area Celebration XIV; Nassau Marriott Resort Crystal Palace, Nassau; hotel rsvns: 242.327.6200; event info: 242.326.0224, 242.327.5601

Canada

Alberta: 5-7 Oct 2001; Alberta-Saskatchewan Regional Convention; Edmonton; event info: 780.424.1839; write: Alberta-Saskatchewan Region, 9348 Cameron Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 3R6 Canada

Quebec: 5-7 Oct 2001; Quebec Regional Convention XIV; Emotion Douce/Sweet Emotion; Auberge des Seigneurs, St. Hyacinthe; event info: 450.774.1408, 517.323.3877, 450.429.4220; write: CRONA XIV, Comptoir Postal Robert, St Leonard, Quebec City, Quebec H1R 3X2 Canada

France

Paris: 5-7 Oct 2001; France Regional Bilingual Convention V; Sérénité/Serenity; l'Asiem, Paris; event info: +06.14.34.07.37; English-speaking: +06.70.06.63.42, +01.45.44.64.78; write: France Region; 1 bis, rue Gutenberg, 93100 Montreuil, France

Greece

Chalkidiki: 5-7 Oct 2001; 5th NA Panhellenic Convention-Conference; Pallini/Athos Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki; event info: +30.945.337.525

Guatemala

Guatemala City: 19-21 Oct 2001; 1st Guatemala Regional Convention; We Are a Miracle; Hotel Ritz, Guatemala City; hotel rsvns: 502.714.0041; fax 502.339.4339

Ireland

Kilkenny: 12-14 Oct 2001; 17th Ireland Regional Convention; New Park Hotel, Kilkenny; hotel rsvns: +353.56.22122; event info: +001.905.507.0101; write: IRSCNA, Box 1368, Cardiff Ln, Dublin 2, Ireland

Mexico

Baja California: 19-21 Oct 2001; Baja California Convention IX; Algo Más Sera Revelado, More Will Be Revealed; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; hotel rsvns: 866.472.6385; event info: 858.277.6438, 626.331.2027, 526.680.0986; write: CBCNA, PMB-80, Box 439056, San Diego, CA 92143-9056

Alabama: 9-11 Nov 2001; Greater Birmingham Area Convention VIII; Making Space for Grace; Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham; hotel rsvns: 205.324.5000; write: Greater Birmingham Area, Box 321324, Birmingham, AL 35212

Alaska: 12-14 Oct 2001; 17th Alaska Regional Convention; Fairbanks Princess Hotel, Fairbanks; hotel rsvns: 800.426.0500; event info: 907.457.5150; write: Alaska Region, Box 102924, Anchorage, AK 99510-2924; www.akna.org/arcna.htm

Arizona: 14 Oct 2001; East Valley Area; Seventh Annual Blues Fest; Kiwanis Park, Tempe; event info: 480.844.3668, 480.964.3440, 480.786.6228; write: East Valley Area, Blues Fest Sub-Committee, 330 S Beck Ave #118, Tempe, AZ 85281; www.arizona-na.org

California: 19-21 Oct 2001; San Francisco Area Rainbow Convention VI; A Beacon of Hope; Ramada Plaza Hotel International, San Francisco; hotel rsvns: 800.227.4747; event registration: 415.826.1006; speaker tape info: 415.586.8837; event info: 415.701.8882; write: San Francisco Area, 78 Gough St, San Francisco, CA 94102; www.sfna.org/rainbow/

2) 9-11 Nov 2001; California Mid-state Region; Western Service Learning Days XV; Fresno Plaza Hotel, Fresno; hotel rsvns: 800.649.4955; event info: 559.651.8090, 559.251.6061; write: California Midstate Region, Western Service Learning Days XV, Box 26915, Fresno, CA 93729-6915

3) 23-25 Nov 2001; Southern California Region; When at the End of the Road; Sheraton Suites, Pomona; hotel rsvns: 909.622.5042; write: Southern California Region, Box 15956, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5956

4) 3-6 Jul 2003; WCNA-30; 50th Anniversary of NA; San Diego Convention Center, San Diego; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311; www.na.org

Colorado: 19-21 Oct 2001; Colorado Regional Convention XV; Wyndham Hotel, Colorado Springs; hotel rsvns: 719.260.1800; write: Colorado Region of NA, Box 1437, Denver, CO 80203; <http://www.nacolorado.org/CRCNA/>

Connecticut: 4-6 Jan 2002; 17th Connecticut Regional Convention; Spiritual Journey; Westin Hotel, Stamford; hotel rsvns: 800.937.8461; event info: 860.267.8698, 860.346.3197; write: CRCNA, Box 1817, Meriden, CT 06450; www.ctna.org/

District of Columbia: 29 Dec 2001-1 Jan 2002; East of the River Area; Excited About Recovery; Doubletree Hotel Crystal City; hotel rsvns: 800.222.TREE; event registration: 202.234.7049; speaker tape info: 202.396.1786; event info: 301.894.8825; www.nalinks.org/cprna/rsc/events.htm

Florida: 12-14 Oct 2001; Mid-Coast Convention 2001; A Vision of Hope; Boca Raton Marriott, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 888.888.3780; event registration: 561.686.4572; event info: 561.686.4572; speaker tape info: 561.686.4572; write: Mid-Coast Area, Box 1791, Delray Beach, FL 33447-1791; www.midcoastarea.org/mccna.htm

2) 26-28 Oct 2001; Uncoast Area Convention; Life Is Good VII; Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, Daytona Beach; hotel rsvns: 904.767.7350; write: Uncoast Area, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604; gmv.fdt.net/~ncoastna/

3) 2-4 Nov 2001; New Path Group, I'm OK You're OK Group, Rainbow Group; Rainbow Weekend V; Embassy Suites of Boca Raton, Boca Raton; hotel rsvns: 800.EMBASSY; event info: 954.961.2876, 954.938.8478, 954.927.5837; write: Rainbow Weekend, Box 2152, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33303; www.rainbowweekend.org

4) 22-25 Nov 2001; Palm Coast Area Convention; Serenity in the Sun XX; Crowne Plaza Hotel, West Palm Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.227.6963, 561.689.6400; event info: 561.848.8262; write: Palm Coast Area, Recovery Weekend, Palm Coast ASC, Box 20984, West Palm Beach, FL 33416; www.palmcoastna.com

Georgia: 18-20 Jan 2002; Spirituality Is the Key IV; Living the Dream; Holiday Inn, Athens; hotel rsvns: 800.HOLIDAY

2) 4-7 Jul 2002; WCNA-29; Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta; event info: 818.773.9999 ext. 200; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311; www.na.org

Hawaii: 25-28 Oct 2001; 10th Annual Hawaii Regional Convention; Spiritual Growth; King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel, Kailua-Kona; hotel rsvns: 808.329.2911; event info: 808.325.1453, 808.334.9738; write: Hawaii Region, Box 391146, Keauhou, HI 96739

Illinois: 16-18 Nov 2001; Greater Illinois Regional Convention V; Bountiful Harvest of Recovery; Holiday Inn Select, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 217.428.3588

Kentucky: 31 Dec 2001-1 Jan 2002; Celebration of Life, Freedom of Choice; Denton Shelter, Atkinson Park, Henderson; speaker tape submission deadline 26 Nov 2001; write: It Works, Box 873, Henderson, KY 42420

Michigan: 12-14 Oct 2001; An Open Door to Recovery; Van Dyke Park Suite Hotel, Warren; hotel rsvns: 810.939.2860; event info: 248.334.9957, 248.332.8381, 248.322.8730; write: Movin On Up, Box 85, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

2) 19-21 Oct 2001; Western Wayne County Area Convention II; Doubletree Hotel at Metro Airport, Romulus; hotel rsvns: 800.222.8733; event info: 734.422.8944

Mississippi: 12-14 Oct 2001; Mississippi Regional Convention; Celebrating the Freedom to Live; Days Inn Motel, McComb; hotel rsvns: 800.329.7666; event info: 601.661.7646, 601.977.8442, 601.684.1217; write: Mississippi Region, Box 7085, McComb, MS 39648; http://www.mrscna.com

Nebraska: 5-7 Oct 2001; Nebraska Regional Convention 18; Interstate Holiday Inn, Grand Island; event info: 308.381.8265; write: NRCNA 18, Box 2191, Hastings, NE 68901

Nevada: 5-7 Oct 2001; Sierra Sage Regional Convention VIII; Reno Sparks Convention Center, Reno; hotel rsvns: 800.797.7366; event registration: 775.348.6523; event info: 775.323.0223; speaker tape info: 775.771.8084; write: Sierra Sage Region, Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510; http://www.sierrasagena.org

New Jersey: 12-14 Oct 2001; Capital Area Convention; Road to Recovery VI; When at the End of the Road, We Choose to Live; Ramada Inn, East Brunswick; hotel rsvns: 609.448.7000; write: Capital Area, Box 2464, Trenton, NJ 08607

2) 2-4 Nov 2001; Northeast Area of New Jersey; In the Spirit of Unity—Communication, Participation, Commitment, & Practice; Sheraton Hotel Newark Airport, Newark; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 908.245.1567; event registration: 908.352.7320; speaker tape info: 908.241.8560; write: NENJACNA, Box 409, Roselle, NJ

3) 30 Dec 2001-1 Jan 2002; Bergen Area Convention; New Year, New Life VIII; East Brunswick Hilton, East Brunswick; hotel rsvns: 800.HILTONS; event info: 973.427.3616, 201.244.9787; write: BASCNA, Box 293, Hawthorne, NJ

New York: 19-21 Oct 2001; ABCD Regional Convention I; As the Path Continues; Ramada Inn, Schenectady; hotel rsvns: 518.370.7151; event registration: 518.489.7289; event info: 518.463.3528, 518.453.5654; write: 1st ABCD Regional Convention, Box 66059, Albany, NY 12206

North Carolina: 4-6 Jan 2002; Western North Carolina Area; Spirituality High in the Sky; Ramada Plaza Hotel, Asheville; hotel rsvns: 800.678.2161; event info: 828.298.5733, 828.258.9697, 828.777.7887; write: WNCANACC, Box 16238, Asheville, NC 28816

Ohio: 4-6 Jan 2002; Central Ohio Area Convention XIII; Columbus Marriott North Hotel, Columbus; hotel rsvns: 800.228.3429; event registration: 614.478.9193; speaker tape info: 614.235.3127; event info: 614.235.5926

Oklahoma: 18-20 Jan 2002; 12th Annual Norman Winter Convention; Reach for the Stars...Live the Program; Super 8 Motel, Norman; hotel rsvns: 800.800.8000; event info: 405.329.6862, 405.447.7814; speaker tape submission deadline: 21 Oct 2001; write: Norman and OKC Metro Groups, Norman Winter Foundation, Box 1455, Norman, OK 73070-1455

Oregon: 5-7 Oct 2001; Pacific Northwest Convention 24; The Healing Starts Here; Doubletree Hotel, Portland; hotel rsvns: 800.222.TREE; event registration: 503.284.5714; write: Pacific Northwest, Box 3036, Wilsonville, OR 97070-3036

Pennsylvania: 1-3 Nov 2001; 2nd Inner City Area Convention; Philadelphia; event info: 215.218.9171, 215.225.3884, 215.232.4062; write: Inner City Area, Box 50374, Philadelphia, PA 19132

2) 16-18 Nov 2001; Tri-State Regional Convention; Start to Live XIX; Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion; hotel rsvns: 800.452.2223; event info: 412.231.1650; speaker tape info: 412.884.4182; event registration: 412.488-6571; write: Tri-State Region, Box 337, Homestead, PA 15120

South Carolina: 12-14 Oct 2001; This Is How We Do It IV; Pathway to Recovery; Quality Hotel & Conference Center, Spartanburg; hotel rsvns: 864.503.0780; event registration: 864.433.1861, 864.473.1795; event info: 864.591.1060; write: This Is How We Do It Group, HOW Convention, Box 8068, Spartanburg, SC 29305

2) 15-18 Nov 2001; Serenity Festival XIX; Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.732.6478; event info: 843.381.9030; event registration: 910.323.0030; write: Carolina Region, Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578-1198

Tennessee: 21-25 Nov 2001; Volunteer Region Convention XIX; Vision of Hope; Adams Mark Hotel, Memphis; hotel rsvns: 800.444.ADAM; event info: 901.761.0049, 870.702.6480, 901.458.2456; write: Volunteer Region, Box 11126, Memphis, TN 38111; www.geocities.com/VRCXIX

Texas: 9-11 Nov 2001; Best Little Region Convention XIV; Tap the Limitless Resource; Holiday Inn Civic Center, Lubbock; hotel rsvns: 800.465.4329; event info: 806.792.2690, 806.785.4861, 806.745.1790; write: Best Little Region, 4002 Ave A, Lubbock, TX 79404

2) 16-18 Nov 2001; 73rd Texas Unity Convention; Redwood Lodge, Whitney Lake; hotel rsvns: 877.694.3422; event info: 972.254.4115, 915.388.2389, 512.657.5357

Vermont: 9-11 Nov 2001; Champlain Valley Area Convention XII; Freedom Today, Hope for Tomorrow; Radisson Hotel, Burlington; hotel rsvns: 800.333.3333; event info: 518.594.7268, 802.660.3609; write: Champlain Valley Area, Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406; www.together.net/~cvana/cvana.htm

Virginia: 9-11 Nov 2001; Tidewater Area Convention II; Still We Rise Through Our Diversity; Ramada Plaza Resort, Virginia Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.685.5150; event registration: 757.484.9542; event info: 757.484.3575; speaker tape info: 757.523.6612; write: Tidewater Area, Box 5151, Portsmouth, VA 23703-5151

2) 29 Dec 2001-1 Jan 2002; East of the River Area Convention IV; Excited About Recovery!; Doubletree Hotel Crystal City, Arlington; event info: 301.894.8825; event registration: 202.234.7049; speaker tape info: 202.396.1786

Wisconsin: 26-28 Oct 2001; Wisconsin State NA Convention XVIII; Four Points Sheridan Hotel, Milwaukee; hotel rsvns: 800.325.3535; event info: 262.268.2027; event registration: 414.481.4245; www.wsnac.org



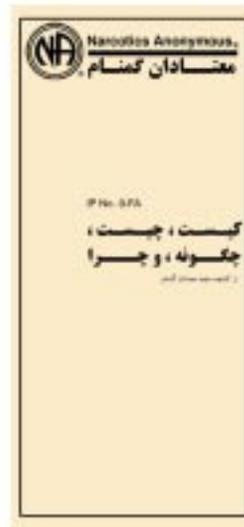
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