



July/August 2019

Volume 16, Issue 1

# ISO of COSA

## ANNUAL DELEGATE MEETING SUMMARY

### International Service Organization of COSA

#### Houston, Texas

#### May 24, 2019

**Attendees:**

*Registered delegates:*

Amy S./Monday Night South Bay COSA (formerly Santa Clara) (CA), Chris C./Walnut Creek COSA Group (CA), Cynthia P./Strength in Serenity (CA), Eveline S./COSA Step TGIF (ONL), Gabby E./Monday Finding Life in Balance (ONL), Inge/Santa Rosa COSA (CA), Janie/Saturday Promises (TEL), Jennifer N./COSA Marin (CA), Jodi D./Wednesday COSA Literature Step Study Meeting (TEL), Joey Z./Orlando COSA Step Study (FL), Karen H./Tuesday Living The Literature (ONL), Kathryn W.G./Holy Name Retreat Center (TX), Linda P./East Bay COSA (CA), Lori D./Monday Night Telemeeting (TEL), Lori M./The Connecticut Love and Hope Group (CT), Marlane/Daily Tenth Step Meeting (TEL), Margaret Z./Thursday Telemeeting (TEL), Mary H./Naples Florida COSA (FL), Martha Jean H./Zoomroom Intergroup (ONL), Mimi A./SoCal COSA Intergroup (CA), Pamela L./East Bay Sunday COSA Meeting (CA), Pat D./Kingwood (TX), Pat/COSA East (WI), Ruth G./On the Path 12 Step/Tradition Study (TEL), Sara P./Miracles in Progress (AZ), Sarah S./San Francisco Saturday COSA (CA), Susan K./Saturday Coed Meeting (TX), Valentina R./Sunday LB COSA (CA), Theresa D./Cosa Safe Haven Thursday (ONL), Tracy S./Boulder Monday Night COSA (CO)

*Other COSAs:*

Amy M.J., Incoming Board Member;  
Martha Jean H., Incoming Board Member (also listed above)

*Board members:*

Ann Marie V., Member at Large  
Chris C., Member at Large (also listed above)  
Cindy L., Member at Large  
Sandy S., Board Chair  
Sara L., Recording Secretary  
Tracy S., Board Treasurer (also listed above)  
Wendy W., Budget and Finance Committee Chair

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**Shared roles:** Sandy S., Moderator; Tracy S., Facilitator; Ann Marie V., Podium Monitor; Cindy L., Timekeeper; Inge and Gabby E., Zoom Facilitators; Sara L., Meeting Summary Recorder; Chris C., Zoom/Sound Technician

## **Agenda Items:**

### **Meeting Convene and Welcome**

The meeting opened with the “Serenity Prayer.” Participants read the “Twelve Steps of COSA,” the “Twelve Traditions of COSA,” and the “Twelve Concepts of COSA.”

Delegates and board members introduced themselves.

The voting process was explained.

### **Delegate Orientation, Rules of Order, Concepts Study**

The delegates reviewed the contents of their packets. The Rules of Order and the Guidelines for Participation were read. The Safe Communications Guidelines were read. Delegates studied the Concepts of COSA and presented the group with the results of their table discussions and summed up how their assigned Concept pertains to their role as a delegate.

### **Board Elections**

The slate and the secret ballot form were explained. Board prospects briefly shared with the delegates why they wished to serve. The nominees were: Amy M.J., Chris C., Sandy S., Martha Jean H. The results of the election were announced upon the meeting reconvening after the lunch break. All four candidates were elected.

### **2019-2020 Budget Review**

Tracy S. began by reviewing the final closed budget from 2017-2018. Convention income was higher than budget. Donations were lower. Sales were higher. Board expenses, convention expenses and wages were lower. Product expenses were higher. There were one-time cleanup items dating back from before 2018 that were corrected in order to bring the balance sheet up to date. There was a question about the Central Office worker’s wages being lower. Susan, the Central Office Manager, explained that she is paid for some of her hours and she elects to volunteer other hours.

Tracy reviewed the Balance sheet as of March 2019. There was a question about the Basic Text Reserve. Tracy clarified that this is only for the book, not other literature projects.

Tracy reviewed the Budget vs. Actual Profit and Loss report as of April 2019. This is an interim report. Much of COSA’s financial activity takes place in the last two months of the fiscal year.

Tracy presented the proposed budget for 2019-2020.

There was a comment that convention budgets are set far in advance of the actual convention, so it is hard to predict actual income and expenses.

There was a question about whether there are restrictions on how much we can accumulate in reserves as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. According to current IRS regulations, there is not.

Budget Approval Straw Poll: [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] 2018-2019 Budget passes.

## Basic Text Chapters

Sara P. gave a brief history of the basic text project. She presented an overview of the process for surveying, writing, collecting fellowship feedback, final draft and approval of each chapter. Because each chapter has gone through such an extensive process, including the incorporation of the fellowship members' input, the delegate meeting vote is to approve or not approve each chapter. In order to honor the fellowship feedback, there can be no amendments made at the Delegate Meeting. The goal is to have the basic text ready in 2022. Therefore, there will be many approvals in the coming years.

There was discussion on the basic text. (Questions are represented by a Q, answers by an A, comments by a C.)

C: Concern that the basic text process has not been inclusive of the entire fellowship.

Q: Do the writers have access to the Spanaway document?

A: The Spanaway group basically wrote a draft basic text when the Literature Committee was beginning its work. The Spanaway document is one resource available to all writers, and is given special consideration in drafting the basic text. The writers use a number of source materials for their work, including the fellowship surveys, all current COSA literature and the Spanaway document.

Q: Previously, an introduction was approved. What happened to it?

A: The introduction is still on file. The Literature Committee decided to finish writing the book first, in order to get an overall impression of the finished product. Then they will revisit and perhaps amend the introduction for the most cohesive fit.

C: The process has been very inclusive. Many voices are being heard and included.

Q: What is on the survey?

A: The surveys seek the wisdom of the fellowship. They ask the fellowship to identify what is important with regard to each step.

Q: Is it possible to spread out the feedback requests?

A: That is the intention for the next year.

### The Literature Committee presents the following for the delegate vote:

#### **Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Step Six Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

#### **Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove all these defects of character.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Tradition Two Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

#### **Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Tradition Two Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

#### **Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or COSA as a whole.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Tradition Four Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

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**Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to those who still suffer. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps ourselves.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Tradition Five Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

**Tradition Six: A COSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the COSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Tradition Six Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

**Concept Three: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of COSA, "the Annual Meeting," the International Service Organization of COSA and its service committees, contracted worker, and executives with a traditional "Right of Decision."**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Concept Three Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

**Concept Four: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve Concept Four Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

#### **COSA Tools: Meetings**

There were no comments on the proposed chapter.

Straw Poll to approve the COSA Tools: Meetings Chapter [35 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED] Proposal passes.

#### **Delegate New Business, Questions and Concerns**

(Questions are represented by a Q, answers by an A, comments by a C.)

C: Round of applause for the Literature Committee and for the whole fellowship for all the basic text progress.

Q: Have meetings dealt with the issue of babysitting? How did you handle it?

A: One open meeting had babysitters. The babysitters were the children of members. Issues include pay and liability insurance.

A: One local meeting allows infants. On Zoom, participants will use headphones when children are in the room. They can turn off video as necessary.

Q: How are items for the delegate meeting chosen?

A: There are several ways items come to the agenda. This year, the basic text had a lot of progress, so a number of approvals were needed. The Delegate Business Item form allows individual COSAs or meetings to submit items for the agenda. There were none this year. The work of the COSA board also generates items that need fellowship approval. The By-laws require a three-year review cycle, which can generate business items too.

Q: What does the board need from the fellowship?

A: There will be a convention session about this.

A: Volunteers. We have small and large ways to be involved.

Q: How can we share ideas that have been successful in our meetings?

A: The Balance or convention sessions.

Q: How should the board communicate to the fellowship?

A: Change COSAs in the Know subject line each week.

A: The board could designate certain convention MP3s for free download when sessions include fellowship building ideas.

A: Work through intergroup reps.

A: Put out a “call to arms” email.

A: People want to do something, but aren’t sure how to connect. Match these people with committees.

Q: How can a meeting get a meeting mentor?

A: The meeting mentor email is now being checked. Apologies that it was previously unstaffed.

Q: Request for audio versions of brochures.

Q: Request for free/discount MP3s for newcomers.

Q: Could the board revisit the idea of a physical office?

A: It is on the board agenda to consider options. Substantive changes would be brought to the delegates.

C: An affiliated fellowship’s intergroup has a volunteer dedicated to spreading COSA info for that fellowship’s members to share with their partners and family.

Q: What can meetings do to keep newcomers?

A: Review the newcomer packet. Provide enough info without overloading the newcomer.

A: Make sure each newcomer connects to a person.

A: Share phone numbers of people who were actually at the meeting, rather than the full member list.

A: Reach out to newcomers after the meeting.

A: Have fellowship after a meeting and invite newcomers.

A: When there is a newcomer, do a First Step meeting.

Q: How can COSA reach out across the world?

A: Zoom can have meetings 24 hours per day.

A: Put meetings in the weekly email.

A: Donate literature.

A: Telemeeting or Zoom intergroups could help find “seed” members for new meetings at new times of day.

A: Some members in the United States would love “night owl” meetings that might be at “normal times” for other countries.

Q: Could PDFs of literature be available online?

A: Sandy described the recent board decision to offer the Twelve Step book, which is a compilation of the individual Step booklets, online.

Q: Could the COSA website be updated to be less confusing?

A: The Technology Committee is working on this. They are investigating new options for building the site. The goal is to make it more user friendly with a better site map.

C: Feedback on today’s meeting goes on the feedback form in packets. Business items go on the delegate business form, which is on the delegate page of the website.

### **Review of Committees and Opportunity to Sign Up**

Time was allotted for delegates to meet with committee chairs to get more information on groups and to volunteer for committees and other service positions.

### **Delegate Evaluations**

Time was given for delegates to complete evaluations of the delegate process.

### **Meeting Conclusion**

The meeting concluded with the “Serenity Prayer.”

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# ISO COSA

## BUDGET VS. ACTUALS: ISO FY 18 BUDGET - FY18 P&L

July 2017 - June 2018

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
<b>Income</b>			
Convention Income		22,350.00	-22,350.00
Convention Donations			
7th tradition -convention	2,626.11		2,626.11
Pre-Convention Fundraising	395.00		395.00
Registration Scholarship	1,095.00		1,095.00
<b>Total Convention Donations</b>	<b>4,116.11</b>		<b>4,116.11</b>
Meals	2,106.00		2,106.00
Registration	16,261.78		16,261.78
Sales	145.74		145.74
Silent Auction	2,500.07		2,500.07
<b>Total Convention Income</b>	<b>25,129.70</b>	<b>22,350.00</b>	<b>2,779.70</b>
Delegate Registration	2,113.00	2,625.00	-512.00
Donations			
Automatic Recurring Donations	16,025.00	16,000.00	25.00
Group	6,084.01	11,852.00	-5,767.99
Individual	5,358.15	4,500.00	858.15
Outreach	800.00		800.00
Resource Development Committee	90.10		90.10
Website Upgrade	290.00		290.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>28,647.26</b>	<b>32,352.00</b>	<b>-3,704.74</b>
In Kind donations	429.00		429.00
Interest Income	25.87	10.00	15.87
Sales	15,434.05	10,100.00	5,334.05
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$71,778.88</b>	<b>\$67,437.00</b>	<b>\$4,341.88</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$71,778.88</b>	<b>\$67,437.00</b>	<b>\$4,341.88</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Annual Delegate Meeting Expense	1,220.02	2,625.00	-1,404.98
Board Expenses			
Board Convention Travel	6,839.06	11,125.00	-4,285.94
Board convention/delegate registration	2,142.00		2,142.00
Board Working Weekend	3,794.14	3,750.00	44.14
Supplies		110.00	-110.00
<b>Total Board Expenses</b>	<b>12,775.20</b>	<b>14,985.00</b>	<b>-2,209.80</b>
Convention Expense		15,482.00	-15,482.00
Convention Supplies	986.29		986.29
Registration	238.00		238.00
Silent Auction/Serenity to Go	176.90		176.90
<b>Total Convention Supplies</b>	<b>1,401.19</b>		<b>1,401.19</b>
Fees	18.99		18.99
Hospitality	467.50		467.50
Hotel			

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	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Food and Beverage	8,855.24		8,855.24
Hotel Deposit	1,500.00		1,500.00
Room Rental	542.64		542.64
<b>Total Hotel</b>	<b>10,897.88</b>		<b>10,897.88</b>
Promotional Expenses	330.87		330.87
Shipping Expense	429.66		429.66
<b>Total Convention Expense</b>	<b>13,546.09</b>	<b>15,482.00</b>	<b>-1,935.91</b>
COSA Committees			
Literature Committee	195.00	175.00	20.00
Outreach Committee	254.33		254.33
Conferences	142.00		142.00
<b>Total Outreach Committee</b>	<b>396.33</b>		<b>396.33</b>
<b>Total COSA Committees</b>	<b>591.33</b>	<b>175.00</b>	<b>416.33</b>
COSA Products			
CDs		50.00	-50.00
Postage/Shipping	1,860.99	2,000.00	-139.01
Printing	4,688.64	2,500.00	2,188.64
<b>Total COSA Products</b>	<b>6,549.63</b>	<b>4,550.00</b>	<b>1,999.63</b>
Office Expenses			
Bank Fees	4.00	20.00	-16.00
Foreign Exchange Fees	0.00		0.00
<b>Total Bank Fees</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>-16.00</b>
Insurance	2,044.14	2,200.00	-155.86
Office Equipment	135.30	304.00	-168.70
Office Supplies	441.16	750.00	-308.84
Phone/Fax Line/internet	349.50	500.00	-150.50
Postage		89.00	-89.00
Rent	6,382.56	7,000.00	-617.44
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>9,356.66</b>	<b>10,863.00</b>	<b>-1,506.34</b>
Payroll Expenses			
ADP/ QB fees	930.00	850.00	80.00
Taxes	539.78	950.00	-410.22
Wages	7,056.00	9,500.00	-2,444.00
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>8,525.78</b>	<b>11,300.00</b>	<b>-2,774.22</b>
Professional Fees		750.00	-750.00
Spring Branch ISD	54.19	75.00	-20.81
Staff Travel Expenses		800.00	-800.00
Staff convention/delegate reg	382.80		382.80
Staff Rooms		800.00	-800.00
<b>Total Staff Travel Expenses</b>	<b>382.80</b>	<b>1,600.00</b>	<b>-1,217.20</b>
State of kentucky	15.00	20.00	-5.00
Taxes Harris County	170.34	275.00	-104.66
Technology Fees			
Authnet Gateway Fee	80.00	170.00	-90.00
Getsy/Fetchapp	110.00	132.00	-22.00
Mail Chimp	366.93	360.00	6.93
Netfirms	181.39		181.39

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	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Paymentech fees	1,419.75	2,200.00	-780.25
PayPal Fees	733.70	875.00	-141.30
Shopify Fees	1,444.34	750.00	694.34
Website Fees	35.97	150.00	-114.03
ZOOM		100.00	-100.00
<b>Total Technology Fees</b>	<b>4,372.08</b>	<b>4,737.00</b>	<b>-364.92</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$57,559.12</b>	<b>\$67,437.00</b>	<b>\$ -9,877.88</b>
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>\$14,219.76</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$14,219.76</b>
Other Income			
Pre 2018 expense reversals	301.01		301.01
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$301.01</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$301.01</b>
Other Expenses			
Pre 2018 convention exp	2,000.00		2,000.00
Pre 2018 office exp	323.00		323.00
Pre 2018 payroll taxes	0.00		0.00
Pre 2018 sales tax exp	244.63		244.63
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,567.63</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$2,567.63</b>
NET OTHER INCOME	<b>\$ -2,266.62</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$ -2,266.62</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$11,953.14</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$11,953.14</b>

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# ISO COSA

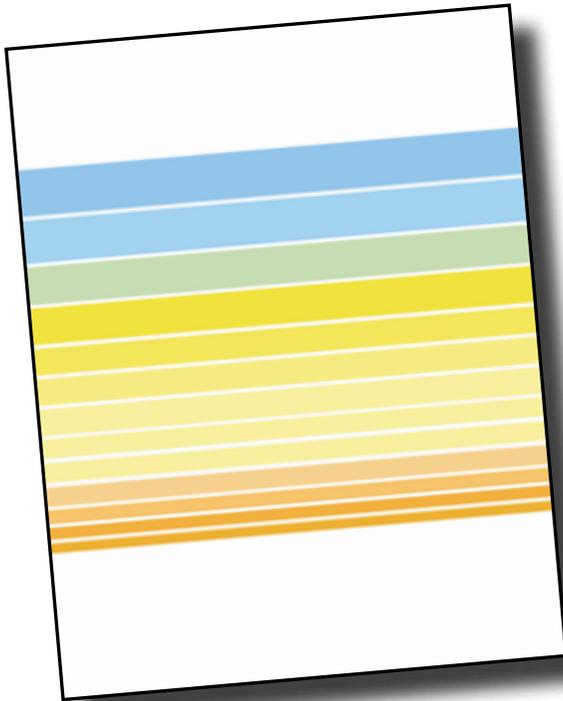
## BUDGET OVERVIEW: ISO OF COSA 2019-20 - FY20 P&L

July 2019 - June 2020

	TOTAL
Income	
Convention Income	
Convention Donations	
7th tradition -convention	2,000.00
Individual	1,000.00
Pre-Convention Fundraising	500.00
Registration Scholarship	1,000.00
<b>Total Convention Donations</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>
Registration	14,450.00
Silent Auction/Serenity to Go	3,800.00
<b>Total Convention Income</b>	<b>22,750.00</b>
Delegate Registration	2,000.00
Donations	
Automatic Recurring Donations	15,768.00
Group	8,856.00
Individual	4,968.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>29,592.00</b>
Sales	15,600.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$69,942.00</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$69,942.00</b>
Expenses	
Annual Delegate Meeting Expense	2,000.00
Board Expenses	
Board Convention Travel	7,000.00
Board convention/delegate registration	2,255.00
Board Working Weekend	4,500.00
<b>Total Board Expenses</b>	<b>13,755.00</b>
Convention Expense	
Convention Supplies	1,970.00
Hospitality	150.00
Hotel	
Audio/Visual	1,500.00
Hotel Deposit	10,600.00
Room block attrition charge	5,152.00
Room Rental	1,512.00
<b>Total Hotel</b>	<b>18,764.00</b>
Shipping Expense	500.00
<b>Total Convention Expense</b>	<b>21,384.00</b>
COSA Committees	
Literature Committee	199.92
Outreach Committee	804.00
<b>Total COSA Committees</b>	<b>1,003.92</b>

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	TOTAL
COSA Products	
Medallion/Pins	444.00
Postage/Shipping	2,004.00
Printing	4,560.00
<b>Total COSA Products</b>	<b>7,008.00</b>
Office Expenses	
Insurance	2,196.00
Office Supplies	300.00
Phone/Fax Line/internet	360.00
Rent	6,800.00
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>9,656.00</b>
Payroll Expenses	
ADP/ QB fees	1,140.00
Taxes	600.00
Wages	7,560.00
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>9,300.00</b>
Spring Branch ISD	72.00
Staff Travel Expenses	
Staff convention/delegate reg	244.00
Staff travel - convention	500.00
<b>Total Staff Travel Expenses</b>	<b>744.00</b>
State of kentucky	15.00
Taxes Harris County	300.00
Technology Fees	
Authnet Gateway Fee	120.00
Getsy/Fetchapp	120.00
Mail Chimp	600.00
Netfirms	396.00
Paymentech fees	1,200.00
PayPal Fees	600.00
Shopify Fees	1,560.00
ZOOM	108.00
<b>Total Technology Fees</b>	<b>4,704.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$69,941.92</b>
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>\$0.08</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$0.08</b>



# The ISO of COSA is pleased to announce a **new literature offering!**

Get all of our Twelve Step booklets under one cover!

- Have all the booklets together in one place.
- Use it as a workbook – plenty of space provided.
- Take it anywhere – it has an anonymous cover!

**The book is a new, convenient format so you can enjoy all our Step booklets in one place.\***

It's a beautifully finished 8 ½" x 11" format, glue-bound book of 108 pages. It features a glossy, color cover that is anonymous—no title or logo. Only the colorful stripes behind our logo are shown.

**Get your copy now at the introductory price of \$15.00 each at the COSA Store on our website. Quantities are limited.**

Working the COSA Twelve Steps

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The Twelve Concepts of COSA	

**Step One:**  
*We admitted that we were powerless over compulsive sexual behavior--that our lives had become unmanageable.*

**W**hen the majority of us came to COSA, we were in varying stages of collapse, from an inability to eat, sleep or do routine daily tasks to a white-faced trembling state of nausea and fear, to feeling driven by vengeful anger at the betrayal we felt by the addict. The realization of how deep our loved one's problem went and of its power to debilitate us as well left us stripped and in some cases, unable to go on. At our worst, we thought of suicide and murder at the same time, yet a part of us cried incessantly to somehow stop feeling completely, whether by leaving or by helping the addict and/or hanging on to him or her. We thought maybe things would be okay if we could be enough.

Some of us believed the addict, while others felt outraged when the addict implied, hinted, or said it was our fault, that the pressures we exerted on them were overwhelming or that if we would just do more, be more, everything would be okay. Some of us were adamant that we had no part in any of the issues we were dealing with, and some of us thought it actually was our fault. We also blamed the addict. We had our own shame, and may have been used to taking blame. In any case, we took on the responsibility to be enough—to be capable enough, patient enough, attractive enough, responsible enough, easy enough, silent or outspoken enough, to be a super hero in some or all respects, in order to help this person we loved. In doing so, we hoped to gain the respect, love, attention and/or fidelity we felt we deserved or needed. When these attempts to control or fix the addict failed, we found hopelessness, anger, despair, apathy, desperation, or all of these.

Somewhere in our backgrounds, we felt abandoned and we learned survival and control tactics. Now, these were our defenses of choice. When we applied these control tactics to the relationship with our addict,

many of us started snooping, checking bank records, odometer readings, endlessly psychoanalyzing the addict; all the while looking to separate the truth from the lies we were being told, yet denying the reality of our lives. When we applied our avoidance or fantasy tactics, we ignored the outbursts of anger over nothing, blaming ourselves as the cause of the treatment we received. We let pass the silences that sometimes went on for days, hoping if we were quiet, cheerful or sullen, our loved one would notice and take interest again in us, our family, and their relationships. We were afraid to ask questions we had a right to ask: "Where were you?" "When will you be home?" "What happened to the money?" "Do you want to be here?"

Some of us matched how messed up the addict was with our own out-of-control behaviors, or became scapegoats to shift the focus. Fearing abandonment or worse, we often refused help as we fed our own addictions, or we somehow crippled ourselves so we could not leave. We hurt ourselves by overeating, quitting our jobs, obsessively spending or hoarding, drinking alcohol, using illegal or prescription drugs. We gave up on ourselves and our abilities. We reacted by disappearing, being nice, caretaking, or by arguing, being a slob, getting depressed, and acting like a baby. With varied responses, we looked like exhibitionists, sex addicts, saints, model citizens, wallflowers, or a mixture, in order to remove ourselves from the pain of reality.

Distancing from other people and things we loved, we sucked the joy out of our own lives to focus more on the addict and the problems in our family and our parents and our kids, our friends, and to ourselves. We told everyone or no one, but in any case, we pulled away into our own shell of hurt and distrust. As we grew more and more isolated, we hoped things would turn out alright given just a little more time, while we,

page 1 • Step One of COSA

**\*This book is a compilation of our existing Step booklets, not to be confused with the forthcoming basic text.**

# Letter from the Chair



The 2019 Houston Convention Committee created such a welcoming atmosphere that it truly felt to me like a big group of friends gathering for a long weekend together. I loved catching up with friends I see each year and making new friends along the way. The Convention Committee paid a lot of attention to creating many inviting nooks and areas in which to mingle and socialize. There was even one occasion where an ice-machine room made for a lovely ad-hoc gathering spot. COSAs will socialize just about anywhere!

Our workshops, panels, and speakers were outstanding. There was healing power and Higher Power in abundance. There were four workshops going on simultaneously throughout the weekend. Needless to say, there was a lot going on. I plan to purchase the recordings of the workshops that I wasn't able to attend so that I don't miss anything that was so generously provided.

As social as it was, there was work to be done, too. The Annual Delegate Meeting took place Friday, May 24th. You can read the summary of the meeting in this edition of the Balance, but what it doesn't convey is the feeling that was in the room—the joy and excitement that rippled through as each of the nine proposed chapters of the basic text was voted on and each was unanimously approved. Every hand in the room was raised in approval. It was a sight to behold. Not just for the benefit it brings to our basic text, but in part because the voting cards this year were in the shape and colors of apples with smiling faces (purchased from a Teacher's Supply Store). There were Red Delicious for red votes, Golden Delicious for yellow votes and Granny Smith for green votes. We took the work seriously and worked hard, but it's COSA, and we get to be joyful in our service! Just recalling the sight of all those smiling Granny Smith apples bobbing in the air still makes me laugh.

I did something this year at convention that I never wanted to do. I volunteered to be the COSA speaker for the other fellowship's banquet. This particular service opportunity has always been so far outside my comfort zone that it wasn't just a "no" for me, it was a "never." But this year when the need arose, I realized something had shifted in me. I have long had deep compassion for the addict, but now I also had a message of hope that I prayed would resonate with those still suffering, in both fellowships. The topic of rebuilding trust immediately sprang to my mind when the convention committee said they were looking for a speaker. I've learned that this kind of "out of the blue" inspiration is a clear nudge from my Higher Power. My "never want to do it" was about to meet its match.

I was nervous to say the least, but my Higher Power had me wrapped in a loving embrace from start to finish. Two dear COSA friends and I had dinner together before the event, and then they accompanied me to the other fellowship's hotel. They waited with me until the doors opened to allow COSAs to come in. When it was time for me to speak, another very precious COSA friend gave my introduction. She, and her words, were such a gift to me. It steadied my pounding heart and gave me courage as I stepped up to speak.

Later that night my friends and I returned to our hotel and gathered in one of our hotel rooms. We kicked off our shoes and just hung out. We laughed hilariously at some of the stumbles we made before recovery. It was a loving, healthy, wonderfully COSA way to finish the day. I treasured it. My "never want to do it" turned into a service experience that I never want to forget.

With a full and joyful heart,

Sandy S.  
International Service Organization of COSA Board Chair

# Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

When sending donations to the ISO of COSA, please include your meeting number so we can record it properly and post it in *Balance*. We thank you for all your donations!

To find your meeting number:

- Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org>, click on the Meetings and Events tab, and then on Find a Local Meeting.
- Search for your meeting and note the meeting number in parentheses next to your meeting name.

## RECURRING DONATIONS

### Keeping Updated

Thank you for your donations to the International Service Organization of COSA. Currently, our system is set to automatically update your credit card when it gets a new expiration date. If you need to increase, decrease, or cancel your recurring donations, please contact the ISO of COSA at [iso@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:iso@cosa-recovery.org). Thank you for your support!



## International Donations

For the first time in COSA history, we have the capability to receive international donations through the COSA website!

Our international groups and members can now use the “Donate” button on our website to contribute as a group or as an individual or make recurring donations to COSA. The technology required to make this change has been challenging, but our Technology Committee’s talent and dedication has paid off. This opens new opportunities to honor our Seventh Tradition and fund our mission to carry the COSA message even further.

On behalf of the ISO of COSA Board, we are deeply grateful for this wonderful new feature. We are equally grateful for our Technology Committee.

Sandy S.  
International Service Organization of COSA Board Chair

## Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

### April 2019

AR-02 (Bryant).....	\$ 50.00
CA-13 (Irvine) .....	\$ 34.00
CA-14 .....	\$ 125.00
CA-18 (San Francisco).....	\$ 46.14
CA-24 (San Jose).....	\$ 96.00
FL-15 (Naples).....	\$ 50.00
MN-01 (Mankato).....	\$ 40.00
MN-02 (St. Paul).....	\$ 100.00
TEL-12 (Daily Tenth Step Telemeeting) ..	\$ 36.15
WI-09 (Madison).....	\$ 200.00
For Convention Scholarships .....	\$ 860.00
Individual Donations .....	\$ 148.75
Individual Recurring.....	\$ 1259.00
<b>April Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 3045.04</b>

### May 2019

AZ-01 (Tucson).....	\$ 50.00
CO-04 (Boulder) .....	\$ 21.00
OH-01 (Cincinnati).....	\$ 40.00
TX-04 (Houston).....	\$ 50.00
TX-52 (Ft. Worth).....	\$ 500.00
WI-04 (Eau Claire).....	\$ 100.00
For Convention Scholarships .....	\$ 22.00
Convention Donations .....	\$ 2372.00
Individual Donations .....	\$ 258.00
Individual Recurring.....	\$ 1241.00
<b>May Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 4654.00</b>

# STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6· 7 ·8·9·10·11·12

## HUMBLY ASKED GOD TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS.

Step Seven is dear to my heart because I saw how my character defects manifested themselves, what program tools were most effective in restoring me to sanity, and how much more connected I became with my Higher Power all within twelve weeks.

My sponsor asked me to develop a chart of my shortcomings to observe daily for twelve weeks. I added a chart of the program tools I could check off at the same time that served as a reminder to be gentle with myself. Each day, I took time to review my day, check the charts and journal about it. Because of the daily check, I was able to see my patterns.

I found myself noting when I was taking care of others and when I was neglecting myself. My first reaction was to “fix” and be a caretaker to others. This was especially obvious to me in the way I related to those I love most, including my life partner and my children. I needed to stop and ask myself some questions: Whose problem is this? Who can solve it? How am I involved? What is my boundary? I intentionally focused on myself and my program. I learned to practice detachment with love.

Offering advice and finding solutions for the problems of others were traits I used to be proud of. It made me feel powerful, knowledgeable or smart when I was able to help others. Now I realized that all this gave me was a false sense of self-worth. Did others really want to hear advice or solutions? Maybe a listening ear was all they wanted. I saw that I was enmeshed with my relatives and close friends. Here again, I needed to find my own boundary and make sure I was not care-taking. I practiced caring.

Sometimes I communicated vaguely because I was unsure myself. Other times, I communicated vaguely because I wanted to please others. Sometimes I was vague because I was manipulating. Here, I needed to ask my HP for help. I had to discover the root causes of my issues. What did I want? What did I think? I checked in with myself. I found words that communicated directly. I took care to be direct, especially with family and friends. I minimized misunderstanding and conflicts. I became better at direct and honest communication.

In my work and personal life, I planned ahead, strategized and tried to control future outcomes. I was successful at this. Consequently, I obsessed and worried a lot in times of stress, high anxiety or emotional turmoil. I learned the meaning of “let go and let God”. I did my part. Asking my HP for help was really an important step to regaining sanity. I learned the benefits of being present. Journaling calmed me so I could be thoughtful about solutions. Sometimes I worked Steps One through Four to get clarity. Meditation was helpful in finding peace of mind and spirit. In addition, I also found that I often lamented the past. I rehashed the past and thought about what else I could have done. Whenever I found myself regretting the past, I said the Serenity Prayer and asked my HP for acceptance. I realized how truly powerless I was to change the past no matter how much I regretted it.

I found myself to be in denial more times than I realized. When I was in denial I didn’t have to change my behavior. I didn’t have to acknowledge certain uncomfortable realities. I needed to take a good long look at situations and acknowledge them for what they were. It took awhile and was often painful, but it was the right thing to do. I could no longer be in denial.

When I got angry, I got carried away by my emotions. I became sarcastic, blamed others, and pointed out the mistakes of others. I rationalized or “intellectualized” my anger and was righteous about it. In addition, I got very angry at myself when I discovered my own mistakes, did something stupid or performed “less than” my own ex-

pectations. For this I berated myself and put myself down.

In recovery, I learned that there are healthy ways to deal with anger. I could acknowledge my anger, but not act on it. I discovered program tools to calm myself, such as program calls, journaling, meditation and asking my Higher Power for guidance. I could set the issue aside and work steps around this. This new behavior was very difficult for me since I had allowed my anger to rule me in the past.

As the weeks went by, I became more mindful of my traits and behavior. At the end of the Seventh Step, I knew I had grown in recovery and was very grateful for the gifts of the Program.

~Mila T.

Reprinted from *Balance* July/August 2011

# STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7· 8 ·9·10·11·12

## MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

My first Step Eight was slow and agonizing work. The list itself took months, because I was paralyzed with an irrational fear that the list might be infinite. My sponsor encouraged, supported, and cajoled me, and I finally had a list which included every name on my Fourth Step and more. She told me that if I was in doubt, write the name and we would talk it over. I met with my sponsor regularly, and we worked hard together on the second part of Step Eight as I learned to become willing to make amends to them all. First, I was asked to make three columns. The first column listed all the people I was “Willing” to make amends to now. The second column held names of people I could “Maybe” make amends to someday. The “Never-in-a-Million-Years” people were all lined up in the third column, and they seemed to be laughing at me.

My sponsor asked me to make some of the easier amends, and I continued the process of becoming willing. Each time I met with my sponsor, we talked about what was holding me back from being willing to make amends to each of the people I was not yet ready to deal with. Many times, I told her “He HURT me!” or “She should be making amends to me!” Slowly, patiently, my sponsor taught me that Step Eight was all about being willing to let go of the hold other people had on me. I had a dozen people on my back and they were there because I let them be there. I learned that I was the only one standing in the way of my recovery.

Forgiveness was the key for me. I needed to forgive one person at a time in order to be willing to approach them to make amends. It took time and patience. I had to realize that “it takes what it takes” and I had to be willing to trust the process.

Little by little, names were moved from “Never” to “Maybe” to “Willing.” As Step Eight melted into Step Nine, I continued to recover and claim more of the miracles this program holds for me.

~Claudia M.

Reprinted from *Balance* July/August 2011

# TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6· 7 ·8·9·10·11·12

## EVERY COSA GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.

When I first attended a meeting, the Twelve Steps and Traditions were read. I immediately became aware of the Seventh Tradition when the words were read “self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” I thought about money \$\$\$\$\$. I was barely getting the bills paid. I do not have a lot of extra cash just floating around. I knew in that first meeting that God led me to COSA for a reason. I just did not understand the “why”. So, I decided to attend every meeting anyway even though I could not “contribute” financially. It took me about year and a half to realize that I was contributing in another way. I was actively working the program and sharing my experience, strength and hope. I received courage and strength from my Higher Power and my sponsor to do a First Step during the group meeting. As the second year approached, I would participate in running the meeting or do mini presentations.

Another year went by and I asked my sponsor if I could return my medallions that I had. She said, “Of course, and you could do this instead of money for the Seventh Tradition. This way the group would not have to buy more medallions.” In the same year, I went to the national convention. I totally spaced the Seventh Tradition. I did not bring any cash with me since this was sparse. I was ashamed and embarrassed that I did not think of this. Being three years in the program, I should have known better. I wondered to myself how could I give back. Somehow, I heard God say to me, “Do not be concerned; an opportunity will present itself.” I shared my story during the “Forgiveness Workshop.” On the last day of the convention, I offered to give my time to the bookstore in which I began to be aware of what literature was available. In comparison to the SAA literature table, the COSA literature table was half the size. So, I put this information in the back of my mind.

When I became aware of my strengths and gifts, I let myself be open and began to listen to all the possibilities that my Higher Power guided me to. In my sixth year, I volunteered my time with the Literature Development Committee. It is truly amazing how God provides opportunities to enhance yourself. You just never know who will be more affected by these experiences: yourself, others, or both. When you give, you receive so much more. I have found this to be very true and humbling. I am feeling very rich from these experiences. Be open and listen to your Higher Power; you just never know how your life will be transformed. Let the transformation begin.

~Bunny

Reprinted from *Balance* July/August 2012



### BY THE FELLOWSHIP FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

We encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles and announcements that share up-coming COSA events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers, etc. We also would love to hear your ideas for what you would like to see in future articles. The *Balance* is a newsletter for the membership, by the membership.

Guidelines for Submitting Literature: [http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/lit\\_guidelines.pdf](http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/lit_guidelines.pdf)

Please send your articles to [COSACopy@yahoo.com](mailto:COSACopy@yahoo.com)

or by mail to: ISO of COSA, Central Office, 9219 Katy Freeway, Suite 212, Houston, TX 77024 U.S.A.

Phone: 866-899-2672 E-mail: [info@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:info@cosa-recovery.org)

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# TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

## COSA SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NON-PROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.

I recently had the opportunity to study the Eighth Tradition with some fellow COSAs. We have been studying the Traditions and I have been learning and growing so much as a result of this, however, I must admit I was skeptical about studying the Eighth Tradition; it sounded kind of boring.

I tried to keep an open mind and knew I would benefit from whatever learning there was to learn as I had from the other Traditions we have been studying. As it always happens, exactly what I needed to learn was right there for me.

In studying the Eighth Tradition I made the connection that I will never be a COSA professional. In fact, there are no COSA professionals. One of the gifts of our fellowship is that we are all non-professionals.

Imagine if some of us were considered professionals and others weren't, how would we ever truly achieve COSA unity or find our group's conscience? Who would decide who qualified as a professional or who was labeled a non-professional COSA?

The gift of our fellowship remaining forever non-professional is that I am of equal standing with all of my fellow COSAs. I am no better or no worse than anyone else in COSA. I believe we are all equals in COSA and equal in the eyes of God. We are all perfectly imperfect, beloved children of God.

I have struggled often over the years with my character defects of comparing myself to others and believing I am either "better than" or "less than". When I was new in COSA I often felt "less than" because I had less recovery or I thought I was more messed up than others in the fellowship. Sometimes I felt as though I had nothing to offer the group if I hadn't completed the Step we were discussing. I have struggled at other times with my ego, judgment, and "stinking thinking" that I have the right answers or know what is best for others.

While I continue to use the Sixth, Seventh, and Tenth Steps around these character defects as they come up, here was a great reminder, built right into the Traditions, of humility and equality. A lesson for me in how to remember we are all experts in where our COSA disease has taken us and we are all we are all new to learning more deeply about this disease, how we have been affected, and the God of our understanding.

Shares from those who attend their first meeting are just as valuable for my recovery and growth as shares from those who have been in COSA many more years than I have. And, no matter how I may feel about myself on that day, my share is just as worthwhile a gift as anyone else's. My service is just as valued and my voice is just as important.

~Sarah S.  
Oakland, CA



With gratitude from a convention committee chair-

Sitting here thinking about the 2019 convention, the main things that come to mind are community and gratitude. With over 100 attendees, 22 presentations, five speakers, two meals, a serene hotel and several other activities, the 2019 COSA convention in Houston was a community of recovery at its best. No event is ever truly isolated and for something of this size, there were many people who made it happen.

First, a shout out to the convention committee: Over 20 people exhibited accountability, flexibility, and creativity as they upheld their commitments, filled in where needed, and did their best work; second to the presenters who were vulnerable enough to share their experience, strength, hope, and energy with long term friends and new acquaintances; and finally, to the convention attendees who were receptive and courageous in their willingness to grow, learn, and participate. Many people were in two or three of these roles. Even those who didn't attend but sent their thoughts, energy, or financial support made the 2019 convention a success.

Many thanks to the COSA community for your collective wisdom and energy. Much hope for the 2020 convention in Columbus, Ohio. For myself, attending and being a part of the creation of the 2019 convention was a growth experience all year and it was my pleasure to practice the Twelfth Step through this service to the community. For those reading this, please consider the 2020 convention as a part of your personal growth through attendance, service, and/or support. You'll be glad you did!

Peace always,  
Julana S., Houston, TX



Plan to join fellow COSAs from around the world in Ohio at the 27th Annual COSA Convention. We'll spend the entire weekend centering, caring, collaborating, and **Connecting in Columbus**, May 22-25, 2020.

If you click [https://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/2020\\_Bookmarks.pdf](https://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/2020_Bookmarks.pdf), you'll see an invitation from the Columbus COSAs, which can also serve as a handy bookmark with details about the convention. Simply print and cut.

Come early and connect with other early birds. Explore nearby art galleries, shops, and restaurants. Run along the riverfront. Enjoy kayaking or paddle boating. Check out the science museum or the Veterans museum. Everything is accessible via the free shuttle that stops in front of our hotel.

We'll "headquarter" at the Hyatt Regency Downtown with our meeting rooms located on the second floor. The associated fellowship will be meeting on the first floor, an escalator ride down.

The ConCom (convention committee) is already planning the convention. In addition to speakers and workshops, we're organizing an open mic event called Nightcap of Creativity where COSAs can present their poems, prose, songs, stand-up comedy, and all genres of creativity. We're researching an online auction. We're looking forward to raffling unique gift baskets donated by COSA groups or individuals. (Would your meeting or intergroup be interested in creating a gift basket around a theme such as self-care, fun, program tools, or your city or state?)

We still have opportunities for service with the convention. Consider serving on ConCom with a great group of recovering COSAs! We have immediate needs in three areas:

- Registration: three or four COSAs needed to cover all aspects of registration; a nodding acquaintance with spreadsheets is useful.
- Treasurer: one COSA with bookkeeping experience desired; no need to be a CPA.
- General help with Care and Support, Decorations, Hospitality Suite, Quiet Room, and technical (online) assistance.

Thank you for your willingness to provide service for the convention and the fellowship. We greatly appreciate your help. To join ConCom or for more information, please email Sydney S. at [sydney.cosa@gmail.com](mailto:sydney.cosa@gmail.com). We hope to see you in Columbus in 2020!