



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Pre-Convention Issue

May-June 2009



Calling all COSAs!

We hope you will be able to join us at the COSA Convention in Oakland, CA over Memorial Day Weekend this May! Hopefully many of you have your plane tickets and hotel reservations in place and are feeling the excitement of seeing and meeting fellow COSAs from around the World. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Oakland Convention Committee for their commitment to the process of creating and running this important event. Some members of this committee have been working to make this year's convention a rich experience for well over a year already. The convention is truly a symbol of the Twelfth Step in action, as COSA members step up to be of service by helping the COSA who still suffers.

I thought it might be helpful to share a short story for those of you who may be new to COSA or are exploring codependency or co-addiction. Disclosure of my partner's sex addiction happened about 6 weeks before the 2002 Convention in San Francisco. I laughed (maybe sneered) at my partner's suggestion that I should go to that convention. I wasn't ready, I was in too much pain and in denial about how to take care of myself or that I was even doing harmful things to myself.

Before the San Francisco convention there were no COSA meetings in the Bay Area. I am forever grateful to the small group of COSAs who found each other at the convention that year and started the Bay Area's first COSA meeting on the heels of the convention. It was through the courage and strength of other men and women before me in COSA that I found the support I needed to feel better about myself and stop the insanity in my life. I am so grateful to live in a place now that is teaming with COSA meetings, where I can pick up the phone at any time and know I can reach out for help.



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Volume 5, Issue 6

7th Traditions Individuals

Anonymous	\$ 30.00
Redondo Beach, CA	\$ 10.00
San Jose, CA	\$ 2.00
New York, NY	\$ 20.00
Issaquah, WA	\$ 18.45
Portludlow, WA	\$ 3.50
Stockton, NJ	<u>\$ 20.00</u>
 Total	 \$103.95

UROCKI

Recurring Donations
Total for
2/18/09-5/02/09
\$543

Thanks so much!**7th Traditions Groups**

CA-06	\$ 50.00
CA-09	\$ 58.13
CA-13	\$ 18.37
CA-18	\$ 60.00
IN-06	\$ 25.00
MI-03	\$ 15.00
MN-04	\$ 55.00
MN-14	\$ 50.00
NY-03	\$ 90.00
TX-28	\$ 25.00
Dallas	\$ 87.64
WI-04	<u>\$ 30.00</u>
TOTAL	\$564.14

**Tuesday & Thursday Telemeeting's**www.cosacall.com**Telephone number:****1-906-481-2100 Passcode: 679461**

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific Time
(8 Mountain, 9 Central, 10 Eastern)

Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time
(7 Mountain, 8 Central, 9 Eastern)

Welcome NEW COSA Groups!
Temecula/Vista: CA-22
Lexington: KY-03
Houston: TX-30
Webster: TX-31

**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 upcoming 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.

Please send your articles to: COSACopy@yahoo.com
or by snail mail to the COSA ISO PO Box listed on the envelope below.

Contact the ISO of COSA

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We are a gathering of equals who simply want to help each other find serenity one day at a time by being true to our best selves. Ironically I was more comfortable keeping company with sex addicts (since I had been surrounded by them and was a magnet to them for most of my life) and I suppose I couldn't recognize my co-addiction until I was sitting in the midst of other co-addicts and had this very strange sensation that I could finish their sentences for them based on shared addictive behaviors. I find conventions to be one of the best places for me to practice my Twelfth step commitment to learn how to apply the steps in all areas of my life (of which there is a never-ending supply) and to extend my hand and my heart to those who are suffering and those who are newcomers to our fellowship. I've also learned that the love I receive in COSA is invaluable because of its unconditional nature. I have relapsed in my co-addiction more than once and my COSA friends and community has always been there for me. Today I continue to learn how to improve my program work at every convention I attend. The annual conventions are like a New Year's celebration for me. I get filled up with lots of new ideas and tools for my recovery and I get to take home a giant balloon of hope.



It is with great humility that I look back on the person I was when I said no to the prospect of a helping hand and certainly would never have predicted I'd be serving as your Convention Chair seven years later when the COSA Convention returns to my backyard. I can't wait to hear the stories of how this year's convention will help launch or reinforce the recovery of both those who attend and those, like me once, who don't even know how the convention will help them over the next year. If you find the courage and wisdom to come join us this year I believe you will receive the strength, hope and tools that will lead you toward the serenity we all seek.

With gratitude and great excitement to see what will happen next,
Kerry M.

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Free COSA CD to pre-registered Delegates!

All COSA groups are encouraged to send a Delegate to the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting takes place all day on the Friday that kicks off the COSA International Convention, May 22nd.

If your group is sending a Delegate to the Annual Meeting and your group completes the Delegate Registration Form prior to May 20th, you will receive a FREE COSA CD at the convention bookstore.

The Delegate Registration Form can be obtained on the convention website:

www.cosa-recovery.org/oakland

User Name: oakland

Password: cali2009

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Last year was my first year attending a COSA Convention. The experience changed my life! I jumped in with both feet and attended both the Business Meeting on Friday as the delegate from my home-group and the Convention. I got as much out of the Business as I did the Convention; I learned a great deal about COSA on the national level - and had fun while doing it!

Linda P.



As a person living in a rural area far from the nearest face-to-face meeting, the convention is my chance to connect to new recovery friends and to reconnect with my long-time recovery friends. I talk on the phone and e-mail all year-round to my dear friends, but nothing beats the thrill of looking into their sweet faces.

Also, as a double-winner, I get to experience workshops and meetings for both of my fellowships at one location. I feel deeply at home and fully myself at the convention.

Deborra



When I first started going to COSA meetings about six years ago, I learned a lot. I went to as many meetings as I could-- as many as were available in those days. I really valued those meetings. But I have come to realize that for ME, recovery happens between meetings-- in those times of fellowship with other COSA members-- at coffee, on the phone, with my co-sponsor or sponsee, at retreats, at convention. It's in fellowship that I can practice my recovery skills.



And there's no better fellowship opportunity than to go to a COSA convention and start to get to know others who share many of my experiences. At convention, I'm out of my usual environment, and joined up with others with the same purpose: to improve our lives. I go to meetings and workshops, but at convention I have the time to meet with other COSAS in the times between activities-- in the Hospitality Room, sitting on the stairs, in a private corner. Here we can build our support relationships for the times between meetings to come.

I hope all those who are new to the program, or those who feel like they're not quite connecting to others at their meetings, do whatever they can to attend the COSA Convention in Oakland this year. I hope others find out what goes on between meetings.

Ginger H.



I try to attend the COSA Convention every year. At times it can be a big financial commitment, but what I receive in return is priceless. I receive wonderful information on recovery from attending the workshops. I gain hope from listening to the speakers.

Every year when it comes time to make the decision to go to the COSA Convention, my HP tells me loud and clear that the COSA Convention is the place I need to be!

Connie P., Mesa, AZ

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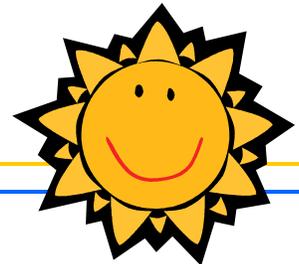
My attendance at the last five COSA Conventions has allowed me to participate in COSA on a national level. This experience has been phenomenal in helping me know myself and grow knowledgeable of my codependent issues. As I work the steps of COSA and keep in touch with the program on this larger scale, I like the me I am becoming more and more.

I was amazed to learn at the convention how many of our fellowship work the program with no local meetings but by attending telemeetings and/or online meetings and by going that extra mile to attend convention. I get to meet, share with and learn from so many awesome people while at convention and the food, meetings and workshops are wonderful. I attend a small local meeting in New Orleans and call in to the telemeetings (not often enough). My sponsor lives in another state so we have mostly telephonic communications but I get to see her at convention. We met at the New Orleans convention and I asked her to sponsor me at the Indianapolis convention. One of the smartest decisions I ever made. She said YES. I'll see her again in Oakland.

I know the Convention Committee is dedicated to improving the convention every year. In Oakland, new features, such as lists of child-sitting services and newcomers orientation, are being added to accommodate as many needs as possible, to have us all be comfortable and able to attend.

If you are reading this and can possibly join us – the fellowship supports you to do so! We are important to each other. There is no time when that is felt more than at convention.

Lisa W.



Going to Seattle Convention

Seattle was the first convention I attended, both as a COSA delegate and volunteer. Probably my two biggest take-aways were seeing men in COSA - and how totally healing that was for me. I know this sounds just crazy, but until I actually MET Joey and the wonderful men of COSA at the convention, I harbored some very deep feelings about “what men had done to me” that I did not even realize. There is no one point where I realized this, it was just gradual. I was in a COSA event and realized that as I looked around and saw men around me, that I was not afraid or worried or triggered – just sharing recovery with other recovering COSAs.

The second Ah-Ha moment for me was at the Double Winner workshop. I started my recovery from sex addiction in 1986 in another fellowship and attended those wonderful meetings for many years. Because of this, I had heard of COSA for a long time before I attended my first meeting in 2005. The Double Winner meeting/workshop felt like home to me. We don't have these meetings locally, so hearing the men and women share about their journeys was very comforting and exciting at the same time.

These experiences have added depth and richness to my program, in that I now attend a mixed meeting every week and look forward to starting to attend a Double Winner telemeeting.

Thanks for letting me share. Ann R.

We are delighted with this year's line-up of COSA workshops for the 2009 Convention in Oakland. In their own special way, each workshop contributes to this year's theme of "Quaking with Clarity."

Here are some forms of clarity you may get from these workshops, just to give you a taste of what's to come:

Maybe some of us will want some basic clarity in recovery using our primary tool of recovery, the steps. We'll have workshops on 1,2,3 and you may even get on some solid ground with a workshop that will lead us through using Steps One through Twelve on relationship conflicts.

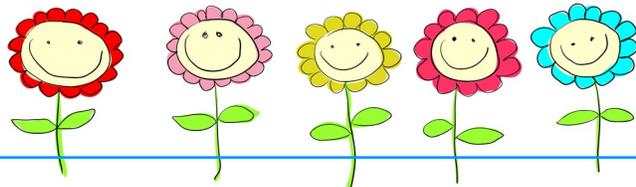
We'll have workshops offering some solid tools to support your program, like how to start and run an HIR meeting – *Healthy Intimate Relationships* (a Bay Area favorite for some COSA members) and a full panel on program calls as a recovery tool! You'll hear from other COSA members about their experience with the telephone as a recovery tool.

This year, we are able to offer a workshop for parents of sex addicts. Another one is for working an S-program while there are children in the home. Other workshops will be geared toward partners and anyone who may be re-parenting themselves for that matter.

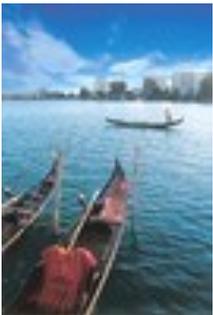
We'll have workshops that will stimulate your creativity and your clarity in your recovery with dance, movement through the steps with non-violent communication, and fun! (Is fun allowed? YES! For anyone who wants it ...) You may just get to take home an emergency preparedness kit. San Francisco isn't the only place we need these in our recovery tool box.

One promise is that in the course of being there, we'll shake and we'll quake together, on the path to some serious serenity. Anyone need some of that? I do. Can't wait to see you there!

Ami, for the Program Committee



There are 100 surprising things to see and do in Oakland.....



Gondola Servizio



Dunsmuir House & Gardens Historic Estate



Oakland Zoo



Chabot Space & Science Center



Jack London Water Taxi

Oakland sits in the center of the San Francisco Bay Area and is easily accessible by plane, train, automobile, BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), bus, and ferry. The Oakland International Airport is the most centrally located airport in the Bay Area, the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States.



Morcom Rose Garden

Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step Five, for me, required showing up after the completion of my Step Four inventory. It would have been easier to close the notebook after writing all that Fourth Step inventory and attempting to call it finished.

The steps are perfectly designed to keep me from falling back into my trap of silence and shame. After putting all of that Fourth Step stuff on paper, I now need to share it with someone else, God and myself. Saying it out loud to another person helped me hear those things myself. Saying it out loud helped me validate myself. Validation was something I never gave myself.

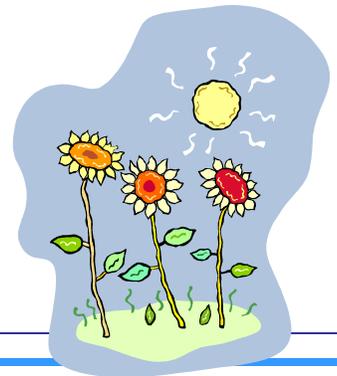
The healing process really began for me the night I did my first Fifth Step. I can remember driving to that meeting feeling like I was driving into a war zone. Nothing made sense about why I felt so frightened. I had chosen a very special, caring, and loving person to share my Fifth Step with. I now realize it was my childhood programming that frightened me so. I was planning a meeting in which I would be breaking the silence. I would be sharing my secrets. My family didn't do that. My family still doesn't do that.

After sharing my Fifth Step, I drove home wondering why I had put myself through such suffering and fear. I felt so much freedom, such a sense of release. My body felt loose and relaxed. There was clarity in my thinking. My Fifth Step gave me the tools to move on in my program. The release gave me the ability to open up to the preparation needed for my amends process to begin.

I have shared many Fifth Steps. Each time there is some tenseness, some fear. Always, upon completion, I feel freedom and growth.

Step Five can set you free.

Ila D., Michigan. 1996



ISO COSA Service Opportunities

- *VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
- *COSA CONNECTIONS COORDINATORS (CCCs)
- *LITERATURE LAYOUT COORDINATOR
- READERS/EDITORS
- LITERATURE COPYRIGHTS COORDINATOR
- ONLINE LISTINGS LIASON
- ONLINE MESSAGE BOARDS SUPPORT STAFF
- SPANISH-SPEAKING VOLUNTEERS
- PHONE LINE RESPONDERS
- ARCHIVIST

*Service Positions that are most needed.

If you would like to apply for one of the INTERNATIONAL SERVICE POSITIONS listed above or join an ISO-COSA Service Committee, please send an email to ISO@COSA-RECOVERY.ORG for more information.

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

I hit a wall when I first got to Step Six. After the high activity level of Steps Four and Five, how exactly was I going to “be” entirely ready to have God remove my defects? I was a woman of action! I didn’t understand what I was supposed to DO. What were the rules, the directions?

My sponsor had me read some Step Six literature from another fellowship, and write about what I had read. What I learned was that Step Six is one on which I would be taking action for the rest of my life, so I didn’t have to try to do it perfectly in one sitting. What I had to do was to START Step Six, and keep trying. That was my first goal with this step. I had a list of defects of character that had surfaced while doing Steps Four and Five, and I spent some time looking at those defects.

Next I discovered that I really liked some of my defects. First on that list was self-righteous anger. As a woman who rarely felt my anger, I had a sense of power when this type of anger surfaced. I felt superior to the object of my anger, which made me feel better about myself. Another example of a defect I didn’t really want to ask for help in removing was my tendency to gossip. Talking about someone with another person who shared my viewpoint enhanced my self-image also. Naturally I focused on those traits I had which were better than the object of my gossiping. At least I was better than that person! I began to say, in my conversations with God, “I’m not ready to give this defect up yet. Please help me to become ready.”

I wrote on a list those defects I felt ready to have removed, held the list in my hand, and asked God to please remove them. Even though I didn’t see

lightening strike, and didn’t instantly feel pure and perfect, I did experience a sense of relief that I didn’t have to “fix” myself, and that I had a partner in God to help me in becoming a better person.

Now I am aware so quickly when I’m experiencing a character defect, because I feel so uncomfortable. When I get that awareness, usually I can immediately ask God to remove it. I don’t have to wait for a formal Sixth Step. Through many years in COSA, I have changed so much. I will occasionally feel self-righteous anger, but before I act on that feeling, I write in my journal, speak to other trusted COSA friends about my feelings, and ask God for help in expressing that anger with respect for the other person. What a relief to feel comfortable after expressing anger respectfully to someone instead of hating myself for expressing anger in an unhealthy way! Gossip? Occasionally I will indulge in that defect, but I sure don’t like it anymore. It doesn’t feel good at all; when I catch myself in the middle of gossiping, I can say, “Oh, I’m gossiping, and I don’t want to do that.”

Step Six is such a gift of the COSA program to me. The result of working Step Six is that my self-esteem has improved tremendously, and I don’t have the need to act on character defects as frequently as I did as a newcomer. Thinking about this step brings me a feeling of being in harmony with God. I trust God with my deepest dislikes about myself, and God helps me by working with me to allow them to go, one day at a time.

Georgia,
Carson City, NV



STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~ FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Five Questions

1. Am I resisting admitting my wrongs? Can I talk to myself in honesty without being mean?
2. Can I talk to my Higher Power about my wrongs in a way that builds trust between myself and my Higher Power?
3. Who should I choose to listen to my Fifth Step and why.
4. What feelings of resistance do I have about sharing my discoveries with another human being? (Fear, shame, resentment, etc....) What are some of the things I can do to feel these feelings and take action anyway? Am I willing to pray about this resistance or talk about it with my sponsor or another COSA member?
5. Do I have a tendency to speak in generalities? How can I ensure that I share *exactly* what I've discovered? What holds me back? Am I ready to admit to myself the *exact* nature of my wrongs? To my HP? To another human being?
6. Have I approached the person of my choosing and asked them? Have I gotten an appointment time from them?
7. Do I have a plan for emotional self-care after I have taken this important step?

**Step Six Questions**

1. Do I accept the concept of "defects of character"? What does this mean to me?
2. What benefits are there of keeping each of my defects of character? What does the Step mean by the idea of God removing them all?
3. Am I willing to accept that even though I am ready, my defects may remain with me?
4. If I woke up tomorrow and God had removed all my defects of character, how would I know? Would others know?
5. What does "were entirely ready" mean to me?
6. If I am not *entirely ready*, how I will work toward readiness? Can I list my plans for each one?



SPREAD SOME *SUNSHINE!*

GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF

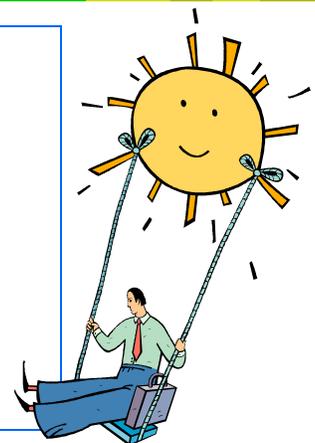
Balance

TO A COSA FRIEND!

to celebrate COSA Anniversaries, Birthdays,
or other special occasions!

It will be sure to bring the 'heart' of recovery to their life the whole year
through!!

See Literature Order form for details!



New Literature!! Now Available.....

COSA Step One
Completely REVISED booklet

Boundaries in Recovery
NEW COSA booklet