



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

November-December 2009

GRATITUDES AND REFLECTIONS

At the end of the year, and the beginning of the next year, many of us take time to reflect on what we are grateful for.

One of the most powerful tools in our Recovery is *Making a Gratitude List*. The ISO of COSA Board members share some of their *Gratitudes and Reflections*.



I am so grateful for the calm and peace that working the COSA program has brought to me and so many dear COSA friends. I am so grateful to learn how much more I have in common with other humans than the separateness I felt in the past. My hope for the rest of 2009 and into 2010 is abundant *willingness* to receive, *willingness* to let go and the freedom of standing and not leaning. The Promises do come true and the gifts of the program are totally worth every step of the journey!
Peace.
-Ann R.

From Kauai, here is my wish. I wish for all COSAs that they experience the joys of the Twelfth Step.
-Jackie

My wish is for peace and serenity for all.
-Joey Z., recovering co-addict

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7th Traditions Individuals

8/01/09–9/12/09

TOTAL **\$ 179.00****Thank You!**

Recurring Donations
 Total for 7/25/09-8/25/09
\$385.21

7th Traditions Groups

CA-04	30.00
CA-09	172.00
IA-01	50.00
MN-01	40.00
MN-02	100.00
MN-06	200.00
MN-17	20.00
MO-04	100.00
NM-01	50.00
TX-01	75.00
TX-04	45.00
TX-06	40.00
TX-26	49.00
TX-28	33.00
WA-05	23.00
WI-04	60.00
WA Retreat	<u>170.52</u>
TOTAL	\$1,257.52

COSA Telemeetings
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)

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time
 (4 Pacific, 5 Mountain, 6 Central)

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

**Welcome NEW
 COSA Group!**

CA-26

**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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GRATITUDES & REFLECTIONS

My wish for the COSA fellowship is that we continue to be inspired by recovery and our Higher Power's plan for each of us and that Tradition Three will continue to guide local meetings to a greater sense of diversity.

- Brian K

I am so grateful to COSA and all of the members and friends I have met. COSA saved my life and has given me the strength to have hope and serenity in my life where I never thought I would have it again. I have met life long friends that are a wonderful family of choice to me. I pray that those who are suffering will be directed to the recovery of COSA by their Higher Power.

God Bless,
- Suzanne R.

My wish for this season and the New Year is for all of us to recognize a Power Greater than ourselves as the source of our abundance and to realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

- Kerstin H., Albany, CA

My wish is for taking care of ourselves in healthy ways and detaching with love from those people, places and things that we need to let go of just for today. I am grateful for the growth of our fellowship.

- Lura Lisa

My wish for the COSA Fellowship is that we find hope, serenity and courage in our journey of Recovery.

- Lindy T., CA

To COSA friends, I wish us simple serenity and gentle kindness.

- MPT

I wish us balance and continued appreciation for diversity

- Katherine

My wish is that all suffering persons find a respite from pain and despair, that they find people who hear their cries for help and love them enough so they can begin to love themselves.

- JoAn D.

I pray for peace of mind, a grateful soul, and an abundance of kindness for all.

In Service,
- Paula, ISO of COSA
Central Office
Coordinator

Being on the Board feels like the gift of a second chance. I am grateful to my Higher Power for new opportunities to re-grow parts of myself the way a lizard might grow a new tail.

Sincerely,
- Carol Ann

I am so grateful to have so many contact numbers to call when I am struggling and lonely.

- Margie S.,
Indiana



Step 11

- "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."

When it comes down to it, recovery is about relationships. Relationship pain and dysfunction is what brought us to COSA in the first place. Steps One to Nine ask us to examine all our relationships, from our concept of the Higher Power, to our own intimacy issues with ourselves and others. Step Ten begins the process of attempting to maintain the new relationship behaviors we so desperately needed when entering this wonderful program.

Since Step Ten has been referred to as the first maintenance step, Step Eleven is the second and it helps us maintain the growth we have experienced as a result of working the steps. This growth can only come as we reconnect, over and over with our Higher Power "through prayer and meditation". Our goal is simple; "knowledge of God's will for us" and "power to carry it out".

While the principles outlined in Step Eleven are simple, the process and actions of working this step are extremely varied. Our program is one of spiritual development not a religious rule-driven formulaic one. With that said, however, I would like to share just a few observations and methods that have helped me personally as I have worked this step and attempt to live it on a daily basis. As we say "take what you need and leave the rest!"

Firstly, "the God of my understanding" has greatly expanded as a result of working this step. My family of origin's religious tradition seemed to be intent on putting God into a box. Second, "praying only for" has released me from frantic prayers voiced in the hope that God would do MY will not God's. Lastly, I have come to realize that the "power to carry it out" comes only through energizing, grounded, conscious prayers that can be as short as the time to take a breath in and out. I believe one of the major ways the disease of addiction thrives is by keeping us away from ourselves and out of our bodies into our heads. These "breath prayers" have helped my stay centered enough to hear that still small voice from within that ultimately holds the key to my recovery. I trust you will find the same as you work this wonderful step.

-Margie S.

Step 12 :

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

I am very grateful that the steps are in their exact order. For me Step Twelve could not have come any sooner in the order of steps. I came into COSA numb, certainly not in a position to help others, as it had been too many years of ignoring my own needs. As I listened and learned, I started to heal. Slowly I started to laugh – something I never would have thought possible at a COSA meeting! For me, it took one whole year of going to a weekly meeting before I finally admitted that I belonged in COSA. Now years later, here are just a *few* of the ways that Twelve Step work has helped me in my recovery journey:

Getting to Meetings: In my second year I volunteered, sometimes, to be the trusted servant which meant I kept “the bag” of meeting supplies from week to week. Many of those weeks, the responsibility to the group, knowing I had “the bag”, helped me to get to the meeting. It is a trick I have used when I know I will want to isolate, just volunteer for a small but needed task – one that requires that I show up.

Staying Connected: I started my COSA journey in Houston but was brought back to St. Paul, MN during my third year. After I found a new COSA home, I once again started doing some service, mostly to help me get out of my head. I missed my Houston group, and found it hard to allow another COSA group into my heart, so I started volunteering for small/short tasks that would help me get to know new COSA members. To my delight I discovered the same welcome and warmth I had had in my first COSA group.

Gratitude: When I went to my first convention in Seattle 2008, I was thrilled to be asked to join the Board. I found my niche on the Communications Committee as the COSA Distributor – forwarding emails to the appropriate CCCs. CCCs or COSA Connections Coordinator – represent a state or states, country or countries and answer emails from people interested in finding out about: (1) Closest face-to-face meetings in their local area (2) Any meetings starting up in their area (3) Sharing their first name and contact information with other people in their local area who are looking for local support or to start a new group. At that time, there were over 14 states and many countries that did not have a CCC representing them. Reading those emails and seeing the need vs. the availability of local meetings and help for people just broke my heart and moved me to ask the delegates at the 2009 Convention to step up to be CCCs for the areas needed. The fellowship heard the need and answered, one month after the convention, all positions were filled – and still are to this day. I too, am now a CCC and the ability to reach out and truly offer my experience, strength and hope to another COSA helps me to realize the promises truly ARE coming true. When I hear/see the first steps again, I am amazed to realize I do not dwell on the past (not something I could have done on my own) and I do enjoy the life I lead with or without a partner (I never would have believed it before!)

Forgiveness: I can honestly say that sponsorship is where I have learned the most about forgiving myself and others. It wasn't until I heard sponsees describing painful lessons, and then the words I would say to them – all encouraging, supportive and loving – that I realized that I deserved those same words in my life – and not the harsh, critical words that I told myself. Now, when I am being hard on myself, I can pause, breathe, and know that I am doing my best and if I need help or need to change direction/set a boundary – that is always my choice. Thank you dear sponsees!

-Ann R., St. Paul, MN

Step

11

Questions

Q's

**GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF TIMES I MIGHT HAVE EXPERIENCED 'CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH A GOD OF MY UNDERSTANDING.'
WHAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER AND MEDITATION?
AM I INCREASING MY USE OF THEM, AND IF SO,**

What am I learning about 'God's will for me'?
What purpose do I see in this Step's instruction for me to pray for knowledge of it?...for the power to carry out 'God's will for me'?...only for that knowledge and that strength?



Step

12

Questions

If I have not yet experienced the spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, do I understand that I may be spiritually asleep? And if I have experienced the awakening, what was it like when I was asleep?

What does it mean to me to have a spiritual awakening?

When I tried to carry the message and practice the principles in a state of spiritual sleep, what were the results?

In light of the 12-Step statement, "If it's not practical, it's not spiritual," how do I understand the relationship, between Step 12 and service?

Q's



News from the annual meeting of COSA delegates:

At the Oakland Convention of the ISO of COSA this year, Delegates from all over the world voted on **THREE GOALS** for the ISO of COSA Board to focus on.

The following is a report from each of those committees.

GOAL ONE: INCREASING SERVICE VOLUN-

ISO delegates, as trusted servants of their home meetings at this year's convention, identified their NUMBER ONE need for 2009/2010: Increasing Service Volunteers.

The ISO of COSA Board has heard this request and formed a working committee of board members and delegates to focus on this goal. Since the pool of service volunteers come from meetings and typically COSAs who are working the steps or working the 12th Step, the committee's vision is to provide experience, strength, hope and tools to start, support and sustain sober COSA meetings around the world.

The Increasing Service Volunteers Committee has identified five areas where support is needed:

1. ***Local Meetings:***
 - Offer bimonthly conference calls for sharing Experience, Strength and Hope on Starting and Sustaining Sober Meetings. The first call was held on October 21, 2009. The next teleconference call is scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2009. Phone (218) 862-1000, access code 1051791#. All COSAs are welcome!
 - Collection and review of email addresses and contact persons of active meetings via the Communications Committee and the CCCs.
 - Outreach to struggling groups to offer feedback to the Committee.
2. ***SUPPORT at 2010 CONVENTION:*** Convention Committee will email a "volunteers needed for Albuquerque Convention" to delegates and 2009 attendee list contacts via email and will have sign up sheets at the 2010 delegate meeting for future volunteer opportunities, and offer a workshop about volunteer service.
3. ***WEB:*** The board will post service opportunities on the COSA-recovery.org website.
4. ***INTERGROUPS:*** ISO will encourage the formation of intergroups and using teleconferencing if participating meetings are too far to travel.
5. ***ISO COSA Board:*** Actively participating in all the above areas and work on a system to support and reach out to struggling groups .

The Increasing Service Volunteers Committee invites all who wish to participate to join us by sending an email to:

info@cosa-recovery.org.

GOAL TWO: INCREASING FINANCIAL Revenue AND RESPONSIBILITY

AT THE FACE-TO-FACE BOARD MEETING IN ALBUQUERQUE THE ISO OF COSA BOARD IDENTIFIED THE INCREASE OF SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS AS THE FIRST PRIORITY TOWARDS ACHIEVING FINANCIAL REVENUE AND RESPONSIBILITY. ADDITIONAL GOALS HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AND WILL BE TACKLED STEP BY STEP.



WE HAVE SET UP THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS FOR THE GOAL TWO TEAM TO WORK ON:

1. ADDING A SHORT PARAGRAPH ON THE BACK OF ALL LITERATURE PIECES REFERRING TO THE SEVENTH TRADITION.
2. PUBLICATION OF A SHORT STATEMENT IN THE BALANCE NEWSLETTER TO EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF PRUDENT RESERVES AND SUGGESTING DONATION OF SEVENTH TRADITION TO ISO OF COSA.
3. DEVELOP A PAMPHLET ON SEVENTH TRADITION.
4. DEVELOP AN INFORMATION PAGE AND EXPLANATION OF THE SEVENTH TRADITION TO BE ADDED TO ALL MAILINGS FROM ISO

GOAL THREE: COSA BOOK FEASIBILITY

THE GOAL 3 COMMITTEE IS A COSA BOOK TASK FORCE EMPOWERED BY THE COSA DELEGATES TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF PRODUCING A COSA BOOK.



THE COMMITTEE'S FIRST PRIORITY IS TO COLLECT THE EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE OF OTHER FELLOWSHIPS IN CREATING THEIR BASIC TEXTS. IN THREE FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS IN ALBUQUERQUE:

IN ITS TELECONFERENCE IN AUGUST, THE COMMITTEE APPROVED THE FINAL LIST OF QUESTIONS, AND VOLUNTEERS TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTACTING THE CENTRAL OFFICES OF THE VARIOUS FELLOWSHIPS.

IN ITS TELECONFERENCES IN SEPTEMBER THE GROUP REVIEWED THE LIST OF ACTION ITEMS TO DATE.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
CAROL ANN R.

1. WE DECIDED TO CONTACT OTHER TWELVE STEP FELLOWSHIPS TO LEARN FROM THEIR ES&H.