

**Harrisburg Area Intergroup**  
**1251 South 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Harrisburg PA 17104**  
**4/4/19**

**April Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting opened at 6:30**

**Call to order:** Serenity Prayer

**12 Traditions-** read by Melissa

**Role:** 4 officers (*actual headcount*)

**Total Headcount:** 30

- **14** Groups Represented (*as per attendance sign-in sheet*)
- **11** Group Reps present (*as per attendance sign-in sheet*)
- **3** Group Alternate Reps present (*as per attendance sign-in sheet*)
- **12** Other than Group Reps present (*as per attendance sign-in sheet*)

**New Reps Present:**

- Billy - Wednesday Night Big Book Study

**Secretary Report / Meeting Minutes:** Ciera

- ✓ Minutes Accepted

**Treasurer's Report:** Chris \*SEE ATTACHMENT – **Treasurer's Report**

- did not move more of prudent reserve over before because we didn't have the cash at the time, so will complete another transfer this month to bring prudent reserves to where we voted last time -- per minutes for last month the amount was wrong -- proper prudent reserves amount 2783.00 (right now there is 2000 so the rest will be added in the transfer)

**Chairperson's Report:** Kevin

- Nothing to report

**Committee Reports:**

**Central Office:** Diane H.

- No one present

**Literature:** Albert C \*SEE ATTACHMENT - **Literature Intergroup Report**

- will be needing to put in an order this month

**Sobriety News:** Jose \*SEE ATTACHMENT - **HAI Intergroup Website/Committee Meeting Report**

- Website up and running - District minutes posted - all events and things are on the website - updated the printed meeting list (changed in a meeting location for Good Orderly Direction group) also updated on the Meeting App as well

**Public Information:** *Patrick*

- Katrina put in an order for the PI box so they can both distribute things (brochures and pamphlets) to libraries, urgent care, etc (purchase was around \$80)

**Corrections Facilities:** *Charlie B - \*SEE ATTACHMENT\* - Corrections Report*

- Centers are starting to go into the facilities - Mazetti and Sullivan is getting involved, etc, so that is a good sign

**Treatment Centers:** *Jose A.*

- All centers are going great

**Accessibilities:** *Keegan*

- Had their normal committee meeting and their turn out is growing! Please help spread the word about getting involved - any questions, please reach out to Keegan, he is willing to come out to groups to explain what is going on
- People are reaching out to Intergroups in our eastern half of the country to get ideas as to what other groups are going for accessibility and the deaf community - no responses yet - GSO recommended that we check out a group in Minneapolis
- They want to check up on the current status of how the deaf community is doing so far since we have been providing services for 6 months - caught up with the Interpreter and the person who needs help, everything going really well, meeting attendance has changed slightly, but the interpreting services are successful so far.
- What do we do about sponsorship and step work → the person who is receiving services has not gotten a sponsor yet, still communicating with their sponsor in California, but found someone locally that he is going to use - something virtual
- Also checking into local resources - advocacy groups (asking them what services are available to us)
- **NEW DISCUSSION: HARD OF HEARING:** Someone attended the last committee meeting that was hard of hearing... not deaf... created new issues so they were glad that he came so we can understand more → hearing is hard even with hearing aids because if more than one person is talking then he cannot understand what people are saying.. Need to indicate lower attendance meetings on the meeting list so that way people that are hard of hearing can attend those meetings and hear better.
  - Someone brought up that a hard of hearing person may have a sponsor that can help direct them to smaller meetings instead of changing the whole meeting schedule - someone asked about space on meeting list to add them on - someone else brought up that it should be up to the home groups if they want to designate their meeting as a smaller meeting - someone brought up that if it is on the meeting list that a meeting is smaller and people see that they might want to have people go to the meeting so it isn't small - Keegan advised that we

could be careful about how we identify the lower attendance meeting... maybe put something like front facing on the meeting list meaning the chairs face each other and not to someone's back so it is easier for them to read lips that way the hearing impaired know - ideas: roundtable vs classroom, 15+ or 15-, or LA for lower attendance, maybe put a picture of an ear

- Someone said that there are so many reasons that cause people to become hard of hearing - everyone chooses to manage their situation and communication needs in their own way - suggestion for not just a accessibilities research team, but a accessibility research 12 step group that can help assist someone to get to hard of hearing meetings, or interpreter, etc - can carry over to visual things etc
- Friday night - Some are Sicker Than Others - set up chairs in square
  - Last Fight night of the month the meeting is over a mic
- Keegan advised that it is important that we make sure that members of the home groups aren't talking during the meeting if there is someone there that is hard of hearing because if they are using a hearing aid it is really hard to distinguish the voices
- Asked about what nights the Interpreter is interpreting so that the meeting lists is correct -- changing meeting list to say that ASL is available and to reach out -- for this month, then will need to make it a regular night so that way it can be set on the schedule in case there are other hearing impaired or hard of hearing people that would like to attend a meeting - said about getting a professional interpreter so that something is consistent - has to be a consistent and regular especially if home groups and intergroup are funding it
- Someone brought up that they brought up to their home group and they advised that maybe the deaf person can reach for outside help since AA as a whole cannot and get some help so maybe a welfare office or something like that can help direct and fund the deaf person -- more and more accessibilities are going to come out with disabilities that will need help
- **Someone that is in AA is close to someone that is part of a local advocacy group and is going to go meet with them as a representative of AA - AA cannot ask for help from a advocacy group, but a single person can**
- Have all pamphlets and info that they could get from GSO and then some
- Looking into virtual meetings

**MOTION TO Buy 3 ASL Big Book and 12 in 12 either for SALE - \$2 for the first ASL BB - \$12.40 for the 12 in 12 - PASSED**

#### **Activities: Sue - standing in for Norm**

- Jared Lobdell passed away - Celebration of Life will be held May 11th at 290 N Union St (Middletown Presbyterian Church) from 12pm-2pm, light lunch will be served, desserts are appreciated
- Marty submitted a treasury report since Feb - next event is next Sat April 13th at St Pauls ... Lasagna Night, all free, food included
- Things coming out of the budget: still owe 1050 for the Riverboat for Founders Day, food for the picnic for Founders Day and the food for the Lasagna Night

**Finance Sub-Committee: Kevin \*SEE ATTACHMENT - HAI Budget Sub Committee Report**

- Formatting error - but there will be a running finance report for each month so we are not a month behind

**Unity: Patrick**

- There is a flyer that should be put out to home groups - tell your home groups about Intergroup and that our website is great and has all info on it for upcoming events and really anything that is going on AA related

**District 36: Jeff**

- Pre Conference Sharing Day -- held May 4th at Derry Presbyterian Church (Derry Rd in Hershey) - chance for our area to voice their concerns on the agenda items for the Conference. Home groups should have a copy of the Agenda items. All are welcome. All day event until about 4-4:30. Looking for home groups to help volunteer. See your GSR for more info.

**Cumberland Valley Intergroup (CVI):**

- No one present

**Al-Anon: Mary**

- See flyer for their convention!
- **Al- ateen Pop Up Event - April 27th Carlisle 12:00 Lunch included - kids 11 to 18 and adults** - split the groups and explain to parents what happens, have a meeting with the teens so they know how it works

**Hotline Committee: Matt**

- Going to have a meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month at Fellowship House at 7pm for anyone who is interested, ideas, what it is all about, etc.
- Got ahold of the guy that the account's name is under in Texas - he is ready to get his name off the account - need the budget/money to cut account and start a new one - cancel all accounts and keep same phone number and just change service if possible - he got ahold of verizon and att but needs the account number from the guy in Texas, so once our finances are in order then he will call and take his name off the account
  - Tom K. left as treasures 2 years ago and the cell has been in his name since then

**ICYPAA Liaison: Dan**

- Forgot the flyers - Pancake Breakfast - Sunday May 5th from 11-2pm at Wormleysburg Fire Hall (pancakes and sausage) - Area delegate will be there - will have flyers next meeting -- will be emailing to Jose and will be updated on the website

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- PJ State Convention asked for literature - handled outside of the meeting



- Reiteration of hotline schedule - phones get transferred at intergroup month to month
- Bridge St meeting time might change
- Add group number on their checks
- Budget discussion: see minutes for old notes

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- No new business - see accessibility notes from any new business regarding same, otherwise no new business

**Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm**

**Closed with – Responsibility Prayer**

**\*SEE ATTACHMENTS ON FOLLOWING PAGES**

## HARRISBURG AREA INTERGROUP TREASURER'S REPORT

TREASURER'S REPORT	March 2019		2019 Year-to-Date
	Details	Total	
Beginning Balance		\$ 3,671.94	
<b>Receipts</b>			
Contributions from AA Groups		\$ 660.00	\$ 3,047.47
Sale of AA Literature		\$ 266.30	\$ 2,069.25
Corrections Workshop Return			
State Convention Literature Sales			
Prudent Reserve Transfer			
Interest Transfer			
<b>Total Receipts</b>		\$ 926.30	\$ 5,116.72
<b>Disbursements</b>			
Fellowship House ( March Rent)	CK #1494 3/28/19	\$ 425.00	\$ 1,275.00
Marco (copier)	CK #1495 3/28/19	\$ 32.97	\$ 66.36
AT&T Cell Phone			\$ 124.35
Verizon Office Phone	Online 3/18/19	\$ 66.18	\$ 197.11
AA World Services (Literature)			\$ 2,687.08
Office Supplies			\$ 22.77
Sobriety News			
Grapevine for DC Women's	CK# 1493 3/7/19	\$ 260.73	\$ 260.73
Transfer to petty cash			\$ (36.32)
Corrections			
CAT Bus PSA			
Interpreting	CK #1496 2/28/19	\$ 408.00	\$ 884.00
All Hands Interpreting			
Phone Workshop Expense			\$ 49.56
Transfer to Reserve		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Total Disbursements</b>		\$ 3,192.88	\$ 5,530.64
<b>Ck Acct Ending Balance</b>		\$ 1,405.36	
Petty Cash	3/15/2019	\$ 50.00	
Interest In Savings Account		\$ -	
Prudent Reserve (Checking Account)		\$ 2,000.00	
<b>Total Cash</b>		\$ 3,455.36	

**HARRISBURG AREA INTERGROUP**

[illegible]

## 4/4/2019 March 2019 Literature Sales EOM Report

4/4/2019

	Amount	Donated	Total
Out	\$761.60	\$307.70	\$1,069.30
In	\$0.00		\$0.00
* Actual cost of literature order			\$0.00
* Savings by buying bulk			\$0.00

Number of Schedules made	175
Personal Copies made	0

## Inventory

**Total Inventory** **\$3,870.45**

### Donations

Camp Hill SCI	
Common Ground	
Concept 90	
Conewago	
Dauphin County Men's Prison	
Daystar Center Recovery House	
Fellowship House	\$23.50
Dauphin County Womens Prison	\$175.00
Dauphin County Womens Work Release	
Dauphin County Mens Work Release	\$109.20
Institutions/Treatment Centers	
New View Women's Recovery House	
Perry County Prison	
Public Information	
Sienna House	
Treatment Center	
New Commer Packets	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$307.70</b>

# Intergroup Budget and Financial Report 2019

## Budget Overview and Financial Standing

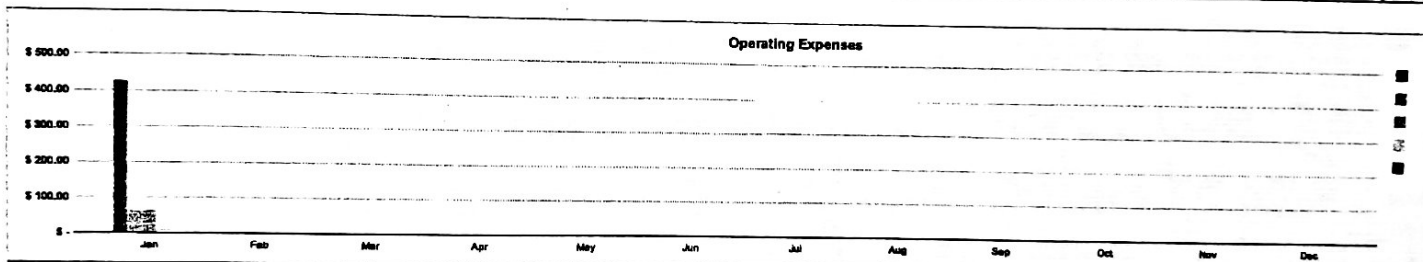
Checking Account 1/1/2019	\$ 3,819.28
Prudent Reserve 1/1/2019	\$ -
Petty Cash 1/1/2019	\$ 67.19
Anticipated Contributions	\$ 11,054.25
Contributions YTD	
Anticipated Expenses	\$ 18,812.00
Actual Expenses YTD	\$ 941.38

## Group Contributions

Category	Yearly	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD Total
Contributions	\$ 11,054.25	\$ 1,512.11	875.36											

## Operating Budget and Expenses

Category	Annual Budget	Monthly Budget	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD
Rent	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 425.00	\$ 425.00	425.											\$ 425.
Verizon (landline)	\$ 770.64	\$ 64.22	\$ 64.21	66.72											\$ 64.
AT&T (cell phone)	\$ 745.92	\$ 62.16	\$ 62.17	62.18											\$ 62.
Copier	\$ 255.72	\$ 21.31	\$ 8.80	24.59											\$ 8.
Office Supplies	\$ 132.24	\$ 11.02	\$ -	22.77											\$ -
Total	\$ 7,004.52	\$ 583.71	\$ 560.18	\$ 601.26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 560.1
Under/(Over)		\$ 23.53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 560.1



## Committee Budgets and Expenses

Committee	Annual Budget	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD
Sobriety News	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -											\$ -
Corrections	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 109.20	154.5											\$ 109.20
Institutions	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -											\$ -
PVCPC	\$ 1,100.00	\$ -	\$ -											\$ -
Accessibilities	\$ 7,680.00	\$ 272.00	204											\$ 272.00
Unity	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -											\$ -
Fellowship House	\$ 77.48	\$ -	\$ -											\$ -
Total	\$ 11,807.48	\$ 381.20	\$ 358.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 381.20
Under/(Over)														\$ 11,426.28

# April Intergroup Corrections Committee Report.

## Committee Chair: Chalie

- Need a 2nd update to 2019 Committee Flyer. There was mistake in March's Flyer. -

- We have been invited to be on a panel for service at PA State Convention -

- Our goal on getting volunteers interested is going more on the one on one communication. We going to encourage active volunteers to encourage AA members to get involved in corrections.

- We are setting up this year's Committee mtg schedule and our Sept Workshop date -

## AC Women's: Kat A reports -

- Kat has been added to the call list for lock down -

- Setting up an April 20th lunch for volunteers.

- Grapevine Bill has been mailed in.

- Set up a scribe for Mtg format -



- Followed up with AC Prison about adding a possible 2<sup>nd</sup> mtg do to N/A mtg no shows-
- AC. Men's Nick B. reports-
  - 3 new volunteers added to Monday.
  - Friday mtgs going well.-
  - Possible new volunteer starting up on Friday.
- DCWWRL Center's Stephanie T. reports
  - Volunteer Schedule updated & 1 May 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>
  - A 3<sup>rd</sup> mtg is being questioned. We are going to go for 6 months of good attendance at the 2 mtgs a week and review a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> at that time
  - Need More Volunteers to add a 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Working on possibility of some new mtg topic formats as well.
  - End note to follow.

- OCMWR Center - Ken H. reports -

- Men's volunteer are fully staffed with back up volunteers.

- Attendance is fluctuating

- End note to follow.

- Petal City Prison - Stevie reports -

- Volunteers have evened out with 2 new volunteer and 2 volunteers left with med issues,

- Working on a new volunteer -

- SCI Camp Hill - Wes H. reports -

- Volunteers are up to 8 members -

- Good format to mtgs -

- Possible request of digital version of the Grapevine -

- End notes - A AC WR Center mtg was had this week. A review of mtg and AA concerns + staff concerns were reviewed.

# HAI Intergroup Website Report 4/4/2019

Website Report submitted by Committee Members: Jose A. & Rod S.

- Committee additions:

Looking for others to assist with website updates  
( Anyone willing to learn )

- Events & Sobriety News:

- All Events and meetings changes have been kept up to date
- Posted District 36 March 2019 Meeting Minutes
- Updated Printed Meeting List online as of April 3, 2019
- Updated Online Meeting Guide App Database

Please have anyone with website updates e-mail: [info@aaharrisburg.org](mailto:info@aaharrisburg.org).



# 47th Annual Pennsylvania Al-Anon Convention

by Jeffrey F | Mar 15, 2019



The 47th Annual Pennsylvania Al-Anon Convention will be held  
**May 31 – June 2, 2019, at Susquehanna University**  
in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania.

Please join us for a weekend filled with fun and learning at this beautiful location in the central part of Pennsylvania. There will be several speakers and many workshops during the convention. We will have a basket raffle and a dance, along with time for fellowship and games on Saturday evening.

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## Workshops:

- **Starting with Surrender**
- **Principles Above Personalities**
- **A First Step Towards Intimacy**
- **Moving through the Steps**
- **Acceptance is Always the Beginning**
- **Starting to Forgive**
- **Came to Believe**
- **How to Start Writing**

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Please consider donating a basket to the raffle from your group or district! Proceeds from this raffle help support the PA Assembly and WSO. Also, if donating a basket, please consider including one Al-Anon item in the basket.

For more information, please contact us at:

.....Email: [penna.alanon.convention@gmail.com](mailto:penna.alanon.convention@gmail.com)

.....Phone: 724-263-9719

**MUST BE 18 YEARS OR OLDER TO ATTEND**

**WHAT TO BRING** (*University does not supply these items*): **PILLOW** – Bring your own!, extra blanket, extra towels, hangers, night light, water bottle, coffee travel mug, phone charger. **NOTE:** Coffee is only available at meals. Bring your own coffee maker for your room.


Convention sign-in begins at 3:00 pm on Friday, May 31st.  
Rooms **will not** be available until this time.



The deadline to register is May 10, 2019.

**NO Refunds** will be given. Registrations are transferable, but not refundable.

We look forward to enjoying everyone's *"Experience, Strength and Hope"* at this event.  
We'll see you at Susquehanna!

#### 2018 PA AFG Convention

 May 31, 2019 - June 2, 2019

 7:00 pm - 12:00 pm 

Details	Price	Qty
<b>Plan A (Double Room)</b> <a href="#">show details +</a>	\$140.00 (USD)	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Plan A (Single Room)</b> <a href="#">show details +</a>	\$155.00 (USD)	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Plan B (No Room)</b> <a href="#">show details +</a>	\$70.00 (USD)	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Plan C (No Room/No Meals)</b> <a href="#">show details +</a>	\$45.00 (USD)	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Saturday Only</b> <a href="#">show details +</a>	\$30.00 (USD)	<input type="radio"/>

[Register Now](#)

Online event registration and ticketing powered by Event Espresso

#### Venue: Susquehanna University

##### Address:

514 University Avenue, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, 17879, United States

**SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2019**

**Area 59 (Eastern PA General Service Assembly) Presents**

# **Pre-Conference Sharing Session**

**Preparing our Delegate for the General Service Conference**

***"Our Big Book – 80 Years, 71 Languages"***



**Discuss and vote on the issues that affect AA as a whole so that our voice is heard at the General Service Conference and our message is carried to the alcoholic who hasn't found AA.**

## **All Members Are Welcome**

***GSR's are especially encouraged to attend***

**Hosted by District 36**

**Derry Presbyterian Church**

**248 East Derry Road**

**Hershey, PA 17033**

**Registration 9:00 AM; Meetings begin 10:00 AM**

**No Fees. Refreshments & lunch provided.**

**Contact: [chairperson@area59aa.org](mailto:chairperson@area59aa.org)**



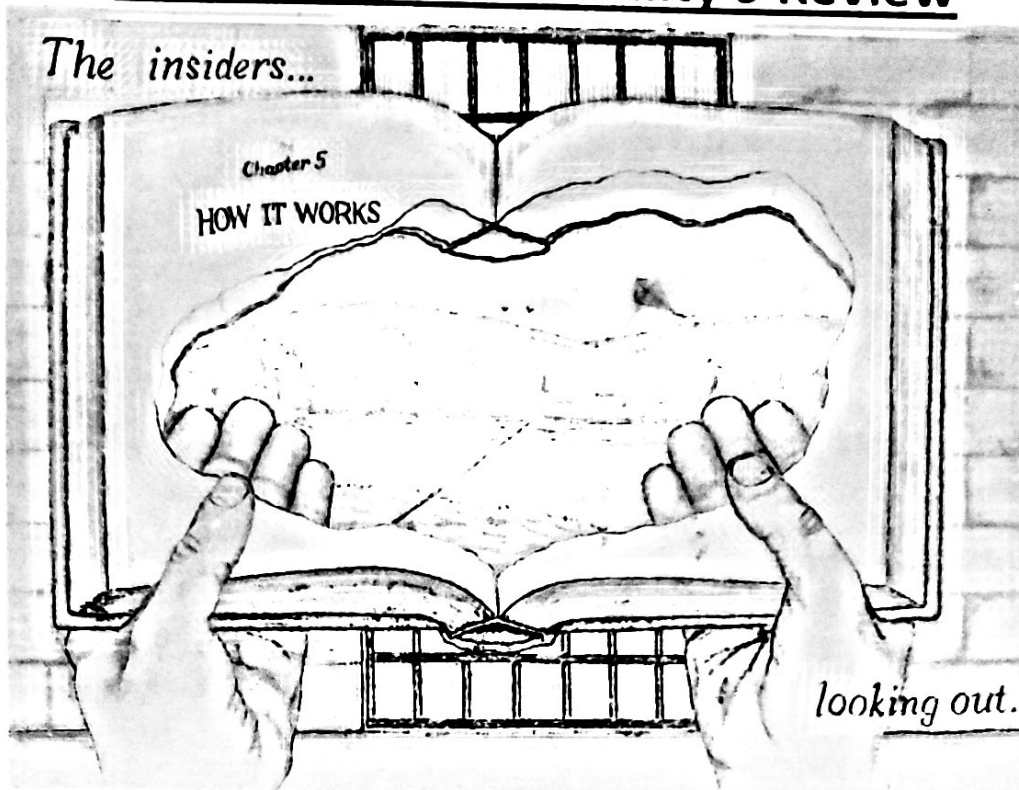
# Celebration of Life



Please join us on May 11, 2019 at 290 N. Union Street (Middletown Presbyterian Church) from 12pm-2pm to celebrate the life of Jared Lobdell. A light lunch will be served, desserts are appreciated.

# Harrisburg Area Intergroup Correction's Committee

## 2018 Newsletter Facility's Review



### **Covered Facilities are as Follows:**

- Dauphin County Men's and Women's Prison
- Dauphin County Men's and Women's Work Release Centers
- Perry County Prison
- The State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Camp Hill

Happy end to 2018 and beginning of 2019 to all Harrisburg Area AA Members

Our 2018 Corrections Committee decided to create 3 goals to work on through 2018.

- The 1<sup>st</sup> goal was to keep an updated Corrections Committee Flyer. We made it available at Monthly Intergroup Mtgs when changes were made to the flyer.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> goal was to go out to groups on the East and West Shore to review getting involved in corrections service work. We shared at the 6 groups and were also available at the PA State Convention.
- Our 3<sup>rd</sup> goal was to complete a Corrections Committee News Letter. Our committee had a meeting in the beginning of December. We decided to write shares from our committee member's experience, strength, and hope in corrections service in our local corrections facilities.

We would like to thank the Harrisburg Area Intergroup for the amazing support received by our committee. Our local Intergroup supplies all AA Literature to all of our facilities. Our annual Corrections Workshop is 100% finically supported by Intergroup as well.

Thanks to all the local AA groups who support the Harrisburg Area Intergroup. The AA core will always be the group and group consciences that approve support being sent into Intergroup.

AA is truly self-supporting from the member to basket, the group to Intergroup, and the group to AA General Services Offices.

We would like to thank all AA members volunteering in corrections service at the volunteer, lead volunteers, and chair levels. We are simply humble servants taking the AA message into our local corrections facilities.

The most direct way to get involved with corrections service is to email [corrections@aaharrisburg.org](mailto:corrections@aaharrisburg.org).

The spiritual experience hits the nail on the head. Contempt prior to investigation may be a feeling of AA members when it comes to corrections service. Hopefully you may investigate after reading our stories.

Thank you to AA members who took the time to share their stories.

I was terrified for days before I first walked into the Women's Work Release Center AA meeting. I had never been inside a prison before. I was afraid of what "those women" would think of me. But I had always been told that service keeps you sober. My experience with AA service is that giving back what was freely given to me takes the focus off of me, gets me out of my self-centered nature and cuts down my desire to be bigger, better, and greater than I am. Service in AA has kept me sane and sober and has brought me some of the greatest, most joyful moments in my life.

I walked into the Women's Work Release Center wanting to save them all. I thought I knew all the answers those women had been seeking their entire lives. What I found in that room, with those women, was me. They saved me, not the other way around. I'm not sure how many of those women stayed sober. But I did. I know that some left and died of this horrible disease. I imagine many likely never gave me another thought. I know now that I may have been the only representation of our AA Big Book and program of recovery that those women will ever experience. And I continue to try to represent our program well.

With these women I am able to practice the principles and traditions of the AA program. I am able to use what I've learned from working with these women in my daily life. I am grateful every day for the woman that asked me to do this service work with her. And I am grateful for every sober breath I take as I continue to give back to others. God's grace continues to bless me each and every day.

Thank you,

Cheryl S. – Dauphin County Women's Work Release Center

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I was asked to volunteer to bring AA meetings into the Dauphin County Prison at the very worst time in my life, and this worst time was while I was already *in recovery*. At first, I refused. My initial refusal was met with constant reminders that I could be of service to others, and that doing so is the spirit of the AA program. When you want to stay sober, but don't really

want to do anything, DO SOMETHING ANYWAY! Service means getting involved by helping others, and that involvement means the end of isolation, *my* isolation.

Since taking on the service commitment at Dauphin County Prison, I have become more active in my home group, I've taken on several other service positions, and I've become a sponsor. I have seen men's sobriety dates change in prison. Alcohol and drugs are everywhere; this disease is everywhere. We must make sure that recovery is available everywhere too. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be mine.

Thank You

Nick B. – Dauphin County Men's Prison.

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I learned early on in recovery, from my sponsor and others, that you **never** said no to AA service work. If you did say "no," you'd better have a damn good reason. It was made abundantly clear to me that service work was very important to my recovery.

There are not many people in Perry County AA. If you have any amount of recovery time and go to more than one meeting, you pretty much know everybody. A couple of sober guys I knew had been taking an AA meeting into Perry County Prison (PCP) for many years. One night they came to a meeting they did not usually attend and they approached me about taking over the PCP meeting commitment. Without a moment of hesitation, I said that I would.

I would be full of crap if I was to say that I didn't have any reservations about that. I went through all the thoughts, like "what do I even have to offer these men?" But after the first meeting, any reservations I had were gone. We were there to pass on the message of recovery, and to make it through another day, sober. One alcoholic helping another. That's AA.

Thank You

Stevie T. – Perry County Prison

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"Not Yet."

That is the bottom line of my experience volunteering with the women in the Dauphin County Prison.

In active addiction I performed some of the same actions that ended those ladies being behind those bars, but I didn't get caught. I had (and still have) some of the same struggles, the same feelings, the same regrets. I just don't have the same consequences...not yet.

I'm a white woman raised in a place of privilege. Upper middle class, white collar family. I was raised in a conservative Christian school, taught "Just Say No" when it came to drugs, shown the horrible consequences of drinking and driving in MADD and DARE presentations growing up, but here I am, battling the same demons as the woman confined in those cells. So, when I was presented with the opportunity to be of service for a year, I hesitated. I'm not like them, I didn't lose a job or a house or a marriage. I haven't been homeless...not yet.

Then I went to a meeting in DCP, and I heard the shares. I saw my past pains, my past hopelessness but also my accomplishments and triumphs reflected in the eyes of the toughest tattooed woman in the room. My ego and my feeling of "Terminal Uniqueness" took a hit. It was a tough realization in humility. Hey, Surprise!! I'm not that special. My disease is no better or worse than each woman I serve by volunteering. It is exactly the wake-up I need on a regular basis.

The DCP Women's Prison Meeting commitment is suggested to be 1 year, ONE meeting a month. Just one. And that one meeting a month is an invaluable resource for my own recovery. My sponsor says "Service Keeps us Sober", and through this service commitment, I'm reminded that if I go back out, I could so very easily have consequences like theirs. And if I go out, if I get those consequences, maybe the next volunteer would look at me and think "Wow, I'm not like HER...yet".

No. Not today.

One day at a time, friends. Thank you for letting me be of service.

Kat A. - Dauphin County Women's Prison

"Wait for the guard to release the outer door locks". "Please touch your ID to the scanner box and place your right index finger on the scanner bed". "Place your keys and any other metal objects on the counter, take your jacket off and step through the metal detector" says the duty officer. "Hand me your jacket so that I can pat down to check for contra-band". "Thank you, I will phone the guard at the Ed building to tell them you are on the way."

Now we wait until the inner sally port door is opened. Once through we wait for the outer door to be remotely opened. Then to the exterior sally ports. Next, into the open quad area where we walk towards "education building". But wait there is yet and other "manway" remotely operated by the guard tower before we can get into that area. Finally, into the education building and our AA meeting room. "Huh!, what do you mean, not so fast?" said I to the desk officer, "Ohh, we need to present our visitors badges to be signed in."

This was my 1st introduction to the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Camp Hill. And this was after the 6 weeks of paperwork, background checks, a mug shot and biometric scans.

After all that, we entered the meeting room as 25+ inmates in near identical attire pile in behind us. The door is closed and the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting begins. But here's where the brand-new experience ends. From this point forward, I felt like I was on familiar, well-trod ground. If you close your eyes, you could be at any of a thousand venues where AA is helping addicts and alcoholics recover. As with any other AA group, there is a unique flavor to the meeting, spiced specifically to satisfy the taste buds of the participants.

Initially, the smells and sights are different and the inmates of a single gender. They are typically reserved and weary of the new guy, and generally have a different demeanor than might be found in an AA meeting. Some are tattooed, some are bespectacled, some make eye contact while others avoid anything that will make them stand out. However, after the prescribed opening and introduction of a topic, the weariness seems



to abate and the inmates start to open up. Some discuss the blessings of the AA program and others verbalize their fears and trepidations about entering the "real" world. 50 minutes later the shares are abruptly ended when the guard catches the chairperson's eye and points to her watch. "Our meeting time is over" he announces, and promptly wraps up with, "will all that care to, join me in the serenity prayer?". Instead of holding hands, we wrap our arms around each other's shoulders in a giant friendly hug that is all inclusive.

This 1st experience at a "prison Meeting" was more than memorable, it was the crushing and destruction of a stereo-type built and propagated by people without this, very human, experience. My thoughts center on the old phrase, "It is there but for the grace of God go I". Although my days of drunk driving and drunken rampages have been arrested (pun intended), it is only because I was never caught that I am able to walk out of that prison with my freedom fully intact. Correspondingly, it is because of AA that I am able to walk around amongst the "normals" free from the fear, guilt, and shame that once defined my existence.

I'm sure this experience is neither unique nor unusual, but it is most definitely indelibly etched in my memory as one of those moments that has defined my recovery. If you have even the smallest of interest in carrying the AA message to our brothers and sisters within their gated communities, seek me out; and I will start you down this "happy road of destiny". Thank you.

Wes H. - SCI Camp Hill

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In my first year of being a member of AA I was told by an old timer AA that I should go to the local area corrections workshop. It really made no sense to me since I had never been in jail. The old timer told me that is why I should go to the workshop. He explained members of AA who were in prison usually were unable to get back into the facilities to carry the AA message. So it left the task to the AA members whom were not in prison during their active alcoholism to take the AA message into the prison facilities.

Well, I signed up for SCI Camp Hill thinking my current financial mess would assure I would not be approved. Low and behold, two months after I sent my volunteer application into SCI Camp Hill, I was contacted to come to the prison and have my AA Volunteer Badge made. I went to the meetings for a few months, still not understanding what I was really doing there. My mind was comparing me *out of* the AA meeting, not *into* the AA meeting.

I just would remember a big guy named Curtis sharing in a prison meeting, and I thought that he was nuts (to a different degree than me.) To my surprise, as Curtis was sharing, I saw myself right in the middle of his share...right next to him. I was from his hometown too and I was really relating to the guy that I did not think it was possible for me to relate too. It completely changed my attitude. After that I became active in volunteering at SCI Camp Hill.

I wish that we had more people being pointed to where that old timer pointed me a good few years ago. That old timer passed on a year or so later. His direction me to a place I did not think I belonged, but I've discovered it was one of the best places that I have found to belong in AA.

Thanks for listening.

Charlie B. - SCI Camp Hill

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