



PRESENTS:

# STORIES OF SERVICE

MEMBERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE



# THE OA PROMISE

I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

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# RECEIVING AND GIVING SERVICE

When I came back to OA in 2004, after a 19-year gap, what helped me re-start was the service OA members freely gave to me. At my first meeting back, one member offered to be my temporary sponsor. I was advised to go to the largest meeting in the area to find a long-term sponsor.

That worked out well. I did not know that my long-term sponsor had just stepped down from the World Service Board of Trustees. One day she told me she wanted to attend an OA retreat and asked if I would be her roommate. What a good way to get me to a retreat!

When the next year's retreat was on the horizon, I served on the retreat planning committee. I chaired the committee for about 3 years. Those retreats did so much to strengthen my program.

Another strengthener to my program has been service at the levels of intergroup, region, and the World Service Business conference. When I was intergroup events chair, every event we offered has helped to strengthen my own program. The same is true for region business meetings, conventions and world service.

I hope I have helped others and know that they have helped me. Although I am slowing down as I get older I'm taking advantage of webinars to "still get around" and still help myself and others.

Linda S.

# RELAPSE INSURANCE

About 5 months after coming back from a relapse that lasted more than 4 years, I was asked by a member of my intergroup's nominating committee if I would be willing to serve as a Region 7 rep. I had been involved with intergroup in the past, but I wasn't attending meetings at that time. I would not have considered volunteering for the position on my own. Because of the one-on-one request, I was willing to accept the nomination.

I didn't know at the time that it would be insurance for my recovery since I found myself having some intense food cravings in the weeks leading up to the spring assembly. What stopped me from picking up the food was knowing if I did it, I would not be able to serve at the assembly and my intergroup would not be able to find someone to replace me in time.

I told myself that I could pick up the food after giving service at the assembly. That service kept me in recovery. When I returned in the fall, I was able to serve as chair for one of the committees at region 7 because of a direct request from someone on the committee.

The service at region continues to strengthen my program and to keep me tethered to OA. As a food addicted, full-time, working mom of 2 young children, I know what a busy life looks like. Service helps me keep a commitment to my recovery one day at a time.

Liz O.

# SERVICE SAVED MY ABSTINENCE

Service has saved my abstinence on a number of occasions. I recommend two things that specifically helped me and still helps me.

One: Take on a service position which requires continuous abstinence. I am responsible to my intergroup to remain abstinent at all costs (which means reaching out, even when I don't want to!). In addition, I am too proud and egotistical to be willing to tell my intergroup that I need to resign because I lost my abstinence. Sometimes, even my character defects work to help me stay abstinent!

Second: Work with someone in relapse. Never do I feel more grateful for my abstinence than when I talk with someone who is in relapse. Even if I don't feel like I am helping, their struggles remind me of where I could be. It doesn't frighten me to work with those in relapse. Instead, I acknowledge that I could be the one needing help and it keeps me humble. I need that reminder because I get complacent and forget. All the time.

C.K.

# SERVICE IS A TOOL

Some years back I was a Region 7 rep. I was asked to fill in a vacancy for the outreach committee as vice chair. I agreed as I thought I could handle this position. Well, things changed and, before I knew it, I was the interim outreach committee chair.

On my way home from the assembly, panic set in and I began to obsess. I shared these fears, worries and concerns with my co-sponsor. My wonderful co-sponsor and friend simply said, "Service is a tool not an anchor." I instantly calmed down and, in time, I was able to fill the position and came to love this service. I was elected for two additional full terms.

Whenever I feel the service I am doing is a bit much or something I can't handle, I think of those wise words. Confidence in my abilities returns as well as my serenity.

Ross

# SERVICE IS KEY TO MY RECOVERY

Service has kept me from quitting the OA program and service has saved me from eating compulsively. That statement is profound. In years past, I would be abstinent and when I would struggle, I would just isolate myself and I would “take charge” and manage my emotions and eat compulsively. Today, I do not fear that outcome.

For the last 3 1/2 years, I have maintained over a 100-pound weight loss. The difference between this time versus all the other times in the past is my need to set the example and lead with action.

I do service because I believe I can help others, and through this, I help myself. When I served as DJ at OA events like the Region 7 Convention, it was an amazing time. I have helped with the talent show and the dance party. I have watched people who have not danced for 30 years dance all night and have fun! I have seen people so scared to sing, that they wanted to quit, but when they did their act, they received a standing ovation. It is truly an emotional experience to watch people shine and smile and enjoy a memorable night. I take great pride in helping others enjoy these moments.

I have also held various service positions in my community and at the intergroup and region level. I have served as a WSBC Delegate. The service positions I have held have really been enlightening. Service is the next step in my recovery. Step 12 all the way. I want to give back to OA what OA has given to me. As Region 7 Chair, I have seen and heard about how many groups are struggling with service. I believe service is so amazing in its ability to help me better understand the OA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. My technical background has helped me serve the OA community by assisting with Zoom meetings during the pandemic. Now, Zoom is just part of our everyday life.

Providing service encourages others to help as well. We all have a role to play in our journey to recovery. Service has been a big part of my recovery. Helping the OA community with my service has helped me. I have strong anxiety issues in social situations. I can be crippled by the fear of being around people I do not know or trust. Yet, doing service as a DJ, as a Vice Chair for Region 7 and as the leader of a weekly virtual men’s meeting, I have found ways to heal my anxieties and learn to be more relaxed and feel safe in social



situations. If I was not providing service, I would still be isolating in my emotions and I probably would not be abstinent today.

I thank my Higher Power daily for my abstinence and, as long as I am in the program, I will continue to do service. We need others to help. It is so simple to do. You can lead a meeting for a month. You can set up the meeting room or host a zoom meeting. You can serve as an intergroup rep and as a Region 7 or World Service delegate. OA service offers members opportunities to meet people from all walks of life who share the same common desire: to maintain a healthy body weight and to stop the compulsive food behaviors. How small the world becomes when you can meet people, virtually or in person, who know you because they heard you speak or have benefitted from your service. I look forward to more service opportunities in the future as I continue the road of my recovery.

Rob L.

# SERVICE KEEPS YOU COMING BACK

I went to my second meeting in June, 1981. They told me that "Service keeps you coming back." They put the literature box in the trunk of my car and told me to bring it back next week. I was stuck coming back next week. What else could I do? Not long after, I became the person who picked up the babysitter to bring to the meeting. I had a two-year-old and if I wanted to go to the meeting, we had to have a babysitter. So, there you are. I didn't even know which end was up and I started to do service. It kept me coming back and now I've been coming back for 40 years!

Over the years I've done all kinds of service at the meeting level, and I always spoke at a meeting or sponsored someone when asked. Sometime in the early 1990's I was the treasurer of a small Intergroup in Ohio, but until the last 4 years I hadn't really done any extensive service at the Intergroup level.

Four years ago I volunteered to share the Intergroup rep position for a meeting I attended. I was very impressed by the quality of service being done by our Intergroup. I helped out on some committees and when election time came around, I agreed to be the Treasurer. I've always loved balancing my checkbook, I tend to be fairly prudent in my spending and I'm somewhat organized, so this position was an easy way for me to give service and to give back a little of what I've been given by the program. My term was two years, but no one has stepped up to replace me. Now I am finishing up my third year as the Intergroup treasurer and am on the Nominating Committee to help find a replacement treasurer.

I believe rotation of service is component of healthy meetings, Intergroup included. I invite you, dear reader, to volunteer for this important service if you have one year of current abstinence, 6 months of Brandywine Intergroup service, aren't afraid to balance a checkbook, are fairly prudent financially and can keep a simple, organized system pretty well organized. I will be available to coach you through as many months as you think you might need to get started. But it is important for someone else to do this service and for me to do a different service at the Intergroup level.

Together we get better!

Laura W.

# SERVICE SERVES US

I'm quoting my beloved sponsor who frequently notes how service indeed serves us. I know first-hand what she's talking about. In a nutshell, when I make commitments for service I show up. For example, I agreed to be the key holder which involved opening the door to the church and setting up the meeting. That meant I showed up regularly. My sponsor reminded me that when I showed up, I was to remember peoples' names and to talk with them after the meeting, helping to make new members feel welcome. She still reminds me to do this because it encourages people to keep coming back.

When I finished that service, I volunteered to be the Literature Person. That involved inventorying and ordering OA conference-approved literature so that our group could maintain a steady supply of books, pamphlets and newcomer packets to help carry the message. Not only did this service get me to the meetings, it also exposed me to the wide range of literature offered by World Services, our Region and AA.

My next service was to help organize our holiday workshops. It involved preparing flyers, setting up the room, making coffee, welcoming participants. All of these services got me there and connected me with my fellow OAs. When COVID happened, I was able to set up our virtual meetings so that we could continue our weekly meetings and workshops despite the quarantines.

Finally, sharing my experience, strength and hope, in meetings and with sponsees has brought me innumerable rewards. Sharing allows me to get shame and secrets out into the light. As some say, "We're only as sick as our secrets." Getting the secrets out through sharing allows me to heal. My sharing also allows me to see my own progress. After our meetings, people have told me that what I said had helped them. This helped me valued.

The old saying, "We can't keep it unless we give away." is so true! Showing up for many 24 hours, has caused the OA program to seep into my bones. Because I showed up for service, I have a quality of life in body, mind and spirit that is indeed beyond my wildest dreams. Yep, "Service serves us!"

Beth S.

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM SERVICE

Service has strengthened my recovery in many ways. When I was new to OA, service kept me coming back. I was told I was needed. I put out chairs, set up tea, make phone calls and put out the literature. I was asked to lead a meeting and to tell my story when I was 17 days abstinent. I protested that I didn't have enough abstinent time and I was told there were no abstinent requirements in that group. With my heart in my throat, I did it. I was scared. I doubt I was particularly inspiring but I had shown up, I had told my truth, I was accepted and appreciated by the group, and I lived to tell the tale.

About the same time, I was asked to lead the newcomers meeting for another group. Once again, I hesitated and I was told that I knew more than a newcomer. I was told to admit it if I did not know the answer to a question and to promise to find the answer and get back to the newcomer.

It was suggested to me that I begin sponsoring when I was about three weeks abstinent. I took several calls each morning and evening. Members generally shared their food plan or about their previous day. I am not sure how much good I did in those early days. I was kind and I listened. I told them when I didn't know the answers and I suggested that the two of us call other OA members. I remember that many of the members who called me continued to have problems with their food and I worried that I wasn't a good sponsor. When I shared this with another OA member, I was told that I was staying abstinent so it was working.

In the first two years, I learned so much. In addition to finding and sticking to a food plan that worked for me and attaining a healthy body weight, I attended 4-6 meetings per week. I participated in several closed step studies. I went on retreats and attended conventions. I soaked in recovery like a sponge. I married, moved across the country and started a family. I set up new meetings, having learned how to do it from others. I was told to find a few OA members who wanted to meet at a certain day and time, then find a space, decide on a format, register the meeting with World Service, and announce it at other meetings and at the Intergroup and World Service. I found it pretty easy to do. Some of those meetings still are active. We meet on Zoom and I am grateful to be able to attend.

With the needs of my growing family taking up most of my energies, I focus my service at the meeting level. Over the last thirty plus years, I have held all the service positions. My favorites are meeting facilitator and arranging for speakers.

This year I am serving as Chair, a service which requires skills that are a stretch for me. I was elected after telling the Intergroup members that I would be serving in a collaborative effort and that I would be asking for lots of help!

Many years ago, another OA member and I set up a workshop. We divided the responsibilities between us. I called the Church to obtain a space. Both of us found speakers. My co-chair made the flyers and handouts for each participant, and hand calligraphed large beautiful signs to assist attendees in finding the meeting room. I welcomed the group, introduced each speaker, and at the end, thanked all in attendance.

We closed with the Serenity Prayer. The event was well attended and the speakers served us well. The day went off free of any memorable challenges. We were tired and satisfied. My co-chair looked at me and said, "Thanks for doing the hardest part." I stared at her in disbelief and blurted, "But you did the hardest part!"

That was a day I have always remembered as a lesson in working from one's strengths and in partnership.

A.A.

# FINDING HER VOICE

Service has been a big part of my OA story. I have been in the OA meeting rooms for 37 years, By the grace of my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, I have been abstinent for 36 years.

On a personal level, I live the OA program in all my life situations. I have walked through the Steps multiple times. I live in Steps 10, 11, and 12 now. I use most of the tools: I read OA literature, I write, I have a sponsor, I sponsor several women, I have a plan of eating and an action plan for self-care, and I attend three to four meetings per week. I still have difficulty making calls. I serve as secretary at my home meeting.

Early on, it was suggested that I attend an Intergroup Meeting. I am surprised that I attended because I was fearful. I remember how I blushed and how difficult it was for me to say

“My name is Linda and I am here to represent the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting.” After a few months I ran for Speakers Bureau Chair, mainly because I heard that it was the easiest service position for a new member. Over the years I served in many other ways: 12th Step Within, Treasurer, Chair, Vice-Chair. I served in some of these positions more than once. With each position, my ability to express myself improved. I am currently the Vice-Chair at my Intergroup.

An Intergroup member asked if I would run for one of the Region 7 Representative positions. The idea blew my mind. I was elected and off to the beach I went! It was a real learning experience. I discovered there were compulsive overeaters who lived in other states. I learned how to travel with other members, to eat abstinent meals on the road and to sleep in the same room with them. I learned how to participate in the business of OA at the Region level. I enjoyed attending as a representative and bringing back to my Intergroup information that could be used to strengthen our groups.

I was asked to run for the position of Vice-Chair at Region 7 and was elected. Imagine, if you will, this person, who at one time could not say her name without blushing, now standing up in front of the whole assembly of representatives and taking roll call. God was standing there with me for sure!

I was asked at my Intergroup to run for the World Service Delegate position. Since I was working full time, I was unable to accept. Later on, I was available. I have been to the World Service Business Conference twice. What great experiences! I learned that there are compulsive eaters all over the world. I met our founder Rozanne. I purchased a copy of the book, Beyond Our Wildest Dreams, and she signed it for me with the inscription, "Keep coming back! Rozanne S" on September 4, 1997.

I learned about the workings of OA on the national, international, and virtual levels. It was both enjoyable and eye opening. I brought back information for my intergroup to use.

Service at all these levels has helped keep me abstinent all these years. I need to be sane in my office and with all of my obligations. When I was in the food, I was not sane. If I lose my abstinence, I would need to resign from my current position and I would have to tell my sponsor, which is something I would hate to do.

Linda

# OA: A CLASSROOM FOR SERVICE

Service has been an ongoing lesson in humility, and OA has been my teacher. When I came to this fellowship three decades ago, I hadn't thought about the concept of service. Sure, I readily pitched in for school and family affairs, and I served the community by being a good citizen, but I had yet to ponder the concept of service. That all changed with my first OA meeting. I observed members casually setting up chairs and greeting people as they entered the room. At every meeting I heard that meeting attendance is the most basic form of service, so I kept coming back. I helped with room setup and I offered to oversee coffee and tea service during the mid-meeting break. When there was no dedicated storage space at a meeting, I carried meeting materials in the trunk of my car. These simple, routine tasks helped me feel part of the group.

My first service challenge occurred when I proposed the idea of starting a new meeting. I heard but ignored the gentle counsel of seasoned members who suggested I first find at least two people with established abstinence who would commit to attendance for six months. Not surprisingly, without sponsors, that new meeting quickly folded. From that experience, I learned that not every service has my name on it. At that point, the Traditions became my guidelines in discerning which service positions were mine to claim.

My sponsors advised me to be mindful of my primary obligations, then to serve OA using my talents and availability. I learned that being willing and able to say "no" is an important part of the discernment process. Next came letting go of positions, which I liked and was good at, in order that others could rotate in.

Today, because of service opportunities available to all of us, I appreciate the simple counsel to "Do what you can when you can."

Anonymous



# SERVICE EQUALS PURPOSE

My nature as a compulsive overeater is based in selfishness, self-will, fear, and survival. Early on in my recovery experience, I learned that people who give service found purpose, gained joy in helping others, and it became easier for them to abstain from those selfish reactions to life and, even better, from excess food.

Service can be as simple as setting up chairs, opening the meeting room, ordering literature and following up with newcomers. For me, service provides a connection to like-minded members in recovery who teach me how to live without excess food and reactive behavior. That connection has propelled my recovery as I learned how to incorporate recovery principles into daily life. My fellow members encouraged me to try new service opportunities. I have served as meeting secretary, meeting treasurer and newsletter article writer. Eventually I became a sponsor.

Service has given me a higher purpose, much higher than chasing a temporary high from excess food. Service taught me skills that I use professionally and in interactions with those around me. Service has helped me to take risks by taking on positions of deeper responsibility, which eventually led me through a variety of service and executive positions at the Intergroup, Region, and World Service levels. My self-confidence has bloomed and has grown through the years and I have been able to mentor other members who seek to serve.

The common theme of my service experience is purpose. Purpose has turned selfishness into generosity, self-will into helpfulness, fear into trust and curiosity, and survival into the fullness of life. Service, no matter how much or at what level, provides a spiritual experience that enriches my life that excess food never could.

Mike B.

# SERVICE KEPT HER COMING BACK

Service has built and maintained my recovery in many ways. For one thing, it kept me coming back during six and a half years of relapse. Like most OAs, I mistakenly believed I could recover alone.

The OA 12&12 tells us we were never meant to face this disease of isolation alone. In the forty-six years since my first meeting this lesson has been reinforced repeatedly. Reaching out was my first service. Desperation eventually won out over the fear of calling almost complete strangers. I began to share. Members later became trusted friends.

Yes, sponsorship was important, but I needed other members for times when my sponsor was unavailable. Ongoing recovery made it necessary for me to create a support system beyond one person and small local meetings. I needed to find more experienced members. I continued to serve in my local meetings in the interests of my own recovery. I could not afford to be complacent and hope others would step in.

The first summer I lived in Germany I was a lone member listening to speaker recordings at meeting times. As a result, I met my sponsor and began 38 years of abstinence. With long-term abstinence I began doing service at Intergroup, Region, and World Service. At the World Service Conference I first experienced the profound strength in a room filled with people having decades of abstinence.

I had to deal with severe stress a few years ago. Alone, I would have had no strength to resist thoughts of bingeing. Yet, I was not alone. I had the support of my service colleagues. Plus, the desire to continue doing OA service. Service has kept me abstinent.

BG

# THE KEY

I have served at my home meeting and at the intergroup level. I have participated in some pretty extensive projects and I have freely and gratefully given sizable chunks of my time in service.

When the food calls my name, my Higher Power uses the abstinence requirement for certain roles as a loving slap upside the head. The service that strengthened my recovery most was performed while I was still heavily into the food. I was given the entrance key to my home group's location. It was just one key on a hot pink strand of ribbon. That one key, among others, dangled from in the ignition in my car while I binged. It was tossed carelessly around my apartment as I sleepwalked through life. It was in the cart as I walked down the aisles of my grocery store. It stayed in my purse when I went to appointments to be lectured about my unmanaged diabetes. But most gloriously, it was in my hand 10 minutes to 7:00 every Sunday evening. That key (and God and my fellows) kept me here until the miracle happened.

Thank you, OA, for handing a struggling woman a literal key to a life beyond my wildest dreams.

Anonymous

# HOW SERVICE SAVED ME

I have been a member of OA since 1987. Initially, my food plan was a diet. After a few months I felt deprived and lost my abstinence. To recover, I could no longer follow the rigid plan I was using.

I developed abstinent recipes for cooking at home, but had several meals a week at restaurants. Eating out contributed to keeping my weight above my goal. Gradually, I started to eat healthier foods. I prepared meals at home more often. However, without a rigid plan, I was unsure if I could consider myself “officially” abstinent.

I served at the group level and at Intergroup, but did not experience much weight loss. I did not do much work with a sponsor. Although I had several sponsors, I never followed through for any length of time. In fact, when caring for my aging mother for 7 years, I gained weight. I started losing weight when I went to work part time and did more intense exercise. But I still had no definite abstinence date.

I retired and moved to Pittsburgh where I became the Group Rep for one of my meetings. The intergroup was seeking a chair for the 12 Step Within Committee. To qualify, a certain number of months of abstinence was required. For this reason, I set an abstinence date and I was able to serve. Since then, I have worked more diligently with a sponsor, including weekly calls

Service kept me coming back, and service has taught me so much more about the program. I have learned new ways to approach the steps and life, and I have learned how to apply the traditions and concepts in my relations with others.

In the last 4 to 5 years, I have worked all the steps on the issue of shame and perfectionism. Both of these issues were major triggers for my compulsive behaviors.

Tricia

# KEEPING IT BY GIVING IT AWAY

“You can’t keep it unless you give it away.” I heard this message early on in the program. I took that to mean service. Service, at that time, meant setting up the literature or bringing the coffee pot.

I happened to go to an intergroup meeting, not necessarily to give service, but to hear more about the program. A very serene and lovely woman was sharing that she had 2 years of abstinence. I had never heard of such long-term abstinence (This was in 1977).

She talked about the service she gave. She was a trustee to World Service. I hung onto her every word. I never aspired to be a trustee, but I sure did aspire to be abstinent. I wanted what she had. I am not a trustee today. Honestly, I don’t see that particular service in my future. However, I have served in ways I never thought I would. I am finishing my second term as Region 7 chair.

Has it been easy? No! I learned a lot about myself: my people-pleasing, my fears, and my lack of knowledge about the bylaws (which I have come to respect and value). I have grown.

I have met the most wonderful people through service and I have had so many opportunities. There are service opportunities at all levels, and they are all important. I am most grateful for the opportunities I have been given through service to others. I just realized that I used the word opportunity 3 times in the last 3 sentences. I take that to mean service is an opportunity you don’t want to miss!

Terri

# TO THE NEWCOMER: WELCOME HOME

I joined OA 30 years ago, I had no idea that this program would save my life physically, emotionally and spiritually. A therapist recommended OA to me. Currently, I am maintaining about an 85 lb. weight loss from my peak weight of 272 lbs.

When I came to OA, I heard three things that have served me well:

“Meeting makers make it.”

“Take what you like and leave the rest.”

and

“Keep coming back, no matter what.”

Yes, I have had some relapses, but fortunately they have been for months and not longer. Currently, I have 12 years of what I call imperfect abstinence. It is physical, emotional and spiritual.

I thought that food was my problem but it was only a symptom. The problem was that I had an allergic reaction to food and an obsession of the mind.

My Suggestions:

1. Attend at least six different meetings to see if OA is for you and then pick a home meeting where you feel the most comfortable.
2. Get a Sponsor to help you work through the 12 Steps.
3. Obtain the Pamphlet "Where Do I Start?"
4. Work your program one day at a time.
5. Make outreach calls daily.
6. Do some form of service.
7. Define a Power Greater than yourself that will help you work your program.

Bob B

# THE TOOL OF SERVICE

Last year, I found myself on the nominating committee for our intergroup. I wasn't getting very far searching for a member willing to fill the vacancy for Chair. It was time for some thinking outside the box. In desperation I announced, "Reach out and ask someone to serve as Co-Chair with you." I received a call the next day from a fellow member asking me to Co-Chair with him. After a conversation with my sponsor and my Higher Power, I said "yes." Do I know what I am doing? I DO NOT. But my connection with my HP has strengthened and deepened through this experience. We are moving along and getting things done. Service at its best.

My advice is this: Jump in with your Higher Power and ask questions later.

All one needs is to BE:  
Be willing to ask questions,  
Be honest asking for help,  
and  
Be gentle with yourself.

Janet M

# WILLING TO GROW

Giving back what I have so generously been given is one of the reasons for my growing involvement in OA service. Service has kept me connected to the OA fellowship, a fellowship I need in order to remain abstinent. Admittedly, it took me a while to be willing to grow in service.

Currently, I serve as the Chair of our local intergroup. Had someone said to me a year ago that I'd be Chairperson of our intergroup, I would have said, 'Nope, not me.' And yet, here I am. How did that happen? As I reflect on it, I see how my service has been a process over the years. It started by my being willing and open to do simple things – showing up for meetings and putting away chairs. Then I agreed to serve as the literature rep. Then an opportunity presented itself for service at the intergroup level. I served as Intergroup Secretary for several years until another opportunity and need arose, the need for an Intergroup Chair. Did I immediately jump on it? No. But I was willing to consider it. In studying the concepts, I learned that we all work together, we're all responsible to participate, and that participation equals harmony. I was willing to consider another service position and I eventually accepted the opportunity to serve as Chair. Even though my new service position had different duties and responsibilities, I learned it was really no harder. Why? Because I am not alone. I'm not in charge. I simply help facilitate Intergroup meetings. It's not like the traditional business world where the buck stops with the boss. There are no bosses in OA, not even at the Chair level.

I get it now. Service is part of what we do in our program to keep us sane, useful and happy. And I want to be sane, useful, and happy. Service keeps me connected to the fellowship. Do I see my service growing into Region or World Service level? Maybe not today, but I'm open and willing. As we say in the program, "More will be revealed."

Ellen G.



# A SERVICE JOURNEY

My service began with driving a fellow member to my home meeting. There were many Sunday nights I made that meeting because, if I didn't go, "J" would not get there. I have served as treasurer, speaker-seeker and program chair.

What has really enriched my life is Intergroup service. Serving in Intergroup is truly hanging out with the winners. Now that many Intergroups are virtual, it is really easy to show up for an Intergroup meeting. I recommend it. Being the webmaster for my intergroup was a fantastic opportunity to learn new skills and to meet new people. I also write daily and share my writing widely. This keeps me in the literature.

Service keeps me showing up. Service keeps me sober.

Robin B

# WE ARE EQUALS

I used to think there was a “we” and a “they,” but I learned quickly that there is only “we.” We are the members of a program that has allowed me to recover from compulsive overeating. There are no “those people” in OA. We all do the work and we can all reap the benefits. We are equals.

I am grateful for the women who greeted me at the door. They made me feel welcome and cared for. I began to do little services: setting up chairs and holding a key to the building where we met. I set out the literature and served as greeter. I remember when my sponsor told me to put my name in the service book to lead the meeting and to tell my story. And sponsoring? What a wonderful experience!

Volunteering as the meeting’s Intergroup representative was an amazing eye opener. I met people from many of the other meetings in my area. We worked together on retreats and committees, and came up with ideas to strengthen our groups. While serving at the Intergroup, I began to understand the importance of our OA principles. We got better.

I learned about our Region at the Intergroup and I volunteered to be one of the Representatives at the Region 7 Assembly. While there, I met other OA’s. We worked together on committees and we organized conventions. We served for the good of OA. At the Assembly, I also learned to practice these principles in all my affairs. There were many different personalities there.

After two years of service at our Intergroup, I was elected to be a Delegate to the World Service Business Conference. It was an amazing experience. We traveled to Albuquerque, New Mexico where the conference was held. It was a long week of hard work and amazing satisfaction. My sponsor was the workshop coordinator that year, and she asked all the green dots, new delegates to the WSBC, to lead workshops! It was scary, but again, very beneficial. The members watched us and we quickly became part of the whole. Some of us also did a skit at the banquet. That was so much fun!!

Service got me out of the isolation this disease enjoys. It made me an active member of OA and helps to keep me abstinent.

Ginny

# THE GIFTS OF SERVICE

Twelve years ago, when I entered OA and opened myself to our 12-step program, I also opened myself to the gift of service.

I became an Intergroup Rep, and I have served as Recording Secretary, Assembly Delegate, and eventually, as Intergroup Chair. Each position gave me an opportunity to gradually use my voice to speak up and to offer ideas and opinions. I also learned new skills. I learned to respect our principles in all interactions.

Personal growth has been an integral part of giving service: getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, asking for help, owning my limits in certain areas and knowing that others would always be there to offer their expertise.

Carrying the message is everyone's responsibility. In order for OA to stay strong and to be available to those in need, it is vital that OA exists for the next person who enters an OA meeting room. We must show up and offer our time in any way possible. Many hands make for light work.

I notice that when I step away from Intergroup involvement, I feel disconnected from my program. It doesn't sit or fit well and my daily focus on my program is not as strong. I need to do service in order to flourish.

The relationships I have made in OA have strengthened while doing service. They are what keep me connected. Service has added much to my life.

Why not try to undertake a small task and see for yourself what can happen? Contact anyone on the Board or your own Intergroup Rep and offer your time on a committee. OA needs you as much as you need OA!

Irene C.

# SERVICE STRENGTHENS MY RECOVERY

I'm very grateful to OA for taking 110 pounds off my body and for keeping it off (+/-10 pounds) over a period of 38 years. One of the things I have noticed is that the people who have what I want, lasting physical recovery and serenity, all seem to be doing service; and those who don't serve, struggle more. So, I do service. I make sure that I always have at least one service position.

Over the years I have done lots of different service jobs, including Secretary, Treasurer, Speaker-getter, Literature person, Intergroup Rep, Intergroup Chair, Region Representative and World Service Business Conference Delegate. I've met lots of amazing OA members at "higher" levels of service and that has really aided my recovery. I've also started OA meetings. It's a great way to set up a meeting that meets your needs and at a time and place convenient to you. It helps to find a few other people willing to start the meeting with you so that you have a committed core group to get the message out.

Rotation of service is essential. It is important for me to not keep a given service job for too long in order to prevent burnout and to give others the chance to serve. Part of the unwritten job description for every OA service job is to recruit and train your successor.

Doing service gets me to meetings. Service also gets me to phone other OA members at times when I don't want to. This is one of the things that keeps me involved in the program and helps to prevent me from coasting. After all, you can only coast downhill.

If I am not doing service, there is something missing in my OA program.

Jim A.

# NURTURING SERVICE IN OTHERS

I have a friend in OA with whom I do things socially. We talk about the program and we talk about personal issues. One day I asked if she ever thought of serving as Group Rep for the meeting we both attended. She said that she thought about it but that she never did anything about it.

Over time, I explained what was involved: attending a 1 ½ hr Intergroup meeting each month and reporting back to the group about what was discussed, upcoming events and the needs of the Intergroup. Since I attended the Intergroup myself, I invited her to come to my home so we could both attend the meeting on Zoom. It was a bit confusing at first, but we reviewed the documents and the agenda and she became more comfortable with the process. She enjoyed seeing members from other parts of the city and our area.

I feel good to have nurtured another member in service and our friendship has grown even closer.

By Tricia

# CHALLENGED TO SHARE

I attend a large weekly Big Book meeting with many people who have decades of experience and abstinence. As a result, I don't often share. Another reason I don't often share is due to the fact that I'm older and it's hard for me to read something or hear someone speak and then immediately share on it. It takes time for me to reflect and process what I've read and heard before responding.

A few weeks ago, I was asked to speak. Afterwards, a participant contacted me and challenged me to share more, saying that I had what others needed to hear. So, I took her challenge and I made a commitment to share at least once a month at this meeting. This morning I prepared for the meeting by reading the section for the day beforehand. I was then ready to share when the time came. Preparing ahead of time also made it easier to pick up on what the speaker had shared.

So, while I was given the service of having been encouraged to share, I gave the service of sharing what God and the program have given to me.

Thank you, my fellow OAs. You have helped me; and perhaps, through my sharing, you have helped someone else.

Linda S.

## **RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE**

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.

For more information on  
Region 7 please visit our  
web site at [oa region7.org](http://oa.region7.org).