

# Sierra Foothills Area of Narcotics Anonymous

## Newsletter - January 2017



This month's SFANA Newsletter's theme is One. The First Step and the First Tradition. In addition, a new section has been added to the newsletter – Events around the Area. Enjoy.

### ***Events Around the Area***

The events calendar for the area is blank for this month so far. If there are any group activities, get the information to: [newsletter@sfana.org](mailto:newsletter@sfana.org) so we can have the website updated.

### **Christmas Party!**

You were invited to the first annual Aisle 19 Group Christmas Party and many of you came. It was a BIG success. 68 people had a great dinner for free, a super meeting with a very passionate, animated and spellbinding speaker with a wonderful message. The live band after the speaker meeting was terrific. Many danced the night away.

### ***Step 1***

Submitted by Jeannie C.

*"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."*

Like most addicts, I tried countless ways to stop abusing

drugs. I remember thinking that if I didn't use before noon, then I wasn't an addict. Where did that logic come from? A diseased brain fed me lies about that fact that I was powerless. As long as I could wait until after noon to use, then I had control over my using, right? Ha-ha! I tried changing substances. I tried combining substances to maintain the constant desire to live in a "perfect" altered chemical state. I told myself that certain drugs were opening my mind and bringing me back to my authentic self.

I changed friends and quit hanging with people whose active addiction was more obvious in their lives. Instead I hung out with other people who were addicted in different ways and were just as miserable internally as I was. I became like them and managed to hide my addiction from myself. And naturally I kept away from anyone who could see the effects addiction was having on my thinking, my actions, and my life. For twenty years, I told myself that I would not get loaded today. I would end up loaded and wonder why. Then I would make a commitment to stop for a month. I would prove to myself that I wasn't an addict. I think the longest I could quit was for a day or two.

But my diseased thinking failed to see that when things got uncomfortable for me, I would turn immediately to the substance of the day to change the way I felt. Eventually, I needed the drug (whatever it was) to start my day. If I was running low, I would stay awake and worry about how I would get more. I had no idea that an unaltered, chemical-free state was exactly what I really craved and needed to come home to my spirit and embrace my authentic self. I continued to think that if I still had a house, a car, a family, and up-standing citizens as friends, then I was not an addict. Because I had surrounded myself with addicts, and my thinking was steeped in denial I could not see that normal people did not stick needles in their arms and feel the need to use every day. The disease of addiction had me in its grip.

“It doesn’t matter what or how much we used. In Narcotics Anonymous staying clean has to come first. We realize we cannot use drugs and live. When we admit our powerlessness, and our inability to manage our own lives, we open the door to recovery. No one could convince us that we were addicts. It is an admission that we have to make for ourselves. When some of us have doubts, we ask ourselves this question, ‘Can I control my use of mind or mood-altering substances?’”  
Basic Text, pages 19-20.

I was tied to the endless cycle of despair. I was emotionally, spiritually, physically, and financially bankrupt. “Finding ways and means to get more” controlled my thoughts. Then once I had more, the relief I felt was temporary. In the darkness of addiction, it was impossible for me to even begin to recognize that I had no spiritual light in my life.

It was actually easier for me to see the unmanageability in my life than it was for me to see the powerlessness. I went to jail several times. My electricity was shut off countless times. I literally slept only between three and four hours a night for years. And that was on a good night, on the nights where I wasn’t awake for days due to a little help from a substance.

My relationships were steeped in suspicion and dis-trust. I invited harmful people into my life because I did not know how to honor and love myself. My thinking was either in the past or in the future. I had lost all joy for life and awareness in the present moment.

I told myself I was a good Mom because my kids were fed and dressed, but I was emotionally absent most of the time. And the times I was emotionally present, my emotions were intense and ridden with anxiety because I was coming off from one substance or another. I did not have the ability to be there for them emotionally, because I was not there for myself emotionally.

I had one “friend”, a using friend whom gave me mood altering substances when life was too difficult to face and with whom I drank with on a regular basis.

Depending upon on the substance of the day, the month, the year, my weight fluctuated like a yoyo. I gained and lost one-hundred, twenty pounds three times. My body ached, my intellect was dimmed, and my spirit was damaged, injured and in pain.

“As addicts, we have each experienced the pain, loneliness and despair of addiction. “It Works How and Why”, page 5

Through the years, I have had my eyes opened as to the various ways in which the disease of addiction effects my life. My Higher Power has shown me that every area of my life can and has been effected. It is only with the help of my Higher Power getting my attention through other members, through the literature, through working the steps, and through my own painful experiences that have I have been able to see that the void I was attempting to fill with various addictions, can only be filled with Higher Power. Every day, I surrender to my Higher Power each addiction and acknowledge my inability to control them.

“In Narcotics, Anonymous, we deal with every aspect of our addiction, not just its most obvious symptom: our uncontrollable drug use. The aspects of our disease are numerous. By practicing the

program, we each discover the ways in which our disease affects us personally. Regardless of the individual effects of addiction on our lives, all of us share some common characteristics. Through working the First step, we will address the obsession, the compulsion, the denial and what many have termed a “spiritual void.” It Works How and Why, page 6.

In applying the principles in my life, I am growing each day. My joy and gratitude continue to increase. My ability to trust, my ability to stay in the present moment, my ability to love and mostly my ability to live clean grows exponentially with each bit of willingness I display through action.

“Recovery begins when we start to apply the spiritual principles contained in the Twelve Steps of NA to all areas of our lives. We realize, however, that we cannot begin this process unless we stop using drugs. Total abstinence from all drugs is the only way we can begin to overcome our addiction. While abstinence is the beginning, our only hope for recovery is a profound emotional and spiritual change.” It Works How and Why, page, 10.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service. Love to all!

Jeannie C.

## **TRADITION ONE**

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.”

Narcotics Anonymous is more than just the first meeting we attend or the other NA meetings in our neighborhood. We are part of a much greater whole. Addicts apply the principles of Narcotics Anonymous in their personal recovery across town and around the world. Just as we learned in early recovery that we need each other to stay clean, we come to believe that all of us, every NA meeting and group, are interdependent. We share an equal membership in NA, and we all have an interest in maintaining the unity that underlies its common welfare. Unity is the spirit that joins thousands of members around the world in a spiritual fellowship that has the power to change lives. One way to look at placing our common welfare first is to say that each of us is equally responsible for NA’s well-being. In our recovery, we have found that living clean is very difficult without the support of other members. Our individual recovery depends on meetings that take place regularly, other recovering addicts who participate, and sponsors who share with us how to stay clean. Even members who can’t get to meetings depend on the support of fellow addicts, maintaining contact with phone calls, letters, and NA loner groups. As each individual member relies on the support of the fellowship for survival, so NA’s survival depends on its members. Our First Tradition encourages not only our members but our groups to place our common welfare first. Most groups conduct most of their affairs on their own. In attending to the details of their week in, week out

routines, autonomous NA groups may lose sight of the bigger picture. In the larger frame, each group is a strand in the supporting fabric of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole; without that fabric, 92 It Works there would be no NA. The importance of our unity encourages our groups to look beyond their own little worlds to the common needs of the worldwide NA Fellowship, placing the welfare of the whole before their own. The relationship described in the First Tradition is reciprocal. Groups work together in a spirit of cooperation to ensure the survival of Narcotics Anonymous; in turn, those groups receive strength and support from every other group and all our services. The strength of our mutual commitment to NA creates the unity that binds us together in spite of all that might divide us. The common welfare of NA depends on the continued growth and well-being of the fellowship in every corner of the world. Our shared commitment to recovery and to our common welfare gives us a personal stake in the unity of NA. In meetings, we find a new place to belong, new friends, and a hope for a better life. A feeling of care and concern grows between us and the group. We learn to treat others with kindness and respect and do what we can to support each other and our group. Sometimes we comfort each other merely by being present; at other times, a phone call or letter simply to say hello can make a world of difference. Our relationships with other addicts are a source of strength in our personal recovery. We come to rely on meetings and on each other for that support. The unity we see in our meetings is an expression not only of our reliance on each other but our mutual reliance on spiritual principles and a Higher Power. NA unity

begins with our recognition of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. We help each other in different ways. Sometimes we help each other one-on-one, as in sponsorship, or we may help each other by participating in the formation of new meetings to make NA accessible to more addicts. Many groups are formed when members of a more established group decide to start another meeting. Sharing the responsibility enhances our common welfare Tradition One 93 and creates unity among NA members who work together. Groups flourish with the loving support of addicts helping addicts. We strengthen our unity by participating in each other's recovery. The unity described in our First Tradition is not the same thing as uniformity. Our membership is richly varied, made up of many addicts from widely differing backgrounds. These members bring with them a variety of ideas and talents. That diversity enriches the fellowship and gives rise to new and creative ways to reach addicts who need our help. Our purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers—allows room for everyone to serve. When we unite in support of this purpose, our differences need no longer detract from our common welfare. Working together for our mutual well-being is a significant source of unity in Narcotics Anonymous. While we often think of unity as a feeling or a condition, unity doesn't just "happen." The unity underlying our common welfare requires personal commitment and responsible action. For example, when we accept personal responsibility for supporting our home group, we further NA unity and enhance the common welfare of the whole fellowship. Our commitment to unity strengthens our groups, allowing us to carry a message of hope. Meetings

flourish in this atmosphere of hope. The fellowship grows and our common welfare increases as a result of our united efforts. Communication goes a long way toward building and enhancing our common welfare. With an attitude of open-mindedness, we seek to understand other perspectives. Reports may tell us a lot about what's happening in other groups or areas, but our common welfare depends on more than just information. True communication involves an effort on our part to "listen" as we read or hear reports, seeking a better understanding of the needs and problems of both our own group and other groups, wherever they may be. Encouraging each member to speak openly from the heart enhances our ability to work together. Regular reports, thorough discussion, and active listening 94 It Works lead us to the kind of understanding that helps us find creative solutions that benefit us all. Today's decisions may affect tomorrow's members. When we think of solutions to our current problems, it's not hard to consider the needs of our group, our area, our region, or even the worldwide fellowship. But it's also important to remember the "unseen members" in our discussions—the members yet to come. When we work to ensure the vitality of NA, we're not working just for ourselves but for those yet to join us. The unity that supports our common welfare is created not only by working together but by playing together. The friendships we develop outside meetings strengthen NA unity. Fellowship activities provide opportunities for us to relax, socialize with each other, and have fun. Conventions, dinners, and holiday celebrations give us a chance to celebrate our recovery while practicing social skills. Picnics, dances, and sports

days, for example, often allow our families to participate, too. We strengthen our sense of community when we share more than just meeting time. Stronger relationships develop as we become more involved in each other's lives. The care and understanding born of these relationships are strong threads in the fabric of NA unity.

Reprinted from It Works How and Why  
pg. 91 thru 93.

## ***NEWSLETTER CALL FOR ARTICLES***

The area staff at SFANA are publishing a monthly newsletter and would like two things from you:

1. Sign in by filling out the form on the website so that you receive the SFANA Newsletter in your email the moment it is published.

2. Submit articles and stories to be published in the SFANA Newsletter to inspire others to stay clean and keep coming back.

Some topics that would be useful in the SFANA Newsletter are:

- What is your favorite recovery quote and why?
- What is your favorite spiritual principle and why?
- What is your experience with children at meetings?
- Does being productive and responsible mean being boring?
- How do you develop healthy intimate relationships?
- How does your gratitude speak?
- How do you continue to make amends?  
Are you ever finished making amends?

If you, or someone you know, has a problem with addiction please call the helpline at: **(530) 645-1635**