

# BETTER TIMES

APRIL 2024  
SPRING INTO ACTION

PRODUCED MONTHLY FOR AA MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

APRIL 2024

## SPRING INTO ACTION

Why is service such an important part of our journey of our recovery? In this issue, we talk about service and some of the ways that one can be of service in the AA fellowship. We also highlight the upcoming East Toronto Archives breakfast and take a stroll down memory lane in the Archives Corner.

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- We All Have Something to Give
- Service Gives Me Purpose
- A Safe Space
- Being of Service
- Grapevine Book of the Month
- ... And More!

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Submit Group News, medallions, event notices, letters to the editor and articles to Better Times, before the 10th of the month prior to month of issue by email to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org) or contact Alexx at 416-487-8110

## WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE

Would you be offended if a person was being assaulted and people stood around doing nothing? Or if an elderly person fell down and people just walked by - not offering assistance?

Of course! These are scenarios that would and should offend us all.

But are we not doing the same when we refuse to help out at Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?

There are hurting people at AA, and we all have something to give to alleviate that hurting.

Alcoholics Anonymous is always looking for volunteers. At their meetings – greeters, making coffee, facilitating meetings, working as a librarian, being a sponsor, etc., etc.

And, then, there are volunteer assignments through committees, answering phones at their helplines, etc., etc.

AA is a success because people “step up to the plate” to help out. The work does not get done by itself.

And, I am sure the powers that be are open to suggestions. Anything to make lives better for alcoholics. Nothing ventured; nothing gained.

I can understand if a person is plagued by worries and difficulties that they cannot get their minds off. And cannot do volunteer work. I know what that is like. But, I believe that they are the exception and not the rule.



But most of us can help out. We all have something to offer. Most of us do have the time. Only the will is missing. By being of service, it can distract us from our worries. By being of service, we help ourselves. By being of service, it's good for our beings, our souls. By being of service, helps us in our healing.

In its simplest form, the Golden Rule states “treat others as you like to be treated.” We all want to be recipients of the Golden Rule. But how many are willing to practice it?

We wouldn't dare practice some form of discrimination towards people of different backgrounds. We wouldn't dare look down upon people, thinking that we are better than them.

But are we not doing the same when we feel no accountability to members of Alcoholics Anonymous? We wouldn't walk away from someone needing help. But are we not doing the same when we refuse to help out?

Finally, when someone inflicts pain on another person, we scratch our heads and wonder...why? Our weapons are our silence and our apathy. We would be wise to ask who we have hurt. We get out of life what we put into it.

Ken M.

## SERVICE GIVES ME PURPOSE

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous in 2019, they told me to get a sponsor, get a homegroup, go to meetings and pray if I could. The only thing I did right was go to meetings. I did not search for a sponsor to tell me what I thought I knew already, and I was hardly praying or helping anyone. I did this for the first year of my sobriety, then Covid hit us.

I relapsed shortly after a year. I had many opportunities to reach out and stay connected, but I did not want to do the work that needed to be done. After my one and only relapse, I was a dry drunk for the rest of the time of the pandemic. I am still sober today. I believe that I got this second chance for a reason. To do good in life and better myself, rather than try to take all the time. And so, I let service into my life.

Service is a HUGE part of my sobriety and in giving back what has been so freely given to me. I got myself a homegroup and they were not hesitant to put me to work right away. But this time I was willing. I did not understand how greeting someone at the door to a meeting was service but that is what I was told, so that's what I did.

- cont'd on pg. 2 -

## A SAFE SPACE

I think we all have that devil on our shoulders that comes out in us after a drink or two, only some of us can control it better than others. I was able to control him when I was younger and more optimistic, but as I got older, I started to lose that ability.

After a few alcohol-fueled instances that I was not proud of, I reluctantly admitted that I really didn't know how to control my drinking. Always hearing about this "cult" called AA that supposedly helps with this exact problem, I thought why not give it a try?

Expecting to have to strictly follow these 12 steps they are famous for, and attend some sort of retreat or something else, I came into the first couple of meetings with my guard up. But was I wrong? Every time I have been greeted with open arms and without one ounce of pressure to join.

AA is just a community of people in the same boat as me... although being on different stages of our journey...



It is an accepting and comforting environment that has allowed me to embrace my problems.

I have not yet officially joined the program, but I have been going to meetings for over a year. There has been no pressure to join, just faces inviting me in every time. It is a place I feel welcomed and embraced, and that I can turn to when my internal struggles begin to get the better of me. It is somewhere safe where I can share my problems without judgment as if I have a group of therapists I can talk to.

And lately, I've found myself choosing AA more and more, rather than the local bar, to vent and unwind after a stressful day. And I couldn't be more thankful for that.

Andrij S.

## BEING OF SERVICE



To many, service in Alcoholics Anonymous means "passing along the message." It can be complicated or simple, as we all have different strengths, talents, and weaknesses.

Service can be through greeting people, making coffee, cleaning up after meetings, or working the phone lines. It can be through speaking, chairing, sponsorship, or "running" meetings. Service could also be in the form of visiting shut-ins, shelters, hospitals, rehabs, detox, and correctional facilities; but it's important to remember that some members may have an aversion to certain types of institutions.

Sponsorship is a very important form of service. But beware of those who see it as a position of control.

Self-centered to the extreme, some among us may long for control, neglecting tradition two which states that "there is but one ultimate authority...a loving God...our leaders are but trusted servants."

Many enthusiastically jump from step one, an admission of being powerless over alcohol to step 12, making an effort to carry the message. This is called two-stepping. It is dangerous since the two steppers do not have the proper understanding of all the steps. You can not transmit something you haven't got. There are twelve steps for a reason.

A sponsor can point you in the right direction and tell you how he or she got there. A sponsor cannot do the work for you. Your sponsor cannot make you sober. If they could, they would have done it for themselves.

Attending meetings is another significant service. It assures people that it is not enough to simply talk the talk. It reinforces our sobriety and it rewards us with the joy of witnessing the miracle of God healing the broken.

All who enter the rooms should be made to feel welcome. This includes "long-timers", newcomers, and those coming back. Being there for others and treating them with respect, love, and compassion changes and saves lives.

Service reminds us that when we look into another's eyes we see someone created and loved by God.

Dan S.

*Service Gives Me Purpose - cont'd from pg. 1 -*

Over time, I began to enjoy welcoming people to the program that saved my life – especially newcomers. I now help set up every Friday at my homegroup and it brings a lot of joy to my heart. My perception had changed in a sense that I had a purpose now and I was not just existing in life.

A little while after, I was asked to be the General Service Rep for my homegroup, and I gladly accepted. I am still new, but I am enjoying going to the business meetings and I believe I will be going to Kingston this year as well. I am being trusted again and that did not happen very often before I got sober.

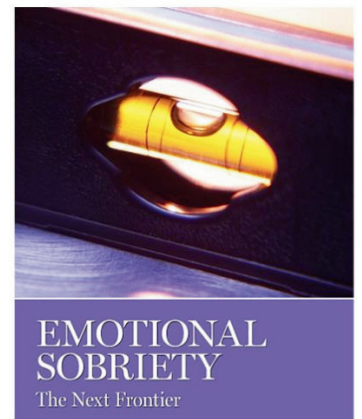
In 2023 I was at the ORC for the first time, and it was amazing. I got to meet so many people and reunite with friends in the program I have not seen in a while. Now I do not drive, and it takes me about an hour to get to the ORC, but it is well worth the fulfillment in my heart that I receive when I am there. I am also going to the ORC in 2024 and I know it will be just as good as the first time.

Also, in 2023 I was on the Winter Season Open House committee as well as one of the chefs in the kitchen. I had volunteered for this the year before as well and I will continue to do so as long as I can. It is an incredibly positive feeling that helps build my esteem and confidence. To see the happy faces at Christmas is a sight that is hard to explain.

Service gives me a purpose!

Tyler B.

## GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



Sober women and men tell stories of the transformations that sobriety can bring

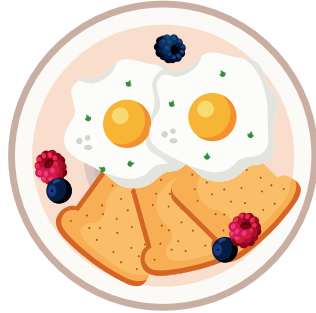
## The 19th East Toronto Archives Breakfast

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR APRIL 28TH, 2024

Well, it's that time of year which quickly approaches, when the greenery and blossoms of spring will be upon us. My sponsor says that he's grateful that he's sober and able to enjoy it.

So what brought us into sobriety?

The spiritual foundations were laid by one alcoholic talking to another because they could relate to the weird mental twists and desperation that led to picking up a drink, which they could see others (like "normal" drinkers?) as referred to in the Doctor's Opinion, take with impunity.



Recognizing the disease (disease) of alcoholism, and that even controlled drinking was no longer a solution for us, the Fellowship and unfolding of the 12 Steps as tools of recovery were hammered out upon the anvil of shared experience, strength, and hope. This was indeed miraculous. Indeed, as in a program of deeds/action.

The 19th East Toronto Archives Breakfast, co-hosted by Toronto City East District 18 and Scarborough District 22, will be held on Sunday, April 28th at QSSIS Banquet Hall, located at 3474 Kingston Road, just west of Markham Road. Doors open at 9 am for Fellowship and coffee. Breakfast will be served at 10 am, followed by an Open Speaker Meeting at 11 am, where a long-time member will share their eye-witness account of their spiritual journey in recovery – what they were like, what happened, and what they are like now!

In my opinion, service has been an essential component of contented long-term sobriety, where we have been given a new life by passing it on or paying it forward with no expectation of repayment. The joy we experience as a result of being together in the "we" program, and the sense of accomplishment that can bring, is never-ending and indescribable.

Tickets to the event are \$35. There will be door prizes, a raffle, and a sobriety countdown. All are welcome, but the last day to purchase tickets is Wednesday, April 24th, so that we can inform kitchen staff how many are expected.

We expect a full house. There's plenty of parking on-site. It's like a migration of members who attend the fall Archives Breakfast in the west end, and then, here's your chance to spring forward for an extra heaping helping of fun and Fellowship in the east end.

For Information & Tickets: Bert J. (647) 622-6127 Eddy G. (416) 536-7536  
Patricia T. (647) 293-5917 John M. (416) 277-4285



## GTAI/DISTRICT - APRIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Accessibilities** - Sun. April 21 – 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

**Archives** - Fri. April 12 – 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

**Communications** - Tues. April 16 – 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

**CPC/PI** - Mon. April 15 – 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

**Correctional Facilities** - April 02 – 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

**Self-Support - Meets every other month.** Next

Meeting: May 30 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

**Treatment** - April 21 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

**Twelfth Step** - Wed. April 10 – 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

**IT Subcommittee** - Tues. April 09 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

**Information AA Day** - Mon. April. 22 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

## APRIL MEDALLIONS

**Rick P.**, Fifth Tradition, 20yrs, April 2nd

**Joyce P.**, Willowdale Shepherd Group, 45 yrs, April 4th

**Paul P.**, Willowdale Shepherd Group, 25 yrs, April 4th

**Patrick L.**, Trial & Error, 1 yr, April 10th

**Maria G.**, Willowdale Shepherd Group, 1 yr, April 11th

**Jake C.**, Black River Group, 5 yrs, April 12

**Dan W.**, Willowdale Shepherd Group, 30 yrs, April 18th

**Gerri F.**, Black River Group, 30 yrs, April 26

**Andy H.**, Fellowship Group, 40 yrs, April 29th

**Nick B.**, Fellowship Group, 1 yr, April 29th

**Tracey A.**, Fifth Tradition, 1yr, April 30th

## IS THERE AN UPCOMING MEDALLION?

Please send your medallion details to

[bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)

in the format of:

name - homegroup - year(s) of sobriety - medallion date

*Kindly note that Better Times only publishes the first year of continuous sobriety birthday celebrations or every subsequent 5th year of continuous sobriety (i.e. 1, 5, 10, 15, 20...)*

# ARCHIVES CORNER

## Did you Know .... ?

**In April 1933**, beer became legal & Dr. Bob went through a "beer experiment." Soon he was drinking over a case a day fortified with liquor. In his Big Book story, Dr. Bob says that this was when he began in the Oxford Group participating in it for over two years before meeting Bill W.

**In April 1935**, Discouraged at having no success in sobering up other alcoholics, Bill came close to giving up on his efforts. However, his wife Lois reminded him that HE was staying sober because of his working with others. Bill W. had a talk with Dr. Silkworth who advised him to stop preaching about his "hot flash" experience and hit the alcoholic hard with the medical view on alcoholism. Dr. Silkworth advised Bill to break down the strong egos of alcoholics by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and the allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be so much easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution.

**In April 1937**, Ebby T. who brought the message to Bill W. got drunk after 2 years and 7 months of sobriety. It began an on-again, off-again pattern of drinking & sobriety that would stay with Ebby.

**On April 4, 1939**, the first edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" was first published. 4,730 copies were published at \$3.50 a copy. The printer, Edward Blackwell of Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The large, bulky volume became known as the Big Book. Bill W. later wrote that the idea was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money's worth.

**On April 22, 1951**, At the close of the first General Service Conference, Lois W. with her close friend & neighbor Anne B. hosted the delegates' wives & local family group members to a luncheon at Stepping Stones. Its purpose was to discuss ideas for an organization that was then being called "AA Family Groups." This was the beginning of the formation of the Al-Anon Family Groups Fellowship.

**In April 1955**, the triangle-in-the-circle symbol was approved by the AA General Service Conference. However, in 1993, AAWS Inc., announced that official use of all of the several circle/triangle trademarks & service marks was being discontinued because they were being associated with a variety of products & services that were not part of AA & not consistent with AA's purpose.

**On April 14, 1959**, Bill W. wrote to an AA member Russ (edited): "...adding the Lord's Prayer to each meeting...probably came from the Oxford Groups... a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore, it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us... There will always be those... offended by... any prayer whatever into an ordinary AA gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document... This Prayer is of such widespread use & recognition that the arguments of its Christian origin seem to be a little farfetched... Since this is the general consensus it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer & the Lord's Prayer be used in... our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic & atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding our light under a bushel.

### Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in April

- April 2, 2011 - A Place of Hope Meeting
- April 4, 2009 - Saturday Night Main Street Meeting
- April 6, 2007 - Leslie Group
- April 9, 1956 - Pine Hills Group
- April 10, 1997 - 12 Tradition Group in Pickering
- April 12, 1992 - Back to Basics Group in Richmond Hill
- April 13, 2017 - Gay Sober Men Group
- April 19, 1992 - Meadowvale Fellowship Group
- April 21, 1957 - Welcome Group
- April 24, 1949 - Toronto Sunday Morning Men's Meeting

TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT  
ARCHIVIST EDDY G. 416-536-7536 or [archives@aatoronto.org](mailto:archives@aatoronto.org)  
OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE ARCHIVES.

## DAY AT A TIME

Little by little, day at a time,  
feeding the soul, freeing the mind,  
climb out of hell or slowly die,  
Step towards heaven, day at a time.

Live in resentment, stars don't align,  
Spiritually sick, D.O.C. blind,  
Forward or backwards, keep us confined,  
All we should seek is day at a time.

Forgive don't forget, learn to be kind,  
Love from within, peace you will find,  
Rocky the road, don't live behind,  
Map paradise, day at a time.

Day at a time by day at a time,  
Hour by hour, walk a straight line,  
Let's not forget, the meaning of life,  
Be humble, be happy, day at a time.



-Tyler B.



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## SHARE YOUR STORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS  
FOR BETTER TIMES'  
SUMMER ISSUES

Summer is just around the corner. Do you  
have any tips for staying sober in the  
summer?



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the QR Code  
or tap this box  
and you will  
be directed  
to our anonymous  
content submission page.