

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

"Embracing Sobriety" is not a soft landing, some days better than others.

Meetings, Service, Working the Steps, Sponsor/Sponsee relationships, Sharing and Carrying the Message to other Alcoholics – Work.

The Benefit is an Alcohol-free healthier lifestyle, Physically, Mentally and Spiritually – the challenge is working your program.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Please scan the QR

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



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BETTER TIMES is published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area.

234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite #202,
Toronto M4P 1K5

Telephone Number – Literature Department 416-487-9865

Email bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Editorial Committee

Ted D. - Communications Chair

Lori C. - Better Times Editor

Ann Marie B. - Coordinator

Ken M. - BT Writer

Latifa A - Graphics & Layout

Ky T - Graphics & Layout

Imran R. - Distributions

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How To Reach Us

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 or contact Alex at 416-487-8110

I THOUGHT I COULD FIND HAPPINESS IN ALCOHOL



For many years, I was a wayward child, disconnected from my spiritual grounding. I thought I could find happiness in alcohol, in other people, or in anything that could numb the feelings I didn't want to face. It was only after I reached my lowest point, in a haze of drinking and self-destruction, that I realized I needed help. My first step toward recovery was finding Alcoholics Anonymous.

Walking into AA, I assumed it would be a strictly Christian path as the meeting was held in a United Church. But I was surprised to find that the program was open and welcoming to all, regardless of faith. The spiritual foundation of AA isn't tied to one particular religion—it encourages each person to find a higher power as they understand it. For me, this opened the door to reconnect with my Buddhist roots. I began to understand that my spiritual journey didn't have to be limited to one narrow path. Instead, it was broad enough to include both the teachings of Buddhism and the principles of AA.

As a Buddhist in AA, I've come to see the program as a continuation of my spiritual practice. In many ways, the Twelve Steps mirror the teachings of the Eightfold Path. Both emphasize mindfulness, self-reflection, and living a life of service to others. One of the most important lessons I've learned is the importance of humility—acknowledging that I am not in control and that I need the guidance of a higher power, whether that's the Dharma, the Path, or the Divine Spirit. This realization has deepened my spiritual journey and made my recovery stronger.

I encourage anyone who is struggling with alcoholism to seek out a power greater than themselves, in whatever form resonates with them. It doesn't matter if you call that power God, Allah, Divine Spirit, or simply the Path. The beauty of AA is that it makes room for everyone, no matter their spiritual beliefs. The program is about finding a source of strength outside of ourselves and using that to guide us toward recovery and healing.

Today, I continue to walk the Buddhist path, but with a deeper understanding of what spirituality means to me. I keep the fifth precept in mind, knowing that abstaining from alcohol is a vital part of my spiritual and physical well-being. And I remain grateful for the guidance of AA, which has helped me reconnect with my spiritual roots and find a new way of living—one day at a time.

-Gigget W., Miami Beach Group (Keswick)

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

A NEW HAPPINESS

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE 2025 ORC COMMITTEE!

Yes! There is so much Excitement Transpiring & it's Just Around the Corner.



The **2025 ORC** will be taking place on **March 14-16, 2025**, at the **Sheraton Centre Hotel**.

Our theme this year for the ORC is **"A NEW HAPPINESS"**

We are looking forward to Celebrating Recovery & Fellowship with you.

JANUARY IS THE MONTH TO REGISTER! Why, might you ask?

If you have not, take the leap and join others to win a **FREE hotel room for 2 nights!** Oh, But Wait! It Gets Better! **The one lucky winner will also receive a \$100 The KEG Gift Card.**

Each ticket purchased by Feb. 1, 2025, will be entered into a random draw with **one winner selected on Feb. 9, 2025.** The winner will receive a \$100 gift card for THE KEG and two nights free hotel room for March 14 and 15, 2025.

REGISTER ONLINE AT: <https://aaorc.ca>

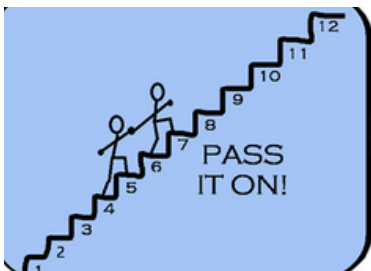
Start Spreading the News! Tell your friends from AA, Al-Anon & Alateen of the ORC 2025 News, and yes, please include your family and friends that they are welcome to join us on March 14 - 16, 2025. It is just around the corner, so do not hesitate to register to win.

I believe I can speak for all of the 2025 ORC Committee when I say ... **"We can't wait to see you when you join us to enjoy ... "A NEW HAPPINESS"**

P.S. We also have a need for volunteer greeters. Being a greeter is a great opportunity to welcome members, make friends, and enhance your ORC experience with the Spirit of giving back. **You can sign-up as a greeter at the same place as you buy tickets: <https://aaorc.ca>**

Just go to the **Volunteer Tab** after you register for the ORC. <https://aaorc.ca/volunteer-2025/>

***** Volunteers must be registered for the ORC conference *****



Yours in Love and Service,
Ed V. (Deer Park Group)
Promotions Chair
2025 ORC Committee



Through the 12 Steps

12 speakers, AA with Al-Anon and Alateen

Saturday February 8, 2025



- POTLUCK LUNCH
- DOOR PRIZES
- 50/50 DRAW
- BASKET RAFFLE

REGISTRATION: 8:30AM

PROGRAM HOURS: 9AM - 4PM

UNIFOR BANQUET HALL

23 Regan Rd, Brampton
NE of McLaughlin Rd N
and Bovaird Dr W

Tickets, questions and
7th Tradition, email
crtts17@gmail.com

TICKETS

\$15 each/\$5 for Alateen

Tickets & information,
contact Wendy at

416-409-3873

PLEASE BRING A HOT OR COLD
POTLUCK FOOD ITEM



GTAI/DISTRICT - JANUARY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - Sun. Jan. 19 - 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. Jan. 10 - 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. Jan. 21 - 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. Jan. 20 - 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Tue. Jan. 07 - 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month. Next

Meeting: Thur. Jan. 23 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - Sun. Jan. 19 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. Jan. 08 - 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Mon. Jan. 06 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - Mon. Jan. 27 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



IN OUR OWN WORDS

Stories of Young AAs in Recovery

A collection of personal stories from the Grapevine that focuses on the difficulties faced by alcoholics who are young in years and the sober joys that await them. The book contains: honest accounts of drinking in the lives of young adults, how they managed to get and stay sober, the impact that practicing the principles of AA has had on their lives, and, the challenges and rewards of finally learning to live and to love, one day at a time.

-Imran R. Grapevine

GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP
ONLINE HELP CHAT
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



+ONLINE HELP FOR ALCOHOLICS+

GTA Intergroup is looking for
members to operate our new online
website help chat tool.



All Training Provided. Training Starts Soon!



Scan this QR code to access more
"Better Times" issues!

SHARE YOUR STORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
FOR BETTER TIMES'
WINTER ISSUES

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



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

ARCHIVES CORNER

Did you Know ?

On January 13, 2025, AA in the GTA, the ORC March 14-16, 2025 Celebrate 82 Years!

In **January 1940**, Rev. George Little, a minister of the United Church; a non-alcoholic, read a review of the Big Book by the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick. He was so impressed that he ordered a copy from New York; mimeographed copies to give to people with drinking problems; to other interested parties.

In **1942**, Rev. Percy Price of the Metropolitan United Church, obtained a copy of the Big Book from Rev. Little; was so intrigued that he persuaded a group to get together at a dinner held at the Little Denmark Restaurant at 720 Bay St. in Toronto.

On Wednesday, **January 13 1943**, the 1st meeting was held in Toronto, Canada. Two friends of alcoholics, the Reverends George Little and Percy Price, along with six alcoholics -Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Buzz McT., Dorothy C and Weems C., met at the Little Denmark Restaurant at 720 Bay St. in Toronto. Something special happened that day and a second meeting was held at the same location the following week.

On **Thursday, January 28 1943**, Rowland H. introduced Ebby T. to the Oxford Group & later took him to the Calvary Rescue Mission in NY City. Ebby, while at the mission, heard about Bill W's drinking problem. He phoned Lois who invited him over for dinner, Ebby visited Bill at 182 Clinton St., Brooklyn, NY & shared his recovery experience "one alcoholic talking to another." Days later, Ebby returned with Shep C. to speak to Bill about the Oxford Group but Bill did not think too highly of Shep. After Ebby's visit & after a drunken visit to Calvary Mission, Bill returned to Towns Hospital for the fourth time on December 11, 1934 and had his last drink (four bottles of beer purchased on the way).

On **January 28, 1944**, as a result of the rapid growth of A.A. in its first year, Toronto members rented a building at 1170 Yonge Street. Bruce M. had learned that a Royal Bank branch was closing. After negotiations, an agreement was reached that the rent at "1170" would be a nominal \$50.00 per month, which ironically was not paid for years. The office was open daily, there was a new committee every 3 months and a regular Thursday night meeting was established. This later became known as the Central Group. "It soon became known across the continent simply as '1170' and its location was described as 'across from the liquor store.'"

In **1960**, The Central Committee became Toronto Intergroup. On October 31, 1995, Toronto Intergroup became the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Intergroup, serving A.A. from Oakville in the west, to Keswick on Lake Simcoe in the north, to Scarborough in the east. Lake Ontario forms the southern border.

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



the Erin Mills Group

You are no longer alone.

The Erin Mills Group in Mississauga celebrates 45 years on January 2, 2023

On a typical Monday evening, when you enter the Erin Mills Group's meeting room, a boisterous party atmosphere surrounds you: people chatting, laughing, catching up with friends and welcoming newcomers. Like the wooden sign at the bottom of the stairs says: **You Are No Longer Alone**. One of the larger groups in Mississauga, Erin Mills' 100 plus members are clear proof that alcoholism has no boundaries and does not discriminate by age, gender, culture, profession or financial situation. Men and women from all walks of life gather each week at Erin Mills United Church to share their sober journey.



Forty five years ago, a group of letter carriers from an Oakville station started the group: Paul T., Roy T. and John H., as well as Bruce A. shortly after, Moe D., Ivy C. and Herta S. joined as well. Despite initial opposition from some of the older members of the day ("we don't need another meeting in this area"), Erin Mills grew rather quickly into one of the most popular meetings in the west GTA. The first meeting was Monday January 2, 1978 with over 100 people in attendance. Paul T. chaired and the late Blake G. was the first speaker. Within a year, the group had about 50 members and has continued to thrive ever since.

The founders had foresight, as most of Erin Mills was still in the planning stages. Some homes existed south of Dundas but to the north, it was mostly farmland and woodlots. E.P. Taylor and Canadian Equity and Development Limited planned and built the Erin Mills community starting with Erin Mills South in the early 1970s. Construction of Phase 2 Erin Mills West happened in the mid-1980s. Erin Mills Town Centre was the focal point for Phase 3 and opened in 1989. Population growth was rapid. In 2001 Erin Mills' population was 105,000, by 2016 it grew to over 122,000.

Christ Our King Lutheran Church on Dundas St. in Mississauga was the group's first home. The Church had just lost an Al-Anon meeting on Monday evening and that space was a well-come opportunity for our group. In addition to the Monday night open meeting, Linda J. saw a need for a closed meeting. She started a Saturday morning meeting in 1987, a Big Book discussion meeting around a ping-pong table. As attendance grew a second room was added, then a third room and ultimately a fourth room, each focusing on the Steps. John F., Carol G. and Jeff H. chaired the Steps meetings. The ping-pong table became known as the "Maac Pina-Pana Table" as so many people eat sober

Erin Mills United Church welcomed our inquiry and David H. formalized our rental agreement within a week. The Erin Mills Group adopted its present location in 1996 and is grateful for a good relationship with the Church to this day.

From the beginning, there were fundamental principles that shaped the Erin Mills:
Service is a key responsibility; The Group has been a consistent financial supporter of the General Service Office, Toronto Intergroup and District. Group representatives attend Intergroup and District meetings. Erin Mills' members have chaired every committee and chaired Intergroup itself. The Ontario Regional Conference and the Mississauga Fall Roundup are two events that Erin Mills' members help plan and execute. Members have managed all key functions and have chaired the overall events.

Rotation is an AA principle that keeps the group balanced. Key roles are rotated so that no one person becomes too influential; there is room for new ideas and fresh perspectives. The "Core does not overpower the Group." Resentments don't build up because everyone has a voice.

Respect: in the early days, many young women joined Erin Mills as it was a progressive group where they felt safe and welcome. Today our group is diverse in age and gender and enjoys a richness of comradery. This value is championed by many long-term members, especially the late Jeanne B. Things don't go unnoticed, if someone is having a problem, a member is sure to step up and try to help.

Group Assets: the wooden **You Are No Longer Alone** sign, made by one of the early members Bill B., is still in use today.



The late Randy B. made the Lectern; the late Jeanne B. made our white tablecloth displaying our group name and founding date. We were one of the early groups to invest in microphones and a sound system so that all could hear clearly.

Well Run: at Erin Mills business meetings, it is obvious that operations and finances are well organized and open to discussion. AA traditions are respected, especially the Seventh with consistent contributions to AA beyond our own group.

The pandemic in early 2020 brought it's share of challenges and new horizons for the fellowship as a whole and to our group. We would be remiss to not give special thanks to our own Jill B. and Jim Y. who stepped up to the challenge and propelled us to a virtual platform. Of this era, the term "Zoom baby" was born to acknowledge alcoholics who'd never attended a live meeting but for the Grace of God were able to attend virtually.

ERIN MILLS 47TH GROUP ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Erin Mills United Church
3010 The Collegeway, Mississauga, ON.

Monday, January 6th, 2025
Doors open at **5:00pm**
Dinner Buffet starts at **6:00pm**
Speaker Meeting at **8:00pm**

JANUARY MEDALLIONS

Mary M., Black River Group, 35 years, Jan. 3rd, 2025.
Gavin K., Living Sober Group, 1 year, Jan. 7th, 2025.
Loren T., Woodbridge Group, 1 year, Jan. 9th, 2025.
Corrie D., Living Sober Group, 1 year, Jan. 14th, 2025.
James N., Dry on Danforth, 5 years, Jan. 14th, 2025.
James F., Woodbridge Group, 30 years, Jan. 16th, 2025.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ryan, Open Hands Group (Mississauga), 1 year, Jan. 8th, 2025.
Conner, Open Hands Group (Mississauga), 1 year, Jan. 16th, 2025.
Adam B., Friendly Group, 1 year, Jan. 19th, 2025.

IS THERE AN UPCOMING MEDALLION?

Please send your medallion details to 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...)