

MARCH 2025 MEMBERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Alcoholics Anonymous only requirement is a "Desire to Stop Drinking". A.A. does not refuse anyone trying to recover from the disease. The membership principles outline the program to keep peace and harmony within and amongst all who participate in the 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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WALKING FORWARD: MY JOURNEY OF RECOVERY AND HEALING



Almost 21 years ago, I found myself at a crossroads. My life had spiralled out of control due to alcohol and drug addictions. These substances became masks for the pain, shame, guilt, and fear that consumed me. My struggles began in childhood when the cards dealt to me were far from kind. The physical and emotional abuse left me feeling small and unworthy, teaching me to doubt myself and question my value.

As I grew older, those wounds deepened. Betrayals by people I trusted, compounded by infidelity in relationships, left me broken. Each betrayal felt like a confirmation of my deepest fears—that I wasn't enough. I blamed myself, believing things might have been different if I had been smarter or more lovable. That self-doubt seeped into every aspect of my life. I wore a mask of strength, but inside, I was crumbling. Alcohol and drugs became my escape, silencing the voice in my head that constantly reminded me of my perceived failures.

What began as social drinking quickly escalated into experimenting with other substances. Before I knew it, they had taken over my life. The people I surrounded myself with only reinforced my downward spiral. I watched as some of my so-called girlfriends—women I once laughed and partied with—lost everything to addiction. They ended up living in the park. At fifty years of age, I could see myself heading down the same path, which terrified me. I wasn't ready to give up on myself, not yet.

That moment of clarity gave me the courage to take the first step. After going to counselling and being unable to rid myself of my addictions I walked into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), scared but desperate for change. My first meeting was in a church basement, where nearly 300 people had gathered to celebrate a woman's 40 years of sobriety. As I sat in that chair, overwhelmed by fear and shame, I saw something in the people around me—hope, strength, and the possibility of a better life.

At first, I resisted. Accepting that I was an alcoholic was not easy, and AA was certainly not on my vision board for life. But as I listened to others share their stories, I realized I wasn't alone. I began to follow the suggestions of those who had walked this path before me. Slowly, I made changes.

I distanced myself from toxic friends and avoided the places I called my "watering holes." I attended more meetings, immersing myself in the program. The more I showed up, the less I wanted to escape into the destructive habits that had controlled my life. By working the 12 steps, I began to confront the pain I had spent years running from. The fear, shame, and guilt that had weighed me down started to lift.

Finding a sponsor was one of the most challenging and significant steps in my journey. My sponsor became the person I could confide in, someone who listened without judgment and guided me through the steps. They loved me when I couldn't love myself. With their support, I reconnected with my higher power and rediscovered my gifts and passions.

Recovery wasn't easy, but it was worth it. Through this process, I learned to love myself again, to see my worth, and to live a healthier, happier life. Today, I continue to walk forward because I'm not designed to walk backward. I now guide other young women on their paths to recovery, sharing the hope and strength I found in those church basement meetings.

The sun shines brighter in my life now. The scars of my past remain, but they no longer define me. They are reminders of the strength it took to overcome, the courage to change, and the beauty of a life rebuilt with love, faith, and hope.

-Linda R., Longbranch Group

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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

King City Group: 54 Years of Sobriety and Unity

On Monday March 10, come out and join us as we celebrate our 54th anniversary at 8 pm at All Saints Church at 12935 Keele Street in King City. We would love to have you.

Early March of 1971, Marlene MacLeod, a member of the Richmond Hill Group refused to give the church key to a chronic slipper named Lincoln Lariviere who wanted to volunteer to set up the meeting. She told him that once he was sober for a few weeks, she would give him the key. He reacted by telling her he would start his own group.

Lincoln, who owned a service station across from All Saints Anglican Church in King City, approached the minister of the church and asked permission to use the church to hold an AA meeting. The minister knew of another AA member, Jack Tanner who was also interested in starting a meeting in King City, and he put them in touch. On Monday March 8, the fledgling group began to take shape in a little room at the top of the stairs off the auditorium.

Jack Tanner and his friend Alex were the foundation of the King City Group in those early day. The newcomers took turns staying sober. At the time, there were only a few meetings in the area; Richmond Hill, Keswick, Newmarket, and Bolton. The King City Group kept holding meetings, open to all, until it became more firmly established.

In the 1990s, several group members went to Chicago to experience a highly successful Beginner’s meeting they’d heard about that was seeing attendance in the hundreds. Hosted by the Lamont Oaks Group, described as a ‘Beginner’s’ class, the meeting focused on introducing newly sober alcoholics to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. The members brought the concept back to King City Group, and the format was adopted, and the Group ran a Beginner’s meeting in this format until early 2001.

In the mid 2000s, these meetings evolved into King City’s current meetings offerings - an open meeting on Monday night and closed meetings on Wednesday night with several rooms offering different formats.

The pandemic saw the group move quickly to Zoom, with members helping other members adapt to this new technology, even offering tutorials. We continued our active monthly business meetings through the pandemic and service positions adapted as needed. We have several “zoom babies” who are now celebrating 3 and 4 years of continuous sobriety.

Today, the King City Group remains an active group with eighty members and representatives taking part in GTA Intergroup, District 14 and Area 83. We have an active temporary sponsor program welcoming newcomers into the fellowship and strong ties to local recovery facilities that support the AA program.

For those of us who have been around for a few twenty-four hours, it is such a joy to witness the membership evolve as new members come in, work the steps, and take on roles in service. The way we manage our service commitments has evolved with the times, just like the people in the various roles rotate, but the group remains active and strong, and committed to the steps and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Members arrive early and stay after the meeting closes, and the gratitude in the room is palpable. For this member, it remains a joy week after week to walk down the stairs, hear the hum of conversation, see the people chatting and greeting, and to experience that feeling of coming home, and knowing with pure certainty that “we are no longer alone”.



Celebrate Good Times, Come On! There’s A Party Going on Around Here.
Your Invited to the ORC held at Sheraton Centre Hotel in downtown Toronto.

The weekend will be full of great speakers, fellowship with lots & lots of fun!

Friday March 14- Registration opens at 11:00 am on the concourse level.

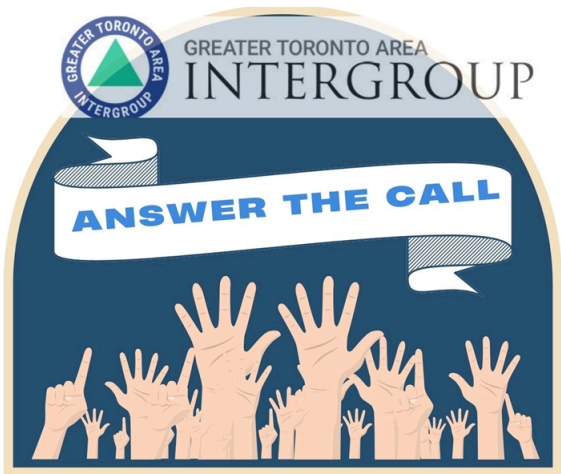
There will be AA & Al-Anon meetings Friday afternoon.
The Conference Opening Meeting starts at 7:00 pm in the Grand Ballroom.
Get your singing voice ready for Karaoke at 9:30 pm Friday night!
Meditation will be 7:30 am Saturday & Sunday morning.

Saturday March 15- meetings begin at 9:15 am and run through until late in the night.

There will be Out of Town & Local AA Speakers, Long-timers Panel, Topic Panels (Growing in AA, Home Group & Beyond, Maintaining a Positive Attitude & Relationships), Family AA & Al-Anon Panel. Banquet Speaker Marty J., Vancouver, BC will share his story at 7:30 pm.

Saturday evening will end with a Dance in the Main Ballroom.
Sunday March 16- meetings begin at 9:30 am. The conference will close with the Sobriety Countdown beginnings at 1:00 pm, followed by our closing speaker.

COME & JOIN US! In The Fellowship of the Spirit for “A NEW HAPPINESS” at the ORC.



ONE
NIGHT A MONTH

OVERNIGHT PHONE
GREETERS



Join our March
Overnight
Greeter Training
Sessions

Any questions?? Reach out to
12step.chair@aatoronto.org



Saturday May 3, 2025
Storrington Lion's Club
 2992 Princess Rd.
 (Battersea Rd)

Tickets \$ 20.00
 (also available at the door)

Doors open at 9 am for Registration
 10 am - 3 pm

Speakers

JAY A. TORONTO
 ERIC H. BARRIE
 PAT B. KINGSTON

BBQ Lunch - Hamburgers, hotdogs and salads

Sobriety Countdown

50/50 Draw

Tickets available from:

Mike N. 613-539-8112
 Randy S. 613-985-4873
 Steve W. 613-893-3280
 Pat L. 613-889-9205



Josh S. 613-893-4895
 Steve B. 613-532-1057
 Joel F. 613-572-4041
 Michelle T. 613-561-2967

GTAI/DISTRICT - MARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - TBA

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. Mar. 14 – 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. Mar. 18 – 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. Mar. 17 – 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Tues. Mar. 04 – 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: TBA

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - Sun. Mar. 16 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. Mar. 12 – 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Mon. Mar. 03 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day Mon. Mar. 24 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 827 5978 - PW: 587553

Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) History

1943 January 13 Wed.6pm. - 1st continuous meeting of AA was held in Toronto at the Little Denmark Restaurant on Bay St. Present at this dinner meeting were two non-alcoholics - Rev. Dr. George Little and Rev. Percy Price and six alcoholics - Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Bus McT., Dorothy C. & Weems C.

1943 December 16 Thurs. - First AA Banquet was held at the Royal York Hotel with 80 people present.

The Conference is the continuing celebration of the anniversary of the commencement of AA in Toronto- Ontario- Canada. Prior to 1950, celebrations were held each year at various locations. 1170 Yonge St. & the Knights of Columbus Hall on Sherbourne St. were used a number of times. The words "regional" and "conference" not necessarily together were used in the announcements.

The Progression of the name of the Ontario Regional Conference can be seen from the programs:

1950 The A.A. Conference
 1951 The Regional Conference
 1952 The Ontario A.A. Conference
 1953 The Ontario Regional Conference

1951 March 3 & 4 - The Ontario Regional Conference was held at the Royal York Hotel. Bill Wilson came to speak and gave a real pitch for his proposed General Service Conference. It was unanimously accepted by those in attendance from the State of New York, the State of Pennsylvania and the Province of Ontario. In the new scheme of things, the two states and the province of Ontario became entities unto themselves after adopting Bill Wilson's plan for the Third Legacy. It now became necessary to elect a delegate for all of Ontario to attend the General Service Conference to be held in New York the following month, April 1951. Adam C. from the Friday-Young Group in Toronto was elected as Ontario's first delegate who served on Panel 1 (1951-1952). In 1953 he was unanimously chosen as the first Canadian to serve on the Board of Trustees from January 1953 until April 1957.

The huge task of establishing areas and districts throughout the Province of Ontario to fit into these new A.A. plans was in the hands of Adam C. on his return from the Conference in New York. During his first year in office, with capable and dedicated help of his committee, they got this job done, in spite of the enormity of it all and most of what was accomplished then remains in place today.

1957 October or November- Western Ontario Convention held in London. Leander John Joseph G. (Panel # 8) was elected as the first delegate of West Area.

1958 - Ontario Area was divided into 2 areas - the West and the East/North.

From the date the 2nd area came into existence a Committee came into existence which has continued under different names until the present:

1958 - The Ontario Committee - General Service Conference
1964 - The Ontario General Service Committee
1980 - The Ontario Provincial Committee
1990 - The Ontario Delegates Committee

It has consisted of the Delegates and the Alternates. At times it had a Secretary, a Treasurer, and other committee members such as Public Information and Institutions.

1963 - Ontario was divided into 3 areas - East, West & North.

1967 - Ontario was divided into 4 areas - East, West, North West & North East.

1964 Fall - 1st Assembly for Eastern Ontario held outside Toronto. Alf McG. from Ottawa was elected delegate at Belleville.

The Ontario Regional Conference was sponsored from the start by all groups in Ontario. With the passage of time and growth, many parts of the province began to have their own conferences. From 1951 until 1963, delegates were elected at the Ontario Regional Conference, the first Western Ontario Delegate was elected in London in 1957. Gradually, the original purpose for this conference eroded, though it continued to be sponsored by Toronto Intergroup and the Ontario General Service Committee, whose name changed to Ontario Provincial Committee in 1981.

In 1991, the name of this Committee changed to the Ontario Delegates Committee, at which time the areas around the province withdrew their support and the sole sponsor became Toronto Intergroup. **By 1993**, Ontario A.A. functions with the assistance and service support of about 18 Intergroups.

Compiled by Eddy Gesicki, GTA Archivist from Tommy H. Fond (Archival Records), March 2024.



MAKING AMENDS
 Finding a new freedom

GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH

Making Amends features 55 candid, firsthand stories from AA Grapevine magazine of members' experiences with Step Nine of the AA program. The book includes chapters on making amends to parents, children, family members, exes, financial institutions, friends and coworkers. These powerful stories illustrate how practicing Step Nine can help us, as AA's co-founder Bill W. wrote, "know a new freedom and a new happiness."

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/store/action-stories-aa-grapevine-sofcover>

-Imran R. Grapevine



SHARE YOUR STORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES' SPRING ISSUES

Winter is ending. Do you have any tips for staying sober in the spring?

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 ?

In March 1935, at the urging of her friend Delphine Weber, Henrietta Sieberling organized a Wednesday night Oxford Group meeting at T. Henry & Clarace Williams home on 676 Palisades Dr. in Akron, Ohio specifically to help Dr. Bob with his drinking. Dr. Bob eventually openly admitted his drinking problem but could not bring himself to stop drinking. Oxford Group meetings continued at the Williams house until 1954.

On March 17, 1938, Rockefeller replied to Richardson that it was contrary to the policy of his philanthropies to fully fund a charitable enterprise unless it was decided to carry it indefinitely. Rockefeller declined to make a donation for the second year but provided \$5,000 to be held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury. Much of the fund was used to assist Dr. Bob by paying off the mortgage to his home. The remainder provided Bill & Dr. Bob (who were both in very difficult financial straits) with \$120.00 a month so that they could continue to dedicate themselves full time to the Fellowship.

By March 1939, the 400 multilith copies of the book that were distributed in January were returned. Reader's comments produced few alterations in the final text. However, the original text made frequent use of the words "you" & "your." A Montclair, NJ psychiatrist named Dr. Howard suggested toning down the use of "you must" changing it to "we ought" or we should." Dr. Silkworth & Dr. Harry Tiebout offered similar advice.

In March 1939, the much changed book manuscript was turned over to Tom Uzzell, an editor at Collier's & a member of the faculty at NYU & a friend of Hank P. The manuscript was estimated to be 600 to 800 pages (including personal stories). Uzzell reduced it to approx. 400 pages. Most cuts came from the personal stories. The Akron, Ohio stories were edited by Jim S., an AA member & journalist from Akron. Jim's Big Book story was originally titled "Traveller, Editor, Scholar" & later changed to "The News Hawk." Following Uzzell's editing, Bill W., Hank P., Ruth Hock & Dorothy S. (wife of Cleveland pioneer Clarence S.) drove to Cornwall, NY & gave a much altered manuscript to the printing plant of Cornwall Press. When the plant manager saw the condition of the manuscript, he almost sent them back to type a clean copy. Hank P. persuaded the manager to accept the manuscript on condition that the group would examine & correct galley proofs as they came off the press. The group checked in to a local hotel & spent the next several days proofreading galley's.

On March 16, 1940 the fledgling Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St. Newark, NJ to 30 Vesey St., Room 703, Lower Manhattan in NY City. Rent was \$650 a year. The mailing address was Box 658 Church St. Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became AA's first national Secretary. Most of the draft yellow pages, & manuscript drafts, of the Big Book were discarded before the move. A difficult loss to AA's Archives was the draft of the initial version of the Twelve Steps.

On March 1, 1941, The Saturday Evening Post article on AA by Jack Alexander was published. Its impact on AA was enormous. The name Alcoholics Anonymous appeared on the outside cover. Bill's & other member's pictures appear full-face in the article. The photo caption read, "A typical club house discussion group". It was AA's most notable public relations blessing. During 1941, AA membership surged from around 2,000 to over 8,000. Reprints of the article became a favored pamphlet "The Jack Alexander Article About AA" & it is still reprinted today. Over 6,000 inquiries were sent to the NY Office during 1941 because of the article. The NY Office asked groups for donations of \$1.00 per member per year for extra staff to respond to all the inquiries. This began the practice of financing the NY office operations from group and member donations.

In March 1941, Cleveland forms the Fellowship's first women's group & also the first Black women's group.

On March 18, 1944, the first reported women's prison group meets at Clinton Farms in Clinton, New Jersey.

On March 21, 1966, Ebby T. who was sober 2 months through the Oxford Group when he carried the message to Bill W. died at age 69 of emphysema with 2 1/2 years of sobriety. Bill W. loyally referred to Ebby as his sponsor throughout his life.

On March 22, 1984, Clarence S. founder of Cleveland AA, story in Big Book "Home Brewmeister" dies at age 81.

Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in February

March 17, 1949 - Sunnyside Group

March 1, 1954 - Willowdale Group

March 11, 1986 - Shepherd Group

March 17, 1960 - Port Credit Group

March 8, 1968 - West Toronto

Women's Meeting

March 19, 1970 - Golden Mile Group

March 7, 1971 - Trial & Error Group

March 8, 1971 - King City Group

March 22, 1972 - Third Tradition Meeting

March 17, 1981 - St. Patrick's Group

March 1981 - Aurora Group

March 17, 1984 - St. Andrew's Group -

Scarborough

March 29, 1984 - Recovery Group -

Thornhill

March 6, 1987 - Lighthouse Group

March 17, 2004 - Primary Purpose Group

MARCH MEDALLIONS

Walter S., Erin Mills Group, 25 yrs, **Mar. 03**

Grant D., Rexdale United Group, 40 Yrs., **Mar. 06**

Janine H., Erin Mills Group, 1 yr, **Mar. 10**

Durvy M., Woodbridge Group, 1 yr, **Mar. 13**

JenG., Erin Mills Group, 10 yrs, **Mar. 17**

Peter S., Six Points Group, 1 yr, **Mar. 17**

Donna W., Erin Mills Group, 20 yrs, **Mar. 24**

James G., Erin Mills Group, 1 yr, **Mar. 31**

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Laura S., Friendly Group, 4 yrs, **Mar. 09**

Hazel G., Friendly Group, 13 yrs, **Mar. 10**

Bill J., Friendly Group, 32 yrs, **Mar. 11**

John O., Friendly Group, 7 yrs, **Mar. 23**

Beverli S., Friendly Group, 1 yr, **Mar. 30**

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CONTACT ARCHIVIST EDDY G. 416-
536-7536 or archives@aatoronto.org
OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE
NEEDED FOR THE ARCHIVES.



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more
"Better Times" issues!

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...)

GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

HIGH PARK GROUP - NEW LOCATION

Effective January 31st 2025

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church
1691 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M6P 1B1

Southwest corner off Bloor at Indian Road – 100
meters east of Keele Subway Station
Green P Parking at Keele Subway Station and Street
Parking
(former location St. Johns' Anglican Church – 288
Humburside Avenue)