

December 2025 12th Tradition

The 12th Tradition is built around trust amongst the fellowship; what is seen and heard in the rooms, stays in the rooms. It reminds us that the fellowship is a spiritual program that will continue to work if we follow the principles of the program.

SHARE YOUR STORY

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submission page.

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

YOU CANNOT STRESS OVER THE THINGS YOU CANNOT CONTROL



As of October 10, 2025, I was 7 months and 18 days sober; a milestone that feels both surreal and hard-won. Back in July, when I hit 3 months sober, I penned a publication detailing my life's ups and downs, choosing anonymity then to shield myself from judgment and shame. Today, I'm done hiding.

Sobriety has gifted me the freedom to let go of those fears, to fight for what I need despite the chaos, and to embrace a clarity I never thought possible. I never once knew I would be 7 months sober.

My path hasn't been easy. On August 29, 2025, I underwent a left superficial parotidectomy, a surgery that sidelined me from recovery meetings, which was and is still frustrating. Since starting full-time studies again on September 2, I've faced housing instability, financial stress, and employment barriers, all while grappling with the aftermath of a rape in 2023 during my active addiction. That year, I pushed everyone away, including my psychiatrist, who supported me from 2017 to 2023. I tested boundaries, a trait I now recognize as part of my dual diagnosis, borderline personality disorder, alongside ADHD and autism. For years, I resisted this label, but recent self-awareness is indicative of my struggles, making life feel chaotic yet giving me the tools to navigate it.

These days, I'm slipping. Living alone without family support, I battle brain fog, worsened by post-op distress, learning and auditory challenges, and the inability to eat or sleep well. I feel invisible, dismissed by a healthcare system that often overlooks the vulnerable, even as I try to communicate openly with my psychiatrist. Yet, sobriety has taught me to self-advocate and that nobody else will do it for me. “Let go and let God” echoes in my recovery, a reminder to release what I cannot control, much like the quote I painted in 2015, “You cannot stress over the things you cannot control,” still hanging in my living room.

I'm here, struggling, but determined. Also faced by numerous challenges these days, and non-neuroaffirming professionals who will never get it. Communication has been challenging for me, and I'm afraid of being dismissed for simply being autistic. That's why I've fallen through the cracks of this supposed system, because I don't apparently look autistic, yet I have been autistic all my life, and I'm waiting for just one person to take me seriously. I do know that once people start regarding my autism/ADHD, I will therefore get the supports I deserves and, understandably, this may never happen because this is exactly how our society is. To anyone reading, keep using your support, advocate fiercely, and trust that better times can emerge from the mess. Let's keep holding space for one another. We cannot give up, even amidst the misperceptions, biases, and judgments of things others do not even know – We still cannot give up. We must keep showing up, as it is the only day. We can do 1% for ourselves every day.

- Victoria

WANTED: PHONE GREETER COORDINATOR(S) FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS TORONTO



Great opportunity for someone who has recently retired and who is computer-literate. This position makes use of the talents and abilities acquired over the years in the workplace, allowing you to stay current with technology.

You are savvy, organized, and love working in a team of other dedicated volunteers. You've been around AA for some time. Your love is giving back. You welcome a challenge. If this describes you, the greeter coordinator position is tailor-made for you.

Anyone interested in filling this position can email:
greetercoordinator@aatoronto.org

December Events

Dec. 8th, 2025 - Holiday Celebration - 11 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Grace Noon Meeting

Grace Place, 156 Main Street N., Brampton. (Park on Alexander Street and Central Public School)

Dec. 10th, 2025 - Gratitude Meeting - 8:00 P.M.

Brampton Recovery Group

Holy Family Anglican Church, 10446 Kennedy Rd N., Brampton)

(NO MEETING DEC. 24th & 31st, 2025.)

Dec. 15th, 2025 - Gratitude Meeting - 8:00 P.M.

Fellowship Group

St. John's Parish Church, 786 Kingston Road, Toronto

Dec. 15th, 2025 - Candlelight Meeting - 7:00 P.M.

King City Group

All Saints Anglican Church, 12935 Keele Street, King City

Dec. 17th, 2025 - Gratitude Meeting - 7:20 P.M.

Pathfinders Group

St. Ansgar Lutheran Church, 1498 Avenue Road (at Lawrence), Toronto

Dec. 18th, 2025 - Gratitude Meeting - 8:00 P.M.

Woodbridge Group

Woodbridge United Church, 8090 Kipling Avenue, Vaughan

Dec. 20th, 2025 - Gratitude Meeting - 8:30 P.M.

Lansing Group

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2737 Bayview Avenue, Toronto



DECEMBER MEDALLIONS

Dec. 04th, 2025 - Franco T. - 10 yrs - Woodbridge Group

Dec. 13th, 2025 - Arlene B. - 1 yr - Grace Noon Rap

Dec. 27th, 2025 - Chris G. - The See to it Group

Winter Season Open House (Free Event):

DEC 25TH 10 AM-4 PM

It will be held at:

Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

230 St Clair Ave W, Toronto, ON M4V 1R5

Dunvegan Rd entrance.

Committee meetings will be held at:

Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

230 St Clair Ave W, Toronto, ON M4V 1R5

In-person and Zoom option for committee meetings.

Sunday, Sept 14th 2025, at 9 am-10:30 am

Sunday, Oct 19th 2025, at 9 am-10:30 am

Sunday, Nov 16th 2025, at 9 am-10:30 am

Sunday, Dec 14th 2025, at 9 am-10:30 am

If you're interested in joining this fun, active committee, please contact Zobie G.

wsoh@aatoronto.org

Zobie - (416) 709 - 0178



SHARE YOUR STORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES'

Share Your Thoughts and Pen a letter to Better Times

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



GTAI/DISTRICT - DECEMBER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - TBA

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. Dec. 12, 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. Dec. 16, 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Tues. Dec. 30, 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Tues. Dec. 02, 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. Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Tues. Dec. 09, 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

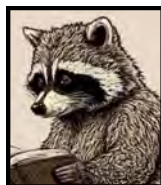
IT Subcommittee - Mon. Dec. 01, 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - TBA

ID: 811 827 5978 - PW: 587553

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



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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...)*

History of the Winter Season Open House (WSOH) 81st

January 20, 1944: AA Central Office opened at 1170 Yonge St.

December 25, 1944 - December 25, 1959: Open House at 1170 Yonge St.

January 15, 1960: 1170 closed, and 2 Gerrard St. West opened.

December 25, 1960 - December 25, 1970: Open House at Columbus Hall on Sherbourne St.

December 25, 1971 - December 25, 1979: Open House at Metropolitan United Church.

The reason the Open House left the Metropolitan U.C. was "rowdiness and drinking at the Church. The Church would not tolerate what was taking place. Intergroup did not feel it was in a position to police the gathering. Various elements in the Fellowship used the Steps and Traditions to prevent the necessary controls."

December 25, 1980 - December 25, 1988: Open House at North Toronto Memorial Gardens.

Intergroup chose this site for the Open House because it wanted to remove it from the downtown problem areas. At this time, the Xmas Open Houses were the responsibility of the elected representatives of the Fellowship in Toronto. An element in the Fellowship did not feel the proper way of treating the downtown alcoholics was being followed by moving up to Eglinton West (the area where North Toronto Memorial was located), where the drinking drunks would not go. At this point, the minority took it into their own hands, and the result was the start in 1981 of the dinner at St. Bartholomew's, which has continued. It has unquestionably been successful, but it has not fulfilled the wishes of the majority. It is a controversial issue. The elements who have put it on have shown that it is useful. Accordingly, "several members of AA who felt that AA should be helping drunks at Christmas time in the downtown area started a dinner at St. Bartholomew's, Dundas St. East, beginning December 25, 1981, and continuing to today and probably into the future. "In 1989, they were requested to consider realigning themselves, but they chose not to (do so)."

December 25, 1989 - 2014: Open House at Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, 214 Wright Ave.

A Xmas Open House was started in the West End and handled again by Intergroup. "It was felt by Intergroup that the group involved at St. Bartholomew's was in effect dealing with the East end", while Intergroup's Open House took care of the West end... One other note: a few years ago, the assembled representatives at Intergroup decided to change the official name from "Christmas Open House" to "Winter Season Open House" to avoid the Christian bias of the traditional name. The assembly acted in response to the challenge that, as a worldwide institution now seeking to help alcoholics of all stripes, regardless of religion or irreligion, AA should avoid officially associating itself with any particular form of religion, as declared in the "Preamble".

December 25, 2015 - 2017: Open House at St. James Cathedral's Snell Hall.

(Southeast corner of Church St. & Adelaide St. E.) Moved to this location because the hall is fully accessible, and it is in a central location.

December 25, 2018 - 2019: College Street United Church, 452 College St. (College & Bathurst).

December 25, 2020 - 2021: Did not take place because of the COVID pandemic.

December 25, 2022 - 2023: Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. (front entrance) (formerly the Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, 214 Wright Ave, side entrance)

December 25, 2024 - present: Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. W. (Dunvegan Rd. entrance) Moved to this location because the hall is fully accessible, a central location & TTC accessible.

The above summary, written in 1991, is based on a memo from Tommy H. Archives
Records.

Updated October 2025 by Eddy G. GTA Archivist.

GRAPEVINE

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/>

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Join the 12 Step Help Line Phone Greeter Team

Do you have 4 hours a month to do service outside your home group?

TRAINING AVAILABLE ANSWER CALLS REMOTELY OR IN THE OFFICE	ONE YEAR SOBRIETY REQUIREMENT COULD BE THE MOST GRATIFYING SERVICE OUTSIDE THE GROUP
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phonegreetercoordinator@aatoronto.org
 OR VISIT AATORONTO.ORG
 LOOK FOR SERVICE COMMITTEES AND CLICK
 ON 12TH STEP COMMITTEE

ARCHIVES CORNER – DID YOU KNOW?

In Dec. 1931, Russell (Bud) Firestone, the alcoholic son of Akron business magnate Harvey Firestone Sr., was introduced to Sam Shoemaker by James Newton while returning from an Episcopal conference in Denver. Newton was a prominent Oxford Group (OG) member and an executive at Firestone. Bud, drinking a fifth or more of whiskey a day, spiritually surrendered with Shoemaker and was released from his alcoholic obsession. He joined the Oxford Group and became an active member (but later returned to drinking).

In January 1933, Harvey Firestone Sr., grateful for the help given to his son Bud, sponsored an Oxford Group conference weekend (10 10-day house party) at the Mayflower Hotel in Akron. Frank Buchman & 30 members of his team were met at the train station by the Firestones & Rev Walter Tunks (Firestone's minister & rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church). The event included 300 overseas Oxford Group members & received much news coverage. Attendees included Henrietta Seiberling, T Henry & Clarace Williams & Dr. Bob's Wife, Anne.

In early 1933, Anne attended Oxford Group meetings with her friend Henrietta Seiberling (whose marriage to J Frederick Seiberling was crumbling). Anne later persuaded Dr. Bob to attend. Meetings were on Thursday nights at the West Hill group.

On Dec 8, 1941, after an attack on Pearl Harbour, HI, the US entered World War II. With the prospect of being recalled to active Army duty, Bill W requested that he be granted a royalty on book sales to provide financial support for his wife, Lois. The board approved a 10% royalty (35 cents). Prior to this, Dr. Bob was voluntarily giving Bill half the 10% royalty he & Anne were infrequently receiving. Bill's royalty became his sole source of income. An exception occurred in the mid-1940s when his income averaged \$1,700 over seven years. The board made a grant to Bill of \$1,500 for each of the seven years for a total of \$10,500, out of which Bill purchased his Bedford Hills house, Stepping Stones.

On Dec. 20, 1945, Rowland Hazard died at age 64. In 1931, Rowland (age 50) was concerned about his drinking & saw Dr. Carl Jung psychoanalyst in Switzerland. He was treated for about one year, got drunk again & returned for more treatment.

Treated a 2nd time by Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a vital spiritual or religious experience - in short, a genuine conversion experience. Bill W. wrote that this was "the first chain of events that led to the founding of AA." Rowland sobered up in the Oxford Group in 1931 & was a prominent member of Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC (the Oxford Group US HQ).

Rowland & Cebra G. interceded with the judge to accept responsibility for Ebby T. in August 1934. He helped Ebby find sobriety. Rowland remained a member of the Oxford Group (Moral Re-Armament). It is unclear whether he stayed sober or not. There is no evidence that he ever joined AA. Bill W. later wrote to Dr. Carl Jung on January 23, 1961, acknowledging his contribution to the AA movement. The letters Bill & Dr. Jung exchanged were printed in the Grapevine & are preserved in the book "Language of the Heart."

On Dec. 7, 1934, Bill W. decided to investigate the Calvary Mission at 246 E. 23rd St., NY. He showed up drunk with a drinking companion he found along the way (Alec the Finn). Bill kept interrupting the service, wanting to speak. On the verge of being ejected, Ebby T. came by & fed Bill a plate of beans. Bill later joined the penitents & drunkenly "testified" at the meeting.

On Dec. 11, 1934, Bill W., 39 years old, decided to go back to Towns Hospital in NY & had his last drink (4 bottles of beer purchased on the way). He received financial help from his mother, Emily, for the hospital bill.

On Dec 14, 1934, Ebby T. visited Bill W. at Towns Hospital in NY & told him about the Oxford Group principles. After Ebby left, Bill fell into a deep depression (his "deflation at depth") & had a profound spiritual experience after crying out, "If there is a God, will he show himself." Fearing that he had gone crazy, Bill called for Dr. Silkworth, who told him to hang on to what he had experienced because it seemed so much better than what he had come into the hospital with. In a lighter vein, Bill & others would later refer to this as his "white flash" or "hot flash" experience.

On Dec. 15, 1934, Ebby T. (possibly Rowland H.) brought Bill a copy of William James' book "The Varieties of Religious Experience." Bill found the book inspiring by revealing three key points for recovery:

1. A need for a complete defeat in a vital area of life (or what we today call "hitting bottom")
2. An admission of defeat (or what we today call "acceptance") and
3. An appeal to a higher power for help (or what we today call "surrender").

These spiritual principles later formed the basis for Steps 1, 2, & 3. The book strongly influenced early AA & is cited in the Big Book. Note: William James was no stranger to alcoholism. His brother, Robertson (Bob), was in & out of asylums for his alcoholism & spent his final years with James.

On Dec. 18, 1934, Bill W. left Towns Hospital in NY & began working with alcoholics. He & Lois attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby T., Shep C. & Rowland H. at Calvary Hall in Calvary House in NY on 4th Avenue. After meetings, Bill & other Oxford Group alcoholics met at Stewart's Cafeteria near the mission. Attendees included Rowland H. & Ebby T.

From **Dec. 1934 to early 1935,** Bill W. (dry date Dec 11, 1934) worked with alcoholics at the Calvary Mission & Towns Hospital in NY, emphasizing his "hot flash" spiritual experience. Alcoholic Oxford Group members began meeting at his home on Clinton St. in NY. Bill had no success sobering up others. In April, Bill talked with Dr. Silkworth, who recommended that he stop preaching about his "hot flash". He told Bill to hit the drunks hard with the medical view, & break down their strong ego by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to go mad or die.

In Dec 1948, Dr. Bob gave his last talk in Detroit.

GTA Groups/Meetings that started in December:

1. Dec. 7th, 1947 - Beaches Group.
2. Dec. 7th, 1956 - Islington Group.
3. Dec. 21st, 1973 - Twelfth Tradition Group.
4. Dec. 22nd, 1974 - High Park Group.
5. Dec. 6, 2013 - Whitby Freethinkers Group.

-Eddy G., GTA Archivist