

January 2026 Service Work

If you want to become more involved with service work, the phone greeters are in need of volunteers - try it for a few months.

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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

ANSWERING THE PHONE, ANSWERING THE CALL



When I became a Phone Greeter, I didn't realize how meaningful this simple act of service would become. My job is straightforward: I answer the phone when someone reaches out to Alcoholics Anonymous. But over time, I've learned that what I'm really offering is connection, calm, and hope at the exact moment someone needs it.

Some callers are newcomers taking their first shaky step toward sobriety. Others are family members looking for guidance. Sometimes it's a member having a hard night who just needs a steady voice. Each call brings me back to my own early days — to the people who picked up the phone when I felt lost, frightened, or unsure. Today, I get to be that voice for someone else.

As a greeter, I don't fix anyone's problems. I simply listen, share information, and help them find their next step. But the impact of that small service has been far bigger than I expected. It keeps me connected to the heart of our program: one alcoholic helping another.

This service has strengthened my sobriety, grounded me in gratitude, and reminded me again and again that recovery is shared — never carried alone. I'm grateful for the chance to answer the call.

If you are looking for a meaningful, quiet way to give back, we truly need more volunteers. Please consider joining us — your voice might be the one someone is praying to hear.

-Jessie S., Lakeshore Group

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

The Beginnings of A.A. in Toronto, Canada

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 June 1941, Rev. George Little ordered 5 more copies; he sold one to the Rev. Canon Quintin Warner of London, Ontario. This was given to a friend who got sober & later joined AA. Rev. Little was a minister who supported the Temperance movement, but could not understand AA's tolerance for drinking. However, he became a good friend of AA.

In August 1942, the AA office in New York granted distribution rights for the Big Book to Dr. George Little. Dr. Little formally transferred these rights to the Toronto AA Club on September 22, 1944.

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.

January 13, 1943, Toronto, Canada

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, the first organized A.A. meeting was held at the Metropolitan United Church House. Six people attended. In a matter of just two weeks, the attendance at the meeting had tripled. On February 25, 15 were present & Dorothy C., the first woman in A.A. in Canada, attended the meeting at the Metropolitan United Church. On March 18, 12 People were present, including 2 women. These were dinner meetings.

On April 15, 1943, a celebration dinner with 20 people present took place at the Rev. & Mrs. Percy Price's apartment. This was the celebration for the first 3 months for the commencement of AA & its continuing success

Weekly meetings continued at the Church House were regularly attended by about 17 to 20 members until June 10, when it was decided that permanent quarters should be established.

On June 12, 1943, the meeting moved to 160 Bloor Street East to the newly acquired Club Room & 25 people were in attendance. Alcoholics Anonymous was launched in Canada.

On October 22, 1943, 1st AA meeting started in Windsor, Ontario.

On November 23, 1943, 1st AA meeting started in London, Ontario.

On December 16, 1943, in gratitude for this newfound sobriety, a dinner was held in Toronto at the Royal York Hotel. There were 80 people in attendance, including newly minted members of Alcoholics Anonymous, along with family members and other supporters of sobriety. Today, we know this dinner as the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) Banquet. **On March 20-22, 2026, the Ontario Regional Conference will be celebrating 83 years. Theme: A Revolutionary Change. AAORC.CA (for pre-registration & more info).**

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.' On January 1, 1945, a Sunday Afternoon Beginner's Class was started.

In September 1945, "growing pains" were the reason that a second AA group was formed. This was the first group to come out from "1170." This second group was named the Midtown Group & their Friday Night Meetings began in the St. James Parish Hall downtown.

On October 9, 1945, a Women's Group formed at a house meeting. Other groups that started in 1945 were the East End, West End, Victor & Parkdale Groups.

On May 8, 1946, the Kingsway Group was started by Tom G. & on June 11, 1946, the North Toronto Group was started in the home of Mac H.

In 1946, Earl McI. & Tom G. came up with the idea of the AA Medallions. The size is slightly bigger than regular coins & an oval shape would be easy to pick out from the pocket or a change purse. At first, the members paid \$2.50 for his or her pure silver medallion, which was received when one year of continuous sobriety had been achieved. The 5-year & 10-year colours came later. Just as today, members would carry these medallions as a reminder to be Grateful.

On Oct 2, 1947, the Danforth Group started, on **November 17, 1947**, the Oakville Group started & **December 7, 1947**, the Beaches Group was started by Wilf D. & Fred H.

In October 1947, there were ten groups in Toronto, and the first Central Committee (today GTA Intergroup) was formed at "1170" Yonge, with the first operating procedures drawn up by Glen G.

In August 1948, an office was opened at 331 Bay Street to deal with administrative matters.

On August 16, 1948, Marg M. of the North Toronto Group became the permanent secretary and held the position for 25 years. "1170" remained open to provide services to alcoholics.

In 1947, the first meeting in a correctional facility took place at the Mimico Reformatory, initiated by Rev. George Little. This meeting was likely the first of its kind in the Canadian Penal System.

In 1955, the 331 Bay Street Office was closed & a new one opened at 77 York Street.

On January 15, 1960, "1170" & 77 York Street closed & the offices moved to 2 Gerrard St. W.

In 1975, the Toronto Intergroup Offices moved from 2 Gerrard St. W. to 272 Eglinton Ave. W.

On February 1, 1987, the Toronto Intergroup Offices moved from 272 Eglinton Ave. W. to 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 502 & on August 3, 1993, moved from Suite 502 to Suite 202.

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.

Taken from the "75 Years of A.A. in Ontario" Booklet

Written by Peter N. (Bayview Group) & Eddy G. (Beaches Group), GTA Archives Committee & also from "AA History Timeline" by Tommy H. (Unionville Group)

January 2022 by Eddy G. GTA Archivist
Revised Fri. Dec. 9, 2025 by Eddy G.



THE FAMOUS LITTLE DENMARK RESTAURANT Photograph by J. J. Klaus
THE BAY STREET TORONTO COPYRIGHT 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026

GTAI/DISTRICT - DECEMBER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - TBA

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. Jan. 09, 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. Jan. 20, 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Tues. Jan. 27, 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Tues. Jan. 06, 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Tues. Jan. 06, 7 p.m.

Next Meeting: TBA

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - Sun. Jan. 18, 4 p.m.

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Tues. Jan. 13, 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Mon. Jan. 05, 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - TBA

ID: 811 827 5978 - PW: 587553

January Medallions

Avery B. - Anniversary Group, 1 Year, **Jan. 07, 2026**
Douglas G. - Brampton Recovery Group, 5 Years, **Jan. 07, 2026**
Felix V. - Rox Glen Traditional, 20 Years, **Jan. 08, 2026**
Anthony C. - Woodbridge Group, 1 Year, **Jan. 08, 2026**
Lori B. - King City Group, 30 Years, **Jan. 11, 2026**
Belissa J. - Anniversary Group, 1 Year, **Jan. 14, 2026**
George F. - Bellamy Group @ New Anchor Group, 25 Years, **Jan. 15, 2026**
Irene S. - New Anchor Group, 25 Years, **Jan. 15, 2026**
Phil T. - Rox Glen Traditional, 1 Year, **Jan. 15, 2026**
Lori H. - Melrose Group, 25 Years, **Jan. 17, 2026**
Chris P. - Anniversary Group, 1 Year, **Jan. 21, 2026**
Rosario A. - Woodbridge Group, 5 Years, **Jan. 22, 2026**

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS w/ AL-ANON & ALATEEN

A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

MARCH 20-22, 2026

Join the Conference
Fellowship on Facebook



Ontario Regional Conference 2026

REGISTER ONLINE
AAORC.CA



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

January Birthdays, Group Announcements, & New Group.

January Birthdays:

Dave P. - Brampton Recovery Group, 33 Years, **Jan. 02, 2026**
Darlene S. - Brampton Recovery Group, 27 Years, **Jan. 03, 2026**
Thillai K. - Brampton Recovery Group, 13 Years, **Jan. 04, 2026**
Paul G. - Grace Noon, 27 Years, **Jan. 17, 2026**
Melanie D. - Brampton Recovery Group, 2 Years, **Jan. 18, 2026**

Group Announcements:

48th Anniversary - Erin Mills Group, Jan 5th, 2026, Dinner @ 6:00 P.M., Meeting @ 8:00 P.M.

New Group - Spirit of Hope

Church of the Holy Spirit of Peace - 1170 Tynegrove Road, Mississauga, ON, L4W 3B2
 Thursday 7:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.; Doors open at 7:00 P.M. Enter through the doors close to the parking lot.
<https://www.aatoronto.org/meetings/spirit-of-hope/>

GRAPEVINE

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

srsId=AfmBOoq6pkYtDz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi_gBNuUpddy

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...)

A.A Speakers

Billy N. Florida
Juanita W. Ohio
Paul McQ. New York
Tom & Cheryl T. New York
Yvonne S. California

Al-Anon Main Speaker

Marti P. Arkansas

Family Panel

Diane & Mike A. Nashville

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



ONE YEAR
SOBRIETY REQUIREMENT

ANSWER CALLS
REMOTELY OR IN THE
OFFICE

COULD BE THE MOST
GRATIFYING SERVICE
OUTSIDE THE GROUP

phonegreetercoordinator@aatoronto.org

OR VISIT AATORONTO.ORG
LOOK FOR SERVICE COMMITTEES AND CLICK
ON 12TH STEP COMMITTEE



ARCHIVES CORNER – DID YOU KNOW?

In January 1929, on a trip to Manchester, VT, Bill W. called Ebby T. in Albany, NY. After an all-night drinking spree, they chartered a flight with Flyers Inc. in Albany to be the first flight to Manchester. They landed quite drunk (the pilot Ted Burke, as well) & disgraced themselves.

In January 1933, Akron, Ohio, business tycoon Harvey Firestone Sr., grateful for the help given to his son Bud, sponsored an Oxford Group (OG) Conference Weekend (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 (Firestones' minister & rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church). The event included 300 overseas OG members & received much news coverage. It attracted some notable names in AA history, which included: Henrietta Sieberling, Henry & Clare Williams & Dr. Bob's wife, Anne Smith. Anne began attending Oxford Group meetings with her friend Henrietta & later persuaded Dr. Bob to attend. In 1931, Russell (Bud) was introduced to Rev. Sam Shoemaker (the Oxford Group leader in the US). Bud, who was drinking a fifth or more of whiskey a day, spiritually surrendered with Shoemaker & was released from his alcoholic obsession.

In January 1939, after the writing of the Big Book began, it was evident that something more was needed in the form of a story or case history section. It would be living proof to identify with the distant reader in a way the text itself might not. Akron produced 18 stories thanks to the efforts of journalist Jim S., whose Big Book story is & The News Hawk. He interviewed the Akron members & wrote their stories (Dr. Bob wrote his own). Two stories came from Cleveland, one from non-alcoholic Marie B., whose Big Book story is An Alcoholic's Wife. NY members contributed ten stories that were edited by Bill W. & Hank P. over the contributors' protests. The story section was completed by late January.

In January 1939, before the completion of the publication manuscript, NY member Jim B., whose Big Book story & Vicious Cycle suggested the phrases God as we understand Him & Power greater than ourselves be added to the Steps & basic text. Bill later wrote those expressions, as we so well know today, proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. Jim later moved to Philadelphia in February 1940 and was the founder of that city. He helped start AA in Baltimore.

In January 1940, meeting attendance at Dr. Bob's house was so large that the Akron group moved their meetings to King's School in Akron, Ohio, on Wednesday night (the first AA meeting not in a home). In late October 1939, Akron, OH, alcoholic members withdrew from the Oxford Group held meetings in Dr. Bob's house. It was a very painful separation due to the great affection the members had toward Henry & Clarace Williams (meetings were held in their home).

In 1945, Bill W. was called by Barry L., later author of Living Sober, from the 41st St. Clubhouse in NY. Bill persuaded the group to take in a black man who was an ex-convict with bleach-blond hair, wearing women's clothing & makeup. The man also admitted to being a dope fiend. When asked what to do about it, Bill posed the question, "Did you say he was a drunk?" When answered, yes, Bill replied, "Well, I think that's all we can ask." The man was reported to have disappeared shortly after.

On January 23, 1961, Bill wrote a letter to Dr. Gustav Jung, which acknowledged his contribution to the AA movement. In 1931, Rowland H. was treated by Dr. Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. Rowland was a patient for about a year, sobered up, then returned to drinking. Treated a 2nd time by Dr. Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a spiritual or religious experience- in short, a genuine conversion experience. Rowland sobered up in the Oxford Group in 1931, was a prominent member of Calvary of the Episcopal Church in NYC (the Oxford Group US HQ). Rowland helped Ebby T. find sobriety in 1934. Bill wrote that this was "the first in the chain of events that led to the founding of AA."

On January 30, 1961, Dr. Jung replied to Bill's letter. Bill wrote again to Dr. Jung; however, Jung suffered a stroke & passed away on June 6, 1961. The letters Bill & Dr. Jung exchanged were printed in the Grapevine and are preserved in the book "Language of the Heart."

On January 24, 1971, at 11:30 pm, William Griffith Wilson (Bill Wilson), age 75, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, 36 years sober (sobriety date December 11, 1934), died (of emphysema, although sometimes described as heart failure, complicated by pneumonia) at Miami Heart Institute, Miami Beach, FL. The date was also Bill and Lois's 53rd wedding anniversary. Bill was the architect and author of AA's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity & Service, all the written works that explained them. It was an amazing achievement. He had no training at all as a writer. In March 1971, the Grapevine published a memorial issue dedicated to Bill W & is available in facsimile today from the Grapevine.

On January 26, 1971, The New York Times published Bill Wilson's obituary on page one. Bill's name, picture, and story were carried worldwide in public media for the first time. In 1990, Life Magazine named Bill one of the 100 most important figures of the 20th century.

GTA Groups/Meetings that started in January:

1. Jan. 2nd, 1978 - Erin Mills Group.
2. Jan. 3rd, 2016 - One Paragraph at a Time Group.
3. Jan. 5th, 1957- Whitby Group.
4. Jan. 5th, 1980 - Saturday Noon Group.
5. Jan. 5th, 1983 - Rouge Valley Centenary Group.
6. Jan. 6th, 1968 - Six Points Group.
7. Jan. 6th, 1984 - Thorncliff Park Group.
8. Jan. 14th, 1958 - Streetsville Group.
9. Jan. 14th, 1959 - Twelve Steps Group.
10. Jan. 2nd, 1980 - Midtown Group.
11. Jan. 1972 - Parklawn Group.

-Eddy G., GTA Archivist



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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES'

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