

July 2026 Corrections Service

Thank you to Brandon M. for his in-depth article on service work opportunities within correctional facilities.

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submission page.

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BETTER TIMES is published
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the 10th of the month prior to month
of issue by email to

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CORRECTIONS WORK - SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



The first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous to be held in a prison was in San Quentin in 1942. The meeting continues to this day and is simply called San Quentin Group #1. The prison's warden at the time, Clinton Duffy, was an enlightened and progressive man who believed in the virtues of AA. Much like Dr. Silkworth and Sister Mary Ignatia are referred to as “saints of AA” for their tireless work with alcoholics and their lasting legacy of service, Warden Duffy can be considered a “saint” to countless incarcerated alcoholics through the years who have been able to receive and carry the message of hope and recovery.

In an article written for a special issue of Grapevine magazine on the occasion of AA's 25th anniversary (1960), Warden Duffy, then a member of the California Parole Board, had this to say about Alcoholics Anonymous in prisons: “The A.A. program is presented humbly and humanely, simply and without pressure. This is the method to use to reach the man who has developed a very distrustful attitude. It helps him to face reality without feeling sorry for himself or avoiding responsibility, to get rid of the fear, hatred, jealousy and distrust that have been his for so long. This man learns to eliminate alcohol from his life - to fight its obsession, with the desire to get help from his friends and to fraternize. Not every alcoholic in prison will admit to being powerless over alcohol. But over the years, seeing the influence of A.A. on others, the tough guys finally give in. They realize they've lost control of their lives in every way and they're ready to accept some help and chart a course for a new direction, one day at a time.”

Following the founding of the meeting at San Quentin, groups formed throughout the 1940's in other prisons in the U.S., including Washington State Prison, just seven months later, with the governor's personal approval. The success of the San Quentin A.A. group inspired inmates at California's Folsom Prison to obtain special permission from prison staff to contact the San Quentin group for information. In a remarkable demonstration of the respect that the A.A. program had established among authorities at the time, an AA member from San Quentin was actually transferred to Folsom Prison to help inaugurate the first group there in June 1943. By 1948, Alcoholics Anonymous groups had also been established at the now notorious prisons in Huntsville, TX and Attica, NY.

The following year, the first Canadian prison group started in New Brunswick at Dorchester Penitentiary. It is the oldest officially registered AA group in Canada. It's called the Intramural Group, and it is still active today. Also still active is the Nor-kel Group at Saskatchewan Pen near Prince Albert, founded in 1950. By 1960, on AA's 20th anniversary, Bill W. reported at the St. Louis convention in 1955, there were groups in 335 prisons around the world, and thousands of former prisoners were staying sober on the outside.

GRAPEVINE

https://www.aagrapevine.org/?srsltid=AfmBOoq6pkYTdz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi_gBNuUppdy

CORRECTIONS WORK – SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

This legacy of AA's work in jails and prisons continues throughout the world today. Each summer in AA's Grapevine magazine, an issue titled "The Prison Issue" is devoted entirely to the stories of AA members who are currently or formerly incarcerated, as well as perspectives from AA members on the "outside" who bring meetings and literature into institutions. AA's legacy of service in jails and prisons continues worldwide today. Here in Area 83 in southern Ontario, AA continues to bring the message of recovery to incarcerated people in all of the various provincial and federal institutions.

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated, and there are multiple ways to get involved in the corrections service. One avenue for service is to sign up to be a Bridging the Gap contact (also known as a Corrections Prerelease Contact). This is for individuals who are being released back into the community and have requested AA's support. This is not an ongoing commitment like sponsorship, as you would only offer an initial contact to maybe get the person to a meeting or two and perhaps introduce them to other members. Yet this is a vital act of service because often people who are being released from custody, whether on bail, probation, parole, or having served their sentence entirely, do not have pro-social contacts (to use a Corrections Canada phrase) to meet them. Statistically, and anecdotally, a person's level of risk to reoffend is greatly diminished if they can get to meetings and begin to be insulated in AA's way of life as soon as possible after release. Bridging the Gap requests come from parole officers on behalf of their clients, and while we do not receive a ton of requests, it's always important to have AA members available when those requests arrive.

Another type of Corrections service is volunteering to help bring meetings into the jails, detention centres and prisons. The benefits and potential for positive lasting impact of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for incarcerated people with substance abuse disorders (alcoholism and drug addiction) that Warden Duffy recognized in the early '40s are just as true today in 2026. Being a volunteer who brings in meetings is a vital and profoundly impactful act of service. The most important part of your story is your recovery and sobriety, not necessarily a similar run-in with the law or criminal justice system. Some of our volunteers have had personal experience with jail, but most do not. So if this is the type of service is of interest to you, I encourage you to speak to your group's GSR or contact AA Corrections directly via email. Many districts in the GTA have a Corrections Chair as well, and once a month all the Chairs meet online to give their reports and share feedback, successes and struggles. This meeting is open to any members who are curious about Corrections work or just have questions. All are always welcome.

There is also a program called Carry the Message, in which individual members, groups or even entire districts can purchase Grapevine subscriptions and AA literature for incarcerated individuals. As you might imagine, AA books, pamphlets and magazines can be true lifelines of hope and faith for people in custody. If this interests you, please speak to the GSR or Grapevine rep at your homegroup or find out if your district has a corrections chair.

Recently, our Area 83 Corrections Chair, Rich K., has succeeded in getting AA literature uploaded onto inmate-accessible computers at Collins Bay Federal Institution in Kingston, ON. This will obviously greatly enhance access to all of the books and pamphlets that AA publishes to the men in custody there, who may not otherwise have hardcopy books available. As of this writing (early June 2026), the project has only recently started, so feedback and analytics are not yet available. However, it is hoped that this will further the scope of AA's reach with all federal institutions in the near future as the computer system is connected nationwide.

Lastly, there is Corrections Correspondence. Sober AAs on the "outside" are always needed to correspond through written letters and emails to men and women who are working their program on the "inside" in facilities throughout the US and Canada. If anyone is interested in this type of service, there is a pamphlet available that offers guidance on how to sign up. You can find this pamphlet online or contact Intergroup Corrections directly, and we will be happy to send you a PDF of the pamphlet. Jail and prison are some of the only places left where so-called snail mail is alive and well and much appreciated.

In closing, I'd like to briefly share my personal perspective on Corrections work. Remarkably, Alcoholics Anonymous can offer a person who went from "serving time" within jails and prisons, the capacity to now "serve" as Corrections Liaison for Intergroup. The one-year commitment that this service position requires pales in comparison to the previous 26-month and 5-year sentences I "signed up for" and continue to serve on parole as a result of my alcoholic "self-will run riot". As a sober person in AA, this part of my past has been and continues to be beneficial, whereas in most other areas of life and society, any sort of criminal background is a detriment. I can also attest to the immense value of being able to attend meetings on the "inside", as well as having access to AA literature and Grapevines. It's a real honour and privilege for me to get to do service on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous, especially within Corrections. I encourage anyone interested to reach out and get involved. I thank you in advance, on behalf of all the alcoholic women and men who are or will be incarcerated and will hear or read the message of recovery because of you. Here's hoping that they may have "better times" ahead.

— Brandon M., Welcome Group
Corrections Liaison, 2026



SHARE YOUR STORY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES'

Reminder that the Better Times **deadline for Submissions are due the 10th** of the month prior to the publication.

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.

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...)

GTAI/DISTRICT - JULY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities – Sun. July 19th, Noon

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives – Fri. July 10th, 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications – Tue. July 21st, 7 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI – Tue. June 28th, 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities – Tue. July 7th, 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support – Tue. July 7th, 6:30 p.m.

ID: 897 3620 8895 - PW: 162629

Treatment – Sun. July 19th, 7 p.m.

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step Committee – Wed. July 8th, 6 p.m.

ID: 980 8546 4617 - PW: 430387

IT Sub-committee – Mon. July 6th, 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691



Meetings to Go

A Mobile AA meeting for any fellowship member who, for whatever reason, cannot attend a regular AA meeting in the GTA due to accessibility barriers. Two AA volunteers will come to your residence with AA readings and a Big Book. You can also arrange an online zoom meeting. To learn more or to volunteer please contact:

accessibility@aatontario.org or call 416-487-5591

GTA Intergroup Accessibility Committee



MEETINGS To GO ~ we'll come to you

Whatever reason:

Curfew
Homebound
Hospitalized
House arrest
Parents
Relocated
Sick
Shut-In
Travellers



Call 24/7 Help Line 416-487-5591 to arrange an AA meeting

Email us to bring a meeting to you: accessibility@aatontario.org

July Medallions

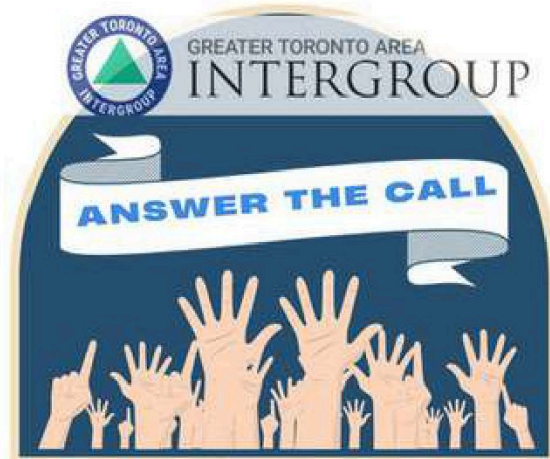
Catherine M. – King City Group, 35 Years, **July 6th, 2026**
Melanie – AA Solution Seekers (online), 20 Years, **July 14th, 2026**
Nicole D. – Beaches Group, 1 Year, **July 15th, 2026**
Maggie J. – Prince Edward Group, 20 Years, **July 20th, 2026**
Neill K. – Schomberg AA Discussion, 5 Years, **July 20th, 2026**
Chris C. – Beaches Group, 10 Years, **July 21st, 2026**
Kathy V. – Pine Hills Group, 45 Years, **July 27th, 2026**
Shun SL. – Richmond Hill Group, 1 Year, **July 28th, 2026**
Blair T. – New Anchor Group, 1 Year, **July 30th, 2026**

July Birthdays

Peter B. – Beaches Group, 23 Years, **July 4th, 2026**
Mark S. – AA Solution Seekers (online), 28 Years, **July 6th, 2026**
Indy B. – AA Solution Seekers (online), 2 Years, **July 7th, 2026**
Renee V. – Beaches Group, 3 Years, **July 11th, 2026**
JJ E. – Beaches Group, 9 Years, **July 13th, 2026**
Brandon M. – Welcome Group, 4 Years, **July 15th, 2026**
Samantha S. – AA Solution Seekers (online), 7 Years, **July 15th, 2026**
Lynne W. – Beaches Group, 6 Years, **July 15th, 2026**
Joycee – AA Solution Seekers (online), 4 Years, **July 17th, 2026**
Chris B. – Richmond Hill Group, 2 Years, **July 17th, 2026**
Fonta V. – Richmond Hill Group, 7 Years, **July 27th, 2026**
Mike B. – Richmond Hill Group, 8 Years, **July 28th, 2026**

Announcements

Brampton Recovery Group
39 Year Anniversary
Gratitude Meeting
July 8th, 2026 @ 8:00 P.M.



ONE NIGHT A MONTH

OVERNIGHT PHONE GREETERS



Use the QR Code
Visit our 12 Step page
Complete the
Phone Greeter Application
Select Overnight Shift option

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

ARCHIVES CORNER – DID YOU KNOW?

In **July 1934**, Ebby T. was approached, in Manchester, VT, by his friends Cebra G. & Shep C., who did considerable drinking with Ebby but were now abstaining from drinking. They informed Ebby of the Oxford Group in Vermont, but Ebby was not quite ready yet to stop drinking.

In **July 1934**, Bill W.'s 2nd admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Lois's brother-in-law, Dr. Leonard Strong). Bill met Dr. Silkworth for the 1st time. Dr. Silkworth explained the obsession and the allergy to alcoholism to Bill. Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge. He was unemployable, \$50,000.00 in debt, suicidal & drinking around the clock.

On **July 4, 1935**, Akron, Ohio, attorney Bill D. (man on the bed) leaves St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH, sober and becomes AA No. 3 (Big Book story Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three). Sister Ignatia & Dr. Scuden secretly treated Bill D. prior to his meeting Dr. Bob & Bill W. Bill D. was hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for his drinking. It took 5 days before he would say that he could not control his drinking. Bill D. was Ohio's Panel 1 Delegate to the 1st General Service Conference in 1951 & he spoke at the ORC in Toronto in 1953. Bill D. died September 17, 1954, with 19 years of sobriety.

In **July 1935**, encouraged by T. Henry Williams, Ernie G. sobered up (AA No. 4, Big Book story The Seven Month Slip) and contacted Dr. Bob & sobered up. He eventually married Dr. Bob's daughter, Sue, in Sept. 1941. Ernie was unable to maintain continuous sobriety, and their marriage was a disaster.

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 in Akron, OH. The meeting was started specifically to help Dr. Bob with his drinking. Dr. Bob eventually openly admitted his drinking problem, but could not bring himself to stop drinking.

On **July 15, 1938**, in a letter to Messrs. Mr. Willard Richardson, Mr. A. LeRoy Chipman, & Mr. Albert Scott, of the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill invited them to his home on 182 Clinton St., NY, for meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was the first documented use of the name of the Fellowship.

On **July 18, 1938**, Dr. Esther L. Richards of John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, stated in a letter that Bill W., at the time, was using the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" both as the working title of the book & the name of the Fellowship. Richards wrote a very favourable letter to Bill W. regarding a 2-chapter prospectus sent to her for review. She noted, "I think you should get an 'A-Number-One' physician who has a wide knowledge of the alcoholic's medical & social problem to write an introduction."

On **July 27, 1938**, Dr. Silkworth wrote a letter of support for use in fundraising for the book. It was later incorporated into the First Edition Big Book, April 1939, into the chapter "The Doctor's Opinion" together with extracts from a paper later published in the Lancet medical journal in July 1939. The Doctor's Opinion started on page 1. & the basic text ended at page 174. Dr. Silkworth's name was not added to "The Doctor's Opinion" until publication of the second edition in 1955.

On **July 28-30, 1950**, the 15th Anniversary and 1st International Convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio, in AA's 15th year with an estimated. 3,100 in attendance. A gravely ill Dr. Bob made a brief appearance at the Convention for his last talk. Part of his now famous short statement was "There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our own program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work... Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service." Also, the Twelve Traditions were adopted unanimously by standing vote by the attendees.

In **July 1962**, Grapevine, Editor Jack M. created the cartoon strip Victor E., & appears first time in the Grapevine. Today, Victor E. is an AA icon.

In **July 1982**, non alcoholic Milton Maxwell became trustee emeritus on account of illness, & non alcoholic Gordon Patrick from Toronto becomes 1st Canadian Chairman of the Board at GSO.

On **June 30 – July 3, 2005**, the 70th Anniversary & 12th International Convention was held in Toronto with over 44,000 in attendance. First city to host the International Convention twice. The theme was "I Am Responsible," repeating the theme of the 1965 Convention held in Toronto. Also, the Convention commemorated the 50th anniversary of Bill W. turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the Conference in 1955 in St. Louis.

On **July 3-6, 2025**, the 90th Anniversary & 16th International Convention was held in Vancouver, BC. The theme was "Language of the Heart."

On **July 4-7, 2030**, the 95th Anniversary & 17th International Convention will be held in St. Louis, Missouri.

Groups started in July:

July 1960 – Mount Royal-York Group

June 3rd, 1979 – Responsibility Group

June 18th, 1972 – East York Group

June 19th, 1993 – Rox Glen Traditional Group

— Eddy G. GTA Archivist

To donate AA/GTA Archival items to the GTA Archives, please contact the GTA Archivist.

Eddy G. @ 416-536-7536.

Old GTA meeting Books are needed for the GTA Archives.

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.



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