

October 2026 Gratitude

Reflect on how you give back to
this simple program

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to our anonymous content

submission page.



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BETTER TIMES is published
monthly for AA members in the
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234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite #202,
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Telephone Number – Literature

Department: 416-487-9865

Email bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Editorial Committee

Communications Chair: Lisa M.

Better Times Editor: Lori C.

Graphics & Layout: Latifa A

Communication Liaison: Raj P.

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Toronto Area Intergroup

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

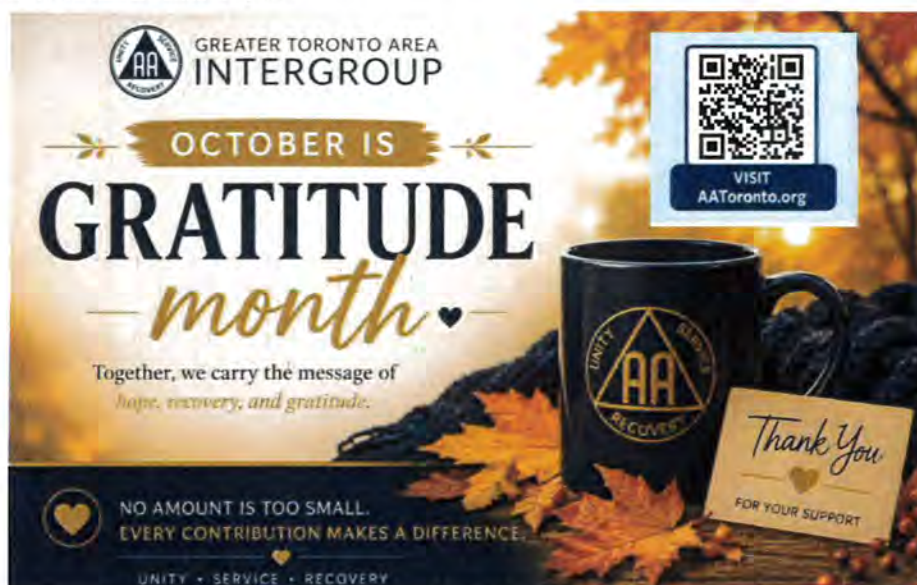
or contact Alex at 416-487-8110

TWO DAYS I REMEMBER

There are two days in my life that I remember as clearly as if they happened yesterday. The first was the day I picked up my first drink. I got so high I never wanted to come down. For once I felt comfortable in my own skin, and every worry I had melted away. I spent the next twenty-five years chasing that feeling, nearly every waking moment, and it consumed me completely. I drank alcoholically from the very beginning. My only motivation for drinking was to change who I was and become somebody else.

Like so many of us, my drinking progressed and got worse. There were many days I drank from the moment I got up until I passed out at night. Toward the end I needed two shots of whiskey before I could brush my teeth in the morning, another four before I could make breakfast, and half a bottle before I could drop the kids at school. It was only a matter of time before I joined the DUI club. It happened on a Christmas Eve. I had too much to drink and decided I was fit to drive the couple of blocks home. I got into a fender bender, spent the night in jail, and came away with a criminal record, a licence suspension for a year and an interlock device for a year after that — never mind the financial cost, the emotional cost, and what I put my family through.

Eventually I came to a crossroads. The decision in front of me was a simple one: I could stop drinking, or I could lose my family. And it was in that moment, facing that choice, that I understood I could not stop drinking. I could picture a future without my family but I could not picture a future without a drink in my hand.



Not long after, I was driving down Erin Mills when I had a moment of clarity, and it dawned on me that I was addicted to alcohol. That is the second day I remember as clearly as yesterday. I finally saw that if I kept living the way I was living, I was a danger to myself, to my family and to society. I saw that if I kept living that way, my kids would be better off without me in their lives. With that realization came an overwhelming sense of shame, regret and remorse — and no idea how I would get through a single day without picking up a drink. By then I had tried a number of things: anti-craving medication, CBT, counselling, psychotherapy. The one thing I had never tried was AA. That weekend my family had arranged an intervention, and I had come up with the perfect plan to get them off my case. I would tell them I was going to try AA. But by the time the intervention came around, I had already had my moment of clarity. I had already admitted to myself that I was addicted to alcohol and that things had to change, because I could not go on living that way another day. AA was no longer an excuse. It was the only thing I hadn't tried, and I was ready to give it an honest go and my best effort, and I hoped it would work, because nothing else had.

I made up my mind to go and found my first meeting. This was during COVID, and meetings were still virtual. Beforehand I did a bit of reading to try to understand how this AA thing was supposed to help a person stop drinking. I skimmed the Big Book, and it wasn't easy to take in. But I got to the page where the Steps are listed, and as I read Step One — admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable — I realized I had already taken that Step without knowing the words for it. The more I read, the more I could relate to what was written. I went to my first meeting, and many members gave me their phone numbers. The next day I went down the list and called every one of them. Each one gave me a little nugget of wisdom and a little nudge in the right direction. That is how my journey in AA began. From that first meeting on, I have not had the need to pick up a drink. A man who drank every day for twenty-five years, has now gone years without a drink. Not through willpower — I had none, and I had already proved it — but one day at a time, in rooms full of people who had nothing to gain by helping me.

It has been a good journey. I have met many wonderful people along the way, and the learning and the growing never end. Somewhere along that road I got involved in service — first in my home group, then beyond it. Today I have the privilege and the honour of serving as Finance Chair for GTA Intergroup. I am grateful to be part of an organization that does so much to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and to work alongside so many men and women who show up, month after month, to make that happen.



What Your Intergroup Does

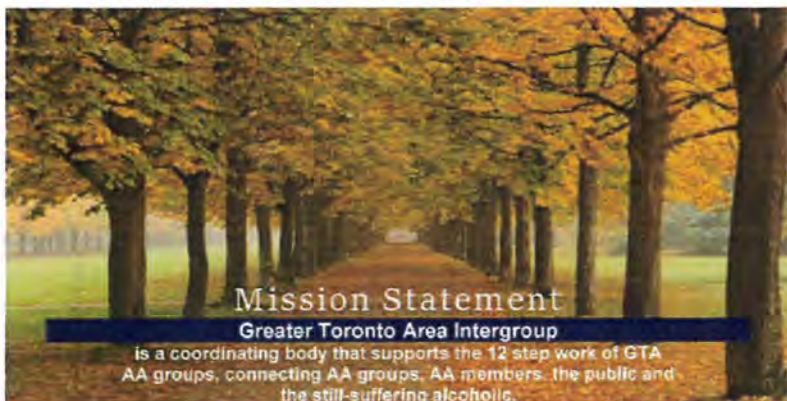
GTA Intergroup is the collection of all the groups in the Greater Toronto Area, and it provides services that no single group could provide on its own. We have an office at 234 Eglinton Avenue East, where our Literature Department is located. Members and groups can purchase books, medallions and chips, pamphlets and other material there, all of it sold at cost. This year our bookstore has gone online, so that placing an order is easier for members and for group literature reps. That same office houses the Archives for the GTA and for Area 83, which quietly do the important work of preserving the history of our groups and of AA itself. Intergroup also organizes a number of functions through its committees over the course of the year — Info AA Day, the Archives Breakfast, Family Fun Day, the Winter Season Open House and the Winter Virtual Alcathon. The Better Times that you are reading right now is published under the umbrella of GTA Intergroup as well. And then there is the 12 Step Committee, which staffs the 24-hour help line. Somebody picks up that phone at three in the morning when a frightened, shaking person on the other end finally makes the call. That is Intergroup too. None of this is possible without the support of you, our members — your time and your contributions.

Gratitude Month

October is Gratitude Month, and this year in particular we are asking our members to give a little extra if at all possible. So far this year, both member contributions and literature sales have been lower than last year. At the same time we have had some unbudgeted expenses: the development of the online web store, and the replacement of the computers at 234 Eglinton, some of which are more than ten years old. That is the honest picture — not a crisis, but a gap, and Gratitude Month is our best opportunity to close it. If every group that is able to give something makes a contribution in October — no matter how small — we will finish the year on solid footing and set ourselves up for the year ahead. It means we can say yes when new opportunities come along to carry the message. If we don't meet our targets in Gratitude Month, we risk having to say no to good work simply because the money isn't there. This is where we need your help. Please take this message back to your groups and encourage them to contribute in the month of October. And if your group is already contributing — thank you — please ask whether there is room to increase it, just for this one month. And remember that individuals can contribute to GTA Intergroup directly as well. Contributions can be made by cheque payable to "A.A. Toronto Intergroup," by e-transfer to contributions@aatoronto.org, or through the donation link at aatoronto.org. I think of what my life cost me for twenty-five years, and what a year of contributions to Intergroup costs a group today, and the arithmetic is not close. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. That is what keeps the help line answered, the doors open and the literature on the shelf — and it is why there was something there for me when I finally went looking. GTA Intergroup can only be a solid umbrella of support for its members if its members support it.

— Imran R.
Finance Chair, GTA Intergroup

GRATITUDE CAMPAIGN 2026



Mission Statement

Greater Toronto Area Intergroup

is a coordinating body that supports the 12 step work of GTA AA groups, connecting AA groups, AA members, the public and the still-suffering alcoholic.



What is Gratitude Month?

Gratitude Month (held each autumn) is an annual campaign that invites local AA members and groups to support Intergroup's continued efforts to carry the message of hope and recovery via contributions.

It is our hope that AA members and AA groups continue to assist Intergroup in carrying the message, and to remain self-supporting.

No Amount is Too Small!

How GTA Intergroup Carries the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous

- By maintaining the Phone Hotline 416-487-5591 (operates 24/7)
- By arranging Twelfth Step Calls to Newcomers
- Staff operate the Literature Store, provide admin support to all subcommittees, and respond to queries from AA members and the public
- By maintaining the GTAI Fellowship website www.aatoronto.org
- A soon-to-be-launched Newcomer Page & Help Chat
- Sponsoring the annual Ontario Regional Conference
- Publishing the monthly 'Better Times' Newsletter
- Preserving and display of AA archival materials of historical significance

Ways to Contribute:

Cheque/Money Order

Please make cheques payable to "Toronto Intergroup"

Credit Card

VISA or Mastercard: fill out Gratitude pamphlet and mail in or contact the Intergroup office (see mailing address below)

Online at www.aatoronto.org

Interac E-Transfer contributions@aatoronto.org

Other Options

Monthly pre-authorized debit or by making a cash/debit/credit card contribution in person at the Intergroup Office.

In keeping with AA's 7th Tradition, contributions are accepted only from AA members.

GTA Intergroup is a registered charity. Tax receipts available upon request.

Toronto Intergroup: 202 – 234 Eglinton Ave. East, Toronto M4P 1K5

HELPLINE 24/7: 416-487-5591

Office Hours: TUES TO FRI 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

www.aatoronto.org

Email: info@tpr@aatoronto.org



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 following format:

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...)

Have You Heard?

GTA/District - October Subcommittee Meetings

Accessibilities – Sun. Oct. 18th, Noon – **ID:** 824 8962 1874 - **PW:** 799763
Archives – Fri. Oct. 9th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 841 5376 9412 - **PW:** 018851
Communications – Tue. Oct. 20th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 850 5256 7237 - **PW:** 984555
CPC/PI – Tue. Oct. 27th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 854 7547 0291 - **PW:** 002060
Correctional Facilities – Tue. Oct. 6th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 883 8002 9737 - **PW:** 950392
Self-Support – Tue. Oct. 6th, 6:30 p.m. – **ID:** 897 3620 8895 - **PW:** 162629
Treatment – Sun. Oct. 18th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 868 2207 4860 - **PW:** 787289
Twelfth Step Committee – Wed. Oct. 14th, 6 p.m. – **ID:** 980 8546 4617 - **PW:** 430387
IT Sub-committee – Mon. Oct. 5th, 7 p.m. – **ID:** 814 0942 9019 - **PW:** 379691

Announcements

Bloordale Group – 40th Year Anniversary October 4th @ 8:00 p.m.

Please join us in Celebrating four decades of Recovery in the Etobicoke Community.

GTA Archives Breakfast Saturday November 7th, 2026

Bloordale United Church
(4258 Bloor St West, Etobicoke)

9am- 1pm, Tickets \$35

9am-Coffee | 10am-Breakfast | 11am - Open Speaker Meeting
Door Prizes, Raffle Tickets, Seating limited to 175



Guest Speaker

Lee-Ann M - The Hill Group

Contacts for Tickets:

Glenn G. Chair	647-572-5687	Steve C. Dist.10	647-527-4266
Amy L. Dist.26	905-767-8405	John M. Dist.18	416-277-4285
Eddy G. Archivist	416-536-7536	Gord H. Dist.06	416-414-8374
David T. Asst Arch	613-868-9243	Rick Mc Dist.06	416-991-7508

for e-transfer send contribution to: johnmay1954@gmail.com

October Birthdays

Jenn S. – Beaches Group, 2 Years, **October 6th, 2026**
David S. – Beaches Group, 14 Years, **October 14th, 2026**
Sarah C. – Beaches Group, 11 Years, **October 26th, 2026**
Mariam M. – Grace Noon, 32 Years, **October 25th, 2026**



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

Answer the Call

Become a 12 Stepper



What is a 12 Stepper?

When our Help Line receives a call that needs more attention, Phone Greeters reach out to our 12 Stepper List.
12 Steppers are Volunteers who follow up with those seeking sobriety.

- ✓ Return a call to someone seeking help.
- ✓ Answer questions and provide support.
- ✓ Connect in person at a meeting or for a coffee.
- ✓ Bring a meeting to a homebound alcoholic.

Click on the QR code

12step.chairsgaatoronto.org for more information.
 Be the voice of encouragement for someone who needs it.
 Join us in carrying the message!



The Friendly Group Invites You to a POTLUCK PARTY

Celebrating **75**
YEARS OF
FRIENDLY FELLOWSHIP

Join us for a happy, joyous and free celebration
of hope, recovery and the enduring spirit
of the Friendly Group.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026

OPEN SPEAKER MEETING • 7:50–9:00 P.M.

POTLUCK PARTY • 9:00–10:00 P.M.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

263 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto

BRING A DISH ONLY IF YOU WISH.

Potluck contributions are welcome, but no fees,
dues or dishes are required—everyone is welcome
at this open meeting.

FEATURING

Open Speaker Meeting • AA Archives Table
Grapevine Table • Potluck



October Medallions

Cole R. – New Anchor Group, 1 Year, **October 1st, 2026**
Jules GH. – Beaches Group, 1 Year, **October 4th, 2026**
Julia E. – Fellowship Group, 1 Year, **October 6th, 2026**
Kim P. – New Anchor Group, 5 Years, **October 6th, 2026**
Jim J. – Friendly Group, 5 Years, **October 19th, 2026**
Ron G. – River Park Group, 35 Years, **October 19th, 2026**
Alana R. – Beaches Group, 1 Year, **October 19th, 2026**
Joe M. – Fellowship Group, 1 Year, **October 19th, 2026**
Gord H. – New Anchor Group, 30 Years, **October 22nd, 2026**
Chris U. – New Anchor Group, 20 Years, **October 29th, 2026**

ARCHIVES CORNER – DID YOU KNOW?

On **Oct. 20th, 1928**, Bill signed a pledge in the family Bible: "To my beloved wife that has endured so much, let this stand as evidence to you that I have finished with drink forever." On Thanksgiving, Bill signed another pledge in the family Bible: "My strength is renewed a thousand fold in my love for you." In January 1929, Bill signed yet another pledge in the family Bible: "To tell you once more that I am finished with it. I love you." On September 30, 1930, Bill wrote his last promise to stop drinking in the family Bible: "Finally and for a lifetime, thank God for your love." After that he gave up making promises in despair.

In Autumn **1933**, Bill W. was quite literally drinking himself to death. In desperation, Lois now earning \$22.50 a week at Macy's (\$400 today) turned to her brother-in-law Dr. Leonard Strong, who arranged, & paid for, Bill's first admission to Towns Hospital. Dr. Strong was married to Bill's sister Dorothy. Bill was subjected to the "belladonna cure" which involved "purging & puking" aided by castor oil. Belladonna, a hallucinogen, was used to ease the symptoms of alcoholic withdrawal.

In **October 1937**, AA meetings are held weekly on Tuesday nights at Bill & Lois home at 182 Clinton St. Brooklyn, the first NY AA group. Leaders of the Oxford Group (OG), at the Calvary Mission in NY, ordered alcoholics staying at the mission not to attend meetings at 182 Clinton St. Bill & Lois received criticism from OG members for having "drunks only" meetings at their home. The Wilson's were described as "not maximum" (an OG term for those believed to be lagging in their devotion to OG principles).

In **October 1939**, Membership grew suddenly & dramatically in Cleveland due to the September Liberty Magazine article & editorials in the Cleveland Plain Dealer by Elrick B. Davis. As a result, the Cleveland group was flooded with appeals for help. Newcomers with just a few days of sobriety were assigned to make 12th step calls. Cleveland membership surged from 20 to several hundred. Cleveland membership exceeded that of NY & Akron combined for several years leading many to think that AA began in Cleveland instead of Akron.

Late **October 1939**, Akron, Ohio members of the "alcoholic squad" withdrew from the Oxford Group & held meetings at Dr. Bob's house. It was a painful separation due to the great affection they had toward T. Henry & Clarace Williams. The Oxford group meetings were held in the Williams home. The founding of the Cleveland Group & this action by the Akron Group ended all outside affiliation between the AA Fellowship & the Oxford Group or anyone else. Meetings were held at Dr. Bob's house & in January 1940, meetings moved to the King School on Wednesday night.

In **October 1942**, with the help of San Francisco AA members & Clinton T. Duffy (Prison Warden), the first AA prison group was established in a maximum-security prison at San Quentin Penitentiary. It generated much favorable national publicity. State & Federal prison groups quickly spread across the country.

In **October 1942**, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Cleveland "Central Bulletin" was published by the Cleveland Central Office. It preceded the AA Grapevine by almost two years & later provided inspiration to the NY members who started the AA Grapevine. On Oct. 3, 1945 the AA Grapevine was adopted as the national publication of AA with 3,000 subscribers.

In **October 1954**, The "Alcoholic Foundation" changed its name to General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The original idea of an all-purpose Foundation was abandoned.

On **Oct. 24th, 1973** the 1st Archives Committee meeting established at the General Service Office (GSO) in New York with Nell Wing (GSO Archivist) in charge. Meet 3 times/year.

In **Oct. 1988**, "The Language of the Heart" was published by the AA Grapevine. It contains the Grapevine essays Bill wrote to explain the Traditions to the membership & much more.

On **Oct. 25th-26th, 1986**, Dennis D. was elected as Eastern Ontario Area Delegate Panel 27. It was the first time an American was made a Delegate in a Canadian Area. He was from Bombay, NY. Also Dennis made the 3 light system when DCM's give their 2 minute report.

In **October 1959**, Gratitude Month began for the requesting of money's to support Toronto Intergroup from the members of the Fellowship in Toronto.

GTA Groups/Meetings that started in October:

October 15th, 1948 — Hill Group
October 8th, 1951 — Friendly Group
October 13th, 1965 — Anniversary Group
October 1st, 1968 — The New Life Group
October 18th, 1968 — Parkway Group
October 8th, 1970 — Chartwell Group
October 20th, 1977 — New Anchor Group
October 10th, 1983 — Melrose Group
October 16th, 1983 — Acceptance Group (Oshawa)

October 23rd, 1983 — Glenholme Group
October 5th, 1986 — Bloordale Group
October 21st, 1987 — Scarborough Thursday Noon Meeting
October 1988 — A Place to Share Group (Women's)
October 25th, 1998 — Principles Before Personalities
October 28th, 1993 — Living Sober Group (Thornhill)
October 6th, 2022 — Scarborough Monday Noon Meeting
October 25th, 2013 — Sisters in Sobriety Group
October 8th, 2016 — Ajax Freethinkers

— Eddy G. GTA Archivist
Beaches Group

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

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