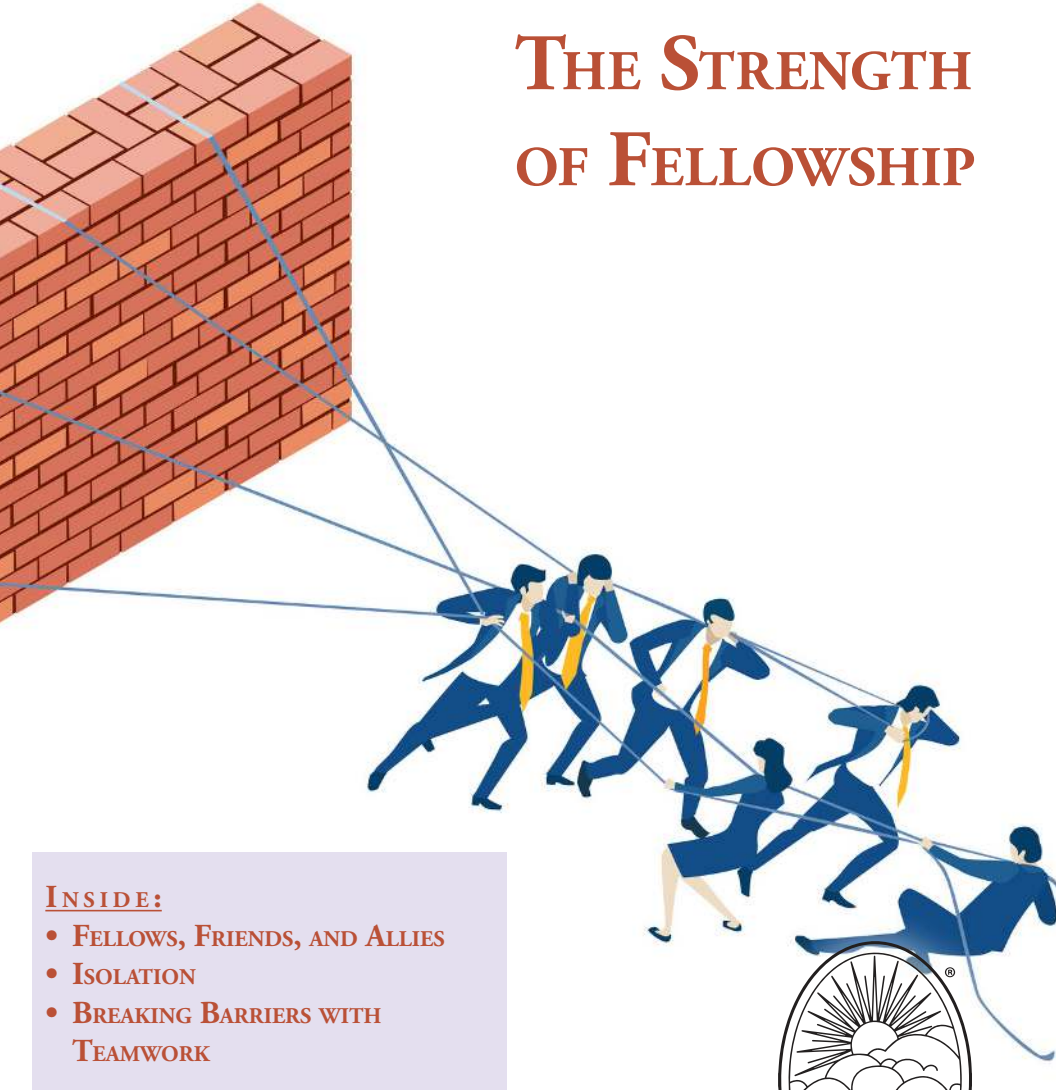


THE OUTER CIRCLE

Carrying the message of hope to the still-suffering sex addict since 1988

THE STRENGTH OF FELLOWSHIP



INSIDE:

- FELLOWS, FRIENDS, AND ALLIES
- ISOLATION
- BREAKING BARRIERS WITH TEAMWORK





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

TOC articles contain the experiences and opinions of individual SAA members and do not represent the official views or positions of the ISO of SAA, Inc. or the SAA fellowship as a whole.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1988, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers”—especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 26. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on p. 27.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

March – April 2026

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Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see p. 27).

FROM THE EDITOR

Fellowship at the Center

BY ALEX B.

**THE OUTER CIRCLE
EDITOR**

Any type of addiction can be painful and isolating, but I have a feeling that sex addiction is in a class of its own. When I imagine telling friends, family members, or work colleagues about my disease, I am instantly confronted with fears of strange looks, difficult conversations, and unfounded suspicions. It wasn't until I had spent substantial time in the rooms that I came to move past my imagined stigma of claiming my identity as a sex addict.

I share this because it makes even clearer to me the importance of connecting with fellows within my recovery program. I know that part of my ongoing recovery relies on my ability to find human connection with those who understand me and validate my struggles. I need to have human contact to be able to pull me out of my depths; if I didn't have fellows in program, there would be no hope of success.

Fellowship is a lifesaver. In my meetings, in my phone calls, in online spaces, the fact that other men and women are able to hear my struggles, know intimately about the pain and suffering I have felt, and share the hope I carry for a brighter day brings me new life. That energy comes through in every moment – whether it is a smile and wave when a meeting starts, a small “thumbs up” on a computer screen, or a phone call that lasts long into the night. My program depends on the fellowship of my community of addicts.

I have also been fortunate to experience the feeling of fellowship that comes in large gatherings, such as those found in the retreats, conventions, and conferences of our program. If you are able to participate, I highly recommend seeking these opportunities for yourself. The fellowship of the program lives through these connections and inspires us all to be there for others.

How have you lived the fellowship in your daily life? Drop a line and share your story: toc@saa-recovery.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Miracle in the Making

BY TRACY R.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ISO OF SAA, INC.

*I have seen
this miraculous
transformation occur in
countless others.*

When I came into SAA, I was miserable and dying inside, trapped in my addiction with no way out. I had no hope. I was isolated and alone, becoming increasingly suicidal. At the time, I had no idea that this pain and desperation were the beginning of a new life beyond anything I could ever imagine.

I worked the steps — not because I believed doing so would help, but because there was nothing else to do. And slowly, I changed. I was — and still am — amazed by the way the process worked and continues to work in me. And not just in me. I have seen this miraculous transformation occur in countless others. The miracle happened for me when I worked the Twelve Steps of SAA in order, while not acting out, with a sponsor who had done the same.

The miracle is not that I am no longer miserable, hopeless, or suicidal, although that is definitely a miracle. The real miracle is that my heart and mind are different. Today, I care deeply about others, especially my fellow addicts. I serve, not because I have to or I will return to my addiction (although that is true), but because I want to. It matters to me that others get the same opportunity to live in the miracle that I did.

I encourage those who are new and those who are struggling to keep coming back and to work the steps in order without acting out, ideally with a sponsor who has done so. Don't leave before the miracle.

I encourage those who have completed the steps to get into service. There are outreach committees for LGBT, women, and prisoners. There is a Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee that provides information about SAA to helping professionals. There is an author's group and a PI/CPC writing group. And there are opportunities to serve in elected positions on the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee, and the Conference Steering Committee.

For information on these opportunities, visit the ISO service website at <https://saa-iso.org> or email info@saa-recovery.org.

DEAR GRACE

How Long Do I Need to Wait?

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE

*Sexuality is only one
part of who we are.*

Dear Grace,

I'm a sober sex addict and married for many years, but now my spouse is sick and not interested in sexual activity. I've been patient, but it's been months, and I'm getting squirrely. How do I stay sober when I'm interested in being sexual and my spouse is not?

Signed,
Squirrely

Dear Squirrely:

This is actually a much more common situation than we might realize. Many couples find themselves in situations where one partner is interested in sexual activity and the other partner is not available, interested, or ready. Couples often find that they are in different places of their individual recovery journeys. Your situation is an example of another common source of this situation, an illness such as recovery from surgery, a heart condition, depression, or dementia. Illness — whether physical, emotional, or cognitive — can add another layer of complexity. None of this means anything is wrong with you, or with your desire. It simply means you're facing a very human challenge.

Here are some practical ideas that have helped other people in your position. Utilizing the courage to change the things we can, we may draw from (and add to) our outer circle for specific ideas that fit our individual needs:

1. Focus on self-nurturing and deeper intimacy with ourselves (e.g., masturbation, dating ourselves, healthy self-touch, massage). Masturbation, for example, can bring us joy and pleasure and integrate our sexuality with our spirituality.

2. Explore other forms of intimacy with our partners (emotional connection, non-sexual physical connection such as holding hands, cuddling, etc.).
3. Initiate a gentle conversation with our partner regarding our sexual needs. Even if it does not result in sexual activity, it may lead to greater emotional intimacy, and it validates our needs with our partner.
4. Seek greater emotional intimacy with our partner (sharing our feelings, asking about theirs).

It may help to remember that sexuality is only one part of who we are. Sobriety asks us to build a life that isn't organized around sexual intensity or escape. That doesn't mean desire disappears; it means we learn to live with desire in a new way, without letting it run the show. When you notice yourself "getting squirrely," it might be useful to gently explore what's underneath that feeling. Are you anxious, lonely, restless, or afraid of being unwanted? Are you grieving the loss of connection? Are you feeling guilty for wanting something your spouse can't give right now? None of these feelings are wrong. They're simply signals from your inner world, asking for attention and care.

These signals may also represent an opportunity to broaden our spiritual awakening by revisiting our Steps and experiencing a new level of surrender to our Higher Power. Developing a new sexuality with the help of a Higher Power can help build trust and love in a hurt relationship. Whenever we are faced with a new situation: "The solution lies in turning our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, knowing that however unfamiliar we are with the challenges of healthier sexuality, we can put our trust in the God of our understanding" (p 72).

Staying sober here may not mean eliminating desire. It may mean learning to hold desire without acting out, without resentment, and without abandoning yourself or your partner. You are not alone in this. Many have walked this road and remained sober one day at a time.

**With best wishes for your journey,
Grace**

Get in touch with Grace at grace@saa-women.org if you have a question you'd like answered.

The Women's Outreach Committee cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

Fellowship, Friendship, and Allyship: *Navigating Relationships in Recovery*

BY LIZZ O.

Using the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and all the tools found in our literature, SAA allows me an opportunity to practice the skills of honesty, integrity, and courage in relationships.

SAA allows me to practice these imperfectly, to step on the toes of others and receive grace, honesty, and compassion.

When I came to SAA, I was an emotional toddler. As my recovery progressed, I developed the maturity to have adult relationships. My program friends and I laugh together, cry together, and get agitated, annoyed, and grateful. We admire and encourage each other. We challenge each other to grow, to be honest, to change.

I learned to discern healthy relationships and boundaries. Along with the sponsee/sponsor relationship, there are three main types of relationships I've experienced in recovery.

Fellows are my brothers and sisters in recovery. You become my fellow the very first time you come to a meeting, and especially if it is your first time — the newcomer is the most important person in the room. I extend my hand in service to everyone who passes through the door. My fellows and I offer you coffee before or after the meeting and invite you to outer-circle group activities. We make sure to let you know that you belong.

Friends are the people who know my whole story, my character defects, my struggles, my triumphs. I know theirs as well. These are the people who ask me how I'm doing and when I say, "Fine," they look at me and respond, "No, you're not. What's really going on?" Friendships take time to develop. One day at a time we get to know each other more as we walk the path of recovery together. We live in the solution.

Allies are those amongst us who know how to welcome a minority into the room. We're the ones who recognize the difficulty of being the only person of a certain identity in the room. We're not afraid of difference and we know that



your existence in our meeting does not threaten our own sobriety. We may not look the same, we may not speak the same, and my relationships may look different than yours, but I acknowledge that and reassure you that you belong. I don't minimize how that difference affects your caution when getting to know us. I understand that you don't trust us until you can determine that we are trustworthy. I will actively work to prove it.

Healthy relationships with fellow addicts can be heartbreaking and they can also be incredibly rewarding. Learning to adjust my expectations based on the nature of our relationships helps me avoid resentments and codependency while also allowing myself to trust and be trusted by others.

Isolation



BY JAMES

Following the Twelve Steps and carving a path to recovery has been terrifying. The program promised me that I was no longer going to be an addict in active addiction. I would be freed from an addiction that was killing me. The spiritual journey I was on was teaching me a new life. I was becoming someone new; but it was someone I did not know.

My life as an addict was terribly familiar. As an addict, I built a wall of lies and secrets to protect my behaviors from judgment, loss of freedom, and shame. I was lying to everyone around me, hiding in my addiction, isolating me from the truth. I withdrew from family, friends, work, and even activities and hobbies that I used to like to do. All my time, money, and efforts revolved around thinking and planning to act out.

I hated who I had become. I begged God to fix me. Wanting to stop acting out, I made shallow promises to stop hurting myself and “be normal” (whatever that means). I prayed to be freed from sex addiction and experience a life without hurting. Each vow, promise, and boundary I would establish, I would break. I would lower my standards, make excuses, and go back to old behaviors.

Isolation became crucial. Being an addict is time consuming. Planning, keeping track of impossible lies, and avoiding real relationships takes a great deal of effort. I avoided connecting with real people to hide my actions. The wall of lies kept me in a cold prison of my own making. I knew I would eventually be found out — the trail of clues was all around me. My perfect lies were a time bomb. In time, I

would be found out, and I would have to answer for what I had done — for who I had become.

At many times, I had enough. I wanted everything to end. I never was brave (or weak) enough to end things, but I thought about it a lot. I came up with plans that remained unformed. I couldn't admit to myself what I was doing or fully accept who I was. Drifting away from reality and making excuses, I realized who I was: an addict who was isolated from everything that I loved.

The spiritual awakening that was the result of the Twelve Steps was a slow process and required work. But learning to be a new person was incredible! I learned to accept and forgive myself. The Steps gave me a plan for recovery. Once I saw the path, I ran for it. New energy that I forgot I had swept over me like a tidal wave. I poured all the energy I had put into acting into working the Steps. The time that I used to waste on my addiction became time for daily meetings, calls to my sponsor, Step work, and program calls. For the first time in many years, I established new friendships, connected with real people, and enjoyed being with a group of people that understood me. Honesty was now possible, and I finally began to relax and enjoy life.

When I reached six months of sobriety, I was nearing the end of my Tenth Step. I imagined that this sobriety milestone would make a grand entrance with trumpets sounding and confetti flying. I foresaw church bells ringing, and I imagined medals and commendations from the Mayor of my city for a job well done. I thought it would be like winning a marathon, bursting through the tape across

The spiritual awakening that was the result of the Twelve Steps was a slow process and required work. But learning to be a new person was incredible!

the finish line. I would triumphantly cross that line and be praised and congratulated on my major achievement.

None of that happened.

What I did receive was love, acceptance, and strength. My new friends and family in sobriety were there for me. They gave me opportunities to explore the new person I was becoming. There were people around me that had gone through what I did and offered their own story to

teach me a new way of living. By connecting with them and my Higher Power, I reconnected with God.

Isolation still called me. It started in my head and offered my old comforts. My thoughts tempted me with “Just a little,” or “You deserve it” or the classic, “What does it matter?”. I knew what to do. I had to shine a light on those thoughts. I had to tell others what I was thinking. Isolation is the breeding ground where my thoughts can lead to troubling actions. Being by myself, without structure or tasks to complete, is dangerous because I stay too much in my head. I need activity and purpose to stay active. When boredom is unavoidable, I know that I can think about all the things in my life I am grateful for.

The biggest ally I have to battle isolation is meetings. If I get into negative moods and emotional deregulation, there is a meeting available. I can share my thoughts and feelings uninterrupted while I drop a truth grenade. I can expose any thoughts I have without judgment. Brothers and sisters in the program are there to help. I collect phone numbers for members I hear in meetings and text or call when I need to talk.

When I disconnect from my program or avoid the people that care for me, I enable my emotional numbness. This increases my loneliness and sadness. The negative thoughts can be exasperated by hopelessness, anxiety, stress, or low self-esteem. Life will involve problems that I need to accept and deal with. I will not have perfect days. I will have tough decisions, impossible conditions, and things that happen that are out of my control. The stress of life can scare me into isolation.

The excuses for isolation are too numerous to count, and spring from emotions, illness, depression, anxiety, physical health, or no reason at all. In my defense, I am able to ground myself, make a positive action, pick up the heavy phone, and reach out. When isolation calls my name, I need to reach out to friends and family to stay connected.

I am so thankful for this program and the new path it offers. It gives me a chance to be someone new, and to lift up that new person with no fear. ©

Don't miss a meeting

Try the all-new “Find a Meeting” page on the SAA website:

<https://saa-meetings.org>

Search by location, day, time, and mode. We'll see you in the rooms!

Declaration

By Klaudio

Sitting in front of the TV
or glued to my phone,
the cups of lust
made me explode.

I know how it starts
The compulsion returns
My head is bursting
I have to stop it.

I go out and shake it off.
I jump and raise my shield.
You're not going to win.
Today I have a program
And even though I want to.
You're not going to win today.

I call a fellow member.
I count 1; 2; 3, I train.
You're not going to win today.

A fellow member called,
she shared the weight
of her sorrows.
You're not going to win today.
We have a program
And even though we want to
You're not going to win today!

I can understand it now,
we are the links
in a long chain of love.
We are no longer alone
And with you on the other side,
I feel so much better.



Breaking Down Barriers to Recovery:

Using Cross-Functional Logic to Define a Higher Power

BY RICHARD N.

For many newcomers, the Twelve Steps offer a paradox: a promise of freedom wrapped in language that requires a shift in belief that can be daunting for those without a background in organized religion. The word “God” can lead to internal shutters slamming shut. This resistance isn’t necessarily a lack of willingness, it can be the result of religious trauma, a strictly scientific worldview, or a life lived without a spiritual framework.

However, the Second and Third Steps — coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves and turning our will over to its care — are not necessarily theological traps. They are, at their root, the ultimate exercise in structured problem-solving. To understand how an agnostic can navigate these steps, we can borrow a concept from the world of high-stakes project management: The Cross-Functional Team.

In business, a silo is a disaster. When one person or one office tries to solve a complex, systemic problem using only their own information and perspective, they are destined to fail. They lack the power to see their own blind spots.

In our addiction, we live in the ultimate silo. As individuals, our internal hardware has become compromised. Our decision-making process is flawed because it is filtered through a singular, biased perspective: our own, which is driven by our addiction to acting out. If we could have solved the problem of addiction using our own willpower and intellect, we would have done so long ago. As the First Step tells us, we are, quite literally, powerless as a solo unit.

Step Two tells us that a “Power greater than ourselves” is the path to sanity. If we look for that Power separate from the metaphysical, we find a practical truth: A group with diverse perspectives is objectively more powerful than a single individual.

When we are in a Twelve Step meeting, we are sitting in a room with a cross-functional team. Each member brings a different set of “data points” — their successes, their catastrophic failures, and their unique life experiences. When we face our problems while sitting in the rooms, the collective wisdom of those who have survived a similar crisis takes shape outside of and all around us.

When we identify our home group as our Higher Power, we are simply acknowledging a management truth: The team has more resources than the individual. This understanding doesn’t require a leap of faith; one needs only believe that the collective experience in the room is a more reliable guide than one’s own isolated thinking.



Step Three asks us to make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the “care” of this power. In recovery as in business, this is an act of delegation.

In a corporate setting, if a CEO realizes they are out of their depth in a specific technical area, they delegate the decision-making to their cross-functional team. They trust the team’s expertise. In recovery, we can trust that the group’s collective conscience has our best interests at heart. When we follow the suggestions of those who have stayed sober, we are essentially following the cross-functional team’s “Standard Operating Procedure.” We are letting the group’s “Good Orderly Direction” (or G.O.D.) steer the ship, while we learn how to be a healthy member of the crew.

In this model, if the group is the Higher Power, how can we “pray” or “meditate” to that power? What does connection look like?

Prayer is an outbound call. In a traditional sense, prayer is talking to a Higher Power. In a secular framework, making a phone call to a sponsor or a fellow member takes the form of prayer. This is the act of reaching out of our own head and vocalizing our needs to the team. This is a formal request for assistance and outside input.

Meditation is listening inward, the practice of being still and receptive. In a meeting, active listening is meditation. When we sit quietly and hear the experiences of others without judgment or the need to interrupt, we are receiving the information and perspective that we need to stay sober today.

The beauty of this model of the cross-functional Higher Power is that it is tangible, evidence-based, and immune to any baggage of the past. Whatever our views on organized religion, we can see that the group is keeping people sober.

In turning things over to the care of this Higher Power, we are stepping down as the “Chairman of the Board” of our own lives — a position we were under-qualified for anyway — and handing the reins to a team that has a proven track record of success. That isn’t religion. That’s just good management. ©

DEAR WILL

The Difference Between Sobriety and Abstinence

*In SAA, sobriety
does not mean
complete sexual
abstinence,
although
members can
choose temporary
or permanent
abstinence.*

*This letter was previously
published in 2018.*

Dear Will,

I hear the word “abstinence” a lot in meetings. Frankly, Will, that word scares me. I know I don’t want to go back to what I was doing for all these many years, but I don’t even want to think about the idea of abstaining from sex for the rest of my life. Can you offer me any hope? Do I need to become a monk?

**Signed,
Still Trying to Overcome the Past**

Dear STOP:

No, you don’t have to become a monk. The short answer to your question can be found at the top of page 9 of the booklet Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous: “For many members of SAA, abstinence means the same thing as sexual sobriety.” Now that brings us to another word possibly fear-laden word: “sobriety.” So let’s see what’s behind that word.

There are several twelve-step programs where sobriety means total and complete literal abstinence. “If I indulge in this or that substance or activity, I start counting my sobriety over.”

However, in SAA, sobriety does not mean complete sexual abstinence, although members can choose temporary or permanent abstinence. I don’t think this is what you want.

How do you know what counts as sexual sobriety, if it is not complete abstinence? Unlike the situation in some twelve-step programs, one can make that determination oneself — and with the help of a sponsor.

The second part of the answer, STOP, involves coming up with a way of determining what constitutes sobriety. I have the option of doing it in several ways. The way I first did it was to make a list of all of the things I wanted to avoid, and call all of them acting out. This did not work out too well. For one example, I called looking into the window of the car next to me acting out. This alone was good for twenty acting-out behaviors a night. The other disadvantage to this way of defining “sobriety” was that the first time I did it, I was already in a position of having acted out, so I was “free,” so to speak, to do whatever I wanted for the rest of the night. In other words, I was setting myself up for failure, night after night. “So,” you ask, “what is a better way of defining sobriety?” Well, some very smart person in SAA came up with such a way, and this is the three circles. I draw three circles, one inside the next. In the inner circle I write down the behaviors that I definitely consider acting out, the ones I am committing to avoid. In the middle circle, I place those activities that can often lead me to the inner circle behaviors that I have already defined. Finally, in the outer circle, I place those activities that I consider healthy, that now take the place in my life of activities that I previously engaged in. They could be things I used to do when I was younger but gave up on, things I always wanted to try but never did, and so forth. Am I allowed to put healthy sexuality in the outer circle? I will likely have to work with my sponsor about what is healthy, but yes! So that right there tells me that I can be sober or abstinent, and still have sex in my life.

Following these new guidelines for my life, guidelines that I have determined in discussion with my sponsor, are sexual sobriety for me, and they include healthy sexuality. And I encourage you, STOP, if you haven’t done so already, to get a sponsor and start putting some circles together. Once you have done so and start following them, I think it will make more sense to you how sexual sobriety or abstinence can work in your life. Good luck.

In Service, Will

Do you have a question for Will?
Please email Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.

STORIES OF SERVICE

Growing My Recovery

BY TIM A.

*Service has been
a core part of my
recovery.*

There are few ways in which my recovery has grown more than through the opportunities I have been given for service. For nearly sixteen years, opportunities to serve have helped to define the quality of my commitment to recovery.

My very first service position occurred when my sponsor encouraged me to raise my hand at our monthly business meeting when we needed someone to set-up chairs prior to each meeting. Though it was a large meeting, what it taught me was that each meeting does not magically happen, but rather takes the shared commitment of multiple trusted servants. At that time, roles included meeting chair, treasurer, secretary, church liaison, newcomer greeter (two of these), opener, closer, event

planner and local intergroup representative. Since the pandemic, the meeting is hybrid, and we have added a tech person. Now, we also have a Group Service Representative to represent us at the area assembly.

A few months later, I agreed to serve as the intergroup representative for my home meeting, and I have since been involved in our local intergroup in a variety of roles. The opportunity to serve at that level taught me the significance of the Twelve Traditions and how they help us operate as a fellowship. These roles gave me respect for the complexities of planning events for a local fellowship of nearly fifty meetings. Chief among these lessons were the autonomy of meetings (Tradition Four) and placing principles before personalities (Tradition Twelve).

In my second year of involvement with the local intergroup, I had the opportunity to travel to our annual regional conference and retreat. The retreats had been going on for years, but our local fellowship had not previously participated. Another member of my home meeting and I traveled to our first regional meeting, where we learned a great deal about the broader SAA fellowship. The Northeast Region was made up of states in the northeastern US, but it also included South Africa. It was through our involvement with the old regional structure that we were introduced to the

possibility of hosting an international convention, which had not occurred in our region since 1998.

My continuing involvement with the local intergroup and the decision to submit a bid to host an international convention in Washington, D.C., gave me an opportunity to attend the convention in Los Angeles, where we presented a bid to host a convention a few years later. We continued to learn about SAA's international structure and the breadth of our greater fellowship's work around the world.

Following our local fellowship's hosting the 2015 ISO Conference and SAA convention, we had the opportunity to learn even more about the ISO office in Houston and the amazing staff that support the daily activities of our world-wide fellowship. Later, I was elected to the ISO Board of Trustees and continued to learn about all the ways that my service could impact my recovery and the recovery of individuals I would never meet. The personal growth has been amazing, and new opportunities to serve continue to emerge.

Service has been a core part of my recovery. To enhance your own recovery and to impact the recovery of others, consider submitting a service résumé to be considered for an ISO elective position. The service résumé form is available on the ISO service website at <https://www.saa-iso.org> on the International Service page.

Become a LifeLine Partner!

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking "Contribute."

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Fellowship

BY KAREN S.

*I came into recovery
because I couldn't do
this on my own.*

It took me a while to really get it. Coming into recovery, I was so consumed by my own shame, grief, and pain that I couldn't look beyond my own needs, looking outward.

Then, as the process of healing continued, I could look around me. I could open up to others and be there for them. Just as others had been there for me — encouraging me, supporting me without enabling me or buying into my nonsense!!

Gradually it dawned. I came into recovery because I couldn't do this on my own. I still can't. But that meant I had to have somewhere to go. That somewhere was, and is, the fellowship. Here I found identification and acceptance. I found my tribe, my people, my belonging.

With that came the realisation that the fellowship doesn't just happen. There is a fellowship because the people in it make it happen. As someone wiser than me once said, "We have a fellowship because someone turns the lights on."

I didn't think it at the time, but I am grateful for a sponsor who gave me the message that supporting the fellowship, through being of service and doing acts of service, would help me stay sober. I am glad that I listened to that message because, as so often is the case, she was right. Service has been a critical part of my recovery journey.

Taking a service commitment has made me accountable and has given my recovery structure and purpose. My addiction robbed me of my self-esteem and made me feel worthless. The programme of recovery has given me the opportunity to serve and do something worthwhile with my time, my skills, and my ability. Service has given my mind focus and taken me out of addict thinking.

Service has been a privilege, and I am grateful to those who have put their trust in me to see things through.

So, when you are ready, we are here waiting for you to join us in service and fellowship..

FROM THE BOARD

A Call to Serve

BY JIM L.

ISO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Do you ever wonder what the role of the Board of Trustees is? That is a good question, and it deserves a clear answer.

As trusted servants elected by the ISO Conference, the Board oversees the financial and operational details of the ISO and provides guidance on matters of policy in keeping with the Bylaws of the ISO of SAA, Inc. The Board assures that all the ISO does is consistent with the mission of the ISO — to support member groups

in their primary purpose: namely, to carry the SAA message of recovery to the sex addict who is still suffering.

While a small and dedicated staff conducts the day-to-day business of the ISO, the capacity of the ISO to fulfill its mission is dependent in large measure on the trusted servants elected by the ISO Conference and the many volunteers who serve on ISO committees and workgroups.

In the spirit of Step Twelve, these members go beyond personal ambition or the desire to control in order to serve the ISO and members of the fellowship, helping to assure that the sex addict who is seeking help can find a home in SAA.

At the annual meeting of the Conference in May this year, the delegates will be asked to elect members to serve on the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee (LitCom), and the Conference Steering Committee (CSC). The various outreach committees will also be looking to add to their ranks.

A special event at the SAA convention this year will be an ice cream social. In addition to frosty treats and good fellowship, outreach committees will have tables around the perimeter of the room where convention attendees may learn about the many opportunities within the ISO to serve members of the fellowship.

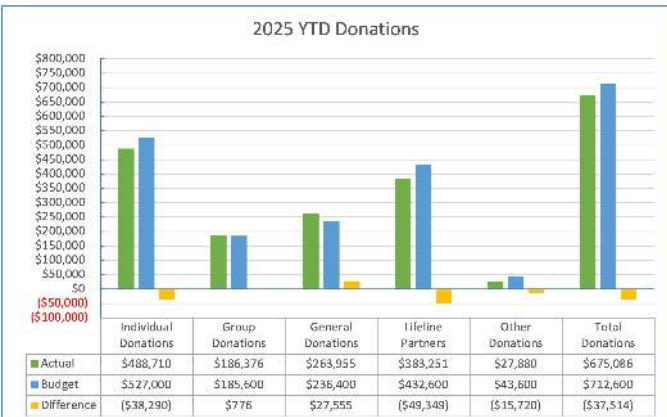
Is now the time? Is now the time for you to step up and take on a role as a trusted servant? Can you be trusted? Are you ready and willing to serve?

Service is at the core of Twelve-Step recovery. And, in addition, service at the local level and at the international level is very rewarding. It enhances one's personal recovery, and it undergirds the ISO effort to support member groups and members of the fellowship in a host of different ways.

The Board of Trustees urges you to learn more about opportunities within the ISO. Visit the service website (saa-iso.org) and click on International Service in the left-hand menu (no password required). There, you can find job descriptions that include estimated time commitment for the elective positions.

Elsewhere on the service website is also more information about various committees and the opportunities they offer for service. Call or email the ISO office for the service site username and password. Is now your time to step into service?

FINANCIAL SUMMARY





FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Overall, donations in 2025 were under budget by \$37,514. There was a decline in pamphlets & booklet sales, and overall sales were slightly below budget for the year. Donations and sales for January 2026 are above budget.

2025 expenses were below budget in part because the office was operating with open positions for part of the year. January 2026 expenses were also under budget due to those open positions which were filled at the end of January.

Thank you all for your generous support!

Tracy R.,
Executive Director

Your help is needed!

The ISO maintains an active outreach program for sex addicts who are incarcerated.

Would you like to learn how you can help be of service to this population? Learn more about qualifications for this program at <https://saa-recovery.org/diversity/prisoners/>

CONTACT THE ISO

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Administrative Assistant: Jerry B

The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: board@saa-recovery.org.

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Board

Karen S (chair); Bill I (vice chair); BJ M; Bob H;
Brian S (treasurer); Enan S; Jim L (secretary);
Juan V; Lizz O; Michelle P; Tom B; Tim A

Board: board@saa-recovery.org
CSC: csc@saa-recovery.org

Literature Committee

Alex B (TOC editor); Andrew H; Arnie A; David C;
Himanshu B (secretary); Jeff B; Jenny M; Keith G;
Mike K; Ron R; Ruth (chair); Zach R (vice chair).

LitCom: litcom@saa-recovery.org

Calendar

The most up-to-date schedule and information about joining any ISO committee can be found at saa-iso.org.

Prisoner Letter Writing Program

Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more—whether you are in the free world or in prison—contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email (info@saa-recovery.org), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, contact PhillipB@saa-iso.net or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

LifeLine Partners

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking “Contribute.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The Outer Circle newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. Don't worry if you're not a writer. Tell us your story and we'll do the rest. If we have any questions, we'll contact you.

There are three ways to submit your story.

- First, you can submit online at saa-recovery.org/toc. This is the easiest for most people.
- Second, email toc@saa-recovery.org. If possible, include a copy of the release form below.
- Third, mail your submission, with the release form, to ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Requested deadlines and suggested topics are below. Email toc@saa-recovery.org if you have any questions.

Issue	Deadline	Topic
» May/June	» April 1	» Gratitude
» July/August	» June 1	» Rigorous Honesty
» September/October	» August 1	» Humility

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Living in Sobriety: For those with five-plus years of sobriety. 750-900 words on how you got sober and what you're doing to stay sober.

Stories of Service: 300-500 words on why you do service and how it helps your recovery.

Feature articles: 650-1,200 words on any of the topics listed above. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with in recovery as it relates to the steps or traditions.

All submissions must complete a formal release granting usage rights to the ISO of SAA, Inc. Visit saa-recovery.org/toc for more information and a standard form.

SAA TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Steps of SAA

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

The Twelve Traditions of SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

