

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

December 2016

The Best Gift

“...we now find ourselves grateful for this program in its own right. Practicing the program has given us many gifts...”

~The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 90

It's the time of year when the world is obsessed with buying gifts. But it's important to remember that there are some gifts that are priceless: self care, abstinence, and hope.

This holiday season, I have already received the best gift I could have hoped for—involvement in OA and meeting and learning from others in the program.

If you have contributed to the newsletter, have read the newsletter, or have attended a meeting this year, then you are a gift I am grateful for. Best wishes for a wonderful year ahead.

~Ed.

A Poem for the Season

'Tis the season –
To be thankful for
A solution to
Compulsive overeating.

'Tis the season
To be grateful for:
All I have, including
The steps, the traditions, the concepts,
My sponsor, the folks I sponsor,
Meetings, literature, tools, and service.

'Tis the season
To embrace the promises anew,
Be painstaking of every phase of my development,
Pray for serenity,
Again surrender my will and life to my higher power,
And renew determination to stay abstinent.

“Tis the season
To reach out to others
To share the love
To share the vision
To share the miracle

'Tis always the season – one day at a time to recover,
A time for resolution, not resolutions.

~Rosanne K., Portland

Upcoming Events

December 25: 1:00 to 5:00 PM, Christmas Day Gathering Potluck at MerleAnn's house, 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. The potluck is at 1:15 and an OA meeting happens at 4:00. Call MerleAnn at 503-281-8947 with questions.

January 1: 1:00 to 5:00 PM, New Year's Day Potluck at MerleAnn's house, 4635 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. The potluck is at 1:15 and an OA meeting happens at 4:00. Call MerleAnn at 503-281-8947 with questions.

January 7: Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00 to 8:30 PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Contact Mikki at 503-747-7769 or mikkimc@gmail.com.

January 11: Oregon Intergroup Meeting, 7:00 to 8:30pm, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

January 14: Off The Scale Recovery, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Registration is at 9:00 AM, St. Vincent's Medical Center, 9205 SW Barnes Road, Stanley Family Room 20. Contact Kym at literature@oregon-oa.org or 503-544-5955.

Step 12: Carrying the Message

Hello, my name is Deborah, and I am a compulsive eater. I have been in OA 25 and a half years, mostly by dint of just not leaving no matter what. In January (HP willing, and I still don't leave), I will celebrate 11 years of abstaining, one day at a time, from my binge foods and from compulsive behaviors with food. My weight is something that I need to leave to my HP; I don't know the current "number" and it's best that way for now. I know that my clothes keep fitting, and slowly getting looser. I know that, one day at a time, I have been able to attain serenity, and today I have a life filled with love, friendship, joy, and did I mention love?

My story is one of itty-bitty, very small changes over long periods of time. It took seven years before I realized sugar was one of the things that triggered my compulsion, another seven years before I got reliably abstinent from it. Most of that time, I thought I had nothing to share and would be no good at carrying the message to another compulsive eater. I heard speakers who had gotten abstinent at their first meeting and stayed that way for years and years. THEY clearly had something to share with a still-suffering person! But not me.

Over time (and some trips through the steps, especially the 4th step), I learned several things. A big one is that my sense of having "nothing to share" was really just my "I'm not good enough!" message applied to my program. "I'm not good enough" is my disease trying to get me to binge again. After all, if I'm not good enough, why bother to work a program?

But I knew when I first came into the doors of OA that this was all that was left. I had tried pretty much everything else out there, with the exception of surgical interventions. I wasn't willing to have surgery, so it was going to have to be OA, no matter how long it took. So I kept coming to meetings, no matter what. I read. I wrote. I (eventually) followed my sponsor's suggestions. My little tiny baby steps moved me forward, even when it didn't seem like it.

And oddly enough, people asked me to sponsor them. They thought I had something they wanted! I always felt like I had no idea what to say, but words came out (thank you, HP!), and they seemed to help others. Was this carrying the message? I think it was—and still is. Today, I work with several sponsees, some by email, some by phone, some in person. I also have a step sponsor and a food sponsor, because I need to hear their messages too.

Over time, I started doing service. First, it was just at meetings: I held the key, I was the treasurer. Was this carrying the message? Yes, it was. Then (thanks to my first sponsor who told me I was going to go), I did service at Oregon Intergroup, then at Region One, and at World Service Business Conference. I was working to help the service bodies carry the message, too! I volunteered to speak at meetings, at marathons, at convention—even though I always, always felt like I wasn't good enough. Yet, I let HP make the decisions, and again, people said that my story and my experience was helpful.

The message I believe I carry, *I hope* I carry, is that *OA works*. It isn't a quick miracle cure, but it is for a sure a miracle. My life has had more than its share of difficulties and challenges, and for the last nearly 11 years, I've met those challenges abstintently, by the grace of my HP and this program. I have been able to show others that it works.

I believe that EVERY member of OA can carry the message, even if it's your very first day. I believe that each of us can embody the message of recovery one day at a time. We do not need to be perfect. We are good enough. We are not alone. And that is a message worth carrying.

~Deborah R., Tigard, OR

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to newsletter@oregon-oa.com

Holiday DAZE

Walking in to my regular meeting the Monday after Thanksgiving, I was chatting with a newcomer. "How did it go on Thanksgiving or, as I have heard it called in OA meetings, 'just another Thursday'?" We both laughed at that astute observation! Another observation that I make regularly is that I am a compulsive overeater. Before OA, I loved the holidays, partly because everyone overate! I wasn't alone. Now I see that feeling for what it was: a wish for belonging.

Now I am not alone in a totally different way. First, I have a HP who is big enough to easily handle a personal relationship with me along with being the essence of the Universe's life force. Next, I have you, other compulsive eaters for company at every meeting, on every podcast and in the literature. Then I have service which gives me a chance to feel happily useful and that is one good feeling! It also gives me a chance to get to know others better and develop true feelings of comradeship and shared energy.

My community service includes running a reading program matching adult volunteers with young school children. I tell my volunteers that our program is meant to be FUN and you can't fake fun! That is how I feel about life now - I am not faking my fun, I am living it. That can make every day seem a bit like a holiday and every holiday another chance to feel happily useful.

Wishing you an everyday life of belonging—the most wonderful gift I can imagine.

~Anonymous

Young People's Phone List

Oregon Intergroup is assembling a contact list for young people in OA. If you came into program at age 30 or younger and would like to offer your experience, strength, and hope to a young person in our program, please send your contact information to youngpeople@oregon-oa.org. Include your name, phone number, email address, and the age you were when you came into OA. WSO defines a young person as someone who is 30 years or younger. If you came into program when you were older than 30 years old and would also like to be a resource to the younger members of our fellowship, you are also welcome to add your name to the young people's phone list.

The views expressed in the newsletter are of the person who wrote them and do not represent OA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest. Oregon Intergroup serves meetings from Longview to Tillamook, Salem to Portland, Silverton to Hood River, and includes Vancouver and the surrounding area. Find us online at oregon-oa.org or call 971-317-6343.

Region 1 Needs Virtual Sponsors!

The Virtual Sponsorship Committee is in urgent need of more sponsors.

Virtual sponsorship is a great way to get your foot in the door if your sponsor says that you're ready to start sponsoring yourself, but you are a little unsure.

This is a great way to meet people from across the region! Many people still live in areas where OA is new and not well established, so being able to bring your recovery to someone who is struggling is an amazing gift! It will enhance your recovery and strengthen the program as a whole.

Your anonymity will be respected at all times. Please consider virtual sponsorship today! To apply, go to <http://www.oaregion1.org/sponsor-application.html>.

Reaching Out with a *Lifeline*

When you sit in a meeting and hear a good share, don't you wish that you could share it with someone else? Don't you sometimes wish that others who are still suffering from a disease that you have found recovery for could hear the hope in these shares?

Then you realize because of anonymity you can't share it with others without bringing them to a meeting, and perhaps they aren't quite ready yet. Or maybe you sit in your doctor's office, barber shop, beauty salon, or other waiting room and wish that those you see there could hear this message of healing?

Lifeline to the rescue! Named after a piece of lifesaving equipment, *Lifeline* can buoy up and encourage a struggling overeater. Yet, *Lifeline* magazine reaches out to us all. We can receive strength and hope through reading of others' experiences on the road to recovery.

Did you know besides a hard copy to carry in your bag or car, you can also subscribe (at a reduced rate) to receive *Lifeline* on your phone or tablet. If you order both a paper copy and electronic copy you benefit in many ways. You can always have a copy with you to share in a casual moment with someone, or to leave in that waiting room of your doctor, barber, beautician, etc. (*with permission, of course*) for others to learn of this program.

The newly designed cover of the paper copy of *Lifeline* bears a message on the back to attract other sufferers to this program, and a space to put local contact information. All this is available to you for less cost a month than that of one cup of fancy beverage that you are probably trying to drop from your food plan, anyway.

Then again, as you tread this road to happy destiny, you have experiences that have taught you things that will help others. By writing your experiences that brought you strength and hope for *Lifeline*, you are not only reaching folks in your meeting room, but all over the world. Please consider writing for *Lifeline* and this newsletter. Together we get better.

Information on *Lifeline* subscriptions and writing for *Lifeline* can be found by going to oa.org and clicking on *Lifeline*.

~ Rosanne K., *Lifeline* Rep, OIG

As the New Year approaches,
remember:

Your life is a result of the
choices you made...

...if you don't like your life, it's
time to make different choices.