

# WEST VALLEY NA MESSENGER

The “No Matter What” Edition

January 2020

## Groups in Need of Support

**Room to Grow** 255 N Litchfield Road. Goodyear, Vineyard Church **Monday 7pm**

**Solutions** 10485 S Estella Pkwy. Goodyear, Estrella Mt. Church **Wednesday 7pm**

**La Connecta** 3948 W Thomas. Phoenix, W. Thomas Baptist Church **Monday and Thursday 7pm**

**Miracles in Action (MIA)** 7702 N 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. Rm 7. Phoenix, Bethany Presb. Church **Sunday 4pm**

**Journey thru Recovery** 9059 W Lake Pleasant Pkwy. (behind CVS) Peoria, **Thursday 7pm**

**Addicts in Recovery (AIR)** Alleluia Lutheran Church 8444 W Encanto Rd. Phoenix, 85037 **Tues & Sun 8:00pm**

**The Journey Begins** 2517 N 107<sup>th</sup> Ave First Baptist Church, Avondale **Mon 7 - 8pm**

**Sanity is Possible** 12313 Northwest Grand Avenue, El Mirage **Sunday, Thursday and Saturday at 7 pm**

**We Do Recover**, 8801 N. 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Phoenix, **Monday thru Friday at 7:00 p.m.**

**Regardless of ...** 3546 E. Thomas Rd. to left of the church, Mt of Olives Church, format changes (and looking for a member to host another meeting) **Friday at 7:30 pm**

## The Twelve Steps of NA

**Step One: “We admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.”**

Powerless. Unmanageable. Such foreign concepts – they are anathema [def: denounced, cursed, banned] to western cultural thinking. When I began my journey into recovery, I never imagined the awarenesses that were in store for me by following this path and working these simple steps.

Even after thirty-four years and countless journeys through the steps, I am still confronted with powerlessness and unmanageability. What has become the blessing is that I have learned not to fear, or at least not fear so dreadfully, the emerging changes that were my next stage of life.

I had found ways to cope with whatever was “wrong” with me. The brutality and violence from one parent; the dismal regard and cowardice of the other. The feelings of alienation, never belonging, never fitting in. After years of categorical destruction of myself and my life with heroin, I looked back at the landscape of the life that I lived. It was a barren wasteland, devastated by years of a scorched-earth policy of self-destruction. The drugs that initially allowed me to shed the shame and heartache of being a defective human being were now the instrument of my agony and despair. But the thought of letting go of them was something too terrible to consider. *So long as they were my only method of coping, I had no concept of life without using, as if being a using addict was the singular purpose for my being.* I did not exist without the getting, using and finding means to get more. My whole existence was completely enmeshed with dope. As my predecessor Jimmy wrote, I had ceased to function, either with, or without, drugs.

It was by an accident, a mistaken left turn when I was supposed to go right, that I ended up in a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous in San Pedro, California. The only thing I heard at that meeting that made sense to me was “we are under no surveillance at any time.” I did not get clean from that meeting, it was October 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1984.

It did plant the seed. In the summer of ‘85, I stumbled into another meeting, deliberately this time, although it was in another fellowship. When I shared some of what was going on, I was told that there was no place for me at that fellowship, and I was asked not to share any further. As I was leaving, some caring members of that group told me where I could find NA in another city, 200 miles away. The following Saturday night I was at the old Arid Club downtown for the Hip, Slick, and Kool meeting, and that was the night my recovery journey began.

I had to quit doing what was destroying me, and that was an obvious lesson. Through that and many steps later, I came to see that powerlessness and unmanageability were not an admission of defeat, they were the mechanisms by which I could find true freedom. When I felt that I was never good enough, cool enough, or even likeable enough, I would lie or embellish to create a persona that would be worthy of being accepted. But every time I did that, I was negating who I really was. It was only through honesty with people like me that I

would learn. That was like being blindfolded and stepping off a cliff overlooking an abyss, with only my faith in this process that I would be okay.

In later years it would be a variety of external things that I had to become powerless over – having the cool job, house, lovers, even my education and intelligence were all things I relied on in one way or another to fill the void I had inside me.

Through Step One I finally could grasp the teachings of mystics of eastern meditation, that the material world was a place of infinite traps that distracted me from true peace and well-being. And each time I came across something that would bind me in some artificial way, I learned that by abandoning these things that separated me from my inner well-being, it was not surrendering, it was a victory for my being a genuine decent being, and letting the love inside me become a comfort for those in my life.

Mike R.

## Fellowship Event

*West Valley Speaker Meeting/Event  
February 8, 2020*

*7:30 Speaker meeting and event to follow  
3104 W. Glendale Avenue, Phoenix*

*For more info on events in the Valley  
<http://www.arizona-na.org> calendar*

## Guiding Principles The Spirit of Our Traditions

**Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.**

“Our First Tradition concerns unity and our common welfare. One of the most important things about our new way of life is being a part of a group of addicts seeking recovery. Our survival is directly related to the survival of the group and the Fellowship. To maintain unity within NA, it is imperative that the group remain stable, or the entire Fellowship perishes and the individual dies.” 1<sup>st</sup> Tradition

My clean date is December 8, 2008. It took me 11 years from my first NA meeting to get there, and I am grateful to share with you that I have yet to find a reason for that to change. Thanks to a loving and caring Higher Power,

a no-nonsense relationship with my sponsor and sponsee family, I’ve been able to Live this New Way of Life to the best of my ability by trying to carry our message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all my affairs. When I finally read Chapter 1 in our *Basic Text*, “Who is An Addict,” I understood an alarming dynamic of the disease of addiction. “We suffer from a disease that manifests in ways that are anti-social; that makes *detection, diagnosis and treatment* difficult.”

After dozens of detoxes, psych joints, treatment centers and rehabs, I realized I wasn’t trying to get clean, stay clean, or find a new way to live. It was about taking a break, catching my breath and continuing to use people, places and things to continue an insane strategy to disconnect from life. The drugs I used were losing the power to cover the agony, frustration and guilt I felt, causing me to alienate even more from society (family, friends, the world community at large). I was a mess. So selfishly self-centered, self-obsessed and wrapped up in escaping the life I lived then that I couldn’t see the forest for the rotten tree that was me.

## *ENTER MY SPONSOR AND EXPERIENCED RECOVERING MEMBERS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS*

I’d had enough and my sponsor enough of my absent-mindedness. He told me, “The *Basic Text* is the beginning of your basic training to re-enter life, and you need a lot of help.” I discovered that in my active drug use, I’d been working with others in finding ways and means to get more. Our common welfare was to create means to do that; yet it wasn’t consistent. I’d gotten service commitments in different groups and on an area level, yet initially all to give me a feeling of self-importance and to flex my ego and talk up, down and sideways to people. The only unity I was concerned with was my own —food, clothing and shelter and enough money to do most of those things I enjoyed while using. Common welfare was only useful when I could abuse and misuse the community’s welfare.

When I began to realize that I was not being mindful of the feelings of others and was always harboring resentments towards other members when things didn’t go my way, my sponsor told me I needed to stop using and abusing the community of addicts doing the best they could to recover from this disease. Shortly after, as I can say in hindsight, I found myself in a meeting where the topic was, “What are you using today?” Yes, you guessed it, we were discussing Steps 6 & 7. My awakening had begun. I was reminded that “art imitates life,” and had begun reading books and going to the movies with friends in and outside of the rooms. What really did it for me was one of the Star Trek Movies

where Spock made a statement: “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one.” This was the true beginning of the *active change* in my *ideas* and *attitudes* in my relationship with, not to, others. I began to be calmer and more at peace with myself as I realized that coming up with good ideas on a consistent basis was not a character trait of this addict, and that God had given me another chance at a life beyond my nightmarish dreams. This was an equal opportunity for others like me to get better. Unity was making sense again. An unconditional love for others was blooming and a passion to share the NA message was essential. This could only happen by me learning to work with others in a loving and caring way.

I got clean in Chicago, Illinois. My home group is still alive and well, Fools No More. I moved to San Diego in the late spring of 2016 on a 9<sup>th</sup> Step assignment and my Home Group there is called Living the Dream. About two months ago I moved here to Phoenix and my home group is known as the Clean Living Group. I always do my best to interact, develop and network with responsible recovering members to whom I can be accountable, to share honestly about the problems I continue to have, to be of service and to ask for help. NA must continue for the addicts who have yet to be born, those who are living in denial, and those who are not yet convinced (like I was) that they don't have a problem.

I've had to unify a lot of things in my body, mind, and spirit over the years. The journey continues. This process works well with the help of others in the Fellowship. We are each other's eyes and ears, connecting empathically in a common bond. Our First Tradition makes this crystal clear.

I'm forever grateful to Narcotics Anonymous. This way of life has offered me an opportunity to continually develop a N.atural A.bility to employ/enjoy a N.ew A.wareness in all of my N.ormal Affairs!

In Grateful and Loving Service, Parker M.

## Committee Announcements

### Activities Subcommittee

Needs a Treasurer and your support. Only one day clean to get involved in the Activities Subcommittee. If your home group or committee would like to sponsor the monthly speaker meeting and dance, please contact the Activities chair.

### H&I Subcommittee

Have a few new facilities that *need volunteers*, six months clean requirement. If interested attend H&I

meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at 8:30am before Area meeting. For info: attend meeting or contact *Mary Lou*, H&I Chair.

### Literature Subcommittee

We can always use help at area to bag literature for home groups. Area meets at 10:45 am the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month.

### Outreach Subcommittee – The Outreach

Subcommittee attends meetings that need support. It serves as the “outstretched hand of an established NA community to isolated groups and addicts...” (From A Guide to Local Services in NA.) We currently have no chair for this position. Interested? Attend the ASC meeting. It's a great way to get out to groups you don't normally attend.

### Public Relations Subcommittee

We are always looking for new members who can help with phone outreach to facilities, give presentations to various organizations and help us carry the message to the professional community. We especially need people available during the day for an occasional speaking engagement with a social service or other community organization. We'll train you!

We meet at 9:30 before the West Valley Area Meeting on the third Saturday of each month. There are many ways to serve. We have an upcoming event at a local Glendale church at noon on a Wednesday where we could use some support.

Especially needed are those who are retired or who have flexible hours since we often speak to groups or do presentations during the day.

Join us there or at the PR meeting in your area.

## The Twelfth Concept for NA Service

**First Concept: “To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose comma the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates and maintain services on behalf of NA as a whole .”**

Our fellowship's primary purpose is to carry the message “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.”

One of the primary means by which that message is carried, addict to addict, is in our meetings. These recovery meetings, conducted thousands of times each

day by NA groups around the world, are the most important service offered by our fellowship.

However, while recovery meetings are NA's most important service, they are not the only means we have of fulfilling our fellowship's primary purpose. Other NA services attract the still-suffering addict to our meetings, carry our message to addicts in institutions, make recovery literature available, and provide opportunities for groups to share their experience with one another. No one of these services, by itself, comes close to matching the value of group recovery meetings in carrying our message; each, however, plays its own indispensable part in the overall program devised by the NA Fellowship to fulfill its primary purpose.

We can do together what we cannot accomplish separately. This is true in our personal recovery and is equally true in our services. In new NA communities, groups often perform basic services in addition to their meetings. But fulfillment of the full range of NA services—phonelines, H&I panels, public information work, outreach, and the rest—usually requires more people and more money than a single group can muster on its own. The degree of organization necessary to carry out such responsibilities would divert most groups from carrying the NA message in their meetings. And the lack of coordination among groups delivering various services on their own could result in duplication, confusion, and wasted resources. For these reasons, most groups do not take such responsibilities on themselves.

How, then, can NA's groups ensure the fulfillment of these services? They do so by combining their resources, joining together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains those services for them, leaving the groups free to carry out their own primary responsibility.

From *Twelve Concepts for NA Service*

## Clean-Time Chronicles

I walked into my first NA meeting in October of 1984. At that time, I did not understand what power the fellowship would eventually have on my life. I was still letting people, places and things drive my behavior and it wasn't until a year later and another trip through treatment, relapsing one more time, before I finally decided to give this a try. I don't think I had surrendered yet, but I was on my way. That was November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1985.

The NA community where I got clean was in a small town in Eastern Washington, boasting six nighttime

meetings and two daytime meetings, which were attended by the same 7 to 10 people every day.

We were totally in each other's business, which I resented at the time. However, now that I look back on those days, I realize that the intimacy that we shared back then helped to build my strong commitment and love for this fellowship. Narcotics Anonymous changed my life.

With the help of sponsors over the years – those who loved me and were patient when I didn't live up to the ideal NA member "standard" – taught me so much about the person that I wanted to be. They took me through the steps and showed me the importance of giving back what was freely given to me, doing this in a kind, non-judgmental and loving way. I wouldn't be where I am without that. The amazing example that they set for me over years is what I do my best to give to the people in my life.

I still work the steps on a regular basis, I have a home group which I attend regularly and I actively serve the fellowship in some capacity, all to give back. I have continued to practice this way of life for the past 34 years and have had the privilege of developing some of the most amazing relationships and enjoyed many remarkable experiences – friendships and adventures that never would have been a part of my life if I had continued to use.

I love my life – for the most part. Unfortunately, over the past couple of years, I have experienced some major life happenings that have been incredibly painful and there have been days/moments when my faith seems gone and no matter how much writing, praying, talking I do, it just doesn't get any better.

However, the gift that recovery has been for me is that no matter how much emotional or physical pain I find myself in or how much faith I am lacking, I also remember how many times life *has* been amazing, how much faith I *had*...and, it gives me a small measure of hope. This gives me the courage to continue to put one foot in front of the other and not pick up.

Life can totally suck no matter how much clean time you have. You can experience periods where you completely lack faith that anything is going to get better. But the love and acceptance that is available in the loving arms of NA can save your life.

I just need to remember to do my very best to stay in the moment and not give up five minutes before the miracle happens.  
Crystal S.