

Sharing Recovery & Carrying the Message

Finding recovery together in and near the Charlotte, NC area.



OA Piedmont Intergroup Journal - Winter 2025

Tool of Service *by Lee R*

When I came into the program, back in the 80's, I was blessed to have as my first sponsor someone who was a role model when it came to service. She chaired the intergroup, spoke at many meetings, and was the secretary for my Monday night meeting. Because of her, I learned three things about service. First, it helps me keep my seat at my OA meetings. Second, the only reason for saying "no" when asked to speak is because of a conflict with some other commitment. And third, doing service means not only doing something that is easy, but also doing things that take me out of my comfort zone. She also taught me to speak when there was opportunity for open sharing, or as she put it, "if you don't share, it's like you weren't there". Over the years I have done much service at all levels of our fellowship, each having their own importance to the well-being of OA. I have seen meetings that thrive because many pitch in to do their part. Likewise, I have seen meetings (and an intergroup) struggle and close because the members wait for "someone else" to do the service. For me, I will continue to do service because I want to be part of someone's future recovery.

The nine tools of recovery are:

- ✓ Plan of Eating
- ✓ Sponsorship
- ✓ Meetings
- ✓ Telephone
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Literature
- ✓ Action Plan
- ✓ Anonymity
- ✓ Service



Sponsorship by Susan W

The Big Book tells us the only way we can keep our sobriety/abstinence is to work with another alcoholic/compulsive overeater. Since I started in OA, I have had 3 short-time sponsors and 2 long time sponsors. I have also sponsored many people which began 10 ½ months into the program for me. When I first began as a sponsor, I did not feel ready, and I have heard the same from sponsees when it comes time for them to begin sponsoring people. I was told that I had at least 30 days of abstinence, which was more than those I was sponsoring and could share my experience, strength and hope with them. Many of my sponsees got abstinent and stayed abstinent while several could not get the program. Whether or not a sponsee became abstinent, I stayed abstinent. I kept sharing my program and gave what was so generously given to me.

When I came to OA in 1984, we only had the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book. Our

assignments were based on those 2 books. Over the years I have changed how I sponsor but still use those books as well as our OA literature.

I am very grateful that I get to travel a lot. The first trip I took while in the program, I was afraid that I wouldn't remain abstinent. I remembered when I went to sleep away camp as a 10-year-old, my friends would write me "train letters" as we had to take a train to camp. I'd open one each day and it was very comforting. I thought why not ask my home group to do the same when I went away. Several OA members did write to me and each day I'd open one of those letters and it gave me a connection to home and to OA.

I no longer ask for "train letters" which are now "plane/cruise letters" but my sponsees email or text me while I'm gone. My newish sponsees contact me daily, and my old timers that I sponsor contact me some days. My sponsees tell me that they are grateful to be able to continue their program while I'm on vacation. The beauty of it is that it helps me remain abstinent. That is the gift of sponsorship. It's a two-way street.

Stop, Drop and Roll by Kelly H

As a mother of three children, nurturing and caretaking of others has always been a priority in my life. It never occurred to me that if I didn't take care of myself, I couldn't expect myself to take care of anyone else. However, it wasn't until later in life, after my children became adults and left home, that self-care became very real to me.

It was unfathomable for me to think that a person could live with chronic pain or take medication for the rest of their life. But I found myself in this exact place. Despite the numerous attempts at losing weight aka yo-yo dieting for over 40 years, I found myself at this exact point.... living with chronic pain and taking medications that my physician indicated I would need to take for the remainder of my life. It should have come to me as no surprise that when I am constantly on the "go-go" and making others a priority that my body would get to a point of saying "no-no". Well, here I am today, my body resoundingly shouting "NO-NO!" In the midst of this God was saying to me, "Stop, Drop, and Roll".

"Stop, Drop and Roll is a simple and catchy slogan, life-saving technique and call to action that has withstood the test of time and continues to save lives today." (Google, 2024). I recall first hearing this slogan during a safety training on how to extinguish a

fire. However, it has now taken on a new meaning for me.

Stop, drop and roll. In Overeaters Anonymous I am learning to stop, pause, and stand still. It is in the pause that I give space to connect with my Higher Power, God. I had spent much of my life busy being busy. I filled up every hour of the day, every day of the week, every week of year.... you get my point. I didn't even have time for myself, let alone time for God. It is when I stopped and paused to connect with God that I began to drop those things, those burdens, those people, those situations, those negative thoughts that were wearing me down. It was in this time and space that I picked up the tools, steps and spiritual principles of Overeaters Anonymous that I needed for my life's journey.

I roll by relying on a loving God. Despite all that I learned growing up about being independent and to rely on no one, but myself I can now say that I "roll" – Rely and lean on a loving God. Or as the saying goes I just "roll with it" meaning I stop, pause, drop and let go and rely upon God.

Without this program and God, I would still be on that never-ending carousel ride that continues to go round and round in constant motion but never getting anywhere. For today, I stop, drop and roll. Thanks to Overeaters Anonymous and thanks to God.

And then came Helene by Debi T.

I have been in OA since nearly the beginning of the COVID pandemic. I found it so easy to follow my food plan during this time when I was not able to gather with others for social events. Little by slowly I found myself going down a slope back to a lot of old food behaviors. And of course, the scale confirmed that trajectory. I struggled for quite a while with, “What is my food plan?” and “How am I going to get on track?”. Despite my challenges, I continued to attend meetings, do my daily readings, and on occasion I would reach out to others including my sponsor. The biggest conflict going around in my brain was about certain foods and if I really needed to eliminate them or if I needed to work more on portion control.

In August, answers became clear when my Creator finally led me to a doctor who listened to my complaints regarding digestion issues that I have walked with my entire life. I received a diagnosis of Congenital sucrase-isomaltase deficiency (CSID) which is a genetic disorder that makes it difficult to digest certain sugars and starches. So, low and behold the question of giving up sugars and starches was definitively answered for me!

After my diagnosis with Creators help, I followed my new food plan and stayed abstinent on this new plan for over two weeks. I am not sure if it was a blessing or curse but the day before Hurricane Helene my medication for CSID arrived making it possible for me to eat sugars and starches. I told my doctor that I

planned to change my diet which she supported but suggested that I have this medication on hand for times when I was not in control of knowing the exact ingredients of my meal. After Helene, food choices were minimal, and the sugar and starchy foods were plentiful in our supply cabinet and at community meals. Also, a couple of months before Helene, I had started attending an in-person meeting 50-minutes away – but the hurricane impacted that area too. I spoke with other OA members who assured me that needing to eat what is offered during this crisis did not take away my abstinence as long as I stayed on track with healthier choices and portions. I did extremely well – until I didn't. After we could get regular supplies at grocery stores, and I could go back to cooking at home – I didn't.

Now, it's January, I have been cooking meals from a CSID cookbook and have completed one week of abstinence. Although my body has been detoxing from the sugars, my stomach feels great. As I lean into this new food plan, this new abstinence, I have become incredibly aware of how the meetings are helpful but just showing up at meetings is not enough to keep me abstinent. When I show up at meetings, I need to be present which I struggle with doing online – so back to the weekly in-person meeting 50 minutes away. I need to do the outside work. I need to work with a sponsor, to read literature beyond the daily readings, to pick up the phone, and most importantly I need to talk with Creator at every meal – prays before I eat and prayers of thanks at the end of my meal help me stay in gratitude.

It's A Wrap - Stacey M, Fort Mill, SC

Greetings fellow travelers. Let's solve your curiosity on this title of the article and get right to it. No, no, I'm not writing about wrapping paper designs, how to wrap gifts, or how to wrap up your abstinent meal that you pack with you on the go. Instead, I wish to reflect on my year as the Event Chair for the Piedmont Intergroup as I wrap up two years in this service position. I certainly would have given up this position after year one had somebody expressed interest in doing it but there were no takers and, quite frankly, I felt like I had areas I could improve on from year one so giving another year felt wise. Looking back, I see why the smart fellows in OA have recommended rotating positions after a term of service. Fresh ideas are important. Not having somebody seem like they've perfected a skill set is also important. By no means have I perfected this position and the one following in my footsteps will do an amazing job because she is organized and on the ball. I can't wait to attend all the year's upcoming events.

So, if you've ever wondered, how the event/workshops are chosen? We try to stick closely to the OA World Service recommended weekends for four events. Plus, we add in a fifth event called a Summer Social.

Reflecting on 2024, we began our year with Unity Day which occurs on the fourth weekend of February. We were blessed with 2 recovered fellows who drove in from the Raleigh-Durham area and presented a wonderful array of experience, strength and hope on our unity within the fellowship. On a side note, I was really scared that nobody

was coming to this event because just 10 minutes before we were to begin, only one fellow showed up. Thankfully 3 minutes before the start time, another 15 people flowed in! Of course, we know carrying the message might just be to one person at the moment and that's perfectly okay. But since the guest speakers came from so far away, I was extra grateful that more fellows came. Thank you if you were one of them. But it did teach me something.... And I'm speaking to myself here... Walking in at the last minute is a common phenomenon in our rooms. I realized the importance of showing up earlier, whether it's to help set up or just to be there to greet a newcomer who might be there for the very first time (or so the speaker knows they have fellows to share their message with). That being said, I am still a work in progress on improving this last-minute character defect as those of you who are in the meeting rooms with me know very well! So, my apologies for my tardiness at times. I'm working on it. And, as a result, we moved up the listed start time by 30 minutes so that we would be in the room and ready for the Workshop to begin. See, I learned some pretty useful things by organizing the events!

Our second event occurred in May, and it was our Summer Social. This year's theme was on how not to jeopardize our abstinence. We had three amazing speakers covering topics ranging from how not to jeopardize your abstinence through summer travel, kids home from school and summer activities, and of course body image issues that can occur with summer wear. The second half of the summer social involved two rounds of Jeopardy! Wow! I'm so impressed with the six contestants who

were willing to represent their Piedmont Intergroup meeting! Congratulations again to... Oh my gosh I forgot who won! I guess that proves it was more about the fun and not the prize /title of being the winner. But seriously folks, it was a blast watching everybody participate and having fun as we kicked off our summer together. And in all honesty, I must give credit to a sponsee from Southern CA who shared her Jeopardy Day questions and answers with me from doing this at a previous event in her area. Though I added some categories and changed things, her ideas and some questions came in really handy! It's nice that we are a "we" program. Together we truly are better. We = wellness. Another thing I learned doing the events. When I stick with "I" / by myself and isolate, I am growing my illness. I = Illness. See, there are cool things one can learn by giving service to the intergroup. Have I perked your interest yet?

This brings us to August when sponsorship day occurs on the third weekend of the month. This event was so fabulous because we had nine speakers. Each speaker highlighted one of the nine tools and shared about how they both use that tool while sponsoring others and how they use it themselves. I learned so much from my fellows on this day. One of my favorite parts of the day was having approximately eight fellows identify themselves as sponsors and five people needing sponsors. You know there's recovery in your midst when this happens. For all those who have worked the steps or are even halfway through them, being a sponsor is one of the best services you can give! Besides, giving service is one of the two ways that the *Big Book of Alcoholics*

Anonymous describes keeping your own abstinence. The other is enlarging our spiritual connection with the Higher Power of one's own understanding. (I'm still learning, still growing, still a believer that service has its benefits).

And jumping ahead 3 months later we come to IDEA Day on Nov 17th. Up to this event, we had always held our workshops three months apart AND on Saturdays, but as we tried to spread the locations of events in different directions of the greater Charlotte area, we realized having this event in Rock Hill where our Thursday, 1:00 p.m. in-person meeting gathers weekly would be very wise. Only it could not occur on Saturday: it had to be on a Sunday afternoon. And why not? Why not try a different day of the weekend for those who can't make it on Saturday? This event was and remains personally very special to me for a few reasons. It was the first time in all the events over these 2 years where I felt several fellows came together to work on a project intensely and with lots of love and fun. Other events were great with help offered on the day of the event and a bit ahead of time by a few fellows, but this event took quite a team to pull together in advance and it happened! Thanks to several meetings and individuals who contributed and put them together, we had eight gift baskets. We had an amazing guest speaker who, if you didn't know, had served as our intergroup treasurer in the past. His newfound spiritual awakening and return to abstinence as a result of his spiritual reliance on his HP really shined through.

And I'm thrilled to say that on IDEA Day, I restarted my abstinence. Now who's to say what tomorrow will bring but for

today I'm grateful to string together over 3 weeks of abstinence. There are many service positions I would love to help with that require strong abstinence and the amount of relapses I've experienced have been not only painful but have taught me many lessons of which I am always happy to share when opportunities arise. I am humbled, so grateful, and so amazed at how fellows serve one another through loving kindness, help with event planning, show up at events, and carry the message. And isn't that our most important priority... Carrying the message?

As I write this article, our virtual meeting to participate in 12th Step Within Day is

coming up this week. It's a special time where we focus on the still suffering compulsive eater within the rooms of OA or who we haven't seen for a while. I can't wait to see what happens during our 1-hour meeting. And by the time you read this, if you were there, I hope it was helpful.

May these five events throughout the year help more than just me to jump into recovery and be able to carry the message to others.

That's a wrap.

I love you all,
Stacey M
Out-going Event Chair



Rosi's prayer *by Rosi*

Dear Father,

Please forgive me for harboring an ungrateful heart filled with fear.

Please replace it with a grateful heart filled with joy because the future belongs to you and so do I.

Allow me to replace negativity with positivity.

Replace fear with joy.

Replace anxiety with the confidence of faith.

And replace food with prayer.

Pray to God but Continue to Row to Shore *by Ginny*

I've learned in this program that it is all about action. From Step 4 on the program teaches me to do all that I can. God will help with the rest. This idea has never let me down.

The Steps (and my sponsor) give me a way to work through a problem. If you haven't seen the free PDF on OA.org called "Twelve Stepping a Problem", it is very helpful when a problem arises. "Twelve Stepping a Problem, gives me a way of continuing to row to shore.

I understand now why so many of my crazy prayers were not answered. God still expects me to do the footwork. Today I am willing, and so grateful!

Upcoming Events

Stacey's reminder....

It's not too early to start planning to attend Piedmont Intergroup's Mountain of Miracles Retreat in Black Mountain, North Carolina held on the third weekend of September at Christmount Retreat Center. Registration typically opens around May 1st & fills up fast. Make it a goal to personally save \$300 (just an estimate) by end of April 2025 so that you'll be ready to register for the 2025 Mountain of Miracles Retreat to be held Sept 19th-21st.



Upcoming Piedmont Intergroup Events

Feb 22nd, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm *Unity: Sharing Our Unique Spiritual Imprint Online Workshop*

May 17th, 12:30 – 3:00 pm *Summer Social “come and enjoy some games and fellowship”*

Grace Presbyterian Church, 2955SC-160 Fort Mill SC 29708

August 9th, 12:30 – 3:00 pm *Sponsorship Day, I put my hand in yours*, Lake Forest Westlake Church, 2204 St. James Rd, Denver, NC

Sept 19 through Sept 21, *Mountain of Miracles Retreat, Unity with Diversity Steps 10-12* Black Mountain, NC

For a list of full list of events visit

<https://piedmontintergroup.org/events-2/>