



CENTRAL MARYLAND AREA NA TODAY NEWSLETTER



December 2023

Living Miracles ^{STEP} 12

O'Dell—32yrs—12/06

Star Group -424 Main St, Laurel



Carolyn J—23yrs—12/18

It Works How & Why-6905 Greenbelt Rd,
Greenbelt



Eric M—30yrs—12/19

HOW Group-106 St Mary's Place, Laurel



Toni C—1yr—1/5

Friday Nite Live-6905 Greenbelt Rd, Greenbelt



WenDell Flowers Celebration of Life

Friday 12/15—2 pm Holy Cross Lutheran
Church

6905 G1reenbelt Rd, Greenbelt

"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and practice these principles in all our affairs." Basic Text, Step 12

Having recently passed what many call Thanksgiving, I am reminded that every day is a day of thanksgiving for recovering addicts. It could be said that we don't even need a special holiday because, compared to how we lived in the using life, every day is a holiday. Some would even say a holy day. This gift of finding faith and joy is available to any addict, and those that sincerely (honestly, open-mindedly and with real willingness) seek out the freedom of a clean life in recovery will find it. The most obvious way to keep up that sense of recovery is to carry that message to Newcomers or using addicts that want to find a way out.

There is no race to get to Step 12 and absolutely no skipping or half-assing of Steps 1 through 11. They really do build on one another and that's a major part of the genius and the magic of how they work. One of the hardest things for me in the beginning was patience. I had been good in school and in the military, where quick learning and finding shortcuts were rewarded. Unfortunately, this drive was reinforced *for me* in treatment. Time has softened my attitude and I now see the great value in exposing new people to the concepts of finding a Sponsor and doing Stepwork anywhere. As is commonly known, the program of NA has no opinions on outside issues, and I am only expressing my personal experience, strength and hope.

In my opinion, and as is reflected in our basic Text, most of us found NA as a last resort after ruining or badly damaging our lives. Speaking for myself, I arrived angry, depressed, scared and desperate.

I had seen the writing on the wall and it said I would die in the streets a pathetic, helpless old addict. That thought terrified me, especially after I'd gotten clean once and enjoyed an absolutely wonderful year of clean life before relapsing and spending 5 more years out there. And they were by far the worst years. I just wanted to stop running, from my gangster dealer, the po-po, from my family and from myself. I even believed that I had run away and hid from my Creator. Talk about desolation!

When I got to NA I wasn't looking for, and never dreamt I'd find, any kind Spiritual Awakening. I wouldn't have known what that was, or how to spell it anymore. My cognitive skills had suffered a great deal from living mostly on methamphetamine and alcohol for 10 years.

The Spiritual Awakening did not happen right away or overnight. I spent years going to meetings, spending time almost every day with my very pushy Sponsor, hoping for a change. Of course, there were sparks of light about every day. There were certain people that had worked their Steps that could really tell amazing stories. The most important thing was that I could feel their happiness. They were for-real and full of joy, and I wanted that. They were my vision of hope.

After I stayed clean for a few weeks, I remember feeling very well and strong. This was only the contrast with how sick and weak I had become before, but I started to think I was cured. This was very dangerous territory. When that well-known "pink cloud" wore off, I went into a very deep and flat kind of depression. Nothing seemed appealing to me, not even steak, ice cream or sex! When I told another addict how I felt he taught me the word "anhedonia, the inability to feel pleasure. I could see how it made sense, as the opposite of hedonism, and, in my case, was the result of hitting the ground so hard after falling through the pink cloud. The other addict also told me that, for us, it's usually temporary and will recede as we get our brains, bodies and souls reorganize and heal. Boy was that good news. I will always owe that man, a fellow newcomer, for giving what I was feeling a name, and letting me know that it was not permanent. That had been a 12th Step moment for the two of us.

It wasn't until, after a few more months of meetings, sponsor, stepwork and prayer, I realized one day that I hadn't been sad for awhile, and that my desire for pleasure and all those good things had returned. I'm an addict, so I stick with what feels good. Recovery felt good. I realized how much joy there is in service, and threw myself into it. My Sponsor did a great job of introducing me to the fun stuff in NA, dances, picnics, talent shows and camping trips. I had never been camping on purpose, not with a tent and everything, in my life, and I saw amazing things. Strangers would offer me food right off their barbecues, just for walking by. Everyone was greeting each other, meetings were set up and well-attended, and the children, and even the dogs, all got along great. That first camping trip was revelatory to me. Everthing about it was "12th Stepping" me.

Even as we strive, from Step 1 or Step 5 or wherever we are, to achieve Step 12, it is not a final goal. If there is a real goal in NA, in my

opinion, is to live a decent, kind, joyous and spiritually-connected life. Once a person, a recovering addict person like me, begins the recovery process, the opportunities to act according to the principles of Step 12 begin presenting themselves. Did we stop stealing, lying, gossiping and acting out with behaviors we know to be wrong? Have we confronted destructive thought patterns we may hold including racism, homophobia and disrespect for persons of our opposite gender? When we replace those old habits (often survival mechanisms in the using life) with others like courtesy, generosity, scrupulous honesty, kindness, open-mindedness, tolerance, a willingness to change and a sense of humor, the joy of recovery blooms within us. We begin to "practice these principles in all our affairs," becoming kinder, more patient and more willing to help and value other people in general.

Service Works!

GSRS & Chairs:

Central Area Service

ASC Meets 1st Wednesdays 7-8pm

Church, 6905 Greenbelt Rd, Greenbelt

NOTE: On-line ASC meetings were originally a pandemic response. For those that can't attend in person:

Having achieved that awakening of the Spirit (which can happen way before Step 12) recovering addicts can and do become among the most decent, honest, helpful people in their communities. They are especially powerful when carrying the message to Newcomers or people standing on the edge of recovery and afraid to step in. Just by their example (not just their usual material success) these uncured but certainly elevated recovering addicts give others hope. In some places, two or more addicts make 12-Step Calls when someone calls the Phonenumber and asks for help. It is essential that at least two people go, and if the addict asking for help, that at least one of the responders be female. That's just common sense, at least from my Old School perspective.

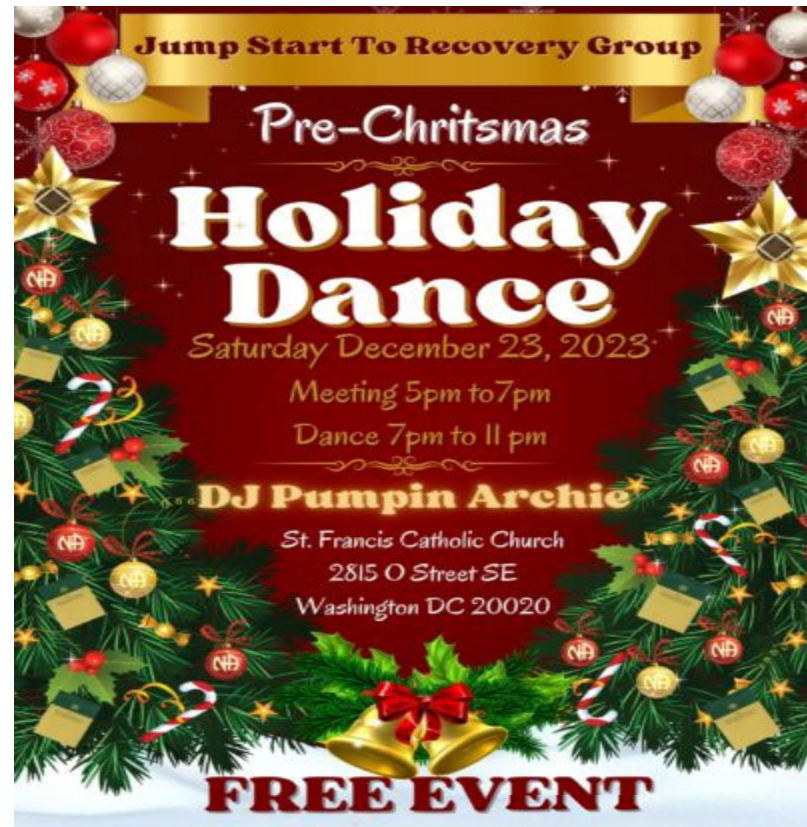
Recovering addicts often become model members of their communities, sometimes returning to their faith communities, or finding new ones that better suit them. They are responsible for their children and pay their bills. They tend to vote and often get involved in community service beyond NA. All of this is as it should be, in my opinion. I remember being out there, sneering at the "sheep" putting their kids into car seats and driving off to work. My contempt was an act. All I ever wanted was a normal life, with real friends, a normal occupation, my basic needs met, family re-connection and the respect of others.

After completing Step 12 for the first time, about five years into my recovery, I felt the entirety of the change I had undergone. It was awesome! I also knew that I had not "graduated" from my Stepwork and that active recovery would be my way of life forever. I'm cool with that. It's been a "big minute" but I'm still in the middle of my Stepwork again. Thanks to completing Step 12, I know I have the capacity, the strength, the faith and the love necessary to stay clean and live in peace.

May we all be Blessed,

Another Anonymous

December 2023

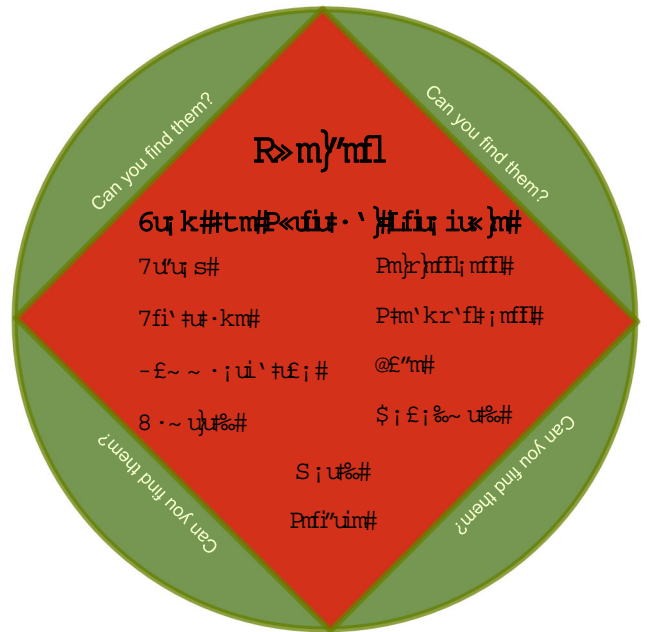


Empowering Women

Thursdays 6:00 pm



The Serenity Center
 9650 Basket Ring Rd
 Columbia, MD 21045



D Z D T R T L U L B T B W U Y
 S T E A D F A S T N E S S T D
 B M C O M M U N I C A T I O N
 S X S P E W N D O D J J W O G
 N M N L L O Y D D E X Z R U I
 Q J X M S Y I E W Z S K S N V
 P G R A T I T U D E G M S I I
 A N O N Y M I T Y R B P O T N
 E Z T B B X E B P N I I W Y G
 K S E L F L E S S N E S S E U
 A Z J U A L F U Y X O Q O U Q
 T M Y Q I N I Y I H J V I L T
 X R E E B E L H U M I L I T Y
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 S E R V I C E Y J F L O V E Q

TRADITION Twelve

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

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In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.

Having experienced the results of this program in our own lives, we join together to carry the recovery message farther than we could individually. NA service is not about forcing our will or our ideas on others; rather, it is about humbly serving them, without expectation of reward.



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Coming soon!

NEWS FLASH! NEWS FLASH! NEWS FLASH!

The 38th World Convention will be at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in downtown DC from **August 29 – September 1, 2024**.

Registration will go on sale in the last quarter of 2023 and we will have information about hotels at that time as well.

NAWS will email everyone who is subscribed to a World Services email list (*NAWS News, Just for Today, and A Spiritual Principle a Day*) before registration goes on sale.

Members interested in being of service at WCNA-38 are welcome to provide their information for the local workgroup here: https://naws.formstack.com/forms/volunteer_form. Information about most volunteer opportunities is announced a few months before the convention and will be posted at www.na.org/wcna

Call for Potential Speakers

If you or someone you know is interested in being considered as a workshop or main speaker at WCNA 38, please complete the online form and provide a speaker recording, if available, before **31 March 2024**. Clean time requirements are five years for workshop speakers and ten years for main speakers.

To submit a potential speaker, please complete our online form here: [online submission form](#). Or a CD recording can be sent by mail with a printed copy of [this form](#). No more than one recording per speaker, please. Recordings are not required to be considered.

