



SUITE 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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

The Meaning of Love: A Real Christmas Story

The year was 1972. I was fourteen years old and had never experienced real love from another human being. What happened on this Christmas was to change my life. Up until then I had been raised in absolute and total insanity. My mother had become a full-fledged skid row alcoholic, her home a piece of cardboard in Anchorage, Alaska. My father, though not an alcoholic, was a cold and distant man, prone to physical abuse. I had never heard the words "I love you" from him, and other signs of affection were nonexistent. My parents were divorced. In the early winter of 1972, my mother had a spiritual awakening and managed to put down the bottle. While in a recovery facility, she met a man named John. Because of this man I learned the meaning of love.

While staying at the facility, my mother and John continued to get to know each other and after two weeks they were married. For anyone who is an alcoholic or understands the disease, this is not surprising. My mother asked me to come and live with them and I agreed. I knew the chances were slim that the sobriety would last, or the marriage for that matter, but I was willing to take that chance. Even a short two months of sobriety and stability were better than living with my father's anger and abuse. I figured the new man in her life would also be a world-class loser. Mother had been married many times to many men, all of whom had let me down in one way or another, but I loved my mother with all my heart and soul, and after some arrangements were made, I came to live with them. It turned out to be the best decision I ever made.

I was suspicious when I first met John. He seemed to have a genuine interest in me, but to me all men were suspect. I could understand that a man would want to be with my mom, but all of my mother's husbands had been either sexually abusive with me (and my two sisters as well) or wanted me out of the picture. John persisted and continued to include me in

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"I detected a note of sincerity in his Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!
I think he is off the sauce."

CONCEPT XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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

Dinner For 1800

We were seemingly more different than we were similar. One of us was 58, one was 26. One had a PhD, the other had completed high school. One had three kids and a grandson, the other never married. We were in completely different careers: one a scientist, the other a plumber. But we had a couple of things in common. We were both alcoholics and attending AA meetings, and we were about to spend our first Christmas away from our families. We had both been separated from our families against our wishes because of our alcoholism.

We knew that the holidays were going to be a challenge. To even think about what our Christmas Day might look like without our families made us anxious. We knew we had to take some sort of action and not let ourselves be complacent and wallow in self-pity, but we really didn't know what to do. Matt mentioned his apprehension in a recovery group we were both attending, and as a result an email appeared in his inbox from the clinic suggesting that he participate in a holiday program at a nearby church. Matt invited me to join in. We had our plan.

On Christmas morning we met at the church. We were hoping that helping out there would be a reasonable distraction from our shared depression. We really wanted to get through this holiday without feeling worse about ourselves; a neutral outcome would be terrific. As it turns out, we were ecstatic at the outcome.

They served a holiday dinner and fed almost 1800 people! It was delicious. The two of us were assigned roles putting used clothing onto tables and trying to keep things organized as people got to pick up some much needed clothing. We were amazed at the number of people who showed up—some in vehicles of their own, some on foot and some on buses chartered by the organization.

We got to meet all sorts of folks—from people who were homeless to families of working poor—getting badly needed clothing for themselves and their families and having the opportunity to eat a delicious feast. We saw their kids playing with each other on the various blow-up jumping rides that had been set up. They even got their faces painted. We saw people dancing to live music next to the dining room. In short, a whole lot of people with difficult situations got to feel some love that's supposed to come with the holidays.

And what did we get out of it? We agreed that it was one of the best Christmases we had ever had. Not at all what we were expecting, and indeed not the celebration that either one of us had originally wanted with our families. But getting to see 1800 smiling faces experiencing a holiday better than they had hoped for was a phenomenal gift for the two of us. We can't wait to volunteer again next year!

—MATT C. | MARTINEZ, CALIFORNIA

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Suite 404 is a monthly publication of Broward County Intergroup, Inc. (BCI). The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of BCI or AA as a whole. The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month. Material may be edited for space and content. We welcome your stories, news and comments. Please send your submissions to help@aabroward.org.

things and I began to let down my guard. He took me fishing and showed me an affection I had not thought possible. As I began to open up to John and let him in, I found other areas of my life getting better. My self-esteem improved and I was happier than I'd been in quite some time.

We were poor, but John, who was driving a cab and working a second job as a temporary secretary, had been offered a job in Kodiak, Alaska working for the telephone company. It was a good job but we needed money to make the move. I got a city job through a federal grant for poor kids doing summer work. The pay was \$2.65 per hour and the work was hard, my boss wasn't a nice or kind man, and I had to walk to work seven miles and then seven miles back home, but all of that meant little to me if it would help us move to a better life.

In September my job ended. The federal money had run out for the year, and winter was fast approaching. Yet even with giving my mother all of my paychecks, we still had not come up with enough money to make the move. Without the job to fill my days, I spent a lot of time around the house helping out and doing chores. John had bought us a small television set and I passed several hours a day in front of it. We lived in a small trailer park and there were some children, but they didn't want to play with me. I was too poor and my parents were drunks. I learned to give people lots of distance.

December came around, and Mom and John asked me what I would like for Christmas, but we were broke, so I asked them not to get me anything. What I never told them was that my only wish for Christmas was for them to remain sober, so I could stay with them and not have to live with my father. At the time I had no clue, but God was to answer my prayers and grant me my wish.

Christmas morning I awoke to find a brand-new ten-speed bike standing in our living room. I was in shock. "How can we afford this?" I asked. John said that it didn't matter, all that mattered was that I liked it. I loved the bike and told him so but knowing we couldn't afford this extravagance I told him to take it back. I was scared that he might have stolen the money (it wouldn't have been the first time one of Mother's husbands had broken the law). John assured me that it was okay, he had not done anything illegal to buy the bike. I pressed, because I didn't understand where the money could have come from. John finally told me he had sold all of his personal possessions. I was silent for a few moments, looking at the bike, until John patted me on the back and told me to take it outside and ride it. For the first time I knew what it was like to be loved by someone. It was through this experience that I was able to learn how to actually begin to love myself, and to develop a real love for God as well.

My mother continued in her sobriety for the remainder of her life. She died of cancer after twenty-two years of sobriety. John continued to be a loving role model for me and a good husband to my mother until his tenth year of sobriety. The pull of the disease was finally too much and he relapsed. I have not heard from him since. I became an alcoholic, but with the grace of God and the love of a stubborn Irish mother, I entered Alcoholics Anonymous, and now claim sixteen years of sobriety. I own a successful business, have two nieces that I am able to love, and a life partner who is sane, full of joy, and is able to love as much as I love him. Both of us are filled with the joy of living, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Because of the love shown unconditionally and the selfless giving of one man, I am able to understand and practice the meaning of love, the power of the heart, and the beauty of Christmas.

—SCOTT F. | PORTLAND, OREGON Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc., December 1999 Reprinted with permission.

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Bridging The Gap

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Recovery Word Puzzle

DRITESPSE
TUNTISLABSA
NAYNSITI
BYTTSILIA
CRYNTIEIS
PRAMTYORE



Unscramble the letters. Answers to puzzle can be found on page 7. Words for this puzzle have been used somewhere else in this edition of Suite 404.

SYRRAEP
CRIPECAT
SPRINDEEOS
SLEAFIMI
NOCCTAMPEL
RITTAPPEACI

The 12th Annual **"AA's Got Talent!"** show is holding the
SECOND PLANNING MEETING AND AUDITIONS

Sunday, December 11th at 4:00 PM

at the 441 Group, Village Plaza, 1452 N SR 7, Margate, FL



The 2023 **Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** will be having their

NEXT PLANNING MEETING

Wednesday, January 18 at 6:00 PM

at your Intergroup Bookstore, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Oakland Park

**GRATITUDE
IS AN
ACTION WORD**



SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



A.A. Birthdays

December Celebrants

441 Group

John A. ~ 25 yrs.

Serenity in the Park-SWR

Emily S. ~ 1 yr.

Cindy F. ~ 1 yr.

Anne ~ 1 yr.

Tommy L. ~ 3 yrs.

Al ~ 5 yrs.

Will M. ~ 1 yr.

Easier Softer Way

Arianna G. ~ 4 yrs.

Coconut Creek

Robin C. ~ 34 yrs.

As Bill Sees It

Jen R. ~ 10 yrs.

5-3-Zero

Dana C. ~ 27 yrs.

Saturday Morning

Awareness

Christine H. ~ 20 yrs.

Downtown Dry Dock

Cindy K. ~ 33 yrs.

Colleen L. ~ 24 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Bonnie Lee ~ 25 yrs.

Kate K. ~ 42 yrs.

Each Day a New

Beginning

Mark L. ~ 8 yrs.

Freedom From

Alcohol

Karl B. ~ 31 yrs.

Victor E

Larry M. ~ 34 yrs.

Women's Step by Step

Heather M. ~ 9 yrs.

Tracy S. ~ 13 yrs.

Imperial Point

Sunday Night

Joyce D. ~ 19 yrs.

Billy D. ~ 33 yrs.

Joey C. ~ 24 yrs.

Empowered Women

Arielle V. ~ 11 yrs.

Express Group

Nereida ~ 11 yrs.

Joanna ~ 28 yrs.

Margate Group

Dennis B. ~ 37 yrs.

Other Notables

Suzanne J. ~ 17 yrs.

Micah ~ 13 yrs.

Laura F. ~ 23 yrs.

Nancy F. ~ 21 yrs.

Allison B. ~ 11 yrs.

Dennis W. ~ 22 yrs.

Chris S. ~ 11 yrs.

Oakland Park

Fritz A. ~ 5 yrs.

David R. ~ 30 yrs.

Y.A.N.A.

Paul W. ~ 18 yrs.

Sarah N. ~ 26 yrs.

Mountain Group

Mark J. ~ 25 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit

Tom J. ~ 34 yrs.

Violet ~ 6 yrs.

Brian S. ~ 14 yrs.

Why it Works

Michael W. ~ 34 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Ernie B. ~ 36 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Kirstie ~ 11 yrs.



JOIN THE BIRTHDAY CLUB!

Celebrate your sobriety by sending \$1 per every year sober to your local Intergroup office to show your gratitude and give back once a year.

(Birthday listings are not contingent upon contributions...we just like to celebrate sobriety.)

**THE INTERGROUP
BOOKSTORE WILL BE
CLOSED ON MONDAY,
DECEMBER 26**
*We hope you all enjoy
Your holidays.*

BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee
will hold their next meeting on

Saturday, December 10th

At 10:00 AM

Twelve Step House,
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

November Celebrants

not previously mentioned.....

Oakland Park Group

Doug D. ~ 36 yrs.

Serenity Sisters

Cheryl ~ 24 yrs.

Carmel ~ 21 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Gale D. ~ 18 yrs.

Horacio V. ~ 31 yrs.

Judy N. ~ 39 yrs.

The next **Intergroup Meeting**
will be held on

**Sunday, December 18th
at 1:00 PM**

Twelve Step House
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

Heave Ho!

I was sitting in church on Dec. 31, 2001. It is a family tradition that we bring in the New Year in church. I slid into the seat next to my mom, who turned to me with a surprised and annoyed look. She asked if I had been drinking. It never crossed my mind that the two fifths of sherry I drank about two hours earlier could actually be smelled on me!

The pastor called for the choir members to come to the choir log and sing a few selections. I went up with the rest of my choir members and sang a few songs. I led the last song. As I crooned one that I had sung many times before, something was not the same. My spirit did not feel as uplifted, and I began to hear a voice that said, "No more. You will not do this anymore." As soon as the song ended, I felt sick to my stomach and ran out the side door. It's a very small area between the choir entrance and the back exit. When I opened the door and stepped down, I noticed one of the deacons standing in the small area. I began to vomit all over the deacon's very expensive shoes. I was mortified! With one swift move, he leaned over, grabbed the mop from the bucket, and began to mop up the vomit. Then, gently, he told me to go home and feel better. Thank God I lived right across the street.

Over the next few months, while attending church service, I was paranoid, trying to make sure no one was giving me any weird looks or vibes. I feared I would be the talk of the church. Fortunately for me, no one made me feel uncomfortable. I also made it my business to apologize to the deacon every time I saw him. He would smile that same warm smile that reassured me all was forgiven; he also insisted that I stop apologizing.

In November of that year, God led me into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, and I began my journey to sobriety. Then one day, after about two years of sobriety, while sitting in a meeting, who walks in but the deacon on whose shoes I had vomited. I was so overcome with joy and emotion. I went up to him after the meeting ended and gave him a hug. He was delighted to see me in an AA meeting. He shared with me how many years of sobriety he had at that time. I don't remember the actual count, but he had many more years than what I had accumulated.

I am so grateful that it was he who God put in place on the horrible night at the church. At that time in my life I was a lonely, lost, sometimes suicidal, spiritually bankrupt drunk. The only thing that I held on to was my ability to go to church and pray and ask God to help me. I could only feel the presence of God when I was in church. I was desperately searching for some peace, so I didn't need anything or anyone preventing me from coming back to meetings. Because of the deacon's kindness, I was able to hear God when I came to AA. Ultimately, the program led me back to God. Was it a coincidence that God used another drunk to help me save my life? I think not; this is divine intervention at its best.

L.W. | NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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Season's Greetings

Things we cannot change....

Gwen G.



She will be missed by all who knew her. May she rest in peace.

Faithful Fivers are fellow A.A. members who donate five dollars (\$5) a month to Intergroup as an act of gratitude. Their generosity helps us to carry the message of A.A. to the still sick and suffering alcoholic throughout the year.

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers and all our Contributors! You are all so appreciated!

Allison B.	Daniel D.	Ryan W.	Don F.	Kerry W.	Ellen F.
Anonymous	Bob B.	Shannon S.	H-Beta	Marsha M.	Ernie F.
Anonymous	Lee R.	Robert M.	Patricia C.	Mary S.	Walter B.
Beth D.	Anthony M.	Susan C.	Lorraine C.	Michael E.	Marcy B.
Carmen D.	Ashley F.	Margaret L.	Fred L.	Michael P.	Nancy G.
Robert H.	Bill W.	Matthew S.	Jerrod F.	Pat R.	Marlene A.
Craig G.	Charmaine D.	Travis P.	Ken J.	Phyllis P.	Sam B.
Lew G.	Gregory C.	Teri B.	Katrina F.	Robert A.	Sharon G.
Deborah C.	Jan S.	Tim S.	James H.	Ron J.	Stephen H.
Debra B.	Jean Marie	Tim H.	Jennifer S.	Steven S.	Howie K.
Dennis G.	Jeff H.	Todd G.	John B.	Susan O.	Elizabeth W.
Don W.	Jolynn J.	Lois M.	Kerry F.	Suzanne J.	Joyce K.
Liz J.	Tom J.	Pat W.	Victoria M.	Vickie T.	

If you are interested in becoming a faithful fiver, you can set up automatic payments from your bank account or in PayPal. You can also send payments by Zelle to help@aabroward.org

Answers from page 4: persisted, substantial, insanity, stability, sincerity, temporary, prayers, practice, depression, families, complacent, participate

I AM RESPONSIBLE....

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.

NAME: _____ GENDER: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

PREFER: VOICE: _____ TEXT: _____ EMAIL: _____ CITY OF RESIDENCE: _____

WILL CALL BACK: _____ AND/OR PAY A VISIT: _____

AVAILABILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: _____ WEEKENDS: _____

8:00am-12:00pm _____ 12:00pm-5:00pm _____ 5:00pm-9:00pm _____ 9:00pm-8:00am _____

TO COMPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: help@aabroward.org

Definition of Broward County Intergroup, Inc.

Your Intergroup office services all groups in the Broward County area. It is not a governing body and does not attempt to, nor can it, rule any AA Group. Its sole purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the convenience of members and groups desiring assistance, and to extend the Twelve Step Work "carrying the message" to the sick alcoholic. The Intergroup office is supported entirely by contributions from groups, usually a specified amount each month or at intervals throughout the year.

The office purchases and sells all conference-approved books and literature to groups throughout Broward County.

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

Bayview Beginners will begin meetings again on November 14th at St. John Baptist Church, Community Room, 4595 Bayview Drive, Ft. Lauderdale. OBG PM

Wednesday

Sober Sisters NO LONGER MEETS at Lambda South in Ft. Lauderdale.

Friday

Hollywood Happy Hour now meets at the Hollywood Hills Methodist Church, 400 N 35th Ave, upstairs, Hollywood. OSPD 5:30 PM.

Saturday

New Day which meets in Pompano at 9 AM is no longer Hybrid.

Free & Easy now meets again in Hollywood at 3400 N 29th Ave in the Activities Room at 9 AM. It is Hybrid.

Sunday

The Sunshine Group which meets at the Twelve Step House is no longer Hybrid.

11 Step Conscious Contact is now meeting at the West Broward Club, 8396 W. SR84, Davie. OMSP 7 PM.

Daily

New Meeting THE BROAD HIGHWAY meets Mon—Sat at 8 PM, 1704 Buchanon Street, Hollywood.

KISS Today from Hollywood now only meets online. They are no longer at Sober Today Club.

Serenity in the Park Southwest Ranches has changed their time to 4:45 PM, to accommodate park closing.

Serenity in the Park east, in Hollywood has changed their time to 5 PM, during daylight savings time.

FOR MOST CURRENT MEETING INFORMATION GO TO

<https://aabroward.org/locations/> or

<https://aabroward.org/virtual-meetings/>



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Jan. 14-16 | Area 15 Quarterly Assembly Hyatt Regency Sarasota. Committee meetings, speakers, third legacy. |
| Feb. 11 | AA's Got Talent! Pompano Beach Civic Center, 1801 NE 6th Street, Pompano, Auditorium. 7-9 PM. Adult only event. Desserts, coffee and fellowship followed by live performances. Don't miss the fun. \$10. Limited capacity. Presales encouraged. |
| Apr. 29 | 59th Intergroup Appreciation Dinner must have ticket to attend. Adults only. 2 Speakers, 4-course meal, raffles and fellowship. Beautiful evening out at Tropical Acres Steakhouse in Ft. Lauderdale. 6-10 PM. Limited Seating. All tickets must be purchased in advance. |