

The General Service Conference in NYC, A Service State of Mind
The Twelve Steps for Crystal Meth Addicts • Embracing the Serenity
Within • Service Saved My Life

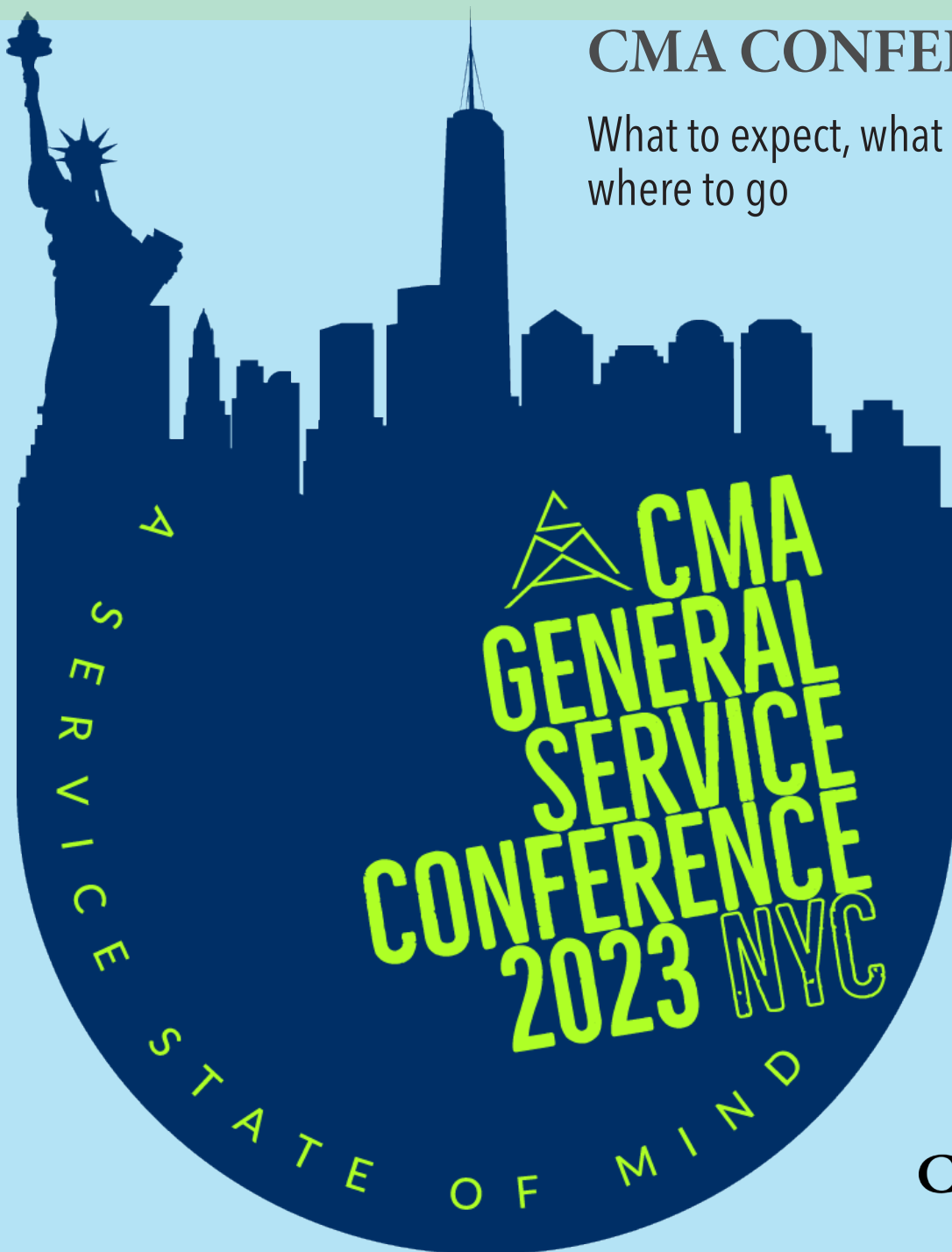


SEEDS OF SERENITY

CMA's Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 2, Fall 2023

CMA CONFERENCE 2023

What to expect, what to do and
where to go



Crystal Meth
Anonymous®

2023 CMA NYC CONFERENCE ROUNDTABLE

A conversation with Jon M. and Ross H.

By Roberto F.

Gentlemen, can you please identify yourself and your position at the conference?

Jon: I'm Jon, I'm a crystal meth addict, I'm the Southwest area Regional trustee and the vice chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Ross: My name is Ross and I am working as the GSC 2023 Hosting Committee Chair for New York City and am also the Literature Advisory Committee Chair of CMA.

How does a city get picked to host the conference?

Jon: So, a city forms a Host Committee and they submit an application to the Conference Committee. Then the Conference Committee interviews the groups who are interested in hosting the conference. Then they choose from however many cities applied, and they make a recommendation to the GSC, the Board, and the General Service Committee which makes the final decision.

Ross: Actually David Herman had the original idea for New York City to host. He passed away in May of 2018, a few months after he brought the idea to us. He wanted us to host in 2020, which would have been 10 years after we first hosted in 2010, which was my first conference. We decided at the conference, I believe it was in Miami, that we were going to try to put a bid in for 2020. But the pandemic happened so everything got delayed. Our bid turned out to be in 2023 and we got the gig!

So, I guess it was decided in 2021?

Ross: Yes, it was decided two years before, so we put the bid in as soon as we could. We were up against a couple of cities and it was a very close race. It was a bit contentious, kinda like Hunger Games.

And how many people are involved in the New York Conference?

Ross: We've had people come and go from the committee, but we've had a solid crew of about 8 people working on this for two years. We started fundraising a while ago because it's New York City and the city's expensive. Rob R. has been a wonderful Fundraising Chair. We started with a Drag Bingo and we've had 3 Day of Beauty events that have been very popular- offering hair, massage, and facial treatments, and then we had a very successful fundraising show that was in the form of a Telethon with 2 very popular drag personalities here in the program, "Kathy and Karen." It was a really great night of entertainment and a lot of the fellowship here in NYC showed up.

That's awesome! So now tell me what can we expect, what's gonna happen when you get to New York in November?

Jon: So the agenda for the conference gets set in the summertime, then all of the delegates from the different areas are invited to come to the conference and there are specific feedback items that General Services wants to know from the groups. For example, there are some potential changes to the 'Are you a Tweaker?' reading. The LAC is asking for Conference approval of the 'Sex and Sobriety' pamphlet, and our International growth structure will be discussed. So when we all come together, the Conference is at the heart of the service structure. Everything in service exists to support the groups, but the conference is the voice of all of CMA's groups and a collective conscience of the whole Fellowship. So the Conference sets the agenda for what all of General Service is going to be working on for the next year and then they also make



decisions that impact the work that the Board will do, and that the Committees will do going forward.

How many people are you expecting?

Jon: I think it's usually between 100 and 150, would you say so Ross?

Ross: If it's 150 we're in trouble!

Jon: Okay I think about 100 then there's like 75 something registered right now so probably 100.

Ross: There may be more. And we're hoping that we have a good local turnout for the speaker meetings at night. We have three speaker meetings, one every night of the Conference and to close the Conference we have a gratitude panel on Sunday. We also hope some of the local fellowship will turn up for the Assemblies on Saturday and Sunday to see what CMA is working on.

Jon: We have a virtual option now that is fairly new.

It's not just for delegates right, anybody in the fellowship may come?

Jon: Yes anybody in the fellowship is welcome to come and participate, and to use their voice. The voting members of the conference are primarily the delegates and the trustees.

Can you give an example? We will discuss "Are You a Tweaker?" for an hour and a half and then come to a decision?

Ross: I do want to clarify that there will be no motion to change the reading this year at the Conference. We are just asking for feedback from the fellowship about the two proposed changes. The LAC and then the GSC approved the changes, so it's now an Interim Approved reading. We want to give the fellowship a chance to tell us what they think and leave the old version and the new version up on the website for people to have available. Either next year or the year after we can have a motion to approve one or both changes.

Jon: The GSRs are going to their home groups getting

that group's conscience and giving the information to the delegates. The delegates will give their feedback on any subject that they've discussed with their groups and also vote on any motion that comes up, like approving the "Sex in Sobriety" pamphlet. Just like you said Roberto, it's a parliamentary procedure. We have motions and we discuss them, everybody lines up at the mic and can talk, you know, everyone has a voice, and then eventually we vote on the motion. The Conference strives to be in alignment with Concept Twelve driven by substantial unanimity, so two-thirds votes are very important in the Conference. We take a quorum of all the voting members and then we get to two-thirds on decisions that are made.

Ross: The voting members consist of delegates, committee chairs and co-chairs, and the Board of Trustees. Don't we have some free-floating votes for each committee?

Jon: There are a few at large votes that each committee gives out and the intent is so that the officers of each advisory committee, who are participating in the Conference, have a vote. So they expanded it a little to include the committee officers.

So Ross, we spent the whole day presenting, discussing, and voting so then what do we do? Is there any fun and entertainment?

Ross: The host committee is planning a double-decker bus tour of New York City on Saturday night. That should be fun. And we're going to feed you! We have three meals planned—two breakfasts and a lunch. We're going to serve you some great New York pizza, and some great New York Bagels. The speaker meetings at night are really fun events. The meetings are a great way to meet the local fellowship and people from all over the country. They are a wonderful experience after a long day of business. And then of course you folks are going to have some free time on your own to walk around the city and explore our beautiful city!

Is the committee suggesting any shows or anything like that?

Ross: Well unfortunately the schedule does not

allow for a show because we have a pretty packed schedule with committee breakout sessions on Friday, Assemblies on Saturday and Sunday, and speaker meetings every night, But if you come a day early or stay a day late, contact me. I have some great show recommendations!

So finally, do you have any words for the people that are coming to New York, any suggestions?

Jon: I would just say enjoy the Conference. My first one was in 2015 in Los Angeles and the first thing that I realized when I got there was that I had a lot to learn. This is a service body and it has a structure to it, but it's a structure that's upside down from what a lot of us are used to in the corporate world. So I would just say ask a lot of questions, everybody's nice. It's one of my favorite things about this Conference. It's where we really celebrate the diversity of Crystal Meth Anonymous because there are so many different kinds of people there, from all over the world, and everybody's willing to talk. So I would just say listen, ask lots of questions, and don't be afraid to speak, everyone has a voice and this is the place to use it.

Ross: Yes! Don't be afraid to ask questions and don't be afraid if you're having feelings to reach out to other addicts because it can be a very overwhelming experience to be in a group of a lot of people you don't know. So just know that you're not the only one feeling those feelings and reach out and discuss what's going on. But most importantly, let's have some fun! Oh, and make sure you have a sweaters and a coat. NYC can get chilly in November, though it can also be a bit balmy. Be prepared!

Thank you, gentlemen. I'll see you in New York!



WANNA LEARN ABOUT CMA CONFERENCES' HISTORY?

We have the records since 2013



CMA GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2023 SPEAKER MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 16, 17 & 18

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 16 @ 7:30 PM
LOCAL SPEAKER: MARVIN A. - NYC
CBST
130 WEST 30TH ST, NYC
Hosted by Harlem Renaissance

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 17 @ 7:30 PM
GSC SPEAKER: JULIE E. - PHOENIX, AZ
HOLY APOSTLES CHURCH
296 9TH AVENUE, NYC
Hosted by New Tooles

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 18 @ 7:30 PM
INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER: ODENE T. - EDMONTON, CANADA
HOLY APOSTLES CHURCH
296 9TH AVENUE, NYC
Hosted by The Young and the Methless



ALL ARE WELCOME!

WHY DID WE WRITE THIS BOOK?

By Mark L.

You may be wondering: Where exactly did NYCMA's "little black book"—*The Twelve Steps for Crystal Meth Addicts*—come from?

CMA has published several great story collections at the GSC and intergroup levels, and many terrific pamphlets and readings; but we've never put out a guide to the Steps. At our first world conference, in Utah in 2008, we even voted not to. I served on a committee that drafted this explanation: "The Fellowship of Crystal Meth Anonymous works a Twelve Step program of recovery. We have not felt the need to elaborate in great detail a specific CMA approach to the Twelve Steps: Too many other excellent outlines already exist for following these spiritual principles. But our experience has shown that without the Steps we could not stay sober."

What changed? Essentially, with each year, more and more fellows ask why we still don't have a book about the Steps, and not only in New York. Especially since our disease seems to be getting deadlier—if that's possible—because of the fentanyl crisis. A lot of us now feel a pressing need to describe "a specific CMA approach" to the Steps. Our experience with sponsees and other newcomers has convinced us that a more relatable explanation of the program could help folks stick with it. From the forward to the book:

...When we come to CMA, we hear our own stories. If we didn't identify, we wouldn't stick around. The same is true when we pick up the literature: We connect better when we hear echoes of our common experience.

We also hunger to read about the program in contemporary language that reflects the experience of people in our fellowship, who represent every race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, and every imaginable belief system. In short, we need a guide to the Steps that describes approaches people in our program use today. It's in that spirit that we offer this book.

How did we put it together? During the pandemic, Ross H. recruited me to contribute to CMA's upcoming Daily Meditation reader. I work as a writer and editor, and have helped put together a lot of CMA's literature over the years, including final edits on its recent releases, VOTF: Our Recovery and A Sober Cell. It's been wonderful working on the meditation project—especially getting reacquainted with Dale G. and all the other beautiful folks around the country who keep putting out such terrific literature.

Many of the contributors, myself and Ross included, submitted meditations early on that were focused on individual Steps and Traditions. And it was clear looking at our work that we do have a CMA approach to recovery. Mind you, the program we work is identical to those of AA and NA and all the other A's. But we have our own unique language, and our own, more contemporary point of view.

With Ross's encouragement—and needing something to do to stay sane during the pandemic!—I dove in and wrote a first draft. We showed this to some experienced 12-Steppers in New York: Ava L., Joe D., Bruce C., and Mike L. They gave me lots of notes and suggested additions, and more important, had loads of encouragement. They all agreed: Whatever our hesitation has been in the past about producing a CMA guide to the Steps, it was time to set it aside.

To review the resulting second draft, Ross convened a more diverse group of readers. We brought in more women, trans, Black, Latino, and Asian American fellows; people with just a year or two and old-timers with lots of experience as sponsors; people with a range of spiritual perspectives; and folks who were devoted to the AA and NA approaches and literature. We also broadened the circle beyond New York, inviting Literature Committee members from around the country. This group gave us detailed notes, convening monthly over Zoom to go over the draft chapter by chapter. Where we were divided on a question, we did what the Traditions instruct us to do and took a group conscience.

With the pandemic easing, Ross and the NYCMA Literature Committee started a weekly Wednesday

hybrid meeting and invited fellows from all over to attend, listen to the third draft, and give feedback. We also made PDFs available so people could give more detailed notes. Scores of people from around the world weighed in. Some had pointed critiques and many offered terrific suggestions, but the consensus was overwhelming: We were making something that resonated with people.

The Twelve Steps for Crystal Meth Addicts is a truly unique book. It's had one writer but hundreds of authors. Ross and I convened a final team to get a group conscience on changes to the fourth draft. (I say the fourth draft; in truth there have been dozens.) Then, this summer, NYCMA enthusiastically voted to approve the book at the Intergroup level. Next, we gave it to a professional copyeditor—a non-program person, to ensure the text was accessible to new readers. Concurrently, Stephen F. in Las Vegas worked up some terrific designs; we got a consensus on half a dozen at the Wednesday meeting and at Intergroup, and settled on the snazzy charcoal design, the “little black book” that went to print at the end of August.

And now the NYCMA Literature Committee is going to work on the 2nd edition. With fellows reading the book more widely and closely, we imagine there will be further revisions to the chapters on the Steps. And we hope to add the Traditions: A handful of fellows have gone over a first draft on them; the second draft is going before a broader committee this fall. If all goes well, we'll share the third draft in a hybrid meeting some time next year. We hope you will all take part! We want to hear from as many fellows as possible, to get a true cross-section of CMA DNA into the book. Please, send your thoughts and feedback to literature@nycma.org.

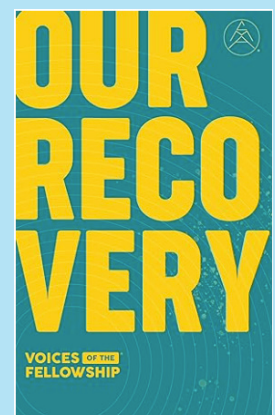
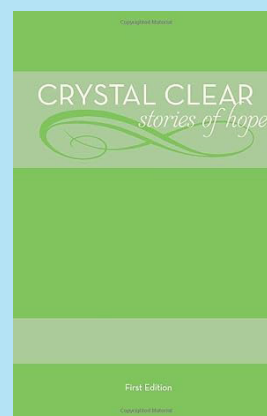
We're gratified that folks all over the U.S. and abroad are buying the book and using it in meetings. Ross and I believe it is—and should remain—a living document. What it grows into is up to all of us.

Yours in service,
Mark L.



OTHER CMA BOOKS AVAILABLE

Crystal Clear: Stories of Hope
(English & Spanish)
Voices of the Fellowship: Our Recovery



EMBRACING THE SERENITY WITHIN

The Transformative Power of Meditation in Our 12- Step Journey

By Dale G.

In our shared journey of recovery in CMA, we've all faced crystal meth addiction head-on, battling the overwhelming cravings and the relentless pull of substances that once enslaved us. The fellowship of CMA and coming to meetings have been a beacon of hope, bringing us relief from our most destructive behaviors, but to have a deep shift in perspective, the change we must make is deeper than just quitting using. This recovery from a warped point of view of who we are and how we fit in the world can be aided by an underestimated ally in our quest for a spiritual shift – meditation.

We've all encountered the relentless storm that is our thinking in recovery. We've experienced moments of despair and helplessness. Our sponsors encouraged us to surrender to a Higher Power but at that moment we came upon a deep chasm that we felt we couldn't cross. It can be a slow journey to understanding how to even approach the subject. Good news! Meditation can be the bridge to the higher mind that can contemplate a higher power.

There are so many reasons to consider a meditation practice. Here are a few.

1. **Stress Reduction:** Addiction thrives on stress, and we've seen how it can trigger our cravings. Through meditation, we can find a path to serenity. Daily meditation practice calms the storm within, helps us navigate the stressors, and ensures we don't turn to our old behaviors.

2. **Improved Self-awareness:** The 12 steps taught us to take a fearless moral inventory. Meditation encourages us to explore our inner selves gently, revealing to us the way our thinking happens. It's a tool that helps us compassionately understand and accept our past, no matter how painful, and embrace our newfound

purpose.

3. **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness meditation, aligned with our principles, teaches us to stay present in each moment. It equips us to resist cravings and avoid a relapse. By staying mindful, we get some control over our thoughts and actions, giving us the freedom we crave.

4. **Emotional Regulation:** Our emotions can be fierce triggers for relapse. Meditation empowers us to observe and manage these emotions constructively, bringing about emotional stability and resilience.

5. **Building Resilience:** Recovery is a journey filled with both triumphs and setbacks. Meditation is our secret weapon for building the mental resilience to face the storms and come out stronger each time.

6. **Social Support:** In our fellowship, we know the immense value of community. Group meditation sessions can create a profound sense of togetherness where we share our experiences and provide support. We build a network of understanding, sharing, and compassion that strengthens our program.

As members of CMA, we've embraced the power of unity and spirituality to overcome our addictions. We will suffer if we underestimate the transformative role that meditation can play in our shared journey. It's not just a practice; it's a profound source of strength and a channel to our Higher Power.

There are so many sources and ways to explore meditation. You don't have to do it perfectly and you don't even have to do it alone. Make meditation an essential part of your daily recovery routine. As you grow in your meditation practice, you'll find serenity and inner peace. Together, we can break free from the chains of the addict mind and lead fulfilling lives rooted in sobriety.



SERVICE SAVED MY LIFE

By Freddie D.

Selfish, self-serving, lying, cheating, and generally unreliable. These are words that might've described me before finding the rooms of CMA. Yup, that was me. It's not comfortable to admit but thankfully, it's not who I am today. I was trapped in a hopeless condition—addicted to meth and the lifestyle that went with it. In those days, I'd chase the chase: getting drugs in dark back alleys or strange houses in Hollywood, Fullerton, or Compton. And when it came to sex, it was an endless loop that started with the hunt, then the conquest, and eventually, the need for more because the hookup wasn't satisfying. On top of that, there was a period when I thought it would be a good idea to become a full-service meth dealer. It's important to note that it's not a great idea to sell a product you're addicted to. As a result, my salesman experiment didn't go well. By the time I made it to CMA, I had lost all integrity, I was physically ill, and I was out of good ideas. I needed to make a change, or I was sure to die.

When I started attending meetings and got a little clean time under my belt, I began to change how I got through my days. Early recovery was selfish because it was all about me getting help. I was broke so I asked for money. I needed people to talk to, so I got a sponsor and gathered new friends. When I was counting days and achieving early milestones—30, 60, 90-- it was all about me getting better and relying on you for support and love. In the beginning, I started doing some basic service like acting as a greeter and setting up chairs during the meeting. But I would eventually increase my level of service somewhere after 90 days clean. Maybe that was when my head started coming out of my ass and I recognized the impact and importance of service work.

By my second year of sobriety, I held local meeting positions like literature chair, chips person, and treasurer. Then my fellow members elected me to be secretary at a meeting. Eventually, I became a sponsor to a couple of people since I had some working knowledge of the 12 Steps. I didn't have to reinvent the wheel by attempting to put my personal stamp on

service work. All I had to do was start making myself available, and stop being selfish with my time and responsibilities. By taking these commitments, something started to change. People started relying on me. Interestingly, trust and integrity were reborn with both my blood and chosen families. There was a time when I thought that kind of trust was lost forever.

My next level of service came in the form of offering my talents to the fellowship. During the early years of my recovery, I was working as a nightclub DJ which required creating boundaries around my DJ space, and not going home with people who were using. I think I was in a place where I was done with using and the only way to sustain my career was to be sober, so I did whatever it took. That included creating sober gigs to balance out my nightclub work and to give back to my sober community. I started working with other DJs and party planners to create sober dance events. These events were all fundraisers for CMA, or the 12 Step clubhouse where meetings were held. They were very successful, and they gave me a platform to be of service to my community in an artistic fashion. This level of service is not uncommon as many artists offer their talents to give back to CMA. We don't get paid in cash; we get paid with gratitude which has no price tag.

I was around three years sober when a meeting I attended elected me to become their General Service Representative (GSR). What an honor! They told me to attend the monthly district meetings and report any updates. I was also responsible for bringing questions, concerns, and requests to the district from my meeting— a liaison of sorts. I didn't know it at the time, but this position would lead me to a lifetime of service on another level. I remember how important I felt when giving monthly GSR reports. "My name is Freddie, and I am your General Service Representative for the Greater Los Angeles District of Crystal Meth Anonymous." It is a wonder I would be able to get a report out after that qualification, but I somehow did it. I quickly became invested in general service. I would become treasurer for the district, co-chair, and then chair. Wow—what an incredible ride! And just when I thought my cup was full by offering maximum service to the fellowship, in 2010, the district sent me

SEEDS OF SERENITY

to the second General Service Conference in New York City. Mind blowing! It is fair to say at this point that my service work shows up as needed to help the fellowship, and it's you who found me capable of holding these positions, thank you!

After attending the 2010 Conference in New York, I was asked by Digby, the man who would become my service sponsor, to take the position of registration chair for the 2011 Conference in Phoenix. It is important to note that a service sponsor is someone who has held general service commitments and can guide you as you embark on your commitment to general service. Much like previous commitments, I said yes and soon found myself on the committee that produces the annual General Service Conferences. I eventually became chair and helped to produce memorable conferences in Phoenix, Atlanta, Minneapolis, DC, and Los Angeles. These were special years for CMA, as the Conference is the platform for growth of the fellowship. And CMA did grow. The work that's done at the General Service level helps to ensure that meeting doors are open for the newcomer to walk through. I have watched as CMA expanded throughout the country and doors opened in London and Sydney.

After my time with the Conference Committee, I took interest in CMA literature. At the Atlanta Conference in 2012, the idea emerged to write a new CMA book with the concept of how people have accomplished some seemingly difficult tasks in sobriety without returning to active meth use. These stories are personal accounts, as the request for this project was to hear Voices of the Fellowship, and not another pamphlet on a topic. Voices of the Fellowship would become a series of books under this banner such as "Our Recovery," "A Sober Cell: From the Inside Looking Out," and the future book, "Our Families." As I learned more about this project, I joined the Literature Advisory Committee and took a position as secretary and would go on to chair the committee for four years. I have found literature to be the heart of our program. It's how we reach people throughout the world, and it has proven to be a major force for connecting with other meth addicts.

As a member of CMA, I have been humbled by the opportunity to learn how to play well with others in the sand box without making it the Freddie Show. The service work I have done and continue to do is an essential component of helping balance out my recovery. The other major benefit was making friends throughout the world. As a result of my years in General Service, I have friends in many states, Canada, London, and Sydney and I am blessed to never feel alone. Recovery is strong when all elements of the triangle are practiced: Recovery, Unity, and Service. Recovery is personal and practiced through the 12 Steps. Unity is found in the meetings and how we do this together through the guidance of the 12 Traditions. Service is how we give back to our community and all who are part of our lives. In General Service, CMA has created a services charter and uses the 12 Concepts for guidance.

A note to anyone seeking a life in recovery through 12 Step programs: I came to CMA broken and selfish. What I discovered is that by following directions, I was given a roadmap for better living, and service is an indispensable component of that. Service shows up in many forms—meetings, local commitments, sponsorship, connecting with other addicts, speaking on panels for Hospitals and Institutions, and doing General Service work. Whatever it is, find what works for you. I have an amazing life today, and my service has helped me be a better husband, son, brother, nephew, cousin, sponsor, and worker among workers. At the time of this writing, I plan to attend the 2023 General Service Conference and return to where it all started for me—New York City.

Yours in Service, Always.

