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SEEDS OF SERENITY

CMA's Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 6, Winter 2025

Hospitals & Institutions



Sharing the CMA Message of Love with Those in Confinement

Crystal Meth
Anonymous®

FINDING HOPE BEHIND BARS: My Experience with an H&I Panel in Prison

By Dale G.

Nine months into a two-year sentence at the California Institute for Men in Chino, I was sober—not by choice, but by circumstance. My hope for the future was as hazy as the fog that rolled in each night. Then I heard a rumor: the AA meetings had coffee. I didn't know what the meetings were about, but I knew I liked coffee.

So I went.

As I sat with my cup in hand, something unexpected happened—I started listening. More than that, I started identifying with the men who were sharing. It was a miracle, considering that in prison, I never truly identified with anyone. But here, I saw my own struggle reflected in their words. The desperation, the endless cycle of trying to stop and failing—I wasn't alone. I was told to keep coming back, so I did.

Once a month, an H&I (Hospitals and Institutions) panel would visit, bringing a speaker from the outside. I didn't know what a panel was, but the idea of someone coming in from beyond those prison walls intrigued me. It felt like a connection to a world I had been ripped away from. One panel night, we took our seats as the speaker walked in—a woman. That was rare.

She started sharing her story, and I was captivated. She spoke about living in a busted-out trap house in Echo Park, the tweakers she was surrounded by, the shadiness, and her repeated attempts to get clean—only to fall back into the grip of crystal meth. She talked about staying up for days on end, not eating or drinking, the chaos, the desperate search to stay high.

It was my story.

But the woman standing before us was not the woman she described in her past. She was kind, composed, and

seemingly successful. I knew the kind of people who lived in those trap houses—she wasn't one of them. At least, not anymore. That realization hit me like a freight train: tweakers could recover. There was hope. She had found something that pulled her out of the darkness, and it existed in the rooms of CMA.

That shocked me. This was an AA meeting, but she spoke openly about her addiction to crystal meth. And thank God she did. Thank God no one told her to censor her story. That night, she gave me something I hadn't felt in a long time—hope.

She had driven miles from Glendale to Chino on a weeknight, for one hour, to speak to a room full of incarcerated addicts. She had no idea who she might reach, but she showed up anyway. And it mattered.

Years later, after my release, I walked into a CMA meeting and heard a familiar voice. It was her. I couldn't place where I knew her from at first, but as she spoke, the recognition flooded back. After the meeting, I asked if she had ever spoken on a panel in Chino. She smiled and said yes.

I thanked her.

That single H&I panel was the first time I heard someone speak specifically about finding recovery from crystal meth addiction. That night gave me the push I needed. After my release, I went straight to treatment, found CMA, and found a home.

I've never turned back.



A SOBER CELL : From the Inside Looking Out

By Freddie C.

Around 2012, the Literature Committee was approached by the Hospitals & Institutions Committee to collaborate on a project aimed at bringing literature to individuals who are incarcerated. The hope was to encourage members of CMA to share their stories about being in jail or prison and how recovery played a crucial role in their lives—whether through attending 12 Step panels or maintaining sobriety in challenging conditions. These writers could also reflect on how the fellowship helped them make meaningful changes, avoiding a return to substance use or criminal activity. Initially titled “From the Inside Looking Out,” the project eventually became the subtitle of A Sober Cell.

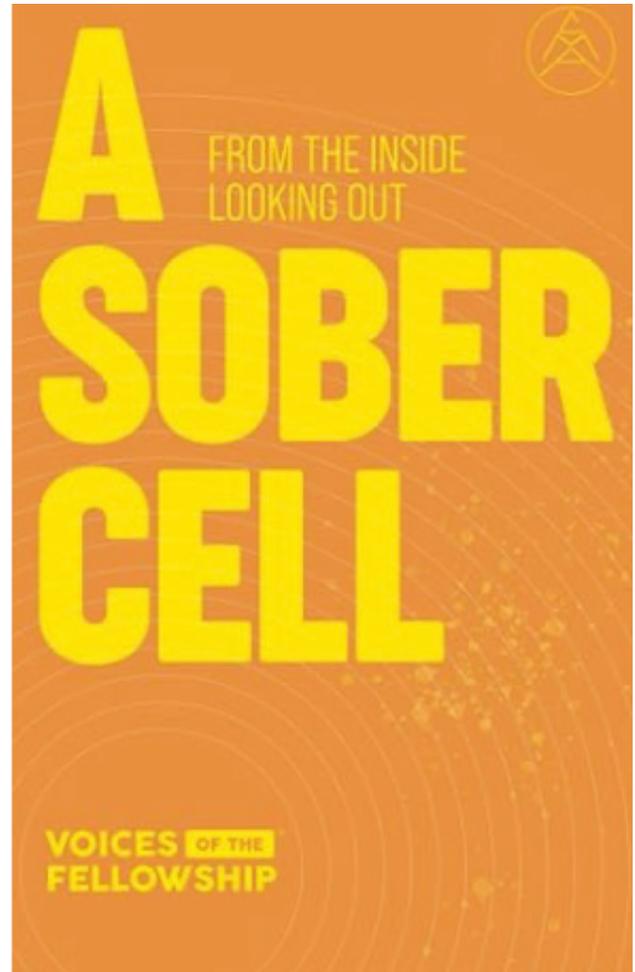
A Sober Cell: From the Inside Looking Out was an ambitious project that finally reached publication in 2018/2019. The H&I Committee chose to begin the effort by using stories written for the “Our Recovery” project. The original idea was to create a quick and accessible resource that would include personal stories, meeting formats, and the CMA suite of readings. The goal was to produce a PDF for distribution within the correctional system. To bring this vision to life, the H&I Committee worked closely with the Literature Committee.

This project proved to be a great success, reaching people across the country who might not otherwise have access to such valuable resources to support their recovery. The book is available for purchase, making it accessible to correctional facilities and members of the fellowship alike. The H&I Committee has also donated dozens of books to facilities in the U.S. and Canada.

In 2024, discussions within the Literature Committee began about expanding the book to include more stories and to create an additional project focusing on prisons and legal issues.

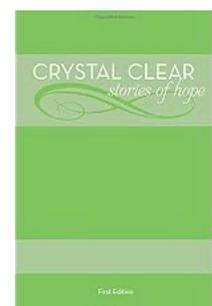
A Sober Cell was truly a labor of love for everyone involved. The final product is something we can all be proud of. While it takes time to produce literature

that is relevant and continues to carry the message of recovery, the outcome is powerful. A heartfelt thanks goes out to all the story contributors and Committee members who dedicated themselves to bringing this project to completion.



OTHER CMA'S BOOKS

- Voices of the Fellowship: Our Recovery
- Crystal Clear: Stories of Hope
- Crystal Clear: Historias de Esperanza



PRISON PENPAL PROJECT

An Interview with Christopher C

By Roberto F.

Welcome, Chris! Could you introduce yourself and share your role with the Pen Pal Program?

Hello, I am Chris C., a crystal meth addict from San Jose CA. For over two years, I've served as the PenPal Matchmaker. I am very excited to be working with two new Matchmakers, Cortlen Y, and Anthony R, who are currently being trained for the positions of PenPal Matchmakers.

Can you tell us more about the Pen Pal Program and its mission?

The CMA PenPal Program gives incarcerated individuals or patients in other facilities or institutions the opportunity to get the CMA message that recovery from crystal meth addiction is possible. CMA Penpals exchange letters to share their experience, strength, and hope with their PenPal Match. The experience of writing with a PenPal from CMA often is the only contact or interaction these folks have with a member of the CMA Program.

Here's how it works: Folks who write in from jails, prisons, or other institutions seeking information or CMA literature are "matched" with a PenPal. The matched PenPal writes a letter to the incarcerated or institutionalized individual, sharing their story of recovery in CMA, using the CMA General Service address as the return address. Receiving PenPals send letters back to their PenPal via the CMA General Services address in Los Angeles, ensuring the PenPal's anonymity. Ongoing H&I PenPal relationships can also turn into sponsorship by mail. The CMA H&I Committee is currently working on a sponsorship-by-mail program that would integrate well with the PenPal program.

How do you match individuals in institutions with those in recovery outside?

Individuals are matched with several different factors in mind. Primarily, PenPals with at least six months to a year of continuous sobriety, who have completed or are actively working the 12 Steps, are considered ideal candidates for matching. CMA PenPals carry the message that recovery from Crystal Meth addiction is possible by working the 12 Steps. Knowledge of the program and experience working the Steps is essential. Gender identity, age, and geographic location can also play a role in matching PenPals. Of course, the safety and anonymity of the CMA PenPal are extremely important to the program, and the matching process takes this into consideration. While these are often great starting points or touchstones there are other things to be considered. This is where the matchmaking comes into play. The goal is to provide the writer a PenPal they can trust and feel comfortable corresponding with and sharing their story.

If someone is interested in joining the program, where can they sign up or learn more?

They can use the following link:

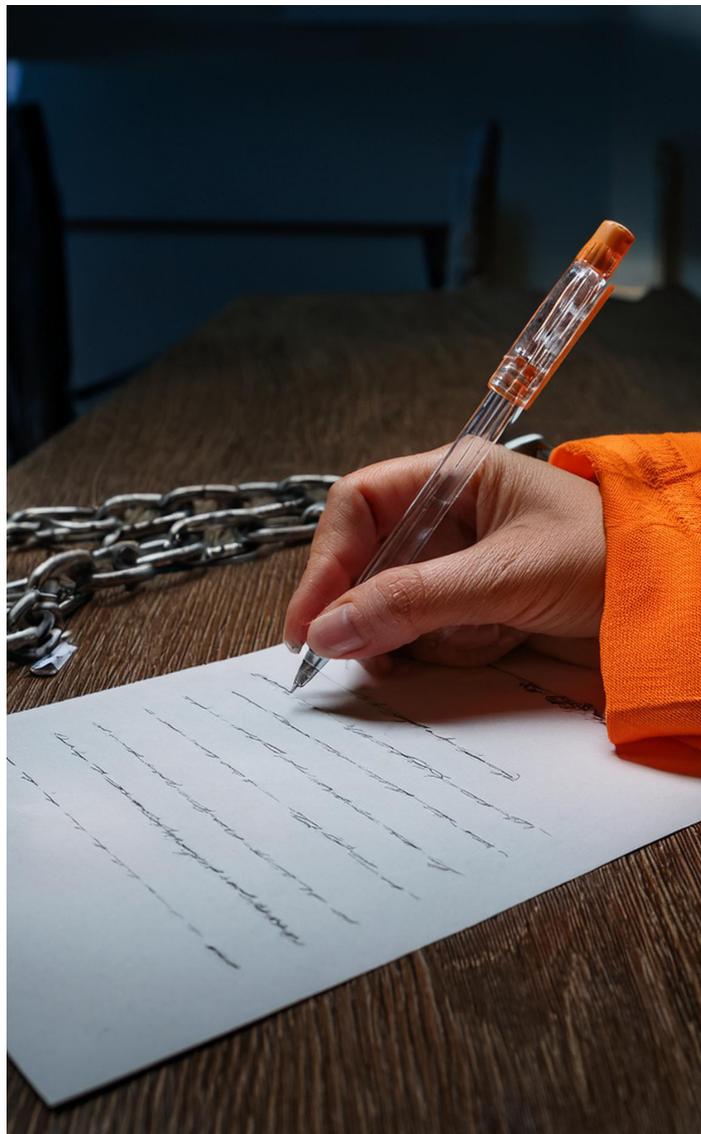
<https://bit.ly/CMAPenPal>

Or they can use the QR code below to access a Google Form. Once completed, their information will be added to the PenPals database. When matched, you'll receive an email containing detailed guidelines, instructions, and correspondence from your match. At that point, you can decide whether to participate in the program.



Do you have a success story from the program that you'd like to share with us?

Any answered letter is a success, but in the few years I have been doing this, I have seen a few PenPal correspondences develop that have gone on for years. Successes also come in the form of incarcerated folks telling their friends about CMA, who then also write in for literature and PenPals. This happens frequently and is a great example of our message being carried to those who are not able to attend a meeting. Folks who have heard the message through the program and H&I in jails and institutions often show up at meetings when they are out, are also successes. Reading the letters sent to us and seeing the willingness to reach out for help, I see success. It's a powerful sign of honesty and the beginning of working Step 1.



SERVICE SAVED MY LIFE IN RECOVERY

By James Ca.

Growing up in the 80s and 90s was a fun and carefree time, but my life changed forever when my parents got divorced when I was 11. My mom walked away from me, and I was left feeling scared, anxious, and alone. I fell into a deep depression, lost my friends, and struggled in school. I turned to food and TV for comfort, leading to significant weight gain.

By the time I was 15, I turned to substances. It started with alcohol and marijuana, but it was crystal meth that quickly took hold of me and flipped my life on its head. I became addicted, using it to cope with my emotions and insecurities. The addiction consumed me and led to a life of petty crimes, including stealing from my family, friends, and even strangers.

I went in and out of jail and prison multiple times, constantly wondering how I kept ending up on the same destructive path. Each time, I found myself back in prison, asking myself once again what had gone wrong. I first came across the 12 Step fellowships while I was in prison, and at the time, I viewed the participants as a bunch of losers because they were sharing their message of hope in such a dark place. However, I didn't realize then that they were planting seeds that would eventually take root after I faced a suicide attempt and went through various halfway houses and rehabs. Throughout my journey, the consistent presence of individuals from these fellowships offered me a glimmer of hope for sobriety. In my last rehab, I found a sense of belonging in CMA, where the model of service truly resonated with me. This led me to find a sponsor who guided me through service and Step work, pulling me into events and meetings, which became a perfect outlet for my time and energy after the devastation of my addiction.

Early in recovery, I wanted to be of service, starting with something simple like chairing a meeting. Anything beyond that seemed like a chaotic headache. At about 45 days sober, I tried to get an H&I meeting chair commitment but was voted down because of my short

time in recovery. Someone told me, however, that I didn't need anyone's permission to start a meeting and be of service—all I needed was willingness and a location.

So, I went to one of the many treatment centers I had been to in the past and started my own H&I meeting on Friday nights. That meeting became a highlight of my life, helping me fight the loneliness that often comes with not partying on a Friday night. It proved to me that I could be responsible, show up when I said I would, and carry the message. Despite how I felt, I realized I wasn't a complete piece of trash. This was the beginning of the self-esteem building that comes with the recovery process.



As I completed my steps and attended meetings, my willingness to serve grew. This eventually led me to chair an Awareness Day Event, which initially terrified me since I had never even planned a birthday party before. I soon realized that a higher power guides the outcome of events, allowing them to unfold as they should. I witnessed the unity within CMA as everyone contributed their unique talents to make the event a success.

This experience taught me that service in CMA is not

about perfection or having all the answers but about a heartfelt desire to serve and trusting in the fellowship and a higher power. Throughout my journey, as I took on various positions within my home group, Intergroup/District, and Area, I learned that while serving may seem like a sacrifice of time and energy, the rewards of service far outweigh any perceived losses.

In 2015, I joined some local service junkies on an adventure to the General Services Conference, and despite my initial doubts, I was deeply moved by the connections I made there. The warmth and acknowledgment from fellow attendees made me feel included and valued in the fellowship. As I observed the discussions about bylaws, agendas, and trustees, I found my calling in the H&I Committee, which kicked off my service journey. Through my various commitments, I not only gained a deeper understanding of the process but also fell in love with CMA's unique and rich history, marked by both fun and dark moments. Now, I take pride in serving on several committees, even the ones I once found intimidating, like the Literature and Communications Committees.

Through my service, I've discovered the importance of carrying a message of hope to those who feel hopeless, reminding them that they belong and that it's possible to overcome addiction. As I made sacrifices for service, my self-esteem began to improve, and I gained confidence in myself, feeling more comfortable looking in the mirror and smiling. Through various roles in the fellowship, I acquired valuable skills like event planning, leadership, and financial management, which have greatly benefited both my personal and professional life in ways I never expected.

Service in CMA became my lifeline during my struggles with sobriety, especially when I faced the overwhelming loneliness and darkness that made me want to numb the pain—or worse. After rushing into parenthood while still in recovery, I found myself alone with a six-month-old after my family relationship crumbled under the weight of substance abuse. During that dark time, CMA service kept me moving forward. I focused on caring for my child and attending meetings instead of dwelling on my fears.

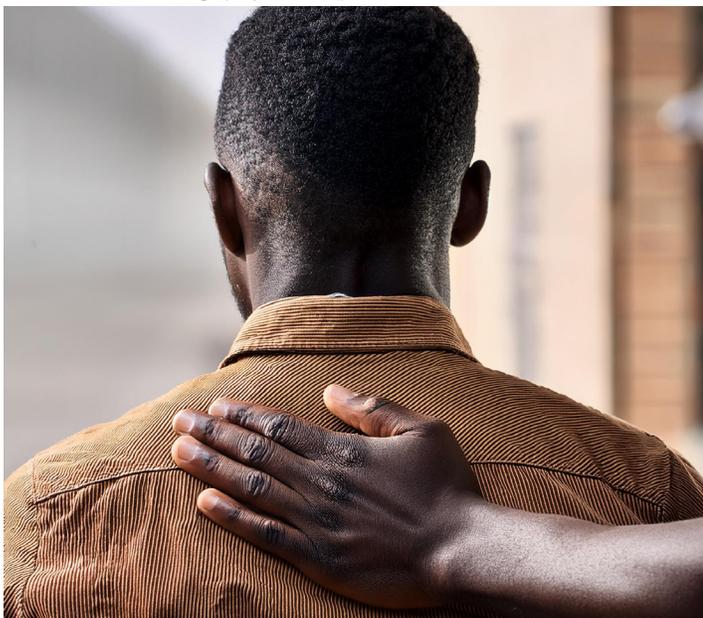
Through the fellowship of CMA, I found a supportive community that embraced both me and my child,

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offering the love and care we needed. Time and again, whether I lost a job, faced relationship problems, or dealt with financial stress, service helped distract me from despair, allowing God to work in my life. By staying busy with service, my life gradually transformed in ways I could never have imagined, leading to a brighter future.

Today, life looks very different from when I first came to CMA. I have a beautiful life, with security and the usual amount of life stress. Most mornings, I wake up and admire this life, hardly believing it's mine. I recently celebrated 10 years of sobriety, and while some might say I don't need to be as active in service anymore, I strongly disagree. Even though life has worked out and is full of other priorities, I believe service is more important than ever. Since 45 days sober, I have always held a service commitment. Service is ingrained in my life, and I couldn't imagine not being of service of some sort to a fellowship that gave me such hope and opportunity at a beautiful life.

This is a debt I owe to CMA. I can contribute financially through the Seventh Tradition, but the reality is that money comes and goes—that alone isn't enough for this hope-filled addict. I repay my debt with something far more valuable: my time and energy. While I may never get those back, the return on investment is amazing—happiness in life and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact within the fellowship of CMA. No matter where your journey in CMA takes you, I hope you find in service what I found: a life-saving, esteem-building, joyful experience.



UPCOMING EVENTS

UNITY DAY 2025

March 1 - 12 to 4 PM

Palm Springs Unity Day Oasis

Palm Springs, CA

<https://cmainla.com/event/unity-day-2025/>

Palm Springs Unity Day Oasis

Fellowship & Celebration

Join Us at
Sunrise Park!
Inside the Pavilion

Saturday, March 1
12:00 - 4:00PM

401 South Pavilion Way
Palm Springs, CA



RSVP: CMAINLA.COM

\$20 Suggested Donation

No one will be turned away for lack of funds

Lunch
12:00-1:30PM

Meeting
1:45 - 2:45PM

Variety Show
3:00 - 4:00PM



12 STEP EXPERIENCE IN THE PINES

March 28 - 30th

Emmanuel Pines

Prescott, AZ

<https://centraldistrictcma.org/12-step-experience/>

12 STEPS IN THE PINES
growing Together
**IN UNITY,
SERVICE, AND RECOVERY**

2025 NORCAL CMA RETREAT

April 11 - 13th

Santa Cruz, CA

<https://norcalcmaretreat.org>

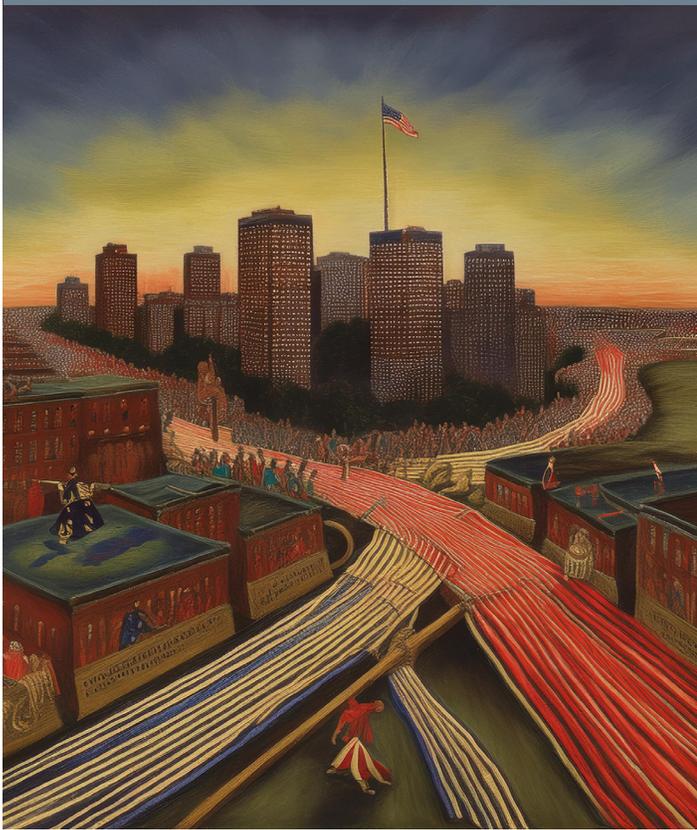
Northern California CMA Retreat

Friday April 11 - Sunday April 13, 2025

[FAQ](#)

Let us know about your upcoming event
newsletter@cmagso.net

H&I AROUND THE UNITED STATES



Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) has been making a profound impact on addicts who are unable to attend traditional meetings by bringing the fellowship to them through Hospitals and Institutions. These committees around the country organize meetings in rehabs, sober living homes, hospitals, and jails, ensuring that those who need support receive it. We spoke with three dedicated CMA members—Texie, James, and Craig—who have played instrumental roles in organizing and expanding H&I meetings in their respective areas. Their stories demonstrate the resilience, dedication, and innovative approaches that make H&I a vital service within CMA.

Texie's Story: Building H&I in Colorado

Texie's journey with H&I began during her own time in rehab. "I was there for 90 days, and there were two H&I meetings," she recalled. "One of them was a CMA meeting, and it just clicked for me. When I got out, I went straight to an H&I organizational meeting." From there, she was mentored by Sarah G., who eventually

became her sponsor, and she quickly became immersed in H&I service.

Texie's early efforts included taking CMA meetings to outpatient programs at behavioral health centers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person meetings were not an option, she got creative and started a Google form to track meeting status and ensure continuity. "That's when I really felt like I was doing something," she said. Today, Colorado has six active H&I meetings, with a mix of in-person and online formats, including one for drug court participants that may soon transition to in-person meetings.

Texie and her team use multiple resources to keep meetings engaging and effective. "We use the '12 Steps for Crystal Meth Addicts' book, meditations from the CMA website, SoundCloud shares, and guest speakers," she said. One of the most creative approaches they've taken is using business cards with images of CMA chips on them. "They absolutely love them! When they get out, they can trade them in at a meeting for a plastic chip."

Finding new meeting locations often happens through word of mouth or outreach events, such as the annual recovery gathering in Denver. Recently, they worked to get CMA literature into all 22 prisons in Colorado. "The H&I Advisory Committee helped us with that," she said. But maintaining meetings is a challenge. "We need enough volunteers to support every meeting. We track each meeting to ensure consistency and keep a list of willing volunteers. Just maintaining that list is a lot of work. But I do it because I love H&I and I love helping other addicts."

James' Story: Expanding H&I in Arizona

James got involved with H&I after his sponsor encouraged him to join a service committee. "I went to my first meeting at Jerry's Restaurant, and it happened to be election night," he said. Though he didn't win a position due to his newness, he remained determined. "I started my own H&I meeting at my treatment center and came back the next month to tell them." Since then, he has worked nearly every position in H&I and has been active in service since 2012.

One of the biggest challenges in Arizona is a shortage

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of volunteers. To combat this, they host an annual H&I Day, which includes food, speaker meetings, and themed panels to energize volunteers. “One panel pairs someone who spoke at an H&I meeting with a person who first heard them inside a facility—it’s powerful.” Fun activities, like the ‘Jail and Bail’ game, also help generate enthusiasm and recruit new members.

James recalled how difficult it was to get CMA into hospitals and jails in the early 2000s. “We were the redheaded stepchild. They didn’t think we had history, so we had to prove ourselves.” Their persistence paid off, and today, Arizona CMA has 50 or more weekly H&I meetings, including some inside jails and prisons.

Recently, they received a letter from an inmate at Safford prison, where an unofficial CMA meeting had started inside the walls. “They reached out to us to be recognized. That was a huge moment,” James said. They also launched the “HMO” (Hospital Meeting Organizer) initiative, ensuring that addicts in hospitals can access a meeting either in-person or via Zoom.

Technology has also played a role in organizing Arizona’s H&I efforts. “We maintain a giant spreadsheet tracking all meetings, and we map facility locations to place volunteers at the nearest meeting,” James explained. “We’re using Google tools to make sure people get connected.”

Craig’s Story: Revitalizing H&I in New York

Craig was one of the first H&I chairs for CMA in New York back in 2001, but after some time away, he returned to find the committee in decline. “There was only one H&I meeting left, run by one person,” he said. Though reluctant to take on leadership, he stepped up when the newly elected chair relapsed. “I knew I had to do it.”

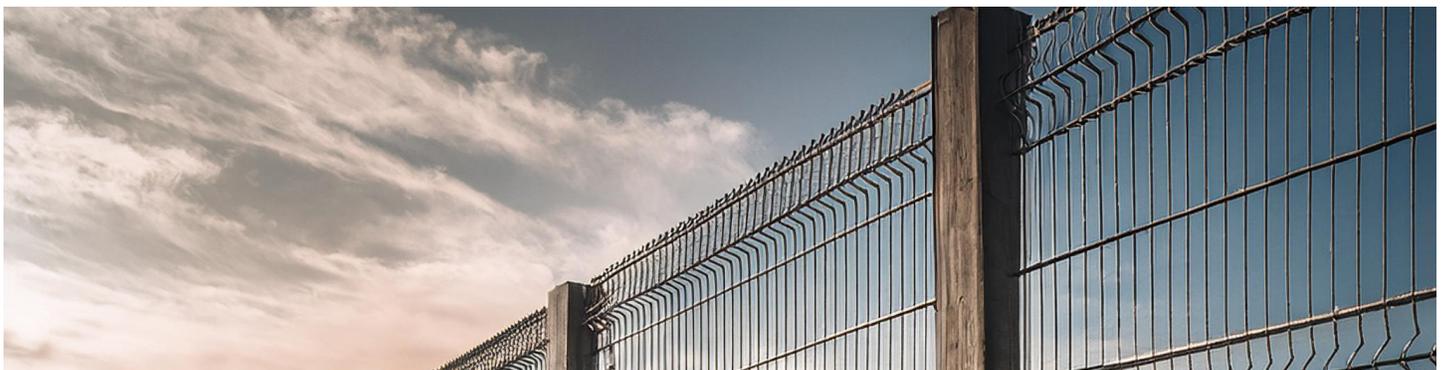
He immediately worked on expanding the team, ensuring that different members chaired meetings on a rotating basis. This helped create a sustainable program rather than relying on one or two individuals. He also focused on local facilities in New York City, where transportation was easier for volunteers.

Craig reached out to treatment centers and helped establish a new meeting at Rivington House. He also connected with Scott W., an AA H&I leader, who encouraged CMA to bring meetings to Rikers Island. Initially hesitant, Craig saw it as a sign when a new member from Delaware, who had served time, expressed a strong desire to start a prison meeting. “So we started the process—background checks, training, everything. It’s been a long road, but we’re finally getting there.”

One of Craig’s most rewarding experiences was seeing the direct impact of H&I. “There was a guy at Rivington House who had been pronounced dead and revived. He’d never been sober before, but after hearing us, he came to a CMA meeting. Now, he’s a big part of the fellowship.”

Craig emphasized the transformative power of H&I. “Every time I chair a meeting, it’s magical. The people inside are excited about their sobriety. Their gratitude changes my spirit for an hour. It reminds me where I came from.”

The dedication of CMA’s H&I committees ensures that those struggling with addiction, even in confined settings, have access to the fellowship and recovery tools they need. Texie, James, and Craig demonstrate perseverance, innovation, and service, and how individuals can break barriers and bring hope to those who need it most. Their work exemplifies the essence of CMA’s mission—helping addicts find freedom from active addiction, no matter where they are.



TWO NEW CMA PSAs ARE HERE!

We're excited to announce the release of two brand-new Crystal Meth Anonymous public service announcements, now available on our YouTube channel!

These PSAs, a collaborative effort between the Communications Advisory Committee and the Public Information and Outreach Advisory Committee (PiCo), mark the launch of a powerful video series dedicated to reaching those still struggling with addiction.

Stay tuned as we roll out these messages in various formats over the coming months, spreading hope and recovery to those who need it most.



AM I A CRYSTAL METH ADDICT?

ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION

THERE IS A SOLUTION AT CRYSTALMETH.ORG

OR CALL OUR HELPLINE

@ 855-METH-FREE (855-638-4373)

