

Service is not work - Service is an opportunity

I recently heard a great analogy about being in A.A; it is like having a RV trailer. In the trailer, you've got your home group, your sponsor and sponsees, A.A. meetings, the Grapevine and all the A.A. events you regularly attend. Life is good. In the back of the trailer is a door that says *service*. Some people may avoid it, thinking that door just leads to conflict and politics. But what they may not realize is that that door leads to a fourth dimension of existence, beyond our wildest dreams.

My introduction to service began when I became a member of my home group. One night, after one of my regular A.A. meetings, a member asked if Kemper Road Big Book was my home group. I asked, what is a home group? When Jon told me it was a group I committed to go to every week, I agreed it was my home group. He then informed me that I needed to stay after the meeting for the group conscience. My only 'service work' in staying for the group conscience was a monthly, 20 minute commitment, but what staying for the group conscience gave me was a feeling that I was a part of that group. I had the opportunity to consistently show up, get to know people and allow people to get to know me. I felt ownership for my A.A. group. Later, I became the secretary, Intergroup Representative and G.S.R. for my home group. By accepting responsibility for these service positions, I had the opportunity to serve the group by listening, taking notes and practicing Tradition 1 through linking my home group to A.A. as a whole, in Cincinnati and throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Being part of a home group is not the only opportunity to be of service. After I was sober a couple of years, I got the chance to be a part of the Cincinnati Conference of

Young People in A.A. The biggest gift serving on the CincYPAA committee was that is where I found my voice. It was the time in my sobriety where the 5th step promises were starting to come true. It was a great place to learn how to look people in the eye and witness my fear of interacting with people just fall away. I learned how to ask for help, how to negotiate a hotel contract and to present a bid for Cincinnati at the 1996 I.C.Y.P.A.A in San Diego. After I turned 30, a therapist suggested it was time to leave the young peoples' group and hang out with the adults.

I became an Intergroup Representative for my new home group and it wasn't long before I started volunteering for service positions. Being involved with Cincinnati Intergroup, I got to learn how A.A. started in Cincinnati. I got to consider where we should move the Alkathon so it would be more accessible to people dependent on public transportation. I got to write lots of inventories and had ample opportunities to practice principles before personalities. I got to make amends and learn to move on gracefully, so I wouldn't have to make amends in the future.

After my commitment at Intergroup, I became involved with general service work. I served as the General Service Representative for the Spiritual Basis Group. At General Service Area 56, I served as the Literature Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar, Alternate Delegate/Chair and Delegate. I had the opportunity to meet my current sponsor, to work cooperatively with G.S.R.s, chairpeople and officers. I learned about the 12 Concepts, I developed confidence through presenting reports, I attended my first East Central Regional Forum in Chicago and I had the opportunity to trust God, no matter what.

Being the Panel 60 Delegate for Area 56 has given me more opportunities for growth than I can possibly express. During my term, I had the opportunity to exchange information from Southwest Ohio and the General Service and Grapevine Offices. I got to hear about problems and solutions from delegates throughout Canada and the United States. I got to be a part of the group conscience for Southwest Ohio and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. I had the opportunity to speak on a panel at the International Convention in San Antonio, Texas, as well as speaking in my city, state, area and other states. I had the opportunity to learn about how we carry A.A.'s message online. I got to attend meetings at my computer with people from around the world. By sharing how I carried A.A.'s message online, I was given the opportunity to observe how 12 Step volunteers on the A.A. Online Intergroup share A.A.'s message of hope to people in every time zone, around the world, twenty four hours a day.

More than anything else, I am amazed at how I have been given the power to be a leader in Alcoholics Anonymous. As I became willing to play the role God assigns, I somehow, blossomed into this person who is no longer afraid to leave her house. I am able to get over my self-centered, introvert tendencies and try to be of service to someone else. Service isn't work. Service is an opportunity to let the Creator show others of its power and love. Being of service is a manifestation of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My A.A. trailer hasn't grown or become fancy as a result of my service work. I am still a drunk amongst drunks at my home group. I still need to practice the principles and my 10th step reads the same as yours; it says 'when' I'm wrong, not 'if' I'm wrong. But, my trailer has been to incredible places. Places I never even knew existed. I am

truly blessed beyond measure. I try to practice a genuine humility that I don't get spoiled by these great blessings. And, I try to live in thankful contemplation to my Higher Power and for Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for this allowing me to serve the last 2 years as your delegate. It has been an experience beyond my wildest dreams.