

DA NEWS



“We are an ever-growing group of sober Chicagoans, diverse in age and sobriety, who want for our city a chance to host the next International Conference of Young People in AA (ICYPAA). We are committed to unifying newcomers and young people in AA, generating enthusiasm and participation for the 53rd ICYPAA in San Francisco, CA, and ultimately creating a group of excited and capable AA members who can help bring ICYPAA to Chicago. Throughout our pursuit we aim to share our experiences with others, honor the traditions and spiritual principles of AA, and carry a message of gratitude, service, and fellowship.”

Socializing in Sobriety

This topic is something that has actually plagued me throughout my sobriety. I don't hear it discussed much at meetings so I figured this would be a good place to toss in my two cents.

One thing that was prevalent in my active alcoholism was a strong desire to fit in and be liked by everyone. I enjoyed being the center of attention and craved the validation that I got when I was surrounded by all of my “friends”. I was hyper-aware of how I manipulated my social scene to be bigger or better than people and, if after taking your inventory you measured up to be bigger or better than me, I manipulated others, and attempted to cut you down to size. In other words, if I wasn't the center of the social solar system, I would have to realign the stars to put myself back in the center where I thought I belonged. All of this was ego inflation at its finest.

Taking on the AA Social Scene

-Bill Z.

When I got sober, I entered a whole new world where I felt like I was at the bottom of the totem pole. Like many others coming in to the rooms and just starting to get sober, I was emotionally, spiritually, and mentally broken. I would come to these large, enthusiastic AA meetings and see everyone talking in their little cliques (which isn't a bad thing; we all have our groups of friends we're close with) and having a great time. I'd see the same exact thing happening when I'd show up to AA parties or dances.

(cont..)

Upcoming Events

WICYPAA: January 21-23rd

333 W. Kilborne Avenue,
Milwaukee, WI

ISCYPAA: February 25-27th

Hyatt Regency (Woodfield)

1800 E. Golf Road,
Schaumburg, IL

www.iscypaa.org

All Illinois Young

People's Open: Jan. 29th

Doors open at 6PM,
dance at 9PM

53rd ICYPAA Dates
Announced!

September 2-5

Register at
www.icypaahost.org

The Chicago Bid for ICYPAA meets at 7:30 every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at CASO, located on the 3rd floor at 180 N. Wabash in downtown Chicago

You can also visit us at
<http://chicagoicypaaid.org>

and listen to podcasts, read archived issues of this newsletter or meeting minutes, and to get the latest info on upcoming events

My self-esteem was shot, I had no confidence or feeling of self worth because I had been living on the street and was ashamed of where my disease had taken me.

When I showed up to these meetings and functions I felt like I wanted to curl up in a corner and disappear. I was terrified to be around AA's because I thought you were all judging me. Since I was trying to work through what seemed like the worst time in my life I figured those "judgments" I perceived you all were making sure as heck weren't good ones.

As much as I hate clichés, I just "kept coming back." I was full of fear and dreaded showing up to parties and dances, but as time went on, and I kept showing up to these functions, it got easier. The social anxiety started to dissipate as I started to get to know all of you better. I had to open up to people and tell them about how I felt when I was at these functions. When I talked out loud to someone about the knot that I would get in my stomach as soon as I walked in to an AA dance or party I would get instant relief, and they would usually share something about their own experience that put my mind at ease.

Most importantly, I started coming to events and functions with the purpose of being of service and looking for ways to make sure others were having a good time and finding a fun, safe place to fellowship. When I took the focus off of my ego and self-obsession, and focused on how I could be of service to you, my whole social experience in AA changed for the better.

This has been nothing more than my personal experience. I know it might not apply to everyone, but if this strikes home for even just one of the readers of this newsletter then it has certainly served its purpose. In Love and Service, Bill Z

My sponsor used to tell me, "there's nothing graceful about getting sober." Stripped of financial stability, afflicted with an unfamiliar cognitive sluggishness, and wholly debilitated in the aftermath of my bottom, I came to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous without the hard-earned gift of social grace.

Entering in the rooms was challenging enough, but imagining a social life absent of inhibition-bashing intoxicants was next to impossible. Wary and befogged, I reticently accepted invitations to strange and mysterious "sober parties," ambushing my pride with a raw and intimidating foray into sober socialization. The parties themselves were like any others -- abuzz with the collision of drifting conversation, the soft mellow hum of indistinct music, bowls of Doritos strewn on solitary coffee tables, rotating gatherings of cigarettes smokers crowding shadowy back patios -- but the cherry red cups weren't filled with foamy beer, and the

"I Was Not Alone"

-Sam K.

hands that beheld them weren't becoming unsteady from the insidious twinge of potent elixirs.

Things were different. Introductions were genuine, and handshakes were firm. As the weeks and months passed, and with several sober parties under my belt, my discomfort had vanished, and interacting with fellow AA's was something I cherished. My laughter wasn't forced, and a burgeoning sense of belonging had replaced the disillusionment of only months before.

Sober socialization today is a joy. In the presence of my fellows, I am at completely at ease. The social life I've earned today is one the greatest rewards of my still-nascent recovery. In a young peoples' meeting or a thronged sober party, the echoes of doubt and timidity have fallen silent to the resounding affirmation that no, "you are not alone."