

# THE OUTER CIRCLE

**Coming Back  
to Life**

**A new life awaits  
us in our recovery**

**PLUS**

**Tenses of recovery**

**Our First Tradition**

**Recovery and life in prison**

**Hope and recovery amid illness**





## International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

TOC articles contain the experiences and opinions of individual SAA members and do not represent the official views or positions of the ISO of SAA, Inc. or the SAA fellowship as a whole.

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# *The Outer Circle* Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1988, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers” — especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 30. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 31.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

**March - April 2021**

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## Coming Back to Life

BY CHRISTIE K.

**I can personally  
testify that  
recovery is worth  
the work, and  
you are worth  
recovery.**

It can be difficult to think of spring when skies are dark and a bitter chill fills the air. Likewise, it can be difficult to imagine new life in recovery when our addiction veils our minds in perpetual cloud cover and we have no visceral experience of blossoming. However, the message of SAA is, “Recovery is possible through working the Twelve Steps.” And, as someone who has worked through the Twelve Steps of SAA, I can personally testify that recovery is worth the work, and you are worth recovery.

In the beginning of my recovery journey, I had to take on blind faith the eventual arrival of spring. I knew how it felt to feel loved; and yet, I had given up hope of that sunlight ever returning. Sitting in meetings, listening to others bear witness to the life they had gained through recovery, the frozen tundra of my soul began to thaw; new life began to emerge.

As the new editor of *The Outer Circle*, my goal is to shine the light of living in the solution to help guide those who are still suffering from a place of hurting to a place of healing. In SAA, we define these places as our circles. The “inner circle” is our list of acting-out behaviors we return to compulsively in our attempts at self-protection. Our inner circle confines us to a place of isolation where we try to meet our own needs and nurse our old wounds.

The “outer circle” is an open field of activities that bring us joy. We identify these behaviors by observing the signs of spring. Trees bud. Birds sing. We begin to feel warmth radiate through us. As we work our recovery, the sun begins to shine again, and we begin to see ourselves in a whole new light.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## A Bright Future Ahead

BY PAUL M.

**If your meeting does not have a GSR, please hold a group conscience to elect one and have them register.**

Hello fellow members. News about the vaccine has given us hope of coming back together to face-to-face meetings this year. I know many of you want that interaction and I hope things progress to make it happen. At this time, the Board of Trustees has decided to hold a virtual convention in May. We are not sure about the conference in October. We may meet electronically or face-to-face or by hybrid means in October for the ISO Conference. Watch your email for further announcements.

The Board of Trustees approved the 2021 budget that included monies for Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) work and further work on SAA Connect. We need local volunteers to help get the word out about Sex Addicts Anonymous to the professional community. Many organizations are going forward with virtual conferences that will allow us to have virtual booths to connect with professionals. If you are interested in helping, reach out to the ISO office at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org).

I am encouraged by the activity I have seen at the area assembly level. Many Group Service Representatives (GSRs) are becoming involved and establishing that communication stream between the ISO and the member groups. If your meeting does not have a GSR, please hold a group conscience to elect one and have them register at <https://saa-recovery.org/iso/gsr-registration-form/>.

Our future seems bright this year and we are envisioning serenity.

# DEAR GRACE

**Belonging  
when you  
don't hear  
stories like  
your own.**

**BY WOMEN'S  
OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

**The Green Book  
contains many  
stories of women  
in SAA.**

**Dear Grace,**

I'm the only woman at my meeting; how do I know I belong if I'm not hearing my story?

**Do I Really Belong Here**

**Hi, Do I Really Belong Here:**

When I first came to Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA), I was the only woman in my group, too. There is a booklet called *Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous*, and in it are twelve questions you can ask yourself to find out if you are a sex addict. You can also view these same questions on the SAA website [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org). SAA has only one requirement for membership: a desire to stop addictive sexual behaviors. If you have this desire and say you are a member of SAA, you are. I hope that you have taken the time to read your SAA basic text (The Green Book), as it contains many stories of women in SAA. We also have a book called *Voices of Recovery*, which contains stories of people in SAA as well. Also, if you have not used the SAA Women's Outreach List, you are welcome to send me an email at [grace@saa-women.org](mailto:grace@saa-women.org) and request the list of women in SAA who choose to be available for communication in that medium. Please keep going to meetings and staying sober! One day other women will walk into your meeting and you will be there to welcome them.

**Grace**



*Editor's Note: This Dear Grace article is from the November/December Volume 1, Issue 3 from 2007. It has been edited slightly from the original version to ensure accuracy of information for the female sex addict who still suffers. "Do I really belong here?" is a question many female sex addicts still ask themselves over a decade later, and we still struggle with being the only woman at a meeting when a "mixed" meeting is attended. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the women who have paved the way before us, who have continued to attend meetings, even as the only woman in the room, and to encourage the female newcomer to keep coming back. It works if you work it, and you're worth it!*

*Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: to reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail (grace@saa-women.org) receives. \*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.*



# From Shame to Grace

If you identify as a female sex addict, this article may be for you. Females have unique issues they face in sexual recovery.

In my experience, we need a safe place to share our hearts, to be seen and heard, to feel love and connection, just as men do. Unlike our male counterparts, however, we're more likely to feel unsafe, unseen, and unheard. In our Western society (as in many other cultures around the world), women are still expected to work behind the scenes, be quiet and demure, and cater to the needs of men, which is deeply damaging to women's sense of equity. Superior/inferior dichotomies are equally damaging to men; they serve no one.

There seem's to be a double-standard toward the permissibility of women's sexual behavior. Females also, for the most part, have a smaller stature and less muscle mass than men, which naturally makes us more vulnerable physically and at increased risk of suffering physical violence.

We need to be here for each other, now more than ever. Females in recovery need the strength and support of other females in recovery. The successful recovery of women benefits the entire fellowship of SAA.

There are a variety of meetings available, including open meetings where we can bring a friend along for support, if we're not yet ready to venture out on our own. There are multiple avenues for women to be of service to other women within the SAA community. A few are listed below:

- Women's Intergroup Meeting: [SaaWomensIG@gmail.com](mailto:SaaWomensIG@gmail.com)
- Women's Outreach Committee (WOC):  
[Genoutreach.WOC.Chair@saa-recovery.org](mailto:Genoutreach.WOC.Chair@saa-recovery.org)
- Women's Information on the main website can be found at  
[www.saa-women.org](http://www.saa-women.org)
- To read any past Dear Grace articles:  
<https://saa-recovery.org/news-events/saa-newsletter/>.

In Service,

**The new (she/her/hers) editor of *The Outer Circle*,**

**Christie K.**

# Terms and Tenses



## The language of recovery

BY KEITH G.

**T**here are three basic terms or tenses that indicate time: future, present, and past. As sex addicts, our addiction involves all three: we acted out in the past and acted out while remembering the past; we fantasized or planned for future acting out; and sometimes we were kinda-sorta present while acting out.

Once we begin our recovery journey, we are told to live in the present: the past and the future are beyond our control; too much time spent in either the past or the future can lead us back into fantasy and acting out.

But there is another way we can use references to time/tense to describe our recovery – sometimes to indicate where we are in our recovery journey. It might be helpful to consider how we use these terms.

Future: "Hi. I'm Keith, and I'm a sex addict."

This is a statement acknowledging my present condition, my powerlessness. But it's also a pointer to the future. Stating that I'm a sex addict is a subtle indication that I expect or hope my future will be different somehow. If I won't be different in the future... what's the point? My expectation and hope are – at a minimum – that the SAA Twelve-Step program will somehow, someday help me to stop acting out.

Present: "Hi. I'm Keith, and I'm a recovering sex addict."

Recovering. Present tense. I acknowledge past behaviors and hope my future will be different. But at this point, I'm a recovering sex addict. I'm working the program

like other sober addicts are telling me to, and I'm on the journey... though not yet able to see many results yet.

It is good to be recovering; it's good to be in the process of moving forward. It's good to no longer be at the beginning – just having realized that I can't control this addiction. But I don't feel very confident or secure yet. I don't feel sane.

Some of us seem somewhat hesitant to call ourselves recovering sex addicts. Maybe we think it might jinx the process if we call ourselves anything other than just a sex addict. Maybe we don't want to appear – to newcomers – that we are somehow above them or better than them. Maybe we think this sounds a bit overconfident.

Without getting too in-depth into the "recovering" usage, let's look at the remaining tense. This is perhaps the most important term for a sex addict.

Past: "Hi, I'm Keith, and I'm a recovered sex addict."

Recovered. Past tense. Since becoming involved with SAA, I think I've heard two people in our fellowship refer to themselves as recovered sex addicts. In Alcoholics Anonymous, or other "substance" Twelve-Step fellowships, the number of people I've heard refer to themselves as "recovered" alcoholics or addicts is probably fewer than five.

Does this wording sound presumptuous or arrogant? How dare anyone

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**The point of the SAA recovery program is to enable a Power greater than me to remove my obsession, my compulsion. And if the obsession is gone, then I have recovered.**

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refer to himself as recovered; doesn't he know that he only has a daily reprieve? Doesn't she know she is one wrong decision away from a slip or relapse? Don't addicts know that ten years of sobriety doesn't mean squat?

Yes, these previous statements are true of all sex addicts: we do have a daily reprieve; we are one wrong decision away from a slip or relapse; ten years doesn't mean squat.

But let's back up a moment and consult our foundational literature.

Page one, paragraph one of the SAA Green Book says, "We are sex addicts. Our addiction nearly destroyed our lives, but we found freedom through the recovery program of Sex Addicts Anonymous." Paragraph two says, "We found recovery through the program of SAA."

Found. Past tense. For these addicts, freedom & recovery occurred sometime in the past.

The Big Book of AA – the origination of Twelve-Step recovery, on which the

SAA program is based – makes the exact same point. In the Foreword to the First Edition, it says, "We, of Alcoholics Anonymous are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body."

Have recovered. Past tense.

Page 62 of the SAA Green Book speaks of the compulsion being lifted and of being free of the obsession and craving.

The point of the SAA recovery program is to enable a Power greater than me to remove my obsession, my compulsion. And if the obsession is gone, then I have recovered. I can join the ranks of those who have found freedom. I need to work this program so the obsession can be removed, and I need to continue working this program so the obsession will stay removed.

Once the obsession has been removed, I'm not suggesting that it is wrong to continue to refer to myself as a sex addict or a recovering sex addict. But if the point of this program is to enable the obsession to be removed... if those of us for whom the obsession has been lifted would start using the term "recovered sex addict," it might help newcomers realize this program works.

I'll never be cured of this spiritual malady we call sexual addiction. I will never get to the point where I "graduate" and can stop working the SAA twelve-step program. But if I stay in fit spiritual condition, can I get to a point where I

can say that the problem has been removed? According to the Green Book and the Big Book... I can. Working the Twelve-Step program will enable that to occur.

Is my obsession still there? If the answer is yes, then I need to focus on my Twelve-Step work with all the desperation of a drowning man. But if the obsession is not there... then maybe I need to reconsider my designation – my tense: Recovered! ●



## Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

*The Outer Circle* newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts in the spirit of Step Twelve — and be of service! Articles may be submitted to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org) or to the ISO office at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org). Please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format with the **RELEASE FORM** that can be found, with additional guidelines, on page 31.

# LIVING IN SOBRIETY

## Minor Miracles: An Update

BY MAX H.

**It is possible for teenagers to join the existing meetings online from anywhere in the country.**

*Editor's Note: As I'm sure many of us have experienced, a year in quarantine has been difficult to navigate. For those who are suffering with addiction and puberty simultaneously, the hardships are greatly compounded. Therefore, in lieu of the normal "Living in Sobriety" column, we are posting an update to the "Minor Miracles" article from Volume 10, Issue 6 at the end of 2016.*

The SAA Teen Meeting (SAATM) coordinator would like to remind SAA members of the support currently offered to teenagers seeking recovery from sexual addiction. Meetings have been formed in Houston, Texas, specifically geared toward minors aged 13-17. There are multiple guidelines and safeguards in place to ensure the safety of teenage sex addicts as well as the adult sex addicts who co-sponsor them.

Each state has its own code of mandates for required reporting of child abuse; therefore, anyone wishing to be involved in a meeting for minors must first become familiar with the requirements of their state. With many meetings taking place over Zoom this past year, it is possible for teenagers to join the existing meetings online from anywhere in the country. Those who qualify for co-sponsoring teenage sex addicts can also join existing meetings with the approval of the coordinator.

Safety requirements for SAATM:

- The meetings are divided by gender.
- The meetings only serve teens ages 13-17.
- Each teen's legal guardian must sign a consent form.

Requirements for adult co-sponsors:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Must not meet or communicate with teens without another co-sponsor present.

- Must have a minimum of one year of continuous sexual sobriety.
- Must have completed all Twelve Steps of SAA with a sponsor.
- Must have written support of that sponsor.
- Must have a clean criminal record verified twice annually through criminal background checks.
- Must have no prior inappropriate contact with a minor.

Before disclosing the day, time, or location of group meetings, co-sponsors meet with teens and guardians face-to-face to discuss in detail:

- What sex addiction is
- How the Twelve Steps of SAA work
- What members can and cannot expect from meetings and adult co-sponsors
- The state's abuse reporting requirements
- The legal guardian consent form

If you or someone you know is interested in and qualifies to work with SAATM or is interested in and qualifies as a teen in need of sexual recovery, please contact Max for further information regarding SAATM:

[saatm@texsys.com](mailto:saatm@texsys.com) ●

*If you have five or more years of sobriety and would like to write a Living in Sobriety column, please contact*  
[toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).

### **Letter to Groups on Minors in Meetings**

Dear colleagues in recovery: In response to a request from the delegate Conference and from several individuals within the fellowship, the ISO has conducted an in-depth study of the issues surrounding the question of minors attending SAA meetings. After lengthy and deliberate discussions, the Board has determined that it is not appropriate or prudent for the ISO to develop and promulgate guidelines relating to this issue. Tradition Four clearly states that member groups are autonomous and are solely responsible for running their own meetings. The ISO does not direct or even suggest how an individual group conducts its internal affairs, especially when potential legal issues might be involved. Guidance is derived from study and application of the principles contained in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA. The ISO does, however, wish to inform member groups that they may encounter this issue and that they might want to give consideration to this issue before being faced with an awkward situation. Although not an exhaustive list, the following items were considered by the ISO: » Twelve Traditions of SAA » Mechanisms of sponsorship » Parental consent issues Local and state definitions of child abuse » Mandatory reporting statutes » Parole and probation restrictions » Composition of local groups » Maturity of persons seeking recovery In the final analysis, it is the responsibility of each member group to determine how it will respond to a minor seeking help or referred for help with sex addiction. By careful review of the Traditions and local circumstances, each group is free to reach its own group conscience on this matter. ISO and its Board of Trustees will continue to monitor this issue and address needs as they arise. The ISO is confident that application of the principles contained in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions form a secure basis for reaching an informed group conscience, keeping in mind at all times that program principles are always subject to the boundaries established by law. Please contact the ISO office if you have questions about this decision or this communication.

**In service, ISO Board of Trustees**

# Coming Back to Life

A poem

BY PAUL P.



It took so much from me  
Robbed me of energy and peace of mind  
Affected every part of my existence  
No serenity would I find

It cost me sanity  
Friendships, career and self-respect  
Created more problems each day  
Basic self-care I would even neglect

It robbed me of self-worth  
Filled me with utmost shame  
Such delusional thinking  
A shattered life it became

One day I woke up  
Desperate for relief  
Stumbled upon the rooms  
Indoctrinated with a new belief

New ideas that I heard  
Based on principles tried and true  
They worked so well for others  
Worth it for me to pursue

All I needed was an open mind  
Willingness and a ready ear  
I too could have a new life  
Experience, strength and hope I would hear

I have been renewed and restored  
A new life I was awarded  
By following the principles  
Serenity and promise I've been afforded

I thank God for this connection  
So much it has meant  
Transforming my spirit  
To such a great extent



## The Twelve Steps bring life back to prisoners

BY ROBERT D.

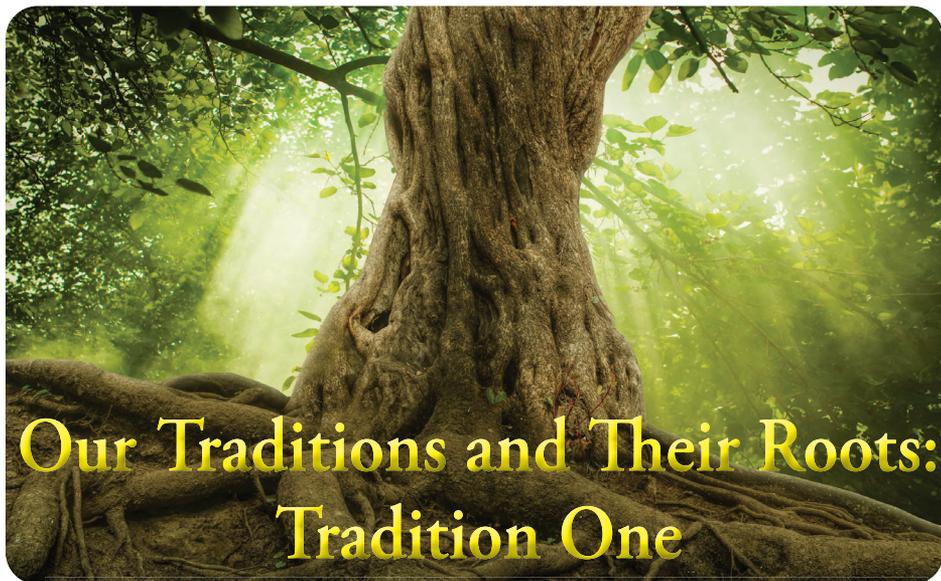
I was struggling with my addiction for several years. Back in October of 2019, I found an SAA Green Book on a shelf on the wall for anyone that wanted it. I was seeking just such a book or the address to the ISO of SAA, Inc., but I couldn't find one.

I wrote to the headquarters to request additional literature and to find out if they had anyone I could write to. I received a couple of replies back to me before another member of the fellowship and I were able to write consistently. Together, we worked through the Steps through the mail.

The Twelve Steps have given me a new life and, with a lot of help, I have been on Step Twelve now for about four months. I have been trying to get a group started in my unit through the administration. However, since I wrote to all of them and haven't gotten any type of a reply, I did the next best thing: I started an unofficial group.

I have sent in my application for registering a group for face-to-face meetings to the ISO. SAA has been a really great life saver for me. It has given me new self-esteem and meaning in my life.

If anyone wishes to get involved in prisoner outreach, please email the office at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org). My sponsor has also informed me that he and others are ready and willing to write to any of the population here that needs a sponsor. Thanks to everyone who writes to those of us in prison. It really does give us a new life. ●



# Our Traditions and Their Roots: Tradition One

**“Our common welfare should come first;  
personal recovery depends upon  
SAA unity.”**

*Editor’s Note: This is the second in the series which will look to the Green Book’s exposition of each Tradition, along with the history of the problem each Tradition sought to address from AA source material.*

BY ANONYMOUS

What the founders of AA meant by “our common welfare” was the common welfare of their groups. AA pioneers faced such rapid growth in 1941 that “...quarrels over membership, leadership, money, power and prestige...” threatened to demolish AA’s group-based service structure (Alcoholics Anonymous, “Forward to 2nd Edition,” pg. xviii, 1955). Early AA members found they “...had to hang together [in their groups] or die separately” (Alcoholics Anonymous, “Appendix One,” pg.561, 1955). Out of the maelstrom, AA produced the principles which protect groups from themselves and from each other: The Twelve Traditions.

In the 1970s, SAA adopted AA’s Traditions almost word for word and for the same reason—to preserve the common welfare of SAA groups. Tradition One suggests that to maintain individual sobriety, we must unify in determination to follow the SAA Twelve Traditions that protect our SAA groups from destructive quarrels—both internal and external.

Why is our first concern the welfare of groups instead of “personal recovery?” Because, groups are the foundation of the SAA recovery program upon which personal recovery is built. “Our local meeting is...the foundation of the SAA service structure” (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 76). Groups provide the most fundamental services of SAA: they schedule meetings and provide meeting space. There, both new and experienced members hear the principles of Twelve-Step recovery, meet recovered and recovering sex addicts, find sponsors, and begin to work the Steps. “Our groups work together to make SAA a place where sex addicts can recover and grow spiritually” (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 78).

If Tradition One means that our own recovery depends on our unified resolve to hold “...the welfare of the group above our own personal preferences, desires, or opinions” (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 78), then the next eleven traditions elaborate in detail upon how we can prevent personal preferences, desires, and opinions from wrecking SAA groups.

For example, new groups form when one sex addict carries their understanding of the message of recovery to another sex addict. The two of them can form a group as Tradition Three assures. Traditions Two, Four, and Five ensure this group can share what works for them with others. So long as their message is the SAA “spiritual program based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous” (Sex Addicts

Anonymous, p. 1), and they follow the “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions... as adapted from those of AA” (Bylaws of the ISO of SAA, Article 4, Section 9, 1990)—their exact message is governed only by their group conscience (i.e. what works for them).

Tradition Four grants the group autonomy to conduct its own affairs—when and where to meet, the meeting format, and even their rules for sharing—in the manner that works best for them. Groups do not interfere with other groups to tell them how they should carry their message. Nor do well-meaning individuals from other groups or from service boards or committees seek to govern groups as to what literature they must use or what topics they must cover; Tradition Two: “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Traditions Six through Eleven provide practical guidelines for avoiding group-destroying disputes over money, property, bureaucratic paralysis, and controversial outside issues. Tradition Twelve reminds us that the foundation of all these Traditions is anonymity—the practice of genuine humility—in all our dealings with each other and with other groups.

If we unify around these Traditions to protect and preserve our groups, our program will thrive, personal recovery will grow, and SAA as a whole will survive. If we ignore the Traditions, our groups will disintegrate, personal recovery will stall, and SAA as a whole will flounder.

*Next issue: Tradition Two.* ●



# Recovery in Adversity

**A diagnosis highlights a powerful spiritual awakening**

BY VINCE V.

*“We find that spiritual principles can guide us in the everyday challenges of life, and they can help us face even loss, grief, and death with fortitude and grace. What we gain in this program is a blueprint for full and successful living, whatever may come” (Sex Addicts Anonymous, pg. 61).*

Before my recovery from sex addiction, I dealt with most major life events and critical situations in an unhealthy way. Negative emotions and reactions dominated my thinking most of the time. I would get grumpy, reactive, and express anxiety, fear, or anger. I thought this behavior was normal. I would feel hurt or disappointed, act resentfully, and then blame others, society, or the world for the consequences. Acceptance was not in my vocabulary. I always thought I could change or control things.

What a contrast there is in how I think and behave now. After being sober in recovery for almost two and a half years, my attitudes and behaviors have changed drastically in myriad ways. There is a sharp difference now in comparison with the past.

Now, I am facing a very serious illness. Four days ago, after an endoscopic biopsy, I was diagnosed with a pre-cancerous intestinal tumor. It must be removed before it turns into cancer. Soon, after more imaging studies, I will undergo surgery to remove it. The surgery will not be simple due to the location of the tumor in my abdomen. My thoughts and reactions to this major life event illustrate the enormous disparity in how I now think, feel, and behave, compared to before my recovery.

Since the diagnosis, I have experienced a variety of different emotions each day. At first, shock, fear, and sadness dominated, but those subsided after a day or

so. My wife and I spoke endlessly with each other and with friends. We came up with a plan of action. By the second day, all of the fears subsided and were replaced with acceptance. A slight anxiety remained, but that too has faded to an almost imperceptible level over these past four days.

After acceptance, gratitude and joy kicked in. As I focused on those feelings, my thoughts turned completely away from myself and toward others — my wife, my children, relatives and friends, my fellows in SAA, and my Higher Power.

Finally, two other extremely powerful emotions began to emerge — love and joy. I thought to myself, “How ironic that I am diagnosed with a serious illness that threatens my life, yet I am overcome with love and joy.” These two emotions have filled my heart, my mind, and every fiber of my being. They feel very familiar, warm, and calming to me. It’s as if I’m lying flat on the sand on a peaceful beach with warm ocean waters washing over me, rising and receding.

These ever-present emotional waves of love and joy have gotten stronger each day. This morning, after showering, shaving, and brushing my teeth, I started dressing and was suddenly overtaken by a powerful sensation of warmth and cleanliness. It was at that moment that I finally understood what has been happening to me over the past four days since the diagnosis.

My Higher Power was preparing me. That powerful feeling of warmth that I felt embracing my entire body

all at once, inside and out, was like a giant hug. This warmth was my Higher Power embracing and holding me. It was communicating with me, acknowledging that I had cleansed my body and mind of all negative thoughts and emotions. It was telling me that I am now physically, mentally, and spiritually prepared for whatever lies ahead. It wanted me to know that I am loved, I will be cared for, and no matter what happens with my surgery, everything will be fine.

What a powerful spiritual journey this has been for me. No matter what happens now, whether the surgery is successful or not, I know that I am ready to move forward on this miraculous journey of life and possible death. I accept this gift of awareness with absolute humility, and I will treasure it forever.

I have received nothing but love and support from my loving wife and two daughters, my friends, and my fellows in SAA. They are praying for me and hoping for the best, as am I. As always, my Higher Power is guiding me through this part of my journey. I am walking side by side with him in the company of others who are providing me with love and support.

*Within me lies this amazing place full of hope, joy, love, peace, and serenity. My Higher Power is in this place with me. I take this place with me, no matter where I go, each and every moment of every day. ●*

# DEAR WILL

## The Value of Sobriety Chips

BY WILL

**We recognize  
mileposts on  
our journey  
of recovery  
by giving and  
receiving chips.**

**Dear Will,**

I appreciate the experience, strength, and hope that is shared in *The Outer Circle*. Last week I reached three months of sobriety. I am so grateful to everyone in the fellowship who helped me get through the longest three months of my life. My sponsor encouraged me to collect a chip at our next meeting. I thought about it, but I've also heard that taking chips is optional. Can you shed some light on the giving of chips at meetings and what they're all about?

**Signed,**

**Chip off the old block**

**Dear Chip –**

Congratulations on three months of sobriety. Thanks for working your recovery program with your sponsor and with your fellows in recovery. It works if you work it, and you're worth it.

In SAA we recognize mileposts on our journey of recovery by giving and receiving chips. Newcomers are encouraged to accept chips in recognition of their courage for walking into their first meeting. White chips are given to those members who have acted out and wish to make a recommitment to their sobriety. Month and year chips are given to celebrate achieving certain lengths of time in sobriety.

Chips are taken to encourage the newcomer that long-term sobriety is possible, to celebrate each other, and to serve as a reminder that sobriety is achieved one day at a time. For some, accepting a chip is often a first attempt at true humility.



*If you have a question for Will,  
please send an email to  
Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.*

Accepting a chip also provides an opportunity to express gratitude for the program and for those who have helped to make our recovery possible.

However, not everyone places value on the symbology of receiving a chip. Sobriety is freedom from the compulsivity and consequences of inner circle behaviors; a chip is merely a token. However, the token is also what you make of it. Many in our program choose to pass their chip around for everyone else in the group to place a blessing on it and use their chip as a daily reminder to choose sobriety today.

Taking a chip at a meeting is optional. Sometimes, a member will announce achieving a milestone but choose to accept a chip from the group they consider to be their “home” meeting. Some might struggle with accepting recognition due to past trauma. Others simply forgo the gesture for personal reasons. Therefore, participating in the acceptance of chips, as with everything in our program, is optional and left to the discretion of the individual.

**Thanks –  
Will**

*LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org) and clicking “Contribute.”*

# STORIES OF SERVICE

## Service leads to clarity

BY NICK K.

Service enables me to feel like a member of the community.

I rushed to get settled for my meeting. I felt cranky and shutdown. I didn't feel receptive to learning or contributing. And, I didn't feel any sense of personal connection yet as I haven't been attending this meeting for very long. Therefore, I had plenty of "reasons" to skip the meeting. Suddenly, I remembered that I had recently volunteered to serve as the meeting's phone list coordinator, so I felt responsible to join the meeting to perform my small act of service.

I'm so grateful I did! Over the past few years, my chronic shame has intensified, leading to a variety of negative consequences. I have been seriously doubting whether I can be restored to sanity, what sort of Higher Power could do so, and whether I am willing to turn my will and life over to its care.

Somehow, in the swirl of the meeting, I began to get clarity on Steps Two and Three. I've heard a thousand times that "Understand how it works" is NOT one of the Twelve Steps. It finally dawned on me that I had been waiting for a detailed mechanistic comprehension of how HP will fix me as a prerequisite to "coming to believe" and "making a decision."

The Steps are so powerful precisely because we decide to join forces with our Higher Power even though we don't know how it will work and there is no guarantee of success. I finally began to understand the word "faith."

When I think about service, I'm so glad members volunteer so meetings can take place. My service commitments help me show up and enable me to feel like a valuable member of the community.

# FROM THE BOARD

## Hope amid uncertainty

BY BOB L.  
BOARD CHAIR

**Without your help, we could not have carried out the pandemic-reduced work of the ISO.**

A friend of mine says, “If 2020 was a fish, I would throw it back.” Indeed, it is hard to imagine a worse scenario for humanity than what we all have dealt with during the past twelve months.

Fortunately for the fellowship, you and your fellows stepped into the breach. Thanks to your generous donations to ISO, we were able to maintain our mission of support for the addict who still suffers. Without your help, we could not have carried out the pandemic-reduced but important work of ISO. Of course, there were several issues to be managed due to the pandemic. The convention was postponed to 2021, and the conference was converted to a virtual rather than in-person meeting. The format for the conference met with favor from those who attended, with the major detraction being the lack of the ability to have in-person fellowship.

This year presents continuing uncertainty in many respects. While the Board approved the annual budget at the January meeting, how the year will unfold depends in large measure on the course of the virus and the recovery from it. At the February Board meeting, it was decided to have a virtual convention this year. The decision was based on the uncertainty of the recovery, especially considering the unknown effects of virus variants, and the assumption that many people would prefer not to travel until more immunity is realized.

Another open question is the form the conference may take this year. Ideally the conference would have an in-person component, perhaps with a virtual aspect as well. We are gathering

# FROM THE BOARD

information about costs, cancellation fees, etc., so the Board can make an informed decision about the conference within the next few months.

A big portion of our budget is outreach to the professional community, in the form of attendance at conferences of psychologists and other professionals, as well as printing pamphlets and other collateral for distribution by areas, intergroups, and groups to support your outreach efforts. The Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee (PI/CPC) has produced several excellent pamphlets under review by LitCom and slated for printing by the office in the future. However, until in-person professional meetings and conferences resume we will not be able to spread the word of SAA in that format. With a return to some normality we hope those activities will resume later this year.

We will keep you informed of these events through this column and otherwise as the year unfolds. Until next time, we acknowledge with deep gratitude your past generous support of ISO, and thank you for your future donations to support the mission of helping the sex addict who still suffers.

**Board of Trustees**  
**Bob L, Chair**



## HELP WANTED!

*Letter writers/sponsors needed!*

*Confidential program.*

*Great way to serve & carry the  
SAA message of recovery to prisoners.*

*Email: [HarveyA@saa-iso.net](mailto:HarveyA@saa-iso.net)*

*or call ISO at 713-869-4902*

# ISO NEWS

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## Let's Talk Forums Time Change

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The Let's Talk Forums hosted by the Conference Steering Committee will take place on the 4th Saturday of March, May, July, September, and November for 2021. Delegates and GSRs are encouraged to attend. For meeting access information, please contact the ISO at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org).

## Conference Steering Committee Invites Participation

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The Conference Steering Committee currently has multiple projects in the works. GSRs and delegates are encouraged to jump in and participate. Email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) to be placed on the email list for any of these subcommittees. You will then receive the Zoom link, agenda, and minutes for the subcommittee each month.

Here is the information you need:

- The Communication Subcommittee is working on the GSR/delegate forums, a user-friendly GSR/delegate timeline document, and the GSR/delegate workshops.
- The Charter and Bylaws Subcommittee is currently working on updating the Conference Charter.
- The Policy and Procedure Subcommittee is updating and revising the CSC Operating Procedures.
- The Twelve Concepts Subcommittee continues to refine the new SAA Twelve Concepts, a foundational document.
- The Service Manual Subcommittee is developing the SAA Service Manual.
- The Mentoring Committee is working on reaching out to developing areas to offer assistance in establishing the formation and maintenance of new area meetings.

All are welcome to participate in any of these subcommittees.

If you are a meeting GSR or an area delegate don't forget to attend the GSR/delegate Let's Talk Forum on Saturday, March 27 at 12 PM CT.

# ISO NEWS

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## Get Involved in ISO Service

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Would you like to give back to our fellowship? International service is a great way to get involved in the fellowship and help reach suffering sex addicts worldwide. The Conference Nominating Committee is currently accepting service resume submissions to fill needed positions before the conference in October. If you are interested in serving on the Board, Literature Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Area Coordinating Committee, or the Conference Nominating Committee we encourage you to fill out a service resume today!

If you would like more information about the positions, you can find them on the service website [www.saa-iso.org](http://www.saa-iso.org) under the International Service tab. Please contact the ISO office via phone, (713) 869-4902, or email, [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org), for the username and password to access these documents.

Have you filled out a resume in the past? We encourage you to fill out a new resume each year before June 30th 2021. All applicants will be entered into a raffle to win a free convention registration to the 2022 Convention.

The resume may be found on the service website at [www.saa-iso.org](http://www.saa-iso.org) under the “International Service” link in the left-hand menu or by clicking this direct link: <https://saa-iso.org/docs/SaaServiceResume.docx>

Completed service résumés should be emailed to [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) or mailed to Nominating Committee, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

## Author’s Group Welcomes Members

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Have you ever wanted to write something recovery-related but didn’t know where to share it? Do you enjoy writing poetry, meditations, or other pieces of literature? If so, the Author’s Group encourages you to join in our meetings and participate. We are looking for literature to discuss and collaborate on. One project that has recently been mentioned is a book of poetry and other literary items.

The Author’s Group meets once a month for two hours on the first Saturday of the month. It is a Zoom meeting. We have lots of fun collaborating on different projects.

If any of this sounds of interest to you or you want to know more, please email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) and ask to be put on the Author’s Group email listserv.

# ISO NEWS

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## A new way to donate is here!

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### General Donation as an Individual

- In the U.S., text “SAA” to 91999. You will receive a responding text with a link to donate at a secure website. Alternately, you can donate at <http://igfn.us/form/GDovAg>.
- In Canada you can donate at <http://igfn.us/form/f0Gy5A>.
- Internationally you can donate at [http://igfn.us/form/Q\\_2d\\_g](http://igfn.us/form/Q_2d_g).

### General Donation as a Group

- In the U.S., text “SAAG” to 91999. You will receive a responding text with a link to donate at a secure website. Alternately, you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/5Evk9Q>.
- In Canada you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/Kub2RQ>.
- Internationally you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/UINjyw>.

*All URLs are case-sensitive.*

## Do you have information for the SAA history project?

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Volunteers are gathering data for a history monograph, chronicling the beginning and growth of the SAA fellowship. Recently, they have made arrangements with the ISO office to record interviews with SAA fellowship members who have information about either the fellowship itself, the ISO, SAA literature or other aspects of our organization.

If you have information, insights, or historical perspectives on the early days or more recent expansion of SAA around the world, please let us know. Members wishing to volunteer for phone interviews (with possible follow-up questions) can send their contact information to the ISO executive director at [director@saa-iso.net](mailto:director@saa-iso.net). All responses will remain confidential in accordance with SAA’s Twelve Traditions.

Help us produce the most complete and accurate history possible!

# ISO NEWS

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## Submit Your Event

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Is your group, intergroup, or area hosting an event? Would you like it listed on our website? Submit your event at <https://saa-recovery.org/event-announcement-request/>.

## Approved Board Actions

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### December

- Approved motion to post a daily meditation from *Voices of Recovery* on the saa-recovery.org website.

### January

- Approved the ISO of SAA, Inc. budget for 2021.

## Financial Report for December 2020

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Our total SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate of \$8,325 by \$2,482 in December. Our HCI sales (September's numbers, a month behind) were \$794 higher than budgeted. Findaway audio sales were \$11 below our budget of \$225. For the year we are 74.22% of our estimated sales.

Our book *Voices in Recovery* sales for December were \$1,328 below our budget of \$2,900 for December. For the year, we are 89.06% of our estimated sales.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate of \$5,900 by \$5,161 in December. For the year, we are at 36.92% of our estimated sales.

Our plastic chips sales were below our estimate of \$1,775 by \$1,414 in December. For the year, we are at 40.43% of our estimated sales.

Our bronze medallion sales were below our estimate of \$2,700 by \$1,463 in December. For the year, we are at 45.69% of our estimated sales.

Our total sales for December were below our estimate of \$21,952 by \$12,142 in December. For the year, we are at 57.28% of our estimated sales. As the results of physical distancing in response to COVID-19, most face-to-face meetings being held electronically continue to cause our sales to drop in December.

Individual donations were below our estimate of \$60,850 by \$6,778 in December. For the year, we are at 109.14% of our estimated individual donations. The General Donations were higher than budgeted by \$17,841 and the shortfall of the Life-

# ISO NEWS

line Partners was \$4,888. Our current Lifelines budget is \$30,000 and our goal is \$50,000 per month.

Group donations were above our estimate of \$11,250 by \$1,258 in December. For the year, we are at 131.26% of our estimated group donations. Group Lifeline partners are \$739 above our budget of \$1,750 and general donations for groups was \$2,845 below our budgeted estimate.

Our total donations were \$5,520 below the budgeted amount of \$72,100. For the year, we are at 113.97% of our estimated donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$83,095.

Our operational reserve is funded at \$200,021. Our estimated 4-month reserve is \$237,350.

Our total expenses were \$49,772 lower than our budget of \$111,270. Our Net Income was \$80,373 above our budget of -\$21,711.

For the year, we are \$223,346 above our budget of -\$88,750 with a net income of \$134,596.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

**Paul M.**

**Executive Director**



# CONTACT THE ISO

## Office

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PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Phone: 713-869-4902  
Fax: 713-692-0105

Office e-mail: [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)  
The Outer Circle e-mail: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)  
Website: [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org)

## The Outer Circle

Editor: Christie K.: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)

The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: [board@saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)

## Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

### Board

Bob L (Chair); Carl D; Bob H (Treasurer); Les J (Secretary); Andy M; Richard S; Eddie N; Melissa W (Vice Secretary); Tim A; Wayne B; Wayne K (Vice Chair); Karen S

Board: [board@saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)  
CSC: [csc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:csc@saa-recovery.org)

## Office Staff

Executive Director: Paul M.: [director@saa-iso.net](mailto:director@saa-iso.net)  
Associate Director: Chris F.  
Publications Manager: Cody S.  
Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, and 7th Tradition Manager: Phillip B.  
Project Manager: Tracy R.  
Information Technician and Prison Outreach Manager: Jonathan C.  
Information Technician: DJ B.  
Administrative Assistant: Jerry B.  
Administrative Assistant: Evan E.  
Administrative Assistant: Harvey A.

LitCom: [litcom@saa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@saa-recovery.org)

### Literature Committee

Jim L (Chair); Doug S (Vice Chair)  
Maud D (Secretary); Byard B; Bruce M  
Carole D; Carol R; Charlie K  
Deb W; Don R; Christie K (TOC Editor)  
Mike K; Cara A.; Jackie J; Rachel R

## Calendar - All times are CST. To attend a meeting email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) or call the ISO

### First Sunday of the month

CSC: Policy & Procedure: 2:00 p.m.  
Intergroup Communications: 3:00 p.m.

### First Wednesday of the month

Prisoner Outreach: 7:00 p.m.

### First Thursday of the month

CSC: Communications: 7:00 p.m.

### First Friday of the month

CSC: Service Manual: 4:00 p.m.

### First Saturday of the month

Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance: 9 a.m.  
CSC: Area Mentoring: 12:00 p.m.  
Author's Group: 4:00 p.m.

### Second Saturday of the month

Women's Outreach: 10 a.m.

### Second Sunday of the month

Literature Committee: 4:00 p.m.

### Second Thursday of the month

Seventh Tradition: 6:00 p.m.

### Third Wednesday of the month

Area Coordinating Committee: 6:00 p.m.

### Third Saturday of the month

CSC: Twelve Concepts Work Group: 12:00 p.m.

### Third Sunday of the month

Non-Religious Committee: 11:00 a.m.  
ISOP Committee: 2:00 p.m.  
LGBT Outreach: 3:00 p.m.

### Fourth Thursday of the month

Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community: 7:00 p.m.

### Fourth Saturday of the month

Inclusion and Diversity: 10:00 a.m.  
CSC: Charter & By-laws: 3:00 p.m.

### Fourth Sunday of the month

Fellowship ISC: 1:00 p.m.  
Conference Steering Committee: 2:00 p.m.

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

## Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

*The Outer Circle* newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts in the spirit of Step Twelve — and be of service! Articles may be submitted to *toc@saa-recovery.org* or to the ISO office. Please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format with the **RELEASE FORM** at the bottom of this page.

Deadlines for Submission and Topics		
Jan/Feb:	“First Three Steps”	Nov 5
Mar/Apr:	“Taking Action”	Jan 5
May/June:	“Changes, Hope”	Mar 5
July/Aug:	“Celebration and Exploration”	May 5
Sept/Oct:	“Letting Go, Giving Back”	July 5
Nov/Dec:	“Prayer and Meditation”	Sept 5

Here are some general writing guidelines:

**Living in Sobriety:** For those with five-plus years of sobriety. 750-900 words on how you got sober and what you're doing to stay sober.

**Stories of Service:** 300-500 words on why you do service and how it helps your recovery.

**Feature articles:** 650-1,200 words on any of the topics listed above. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with in recovery as it relates to the steps or traditions.

### General Release Form

In consideration of being reviewed for possible publication, I hereby transfer and release to the ISO of SAA, Inc (assignee) all legal rights to the publication of my submission(s) or any edited version thereof in any official ISO publication, including Sex Addicts Anonymous, The Outer Circle, the SAA meditation book, the SAA websites, or any other SAA program material, such as pamphlets, booklets and audio recordings.

With this submission, I transfer to the assignee without limitation the legal title and all literary rights, including copyright and/or trademark and the full right and license to reproduce, copy, edit for content, modify, distribute, and create derivatives from the submitted work. I understand that every effort will be made to safeguard my personal anonymity in the publication and distribution of this material. I also understand that I may or may not receive further communication regarding my submission prior to its publication.

I hereby further attest that I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization, and I hereby Release the assignee from any claim whatsoever by me or my successors.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAA TWELVE STEPS

- 1.** We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2.** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3.** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
- 4.** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5.** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6.** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7.** Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- 8.** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9.** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10.** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11.** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12.** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.