

THE MESSAGE

Boulder County Intergroup | www.bouldercountyaa.org

Serving the Alcoholics Anonymous Community of Boulder County

5401 Western Ave. Suite D, Boulder, CO 80301 303-447-8201

What Is Intergroup?

An Intergroup or Central Office is a vital A.A. Service that represents a partnership among groups....

The office exists to aid the groups in carrying out the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*

Looking for an opportunity to do service work and grow in your program? Please consider donating your time and talents as service work back to the most important organization in your life.

All are welcome to attend Intergroup meetings on the last Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Shepherd of the Hills Church, 7077 Harvest Road in Gunbarrel.

Training for new volunteers is offered by appointment. To schedule a training session, contact Mike at

volunteer@bouldercountyaa.org.

Thank you!

*(Reprinted from AA literature with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

The Hand of AA

"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

The responsibility statement was written for the 1965 International Convention in Toronto, and it remains a core principle of AA service today.

In the souvenir book for the 1965 Convention, Dr. Jack Norris writes: "We must remember that AA will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Intergroup activities, and for AA as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. AA has given us the power to choose - to drink or not to drink - and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in AA, and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose AA. Strange, isn't it?"

Intergroup is currently seeking volunteers to help respond to alcoholics in need. We are looking for volunteers to help with...

Answering service: receive calls from answering service and connect callers with 12-step volunteers.

Day Watch: Have calls forwarded to you when the office is not staffed.

Central Office: Cover shifts during the day or evenings to answer calls.

12th Step Calls: Respond to calls for help and arrange to meet with newcomers.

Bridge the Gap: Help someone fresh out of treatment get to a meeting.

Your Intergroup rep can provide more information and help you get signed up!

At Intergroup, we are grateful to be able to carry on this legacy of service, and we invite you to join us!

The Steps We Took

Members share experience, strength, and hope.

There is a certain amount of residual shame that will infuse our perceptions and the way we relate to other people that is hard to shake. Most of us feel we are bad or damaged people when we get to AA. Even after looking at all our baggage in step 4, and sharing it with another person in step 5, we often still live with those childhood-grown voices that translate “I did a terrible thing” into “I am a terrible person.” And so the idea of admitting to another our wrongs and asking what we can do to make up for them drills down into the core of our shame about being fundamentally terrible, unlovable people.

The reason for most of us that becoming willing to make amends seems so insurmountable is because really we fear that if we face someone who we have wronged, they will confirm our deepest beliefs and drive home the validity of our self-hatred. To me becoming willing to make amends is a process where I start to question the verity and source of the stories I am so identified with that they make the cringe and duck and hide response that I have when I think about making an amend. It’s all about unpacking the difference between *doing* harm and *being* an awful person. The only way I can sort out any difference at all is by finding some truth in the idea that my higher power loves and values me regardless of my imperfections.

Perfectionism has a pretty strong grip on a lot of us. It’s the flip side of judgment. As long as I cannot find a way to offer myself the kind of love and compassion that I want from my HP, I will find it difficult to face people because that shame that comes up is anchored in the belief that I am bad and responsible for being an alcoholic. We have to circle back to whether we believe it’s a disease. I am accountable for the damage I have caused, but I didn’t ask for this thing and I’m not at fault for having it.

If I can approach my willingness to make amends by working hard to find and feel the love and compassion that my HP has for me—to nurture and cultivate that relationship, then the shame diminishes, usually not altogether, but enough so that I can face my mistakes and make them right. In the chapter of Step 8 in the 12 x 12, a section reads “In many instances we shall find that though the harm done others has not been great, the emotional harm we have done ourselves has. Very deep, sometimes quite forgotten, damaging emotional conflicts persist below the level of consciousness. At the time of these occurrences, they may actually have given our emotions violent twists which have since discolored our personalities and altered our lives for the worse” (p. 80). The shame we carry, often without even understanding the devastating effect it has on us, *can be healed* and the violent twists in our personality, with the love of our HP, can turn around and no longer drive the direction our lives and relationships. I can learn to love and treat myself the way I believe my HP does. -Liza W

Creativity and Sobriety

There is a persistent belief among artists, writers, and musicians about the interdependence between creativity and alcohol. Alcohol is often considered a muse of sorts, necessary to lubricate the gears of inspiration. Somehow, we believe that we can’t do one without the other, and that when we are faced with giving up the booze, we also believe that we have to give up our identities.

Barbara Jo K. talked to me about her singing career, and how sobriety has helped her become even more in touch with her creativity and her identity as an artist.

“I think probably before I got clean and sober, I thought (alcohol) would enhance my creativity and it helped me to relax and not get so nervous so that I could sing in front of people. And that it was necessary.

In my family, looking good was important. We didn’t talk about problems, when my boyfriend almost died I didn’t know how to talk about it and that led to alcohol and drugs and smoking in college. I was in a band in college and alcohol was always a big part of it. In reality using didn’t help me. A lot of times I was obnoxious and I humiliated myself and embarrassed my friends and bandmates, and they were worried about me.

In early sobriety, one thing that helped me regrow my creativity was working with elders. I could see that I could perform in front of people and work with people and not need any kind of drug or alcohol. What helped me get to the breakthrough moment was the Sunday morning 11am meeting at Boulder One. When I went to that meeting, I heard people singing and playing and I asked if I could join. That’s really where it started. After that, I started a duo with another sober person, and a couple of years later it became a 6-piece band—some sober, some not part of the program.

I started meeting more people in the music community, going to music camps and that was where I met my producer of my new album, she encouraged me to write a song. I thought *I can’t do that*, but 2 weeks before recordings I decided I want to do this. I asked myself *what am I most passionate about? ...my recovery and that’s what I could write about*. Each time I walked my dogs I’d come up with a line or two and write it down. And it happened pretty quickly, which shocked me. I was asking my higher power to reach out and help me to do this thing that was very important to me. And it happened.

The relationship between my sobriety and my creativity is that it is all one. I can’t do one without the other. Being clean and sober and using the gift I was given, and sharing that gift with my elders and with the audience at coffee shops—giving back through my creative mode of singing. It’s such a thrill. I am thrilled every single day with my life. I am living my dream being able to use my music and be in service to others. It’s all about communicating who I am, and I love who I am now.”-Liza W

Central Office

Individuals and groups are needed now to help staff the office. All Central Office volunteers must have at least 9 months of continuous sobriety and receive training.

Current Needs

Karen, office manager, has regular office hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 11 am - 2 pm.

Central office is staffed over the lunch hour every week day.

We are currently looking for these shifts to be covered:

- Weekdays, 9 - 11 am
- Saturdays, 11 am - 1 pm
- **Thank you** to the volunteers who staff the Central Office! And to the groups who cover shifts: Robbers Roost, Principles Before Personalities, Home Girls, Campus Group, and Eye Openers.

Thank you to the following groups, who made contributions to Intergroup In April 2017: Burning Desire / Centennial Peaks / Cherry Creek Promises / District 34 / Erie Group #1 / Erie Early Risers / Eye Openers / Fellowship You Crave Louisville / Fire without Smoke / Kneeling Camels / Longs Peak Group / Nederland Group / Nooners / Pine Street Meeting / Secular Sobriety / Spin Dry Group / Steps to Sobriety Longmont / The Gay Group / Triangle / Wednesday Night Beginners / Women's Solutions Longmont

Nightwatch

Nightwatch volunteers help to answer calls to Central Office during hours when the office is closed. As a Nightwatch volunteer, you have calls forwarded to your phone from 7pm to 7am (or later).

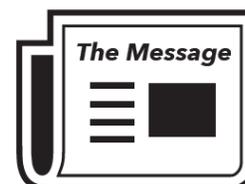
We are currently looking for coverage on Tuesday and Saturday nights.

Nightwatch Coordinator: Aaron
nightwatch@bouldercountyaa.org

We connect to alcoholics in these important ways:

- 1. Central Office facilitates 12 step calls.**
Central Office receives calls and emails from alcoholics needing help. Our 12 step volunteers are available to call on those still-suffering alcoholics who have reached out. Volunteers cover the phones from the office during the day and over night through Night Watch, routing calls directly to our volunteers.
- 2. Central Office helps alcoholics find meetings.**
Meetings in Boulder County are listed on our website (about 1,000 visits per month) and in printed schedules. We distribute about 4,000 printed meeting schedules each year.
- 3. Central Office is where you can purchase AA literature and medallions.**
Central Office stocks and sells AA books, pamphlets, and our newsletter, *The Message*, as well as chips commemorating lengths of sobriety.
- 4. Central Office provides opportunities for service.**
You can contribute by participating in 12 step calls, answering phones at the office, taking a Night Watch shift, and participating in workshops and events.
- 5. Through our Bridge the Gap Committee,** Intergroup connects with Boulder County alcoholics returning from treatment who are looking for someone to help them get started in AA.
- 6. Intergroup publishes a monthly newsletter,** *The Message* to inform Boulder County alcoholics about local AA events, workshops and other AA news. The Message also publishes personal stories from local AA members.
- 7. Intergroup provides workshops on a variety of topics.** Last year, Intergroup sponsored the New Year's Eve party as a way to give Boulder County alcoholics a safe and fun place to celebrate. Our plan is to do this again in 2017!

Each AA member who contributes their time and other resources, such as financial contributions, carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.



Help Intergroup Carry *The Message*

The Message is the newsletter of Boulder County Intergroup. *The Message* serves Intergroup by providing a source of news and information about AA activities and service opportunities throughout Boulder County.

Groups

Send us information about group events, workshops, celebrations, anniversaries.

District 24 and 34

Send us information about workshops, open service positions, elections, events.

Intergroup and District Committee Chairs

Send us information about committee projects, needs, workshops, panels.

Individual Members

Share your experience, strength, and hope with a step, tradition, or concept.

Contact *The Message*

themessage@bouldercountyaa.org

2017 State Convention

**Unity: The Heart of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

September 1-3

Loveland CO
Embassy Suites 4705 Clydesdale Pkwy
<https://convention.coloradoaa.org/>

Boulder County Intergroup
5401 Western Ave. Suite D,
Boulder, CO 80301 303-447-8201