

October 24, 2024

To: GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers and Committee Chairs, Delegates, Alt Delegates, Appointed Committee Members, Nontrustee Directors, Trustees, GSO Employees, Intergroups and Central Offices

Dear A.A. Friends:

Wishing you all warm fall greetings from the General Service Office. This season always brings thoughts of gratitude for the many blessings of sobriety that so many throughout the world have found as a result the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. It's fitting that October begins the annual recognition of our gratitude, as it coincides with the Thanksgiving holiday in Canada, and in the U.S. in November.

The office is finalizing preparations to welcome over 70 international delegates from around the world for the 28th World Service Meeting, October 27-31 in New York City. The World Service Meeting is heavily supported by A.A. structures around the world through their Seventh Tradition obligations. Additionally, many countries provide further support through their contributions to the World Service Meeting Fund. The purpose of this fund is to assist our structure with the overall cost and countries in need of support to participate. This is one of the many events and services supported and carried out by GSO.

I have been feeling much gratitude for our two-country structure and the unity it demonstrates to A.A. around the world and the inclusiveness of our Fellowship. Over the years of my A.A. membership, I have made many Canadian friends. One of those is our new General Service Board Chair, Scott H. from Kamloops, B.C. Scott and I met nearly 10 years ago, and we both served on the General Service Board together. In our current roles, we will co-chair the upcoming World Service Meeting. My experience has certainly aligned with a phrase I have often heard within the halls of A.A., "friendships in A.A. are lasting."

The World Service Meeting is very focused on strengthening A.A. and our Twelve Step work around the world. So much of this work is supported through the translation and distribution of our literature. Our literature has always led the way with the formation of new A.A. structures. The first translation of our Big Book was in 1952 and was into French primarily for our French speaking members in Canada. This inspired our Big Book to be translated into 75 languages today!

As I hear the stories of how A.A. began in each structure throughout the

world, I'm reminded of Canada's story and how fortunate we all are that it found its way there in 1943, so quickly after the Fellowship's inception in 1935.

This excerpt from the GSO Archives about those early days of A.A. in Canada is so inspiring:

In 1941, nonalcoholic Rev. George Little, a Toronto minister who had been trying and failing for years to get alcoholics sober, read a newspaper review of the Big Book. He ordered a copy and was so impressed that he immediately began making copies of chapters and passing them around to those whom he thought it would help. He was such an advocate of the Big Book that A.A. Headquarters granted him Canadian distribution rights in 1942.

The first A.A. meeting in Canada was held in a room above the Little Tavern in Toronto on January 13, 1943 with six alcoholics in attendance. One week later, a second meeting was held.

In the spirit of the season and our gratitude for our Fellowship, please consider a special contribution to the General Service Board. As noted in the fall 2016 issue of Box 459 "There is no timeframe on an A.A. member's gratitude, no expiration date, and A.A.s have long been focusing on Thanksgiving week (November in the U.S. and October in Canada) as a tangible time to highlight their gratitude for A.A. and recovery and to turn that gratitude into action."