

## A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our fellowship united.  
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,  
And the lives of those to come

# INSIDE A.A.

## UNDERSTANDING THE FELLOWSHIP AND ITS SERVICE AGENCIES

This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

## 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

This is A.A. General Service  
Conference-approved literature

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## Inside A.A.

Since the Fellowship of A.A. was founded, in 1935, it has grown from two members to over 2,000,000. There are now approximately 108,000 groups, and members are located in more than 180 countries.

As A.A. has grown, so have its service needs—such as the need to safeguard tested A.A. principles, the need to handle inquiries from all over the world at one central location, the need for descriptive and interpretive literature, the need for movement-wide representation on public relations matters, the need for qualified custodians of A.A.'s service funds.

Let's see how A.A. is set up to meet those needs today.

### Service and the A.A. member

Service is our Third Legacy. Recovery and Unity are the First and Second. Service to others and to the Fellowship reminds us that we owe our sobriety to the work of earlier members, and that our continued sobriety may depend on the hundreds of thousands who still need to learn of A.A. Their participation may well be part of our future.

This folder is about service in A.A. and about its service structure.

### 1. General Service Board (the trustees)



This board, traditionally composed of nonalcoholics as well as A.A. members, was the first movement-wide service unit in A.A. It is responsible for safeguarding A.A. tradition and A.A.'s service funds. It oversees the operating service units: General Service Office; A.A. World Services, Inc.; A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

### 2. General Service Office (G.S.O.)

G.S.O., in New York City, serves as the center of A.A. activities under the guidance of A.A. World Services, Inc., the General Service Board, and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada).

At G.S.O., about 83 A.A.s and non-A.A.s are involved in helping groups with problems, dealing with the general public, publishing *Box 4-5-9* and other bulletins, maintaining contact with more than 1,600 groups in institutions, and helping over 43,500 groups overseas.

Here, too, are centered the vital publishing and distribution of basic books and recovery and service pamphlets—running to a yearly total of approximately 5,700,000 pieces.



### 3. A.A. Grapevine, Inc.



A.A. Grapevine, Inc., a separate corporation with its own board, is under the guidance of the trustees. Grapevine editorial and business staffs are responsible for publishing the pocket-size monthly that carries A.A. to more than 93,000 people throughout the world.

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#### **4. General Service Conference**



The General Service Conference is the link between A.A. groups and the General Service Office and Board. About 132 Conference members—area delegates, trustees, directors, G.S.O. and Grapevine staffs—meet annually and are active in Conference matters throughout the year. It provides a forum for sharing A.A. experience and reveals the group conscience to the Fellowship.

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#### **5. How YOU take part in world service**

When you make a local Twelfth Step call, that's a part of world service. When you contribute to the support of G.S.O., when you use A.A. literature or the A.A. directories, you are taking part in world service, too.

You can participate even more directly by joining service activities in your group and area. The basic A.A. service structure is shown next.



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#### **6. Your Group is the basic unit**



The local group is the basic unit of A.A. world service. Group needs, group attitudes, and group support determine the type and amount of service G.S.O. can render.

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#### **7. G.S.R. represents your Group**



Your group elects a general service representative to represent it within the A.A. service structure.

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#### **8. Assemblies elect delegates and Committees**



Each A.A. area in the U.S. and Canada holds an area assembly to elect a delegate (and alternate) and committee officers to serve for two years.

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#### **9. Area and District Committees and meetings**



Area committee meetings and district meetings for G.S.R.s and the D.C.M. (district committee member) are held monthly or quarterly to discuss service needs, and to report on world services. (Your area chairperson's name and address are listed in the appropriate A.A. directory.)

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## **10. Delegates serve as continuing link between the Areas and the General Service Office and Board**



- By reporting to the area on G.S.O. and General Service Board activities
- By relaying area opinion to G.S.O. and the trustees
- By developing area support for world services

Delegates' jobs do not begin and end with their attendance at the annual Conference meeting. They are expected to be active during the entire year. Much of the recent growth in understanding A.A. world services throughout the Fellowship can be credited to the untiring efforts of loyal delegates. (Area delegates are also listed in directories.)

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## **11. Conference sessions**



Conference members meet annually for six days. They review reports on activities of G.S.O. and on General Service Board, and on service needs all over the world.

They also review significant trends and developments in A.A. Each Conference member is encouraged to act as a representative of A.A., not just one area.

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## **12. A.A. world service, and money**



The Fellowship's world service program is supported by voluntary contributions from the groups, by funds derived from publishing activities, and by individual contributions from members. No individual contribution may exceed \$3,000 per year. Membership in A.A. is in no way contingent upon financial support of the movement. (Groups that are able to do so are invited to contribute in accordance with the "50-30-10-10" plan—50% to your intergroup or central office, 30% to your General Service Office, and 10% each to your area and district committees. Another plan, where there is no intergroup, is "40-30-30"—40% to your district, 30% each to G.S.O. and your area.) For more information see the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix."

All accounts of A.A.'s service agencies are C.P.A.-audited, and detailed statements covering the Society's finances are published annually.

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## **Members of the General Service Board**

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous is composed of both A.A. and non-A.A. trustees—in a ratio of two to one. Fourteen alcoholic and seven nonalcoholic members serve on A.A.'s board of trustees.

On the A.A. side, there are eight regional trustees from the U.S. and Canada, four general service trustees (two from the A.A.W.S. Board and two from the Grapevine Board), and two trustees-at-large—one from the United States and one from Canada.

There are seven nonalcoholics serving with the A.A. members on the board, contributing special skills in several professional fields, including finance, medicine, and social services.