



CoDA CANADA NEWSLETTER



June, 2011 • Volume 2 Issue 2

Calendar of Events

Vancouver Island Retreat

- September 9-11, 2011 *(Look for more info in next issue)*

2011 CoDA World Fellowship Conference (CSC) • July 5-8, & International Convention • July 8-10

Where: Denver, CO, USA **Celebrating 25 years!**

What is Convention?

The International CoDA Convention is where co-dependents meet to celebrate their recovery. The Convention was usually held every two years, but has not been on a standard schedule. By CSC vote, the Convention and CSC will be held in conjunction starting in 2010. The Convention and CSC committees decided to combined the two events in 2009 to gain experience for future years.

Who can attend?

Basically anyone can attend. This is the fun part part of CoDA Events. You do not have to hold any type of position with CoDA or your local CoDA meeting. Registration is just \$65 for 3 days of fun and fellowship. Convention held at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Denver. Group Room rates \$99.00 - (CoDA) Please go to the following website for more up-to-date- information:

<http://www.coda.org/events/index.php>

International CoDA Convention SPEAKERS

Friday Terry R – (Boston, MA), **Saturday** Ken and Mary R – (Phoenix, AZ) Founders of Co-Dependents Anonymous, Celebrating 25 years and **Sunday** our very own Deborah R – (Calgary, AB, Canada)

International CoDA Convention WORKSHOPS

Kristen T (New Hampshire) – Outer Space Inner Space • Kathy M (Nevada) – Family of Origin and Rescue Triangle • Katherine T (N. Calif) – TBA • Michelle E (N. Carolina) – Feelings Are Not Facts, They Are Feelings! • Amy Colorado – Changing Self Shaming Messages • Mary R – TBA • Kathryn T (N. Calif) – TBA • Karla K (N. Calif) – Using the 12 Steps for Emotional and Spiritual Maturity • Judi T (Massachusetts) – Step 11 • Michelle E (N. Carolina) – Feelings Are Not Facts, They Are Feelings! • Kathy M (NV) – Family of Origin and Rescue Triangle • Jim Y (N. Calif) – Equal Partners in Trust • Kristen T (New Hampshire) – Outer Space Inner Space • Evie & Leo South (Calif) – Healthy Relationships • David L (Texas) – Recovery is a Journey Not a Destination • Ken R – TBA

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WANTED Submissions

Do you have a story or a poem you would like to share about your recovery? We want to hear from you. Contributions should be no more than 250 - 500 words long and should reflect the Steps and Traditions as well as the principles of CoDA. Please submit contributions to lists@cdrs.ca. We reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary for the length, editorial content and style of this newsletter.

Co-Dependents Recovery Society

P.O. Box 306, Stn. Main,
Surrey, BC V3T 5B6

Fax: 1.604.777.4890

www.cdrs.ca

Co-Dependents Recovery Society Board Meeting

Chairperson Report • May 1, 2011

We are springing into action at Co-Dependents Recovery Society (CDRS) with the new season well upon us. With the help of a most reliable and wise Higher Power, we are making steady progress.

Since our last Board Meeting on February 26, 2011, we have been engaged in the following:

Co-Dependents Recovery Society (CDRS)

Publications:

- ❖ Contact was initiated by Judi Ann C., CoDA Inc. Chairperson, along with lawyers: Paul W. Donovan, Ottawa, ON & Adam Stephenson, Tempe, AZ regarding CoDA Inc.'s continuing copyright and trademark development. We are establishing the legal parameters to sell and publish CoDA Inc. literature. CDRS will not bear any financial costs to these proceedings.
- ❖ Sue F., New Westminster, BC and Janet D. from Edmonton, AB have been working long hours to edit the American version of The Twelve Steps and Traditions in order to set it up for a Canadian publication. The next step will be to create a publishing format to print. As a result, Canadian-published workbooks will be made available at significantly reduced retail costs to all members. Further work is pending until Conference results indicate the possibility of adding the newly revised Patterns and Characteristics into the Workbook.

Literature Distribution:

- ❖ Spring bouquet of gratitude goes to Susan F. who filled literature orders and other duties while Gerry B. was on a well deserved vacation in April. Unfortunately, there was a glitch with the telephone system and some orders may have not been received. If you did not receive your order you placed in April, please resend as the issue has been rectified.
- ❖ Deborah R. & Gerry B. will attend the CoDA Inc. International Conference on behalf of CDRS.

CoDA CANADA

New Meeting Arise

- ❖ I travelled to Kelowna in April and had the opportunity to meet some of the members from the new Kelowna and Vernon CoDA meetings. They appear to be very organized, having done Step Studies already. The Vernon group members have been a great support to this new group. I walked away from the meeting knowing that there is a

strong sense of service developing already from such a new group.

- ❖ In addition, another new meeting sprouted in **Regina, SK: Cathedral CoDA Group** - Women's Meeting at the Cathedral Natural Health Clinic on 3500 13th Ave - Monday 7:00 PM Special Instructions: Northwest corner of 13th Ave. and Elphinstone. Check it out!
- ❖ Springing up over in **Winnipeg, MN**, another meeting is getting organized. Check the www.cdrs.ca Meeting List for forthcoming details.

CoDA Inc. International Conference July 5-8, 2011 & Convention July 8-10, 2011

- ❖ CoDA Inc. Issues and Mediations announced that CoDA Canada could submit an application to gain two (2) English votes; a mass emailing, telephoning and mailing were immediately launched. An outpouring of emails streamed in to support of having two (2) Delegates attend the Conference.
- ❖ Voting delegates allow CoDA Canada to have a voice in making decisions at the international level, experience service work at an international level, bring the group conscience of their groups to Conference, and bring information directly back to their groups.
- ❖ A spray of spring flowers to all who participated in sending letters in support of the CoDA Canada Delegate Application to CoDA Inc. Issues Mediation Committee. Thank you very much for your overwhelming support to take steps to broaden our capabilities to carry the message.
- ❖ There is still **time to register if you are interested in attending the Conference and/or Convention. Please let us know if you are interested before Conference.** Having CoDA Canada participation would be delightful to be amongst the world delegates and registrants.
- ❖ The **Travel Reimbursement Opportunity Fund** created a financial stipend for those interested in being **delegates**. CDRS will reimburse \$200 of expenses when an expense form and receipts are submitted from one selected candidate after the conference. Applications need to be submitted and can be still obtained.
- ❖ Current **Conference motions** to be voted this year are already on and can be viewed and discussed at your meeting.

Link: http://www.coda.org/dp/Bylaws-Committee_Reports-VEIs/

List appears "Index of Bylaws-Committee Reports-VEI's" listing categories with specific recent motions under most categories.

If there any motions that you and your group feel strongly for or against, please let me know and I will forward the information to the CoDA Canada delegates, if available.

CoDA Canada Outreach Surveys

- ❖ In an attempt to **link all CoDA meetings across Canada**, an **outreach survey was created** for secretaries of all Canadian meetings. The survey was recently put on the web site to be completed. Hopefully, it will gain contact information, an awareness of meeting needs and a connection for future communication. If your meeting has not yet filled one out, please see the front page of www.cdrs.ca.

CoDA Canada Newsletter

- ❖ Janet D.-Edmonton and Catherine K.-Regina are proving to be a fabulous, diligent team who are currently working on the CoDA Canada Newsletter. Writers across Canada are encouraged to submit articles on recovery stories, steps and traditions, principles, as well as, insights to past and upcoming events. Please announce this at your meetings.

New Hospitals and Institutions Representative (H & I)

- ❖ Veronica H. has recently volunteered to be the Hospitals and Institutions Representative. It is exciting to have her help carry the message to those who are in need in secondary institutions, hospitals, prisons, treatment centres and other places where people are still suffering from the disease of co-dependency. It is hoped that others will join Veronica in doing this work across Canada.

Increase CoDA Communication

- ❖ **Please sign up and invite other CoDA members to do so and be more aware of CoDA Canada information. On the CDRS website in the top left hand corner is a place for your first name, first initial of your last name and your email address. Receive your very own personal copy of the CoDA Canada Newsletters and the latest local, provincial, national and international CoDA information.**

We are delighted in the growth that has been made in so many areas during this past term. It is obvious that our Higher Power is showering blessings evidenced by all that is happening. May we continue to be of service to carry the message to those who still suffer.

Gratefully in Service,

Deborah R. Chairperson CDRS

Email: deborah.outreach@gmail.com

Skype: codacanada

Online CoDA meetings, "Hello Canada!"

My name is Krysta H. and I'm a recent transplant to Halifax, originally from Toronto. I'm writing to tell you a bit about online meetings, as I know there are many Canadians without access to face-to-face (f2f) meetings.

There are no meetings in Nova Scotia. Since I'm new here, I wasn't quite ready to start up a f2f meeting. I've been an active member of Online CoDA (www.onlinecoda.net) for about three years. Online CoDA has two components, a chat room and a forum. The chat room always has open chat unless there is a meeting happening. The forum is a discussion board. There are several weekly chat room meetings, all with their own "host", at many different times, but none quite worked for me. I decided to host a meeting there at a time that I could attend. We study the CoDA Booklet Peeling the Onion, and are doing great work talking about our romantic and sexual relationships as well as other relationships including the ones with ourselves and our Higher Power. We meet every Wednesday at 3PM PT/4PM MT/5PM CT/6PM ET/7PM AT/7:30PM NT. The topic for the week gets posted in the forum section of Online CoDA, or can be read in the Peeling the Onion Booklet (available through CDRS). People from all over the world attend, but it is mostly Americans due to it being in English and the time. It would great to see more Canadians active in Online CoDA.

To access the forum:

- go to www.onlinecoda.net
- click on Forums
- create a username. They have this set up for users with passwords for safety as there are a lot of very open shares.
- it will take up to a couple days for them to approve your membership and then you can log in.

To access the chat room:

- go to www.onlinecoda.net
- click on meetings
- enter a user name (can be any - most people choose the same one as their username for the forums)
- enter the password "service" (no quotes)
- the red text at the top lists the most current meeting schedule

Krysta H.
Halifax, NS

Co-Dependents Recovery Society Grateful for Donations

Financial donations received from the following groups:

- March 2011 Toronto, ON - Group Closes & sent remaining funds – A. D.
- December 2010 Saskatoon, SK -Experience, Strength and Hope
- November 2010 Edmonton, AB – Hilton Group
- New Westminster, BC - Freedom Group
- Toronto, ON – M. D.

Co-Dependents Recovery Society is grateful for all donations used for CDRS expenses, in particular for the development of publishing CoDA materials. Thank you very much for your contributions.

Outreach Report

If you have ever contacted CDRS with an inquiry regarding a meeting or regarding co-dependency, most likely you would have connected with me. I am Sharon, a volunteer for Outreach.

As a service, CDRS maintains a list of CoDA meetings across Canada provides information on Codependency and hosts a forum. As these services have expanded so has the need to answer inquiries from those accessing the CDRS website. What kind of questions do people ask? Most often they want to know if a meeting is available in their area or if there is no contact for that meeting, if it is active. Sometimes, I lead people, to online sources or encourage them to start new meetings when no meetings are available in their area. Some contact us to discuss codependency or want to know what to expect at a CoDA meeting. I do the best I can to support people whatever their needs. What has been really inspiring is the number of people who have volunteered to start a CoDA meeting in their area. New CoDA groups have emerged this year in the Maritimes, BC, Ontario, and the prairies – all across the country. It has been a really exciting year. For those interested in starting a new meeting, we provide support and guidance. As CoDA grows in Canada we also need more volunteers (like me) willing to do Outreach – to support groups and individuals at a provincial and regional level.

Outreach is important at the community level, as well. If you are the contact for your group as listed on the CDRS site or in your local newspaper, you are doing outreach. If you have listed your group in a local directory of support groups, you are doing outreach. If you advertise in your local “freebie” newspaper so that co-dependents know that your group exists, you are doing outreach. If you represent your group in an “intergroup” meeting, a structure that helps grow “CoDa Canada”, you are doing outreach. And if you welcome newcomers and support a strong, vibrant group, you are doing outreach.

An important and emerging area for outreach is to support co-dependents in Hospitals and Institutions (H & I). At CDRS we have had requests for support from inmates, those working at recovery houses and even counsellors. In the past, I have responded to many of these inquiries. Local groups have also supported people from Institutions and recovery houses. We are happy to announce that we now have an Outreach Chair, specifically, for H & I. Veronica H. can be reached by contacting CDRS. Her experience includes conducting CoDA groups in a woman’s prison, establishing CoDA groups in recovery houses and making presentations to support organizations. For many years, Local groups have also continued to support people from institutions and recovery houses. Now these groups and co-dependents isolated in institutions, can receive support.

Step Twelve and Tradition five encourage us to “carry this message toco-dependents”. I am so grateful to those who reached out and welcomed me and continue to support me in my recovery. Service has taught me to rely on my higher power, to set boundaries, to distinguish between my temptation control and my desire to help and to balance my volunteering with other areas of my life. It has given me an opportunity to give back and to grow in my recovery. So if outreach is your next step to growth in recovery either at the community level or the national level, I can only express what a blessing it has been for me.

At CDRS we are looking for more volunteers willing to do outreach for their Province or region. For information email: service@cdrs.ca

Please pass this newsletter to those who may be interested. If you would like to receive this newsletter, please email: lists@cdrs.ca to add your email address to our database.

Personal Recovery Sharing *The following is from a fellow CoDA member sharing on Steps One and Two.*

Starting my first step study in CODA has been a challenge and an opportunity at “sweeping my own doorstep”. Having a group of people outside of my family and friends with whom I can journey anonymously is incredibly freeing.

Step One: trying to be aware of my methods of control and realizing that anger is my control-loss indicator. I get mad when my attempts to make something turn out right (my right) don't work. I see how I use “facts” and watertight reasons to convince someone else to do something exactly as I suggest. How do I embrace being unable to “make stuff work,” i.e. being powerless? My job is me. Powerless refers to my inability to control others. Empowered refers to saving my personal power for the challenges of my own life. I see it like a non-renewable resource like electricity or money. Waste it on useless projects or let it leak out and there's not enough left for the real or important job. Spend the rent eating out and I'm in big trouble. Trying to fix, help or control others is simply too big for me – I will be destroyed trying. Letting go, letting God, knowing I am loved and delighted in for “just who I am,” not what I've done or could do, are hopeful thoughts for a weary me.

Step Two, whew, so unbelievably relieved I don't have to deal with my inner pain and mess alone. There is One who knows me wholly and yet loves me truly. As I learn to let go, to rest, I am in the care of One who can take everything in my life (including my errors) and turn it to my benefit. As I listen and learn I feel grateful for my past inability to cope with my life. I know now that had I been able to keep it all going, my personal defects and control issues would have gained more and more power over me, twisting me horribly. I am trying to remember gratitude for my “broken road”. I am so glad there is a great *More.(other than ourselves)* I remember becoming an adult and being shocked at the immature, childish behaviour of adults. I thought that adults would grow out of those behaviours, but I saw they were merely masked by more sophisticated coping systems. I want to skip the fancy footwork. Sometimes I can almost see God underneath me, not in the sense of low or evil, but as the solidity under my feet and I can see how God waits for me to climb off my high horse and come down out of my castles in the air so I can be shown the way down the path of peace one muddy footprint at a time. The path to sanity became clear when I looked at Step Two. I could see the link to Step One: I can live an empowered manageable life! Wow. I have spent my conscious life feeling weak, empty and in the middle of a cyclone. I hope that I can live

with inner strength and purpose in less than cyclone!! The cyclone may still be there but the cyclone is God's job: too big for me. I am called to deal with only the flying bits which God sends my way and to leave the rest.

I am working through the Step Study, excited to learn as I listen to the One who loves me.

-Anonymous Newcomer (8 months)

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On Prayer

When I pray for what I want, I'm often praying for God to give me a square peg to fit into a round hole. When I pray for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry it out, I have the possibility of discovering that the only puzzle to solve is why I'm still trying to solve something that wasn't ever my puzzle to solve. Someone gave it to me and I took it. I can give it back.

What unsolvable puzzle am I trying to solve today instead of:

- 1) taking care of my body
- 2) learning to play an instrument
- 3) singing
- 4) noticing the miracles of nature
- 5) accepting myself as I am today without having to fix you for me to be okay

Life is a river. The water is never missing. I am never abandoned.

We're all being carried, no one goes faster or further than the river takes them.

A flashy boat doesn't fool anyone, especially the river!
As God intended, I am Precious & Free

Anonymous

February, 2010

I am Learning

I'm learning to stop being so hard on myself. I'm learning that pain is mandatory and suffering is optional. I'm learning to listen to and respect myself on a minute by minute basis. My day is filled with 10th step inventories. I've learned that there is one person who will always be there with me, like it or not. That person is me. I best take care of her in every way so that our journey together is filled with love.

MEMORIAL: James Malcom S. a BC CoDA member passed away on February 7, 2011 in Victoria, BC after his valiant effort against the debilitating disease of esophagus cancer. Malcolm was born March 5, 1955 in Stettler, AB. He was an avid volunteer and he lived his life in service to others. Through CODA, he started the Thursday night meeting in Duncan, BC. He attended every week waiting for members to join. The group eventually grew to about 15 members. In addition, Malcolm was actively engaged as the moderator for CoDA Online Forum, the website where Canadian co-dependents can interact concerning codependency issues. He also helped to start the Annual Coda Retreat held at Mesachie Lake, BC which is now entering its third year. Malcolm also provided an article for the new CoDA Canada Newsletter. Encouraging others to trust, talk and feel was Malcolm's trademark. He was a sponsor to many, a friend to all. Malcolm lived his life by the motto, "If the doctor gives you 6 months to live, he doesn't mean wait" and he put this into practice through his passions of kayaking, camping, skiing, hiking and jumping the waves at Tofino. Malcolm touched many lives in his commitment to be of service. He is truly missed by all, especially the CoDA community.

INTERVIEW WITH TONJA (Last Year's Canadian Delegate)

How long have you participated in CoDA?

2 years

What types of service work have you been in the past?

I've been the treasurer for two groups, chaired meetings, helped set-up and clean up, been a temporary sponsor, and helped format and print signs and new comer packs.

Why did you want to become a GSR (Group Service Representative)?

When I started being of service in CoDA I recognized how much I needed to exercise my recovery. It was suggested to me that being of service is an excellent way to do just that. Shortly after that I was reading about the CoDA conference and convention that was going to take place in July, 2010. I decided right away that I would go to the convention. Then through a series of synchronistic events, I learned about the conference and that Toronto had no CoDA representation at the conference. I started to ask questions about how I could get involved and represent my area.

How long were you a GSR before attending the CoDA Inc. International Conference?

Only a few months.

Why did you want to represent your area at the CoDA international business level?

When I first decided to represent my area it was really out of curiosity. I didn't really know what was involved. I read a lot off the CoDA website about delegate responsibilities.

What did you hope to gain from attending the CoDA Inc. International Conference?

I hoped to learn about the people and structures that keep CoDA in operation.

What were some of the highlights of the conference that you would share with your group or that helped you to gain personally?

I learned about the process of presenting and passing a motion. It was amazing to see delegates present a motion

and the chair exercise healthy boundaries while facilitating questions, pros and con comments, re-crafting of a motion and then voting. I learned about myself through the process- I didn't speak-up! With each motion there was an opportunity to ask questions or comment pro or con, but I didn't! :(

I had questions! I had comments! I would sometimes ask the person beside me or make comments under my breath on things I didn't agree with, but I never stood up, went to the microphone and asked my questions or offered comments (pro/con) that were on my mind.

This was a big lesson for me! I did this in my life! If I felt uncertain about a situation I didn't ask questions. I would complain, or huff, or roll my eyes and look for supporters. I would victimize myself!

I recognized that this is a pattern born out of my feeling that I am not good enough and this behaviour would keep me stuck! I'm also embarrassed to admit that at the Conference I also learned how much I judge others. There were people that did get up and go to the microphone and ask questions and comment on motions. I saw those people as annoying. I now know that they were mirroring back to me what I wasn't doing and that really I was judging myself. Since attending the CoDA Conference I have worked the steps around these behaviours. I have come a long way and continue to honour myself by asking questions and voicing my option because I'm worth it.

Did attending the conference change or add to your perceptions of Coda as a whole? How it supports your national groups as a whole and the groups in your area? Your home group and personal program of recovery?

I was so grateful for the experience of attending the CoDA conference. I got to see how many people volunteer at the International level to keep CoDA meetings possible for me to attend.

Would you attend another conference?

Yes.

How Our Meeting Began...

My introduction to CoDA began through a friend in another Twelve Step program. She was attending CoDA and wanted someone to work the program one on one with her but couldn't, for reasons unknown to me, find someone to do that with. When she mentioned this to me I told her that although I knew nothing about CoDA I'd be willing to do this with her.

We began by reading the CoDA blue book together and sharing the insights we had as a result. As soon as I read about the relational hierarchy (God, myself, and then others) a chord was struck in me and I knew I needed this program and I'd love it. Not long after we started this another friend and a friend of hers were planning to start a second CoDA meeting in Kelowna, an evening one since we already had a daytime one. I wasn't asked if I was interested in coming so I hesitantly inquired if I could.

During the process of beginning one of our cofounders decided that she couldn't commit. Those of us who remained decided to continue to meet while figuring out what we should do next. We eventually decided to do a Step Study. We did this by beginning to answer the questions (in bullets) in the CoDA blue book in Chapter Two on page 13 and in Chapter Three on pages 28 and 29. Then our other cofounder decided that she couldn't commit.

While this was going on the three of us who were initially left were attending the other meeting that existed here. But the two of us who were left after the attempted start of the second meeting didn't want to give up the opportunity of the meeting space we had, so we decided to restart our Step Study and invite others we knew might be interested. Of the ones we called only one other joined us. We were all very new to CoDA and thought this would be a great opportunity to learn more about it while we continued to attend the one meeting we had here. We decided we would continue to answer the questions in the CoDA blue book first and then begin an official study (in January 2010) using the CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook.

Before we began our official study we did an overview of the work to be done in the Workbook and decided we would do a Steps and Traditions Study (answering all of the questions for each. Since we were all new and had a real desire to get this stuff we thought we'd divide the Steps and Traditions up so that we'd be answering half of the questions from each, each week (an overall undertaking of a whole year). We thought about that commitment and although it was huge at the time we only had to focus on one week at a time and we knew that our Higher Powers would be there for us in our willingness.

As we progressed through the study we were blessed with continuing insights into our codependency, as well as the blessings of fellowship, trust, love and healing. During that year us newbie's thought often about what we might do when we were finished (offer another Study or start a new meeting), because we so wanted others to have the opportunity we had given each other. And so it went out to our Higher Powers and we just kept on doing what we were doing (our Study). As the year came to an end it was clear to us that we should start another meeting and that maybe somewhere down the line we could offer another Steps and Traditions Study.

We decided when we began, to use the guidance provided in The Fellowship Service Manual. We followed the Basic Meeting Format it contained and continued to use the CoDA Meeting Funds Record we had started to use when we had tried to start the meeting before we opted to do our Study. We registered as a New Closed/Coed Meeting with CoDA and had our first meeting on January third of this year. The Seventh Tradition funds we had started collecting at the meeting that failed were used to purchase the literature we use and have for lone at our current meeting. We were also able to create some Newcomer's Packages, using some of the CoDA Pamphlets with those funds. Our Higher Powers enabled everything to fall into place quite easily (we just had to be willing).

We knew that there would be the three of us who had done the Study and one other who were committed to making this meeting a go, but we were pleasantly surprised when on our first night we had eight attend (we thought it would take a while for us to become that many). Our little room which we thought would suffice for quite a while (comfortable for about ten) quickly became too small for the numbers that passed that. At our third Business Meeting we decided with numbers constantly at ten plus we needed to find a new venue if we were going to be able to grow. We moved into our new meeting place at the beginning of April. We continue to have Newcomers check us out and our meetings usually have eight to thirteen members in attendance.

During Business Meetings, which we have after the first meeting of each month, and via the Group Conscience Process we have fine tuned our Meeting Format so the beginning of our meeting is run more efficiently. We have had members step up in willingness to do service and we have provided further guidelines such as a reading schedule so there's no guess work for them.

Through the feedback we have received from members we can honestly say our Higher Powers and those who do service at our meetings (and that's everyone) have blessed us with a strong, safe, healthy place where we all have the opportunity for recovery.

Juanita, Steps to Recovery Group - Kelowna, B.C.

Chart: Structure of CoDA Inc. - International

Co-Dependent Anonymous Structure Chart

Group conscience decision making provides a foundation for the entire service structure of CoDA; it begins in our home groups. The effectiveness of our program depends heavily upon the interest and participation of individual members as representatives of their home group or community's concerns and needs at local, state/regional and national committees.

