

## Overeaters Anonymous

### World Service Business Conference Report

April 2023

It was my privilege to attend this conference as a delegate representing the Chicago West Intergroup Farout (CHI-WIF) and Region 5. Much work was accomplished by and for the members and for OA as a whole. The theme and focus of this conference was “Concepts of Service: The Heart of Fellowship”. In attendance were a total of 176 delegates representing 14 different countries, including Italy, Greece, Israel, Iran, Brazil, Columbia, Spain, Sweden, Russia, Ukraine, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Also being represented were several Virtual intergroups, including Young Peoples, Men’s, and Footsteps.

Much emphasis was given to the topics of Unity and Inclusiveness, and delegates were reminded that our discussions and our voting should be “for the good of OA as a whole”, to benefit all current and future members. As a new delegate, I appreciated the camaraderie and support we all received, as it was confusing and stressful at times to understand the proposals and motions and even the whole process. The other thing I appreciated and found so helpful as a first time attendee was being assigned a Mentor for the week, someone who has attended WSBC & wants to help the “newbies”. My mentor was from the Philadelphia PA area and she was great, explaining what was happening and what things meant, always doing it with humor and gentleness. She reminded me several times that I was supposed to be confused with it all and to just relax and do my best. We shared a few meals and down time together, and we are still in contact. This was another example of how “together we can do what we cannot do alone” in OA.

The conference process was amazing and so well organized. We would start each business session with the Serenity Prayer, and delegates from outside the U.S were invited to say the prayer in their own language. A touching moment for me with this was when the 2 delegates from Russia and the Ukraine stood in front of the whole assembly, held hands, and said this prayer in their own languages, then hugged each other. Beautiful! Then we got to the work of dealing with and voting on all the many proposals and motions included in our 462-page delegate binder. Parliamentary procedures were used throughout all the sessions, with pros and cons presented for each motion, as well as opportunities for questions. Everything was also timed and strictly adhered to. The chair of the Board of Trustees presided at all sessions, with support from all the trustees on the dais and a professional parliamentarian to make sure we followed protocol. At times, there was some tension and disagreement and strong opinions voiced with some of the proposals, but cooler heads prevailed after we paused to say the Serenity Prayer or the 3<sup>rd</sup> Step Prayer.

#### **PROPOSALS/VOTING** (there were several more than cited here)

**1)** A new book “Diverse Voices: A Common Solution” about recovery of underrepresented OA members was presented for publication. MOTION ADOPTED.

**2)** A second new book “Sponsorship in OA: Guiding Others into Recovery” was proposed to replace 2 sponsorship pamphlets. MOTION DEFEATED. Committee will review/rewrite and may be proposed next year.

3) Proposal to not use acronyms on all future official communications to service bodies, to avoid confusion in language translation. MOTION ADOPTED.

4) Proposal to change wording & definitions of open & closed and special-focus meetings in policy manuals. Motion was split into 2 motions, then wording "Specific" was added to "Focus" & "Topic" meetings, and "Meetings with Visitors" and "Meetings without Visitors" be used to define current "Open & Closed" meetings. BOTH MOTIONS ADOPTED.

5) Proposal to increase maximum member contribution per year from \$5000 to \$7500. MOTION ADOPTED.

6) Two Proposals to give OA Conference Approval to Alcoholics Anonymous literature. First one included just the AA Big Book & the AA 12/12. Second proposal included all AA Conference-approved literature. FIRST MOTION FAILED. SECOND MOTION PASSED.

### **COMMITTEES**

Delegates were also assigned to committees, to work on issues & goals "for the good of OA as a whole", that they developed in this conference. Committees will meet during the year and submit their work for review to the Board of Trustees for consideration at next year's World Service Business Conference. I was assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Step Within committee (TSW) on a subcommittee that will review materials in the Documents Library of OA.org website and encourage members to use our website. Other TSW committee goals: to encourage intergroups to develop a 12 Step Within committee to grow service through workshops & sponsor banks; to develop greater awareness & encouragement of OA's International 12 Step Within Day on 12/12 through flyers & workshops.

### **WORKSHOPS**

The Conference also included several workshops, mainly focusing on the theme of Service. Presenters from Israel and St.Louis stressed the importance of service to keep OA strong and united, especially since we are a global organization. They shared ideas on how to do this, such as workshops, visits to other meeting, and inviting sponsees to step up.

### **TRUSTEES**

All Conference delegates were introduced to and given the duty of voting in new Trustees for the Board. 10 open positions, with 6 candidates vying. All 6 candidates were voted in by the body of delegates present.

A 7<sup>th</sup> Step collection was also collected from the delegates, totalling \$2477.75.

On the last day of the Conference, all "Green Dots" were brought to the front of the ballroom and introduced and congratulated for attending. We removed our dots & were warmly cheered by the veteran delegates. We survived!

Report respectfully submitted by Evelyn Spagnuolo

5-9-23