Gratitude in Action (GIA) 3rd edition - 2019

What is GIA?

GIA is a quarterly email publication of the WSI 12th Step Committee. Its purpose is to inspire FA members to engage in service and to carry the message of FA recovery to those who still suffer from food addiction.

Personal Reflections... Why Do Service?

During the last year, I required chemotherapy. The treatment interrupted my attendance at meetings and required me to be somewhat isolated. In this scary time, I found service to be my salvation.

Service was a practical activity that distracted me from my fear. It helped me to feel effective and capable when I felt fragile and vulnerable. It also gave me a chance to be productive and contribute to the people around me. Fundamentally, it made me think about something beyond myself.

My sponsor told me I would need my sponsees during this time, and she was right. Most of them had a fair amount of abstinent time behind them. They stuck with me, even though I would have to occasionally cancel calls or ask them to find temporary assistance from time to time. They were a gift to me every single morning.

Particularly suited to my situation were FA service committee meeting calls. To hear the voices of my friends, people I knew well from around the world, and to contribute filled me with joy. I remember one Sunday when I had three FA committee calls. By supper time, I was high as a kite.

In fact, I was so happy on the committee calls, I couldn’t stop talking. My judgment was a bit “off” as an effect of the treatment, and I had to make an amend a week, or so it seemed. But I got some lessons in humility, and finally learned to muzzle myself.

I got through my chemotherapy abstinently. My weight held stable, and I had a lot of really good days. That’s why I do service.

Anonymous
Spotlight on Service: Public Service Representative

The role of the Public Information Representative (PI Rep) is to help increase awareness of FA in the public. Given the wide variety of possible PI activities, the WSI Public Information Committee has recently identified a set of primary responsibilities for PI Reps. Taken together, these primary responsibilities are a reminder that PI Representatives can engage other FA members in public information activities rather than conducting these activities alone.

1. **FA Trifold Brochures**
   - Download the tri-fold brochure for publicizing weekly meetings and modify it for your local fellowship.
     - Go to [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org). Under the “Members” tab in the Public Information section, select “Meeting Tri-fold Template.”
   - Ask meeting members to distribute brochures in public spaces, including community bulletin boards, cafes, gyms, libraries, schools, salons, laundromats, bus stations, supermarkets, senior centers, etc. Remind members to ask permission before posting a tri-fold brochure.

2. **Healthcare Brochures**
   - At the announcement portion of the FA meeting, ask members if they have upcoming appointments with healthcare providers. Ask if they would be willing to share the FA healthcare brochure.
   - Distribute FA healthcare brochures at monthly business meetings to those members who are willing to share information about FA with their healthcare providers.
   - Check out GIA edition 1 from 2019 for more detailed information on reaching out to healthcare providers.

3. **Packets for Faith Community Leaders**
   - Encourage members to engage in conversations with their faith community leaders. During these conversations, it may be helpful for them to share trifolds, the pamphlet *Food Addiction and the FA Solution*, and the Letter to the Faith Community Leader.
   - Request a Microsoft Word version of the “Letter to the Faith Community Leader” that you can modify for your fellowship by emailing docrequest@foodaddicts.org.

4. **PI-Related Announcements at Monthly Business Meetings**
PI Representatives who wish to expand on these primary responsibilities can also focus on the following activities:

5. **Calendar Announcements**: Announce your weekly meeting in the following public forums: community newspapers, online calendar announcement/community events websites, cable and radio stations (including their online calendar events sections).
   - *Please use the approved Meeting Calendar Announcement Templates from the PI Kit under Appendix A, and Appendix B, and also under the PI section of the FA website.*
   - Email the PI Committee at pi@foodaddicts.org for a list of your area’s local newspapers, college newspapers, radio and TV stations.
   - Email weblinks@foodaddicts.org for a list of local, national, and international sites where you can post meeting information online at no charge.

6. **Tri-Fold Rack**: Establish and manage your Meeting’s Sponsored Tri-Fold Brochure Rack in public establishments (i.e., local libraries, gyms, doctors’ offices, etc.), with permission from management.
   - Meeting members must vote to sponsor a local brochure rack, and a member(s) must take responsibility for keeping it updated with new trifolds (racks are available for purchase at office supply stores).
   - See the Fall 2017 edition of GIA for helpful suggestions on sponsoring a rack.

7. **Health Fairs and Information Sessions**: Encourage members to locate Health Fairs and Information sessions geared toward the general public, health care providers, or other professionals.
   - Check out the Health Fair tab in the Public Information Section of the FA website, under the Members tab: [https://www.foodaddicts.org/members/health-fairs](https://www.foodaddicts.org/members/health-fairs).
   - Review the Public Information Session section of the FA website for information about conducting Public Information sessions, including suggestions on how to announce and coordinate these sessions, and helpful resources for related activities. ([https://www.foodaddicts.org/members/information-sessions](https://www.foodaddicts.org/members/information-sessions))
   - Work with Local Service groups, Intergroups, and Chapters to coordinate participation.
   - Check out edition 2 of GIA from 2019 for information on conducting public outreach through health fairs.

**Personal Reflections...**

I was scared out of mind when I first took on the service of editing the Cleveland area trifold. I thought, “What if I mess it up and send some poor newcomer to the wrong location?” Or “Will
someone get mad at me for misspelling their first name?” However, this experience taught me that I only get better by walking through my self-centered fears and not running from them!

Doing the trifold had challenges, at first, because we constantly had meeting changes, and the Microsoft Word format of the trifold was challenging for me to master. I had very little in the way of computer skills, and I found it very time consuming and overwhelming to keep the local area trifold updated constantly. But with the support of our local service group, I eventually settled in on a manageable system, making changes only once a quarter and then sending out the draft copy to local meetings for edits. We also added a line on the front of the trifold, directing people to the FA website for the most updated list of meetings. After approval from the meetings, I would send out a finalized PDF version of the local Cleveland area trifold to all of the meetings, with the name of a recommended printer. Most meetings found it helpful to order together, in bulk, which made the trifolds more affordable and uniform throughout the area.

Eventually, EAI started sending updates to me as soon as people submitted meeting information changes online on the FA website. This was very helpful, and I was able to check the edits made online with the fellowship’s feedback via a group email. I grew and learned from doing this service, and, after 5 years, I decided to let go of this service position and let someone else learn the role.

It is amazing to me to look back and see how I went from fear to freedom, just by doing a service that I was so afraid of. Looking back, I realize this was invaluable to the fellowship, and I hear stories of how newcomers came into FA because they saw that trifold!

Cayce K., Ohio

When I think of service in FA, my typical first thought is "no." I'm just that kind of addict. But what ends up coming out of my mouth is "yes," because I know that it is the #1 way to get out of myself, and I always feel good afterward.

PI is a great way to get involved! I have been a PI rep for a meeting and have also been a part of an active Local Service Group. One activity we undertook was to post our meetings online as calendar announcements. We posted in several different websites, including Eventbrite, which shows the statistics for how many people have viewed the meeting or showed interest in coming. As a result, I've responded to people's inquiries about the meeting. It always gives me joy to see that people are seeing our meeting when they are looking online for a solution. It's a fairly easy thing to do, and many websites will let you post the meeting for years out, so it is not much work to see the seeds of recovery planted online.

Amber J., California
My experience with PI since moving to the frontier has been more challenging than I thought it would be. Since English is the third language in the country where I live, I had to go about looking for various places where English-language announcements are advertised specifically. I found a website where, in addition to having a free monthly calendar where I asked them to post our meeting, we also pay for our ad to be featured every month so that if anyone is looking for a job, an apartment, or other various items, they will see our ad come up. We have had many people call because they have seen either the ad or the calendar announcement.

Other places we have advertised include putting up flyers on bus stops and on bulletin boards around the city, especially in places where we hold our meetings or attend various AA meetings. We have also submitted emails to doctors in hospitals, telling them about the program. We have tried to get weblinks posted on various local websites that support mental health and have tried to give our trifolds out whenever we are asked about the program.

Doing this PI work really reminds me of the paragraph in the Big Book where the writer is disheartened because he feels like he tried so hard to help other alcoholics, and no one stayed sober. Yet his wife reminded him that they were both sober. I often feel that way. I am a results-oriented addict, and it can be disheartening that people who see our ads and call about the meeting don't come or don't stay, but the truth is I get to be grateful that I'm still here. Every month when I put up our ad, every flier I put on a bus stop that someone stops and asks about, and every call I take from someone who has seen our ad and is interested in the program not only plants a seed but also reminds me why I need to be here. I get to talk about the program and recall that I'm no “greater” or “less than” and that I'm just another food addict, living on the frontier and trying to stay abstinent and help someone who might be sick or suffering.

Ashley A., Israel

As a PI Rep for one of seven meetings currently working together to host an FA Information session, I appreciate the opportunity to work with fellows I don’t see at my regular committed meetings and to make new connections. We have been meeting monthly on the phone since March and are all very excited for our upcoming event! Working together, we have been able to send out a press release to multiple outlets. So far, one town newspaper has published it. We have created an Information Session trifold that has meeting information for the seven participating meetings, and we are creating a special “Information Session Phone List” that will be included in the newcomer packets we distribute that day. We have been going out together into our communities to post flyers and place racks—it’s so much easier when you’re not alone! We planned the Information Session for a Saturday afternoon and will begin the event with a fellowship lunch.

Lisa B., Massachusetts
Discussions about doing PI Sessions during our FA fellowship luncheons inspired me to check out renting a room in my church, which hosts other 12 Step meetings. I did not know how much my recovery would be enhanced by doing the service.

Participating in the PI Session changed my behavior and thinking. Before participating in the PI Session, I hesitated to ask for help. I thought I could do everything on my own. I often hoped other fellows might offer, but I wouldn’t ask outright. Now I see that I had been trying to protect myself from being hurt. By not asking for help, I didn’t put myself in the position of being refused, which would feel like rejection.

At the outset, I got two strong suggestions. One was not to attempt to the whole project myself, as it is impossible for one person (or one meeting) to do everything needed to carry off an effective PI Session. That would end up in my being overwhelmed, likely exhausted, and full of resentments, or the PI not reaching newcomers. The second suggestion sent me to the Tasks List in the website PI Kit for a PI session. The result was I took on the position of task coordinator and several meetings were involved.

After a group discussion where all my fellows had a copy of the Task List, I soon saw my fellows’ enthusiasm and willingness to volunteer to take on tasks for the PI Session. The open conversation about tasks and the necessity of my asking for assistance brought me out of my isolation and resulted in deeper relationships with each fellow. It became clear to me that nobody was going to automatically know what task had to be done, so I needed to learn how to delegate.

Doing this service taught me that being part of a team working together to reach the still suffering food addict was more effective, and much more fun, than me going it alone. The tasks were evenly distributed and no one fellow showed signs of burnout. Finally, and most importantly, the group effort in bringing about the PI Session Event strengthened our local fellowship by bonding us closer. I am grateful for the experience.

Kathryn W., New York

Traditions Corner – Posting Full Name or FA on Meeting Signs

The WSI Traditions Committee was asked whether FA meetings and Conventions should use our full name, "Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous", or "FA" on posted signs.

The Fifth Tradition reminds us that our primary purpose is to serve the newcomer. The Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions remind us to protect anonymity. Therefore, the TRC recommends local meetings keep it generic, “FA.” Because the meeting is for the newcomer, it is important to take into consideration that a newcomer may feel uncomfortable walking into a meeting with a sign announcing, “Food
Addicts in Recovery Anonymous.” Similarly, a meeting phone list is best titled with only the meeting day listed on the phone list. We do not need to identify it as a phone list for Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous. For meetings one should use “FA.”

In contrast, for conventions, welcoming signs may conceivably use the full name, Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous. Generally, established FA members attend conventions, and these conventions take place away from attendees’ home communities, so there is less concern for the anonymity of newcomers. Moreover, these signs may help attract public attention, so they have PI value.

Highlight: FA Web Resources for PI Reps

The Public Info tab on the FA website includes links to a variety of useful resources, in addition to the PI Kit. A good place to start is “Help for PI Representatives” (www.foodaddicts.org/members/PI-rep-info) which summarizes the primary and secondary responsibilities of the PI Rep and lists a variety of helpful ideas to make this position more manageable and effective, including:

- Conferring with previous PI Reps to learn from and build on their experience
- Asking members for help with PI activities during business meetings
- Consulting the resources in the Public Info tab of the FA website, including the PI Kit
- Coordinating with others who are supporting PI activities through local service groups, intergroups, and chapters
- Participating in World Service PI Committee calls
- Participating in WSI PI committee meetings at the annual FA Business Convention.

Words to Live By

“Service to others makes the world a good place. Civilization would cease if all of us were always and only for ourselves. We [food addicts] have a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the well-being of the world. We have a common problem. We find a common answer. We are uniquely equipped to help others with the same problem. What a wonderful world it would be if we took our own greatest problem and found the answer to it and spent the rest of our lives helping others with the same problem in our spare time. Soon we would have the right kind of a world.”

*Twenty-Four Hours A Day, December 15*
Subscribe to *Gratitude in Action*

- Go to the FA homepage at [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org)
- Click "login" at the top of the right page
- Type in your email address and password
- Click on "Manage my email list preferences"
- Ensure Gratitude in Action is clicked as "Subscribe"

**Share your experience!**

Sharing experience, strength, and hope is essential to our recovery—and to Gratitude in Action (GIA). Your submissions can help inspire all of us to do service. In particular, we’re looking for brief paragraphs on:

- How service in FA has enriched your life and strengthened your recovery
- Examples of experience with our highlighted position: **FA Conference Member** – Attending the annual FA Business Convention as a voting member of the conference from an FA meeting.

Please email your stories of experience publicizing meetings as an FA Conference Member to [GIA@foodaddicts.org](mailto:GIA@foodaddicts.org) by October 20. Other submissions are welcome on a rolling basis. Please contact us at the email above to let us know your interest.