

Gratitude in Action (GIA)

3rd edition – 2020

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

Service as a Pathway to Growth

I do service because it helps me grow. I remember a time when I was fairly new in program. I think I had just gotten my 90 days, and I didn't raise my hand to speak at the meeting. My sponsor asked me after the meeting why I hadn't raised my hand, and I told him I had nothing to say. The truth was that I was full of fear. My sponsor told me we don't wait to do service until we feel like it.



By doing service in FA I have learned to stretch into things I didn't think I *could* do and sometimes didn't *want* to do. I have taken on committee work when I didn't feel qualified and have grown as a result. The first service I did in FA was staying abstinent. By doing that, I learned to be honest and take care of myself. Now I can care for others by doing service. Service means: being available for my sponsee calls and calls from FA fellows; working with others on committees; speaking at gatherings; and helping out with my local service group. Any time I carry the message to another suffering food addict, I am giving back what was freely given to me, and I am strengthening my recovery.

Paul W., Massachusetts

Doing Service Despite the Fear

When I was asked if I would consider doing a radio interview as a PI activity, my first response was fear. Then I called a member who had already participated in a radio interview. We talked

and she suggested that I read the PI kit for guidance about how to speak with the interviewer. One suggestion I read was to refrain from using “FA jargon” in interviews.



When I did do the interview I silently prayed, “Your words, God.” The interview went well. All I did was ask the interviewer if there was anything she would like to know. She asked me questions, and, with the aid of some FA pamphlets I had also reviewed, I was able to answer her questions very simply. The time went so quickly! I am glad that I was able to experience this joy of being of service to the still suffering food addict.

Linda Mc., Sydney, Australia

Personal Reflections... Deepening Service during COVID-19

Looking for the Good

When I was asked to contribute to Gratitude in Action, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of inadequacy. Before COVID-19 shut down our in-person meetings, I was an active member of my meetings and held many service positions. Surprisingly, the service position I miss the most is being an Opener. There is something humbling, comforting, and grounding about arriving early, doing quiet time, putting out chairs, and greeting members and newcomers as they arrive.

Since the closure of my meetings, I am not as active in my FA service because I am not the “host” for my virtual gatherings, and I don’t hold service positions on any FA committees above the meeting level.

This leads me to reflect on what service *I am* doing. The most precious service I can provide is to be abstinent a day at a time, so I have the chance to be helpful to somebody else. Working from home opens up more time in my morning, so I am able to sponsor one extra person. I am so grateful that, in recovery, staying at home has not made me a slave to my refrigerator. And I am honored to help other homebound food addicts experience freedom from the bondage of addictive eating.

I am lucky to be a contact person for my in-person meetings, and so I sometimes receive phone calls from newcomers looking for information about FA. I listen to their stories, share mine, and suggest FA gatherings to attend. I also try to check in with them afterwards. A final service benefit from our COVID-19 reality is the extra flexibility of my schedule, which gives me the wonderful opportunity to receive calls from all over the world.

Livia L., Sydney, Australia

Connecting with Others to Strengthen Recovery

When our first meeting closed due to COVID, it was quite a shock. Although I was aware of this happening slowly around the world, first in China, then Japan, and then America, when it happened to us here in Sydney, Australia, it was very unsettling. I have been committed to my three live FA meetings for twelve years and would rarely miss a meeting—only for a weighed and measured vacation and the odd time when I was very sick. Making the transition to virtual gatherings was difficult, but I was grateful for my sponsor’s guidance about finding ways to be of service virtually, because service has been an anchor in my recovery.



It’s been lovely to hear and meet people from all over the world, who are able to attend the virtual gatherings I attend. And these new connections have opened up yet another way I can engage in service: making more outreach calls. I have always connected with fellows all over the world through outreach calls. I find this service most rewarding, especially talking to and supporting members in outlying areas with regular outreach calls. My virtual gatherings have allowed me to interact with many new members. God works through the gatherings and through the one-on-one outreach calls. My one percent is to welcome new

members to the gatherings and to call and receive calls when I can. Connecting through the telephone, getting things up and out, “facing our stuff instead of stuffing our face,” sharing, listening, and remembering our primary purpose—these actions reinforce my commitment to do “every tool every day” and “to not eat, no matter what, one day at a time.” In this way, my recovery is strengthened each day, ensuring that I maintain my precious gift of contented abstinence from my Higher Power.

Daniella P., Sydney. Australia

Local Service Group Spotlight

(A local service group consists of two or more FA members from more than one FA meeting group who combine resources to do service for FA.)

Although COVID-19 has brought many challenges, the Local Service Groups (LSGs) have continued to do service in a variety of ways in order to bring help to anyone struggling with food addiction during these stressful days. In fact, in many areas LSGs are forming for the first time, in order to help coordinate and centralize functions that support their regions.

In Toronto, LSGs have been coordinating with Meeting Contacts (who are the first point of contact for many newcomers) to share information about local Zoom or telephone gatherings. Since the Zoom gatherings are not posted online, making sure that the Meeting Contacts are

aware of alternate gatherings helps ensure that anyone looking for help can be quickly connected with other food addicts who can share their experience and provide hope.



In Western Massachusetts, an LSG came together to purchase a professional Zoom account for the local meetings to use for their online gatherings.

Representatives from the LSG also took on roles of providing helpful reminders to various meetings such as encouraging individual donations to FA (since there are presently no Seventh Tradition baskets being passed). Another valuable LSG initiative was to create written documentation to assist our less technically savvy members in using Zoom and other applications so that everyone can more easily participate in online and telephone gatherings.

LSGs have also been providing service by organizing *connection* magazine writing events, which are held on behalf of all the meetings in an area. During this time when we likely do not have access to normal in-person FA meetings, it can be great to use *connection* magazine by reading it on one's own, sharing in gatherings, or by writing for *connection* to support individual recovery.

It's becoming apparent just how valuable LSGs can be to support recovery from food addiction during COVID, for both newcomers and long-time members. Thank you all for your great service.

RESOURCES:

- 1) Bi-monthly SGSC conference call. Click here for information.
<https://www.foodaddicts.org/service-groups>
- 2) Access LSG Guidelines and Recommendations
<https://www.foodaddicts.org/downloads/lsg%20guidelines%20and%20recommendations%20updated%202001%2010%202016.pdf>
- 3) Request the Global LSG Contact List at SGSC@foodaddicts.org
- 4) Share your LSG experience in an upcoming issue of Gratitude in Action. Submit 2-3 written paragraphs to SGSC@foodaddicts.org for consideration.

Highlight: Donating to FA

Because of the pandemic, donations have naturally declined. It appears donations will remain low for a while, which means that WSI will need to tap into its prudent reserve.

Rather than using the prudent reserve, it would be preferable to temporarily maintain the WSI budget through donations from individual members. These donations could be those that many members would otherwise be making to their local meetings.

Many households are also experiencing a decline in their personal income. It is most important that these members first take care of themselves.



For those members who are financially able to donate to WSI at this time, one method of donation to WSI could be to calculate the amount they typically gave each week prior to the pandemic (ex: \$2 at each of 3 meetings a week is \$6 a week or about \$25/month).

This could be given online by clicking the [DONATE](#) button on the upper right side of the FA website or a check mailed to:

WSI-FA
400 W. Cummings Park Suite 1700 Woburn, MA 01801

From here you can also donate to your intergroup and the Maine Chapter.

All of this is entirely optional. Some people may wish to make a one-time donation based on the amount from around mid-March to now, and then donate on a regular basis, such as monthly, going forward until meetings again reconvene in their area.

If you have questions or need help on how to give online, please email FA at fa@foodaddicts.org. You can also call 781-932-6300.

Also, we want to acknowledge and thank those who have already made individual donations to WSI.

Stella J.
WSI Treasurer



Traditions Corner – Personal Anonymity in Print

Have you ever read a great article in *connection* magazine and deeply related to what the author shared? You get to the end and there might be a name of the author and where they are from. Or it might be submitted anonymously. You really want to reach out to this writer because you identify with their sharing, but there is no contact information available.

The simplest solution would be to publish the writer's phone number or email along with their name at the end of the article. But would this be in accordance with the 12 traditions? The Traditions Review Committee has been consulted with this exact question and has concluded that this practice would be a break of Tradition 11. Tradition 11 reminds us that "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." It is the opinion of the TRC that Tradition 11 also applies to printed publications of FA. Although *connection* is intended for FA

members, once it is in print form it is available to anyone. Furthermore, Tradition 12 states that “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.” The committee felt that “principles before personalities,” and the general guidelines of preserving individual anonymity, would best be protected if contact information were not published.

Words to Live By

“Happiness cannot be sought directly; it is a by-product of love and service. Service is a law of our being. With love in your heart, there is always some service to other people.”

Twenty-Four Hours A Day, August 28

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- 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.

Please email your stories of experience to GIA@foodaddicts.org. We’re also looking for FA members with 2 or more years of abstinence to join the GIA subcommittee. Please contact us at the email above to let us know your interest.