

Gratitude in Action (GIA)

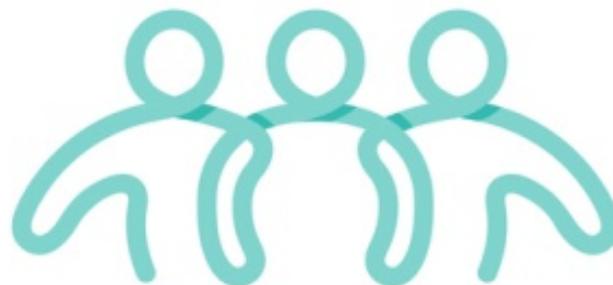
4th edition - 2018

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?

First and foremost, I do service because it keeps me abstinent. I was told as a newcomer that if I did all the tools every day, including service, I would always have a choice about whether or not to pick up the bite. If nothing else, while I'm doing service, my hands are too busy to be putting extra food in my mouth! I get so much more, though. Service gets me thinking about others instead of just myself. When I do service, I'm putting effort into FA instead of worrying about how much I can get out. There was a moment once when I was doing service at the EAI Service Support Weekend and I realized that anyone in the program could do what I was doing at that moment. If I wasn't doing the service, someone else would be, but I was graced with the length of abstinence needed to do what I was doing and the time to do it. It was my privilege to be the person doing service in that moment. I wish I could say I have that feeling all the time—sometimes, service is just one of the tools I do—but I try to keep that perspective whether I'm calling a newspaper or a newcomer. I was graced with abstinence, and the service I do is a very small price for a very large benefit!



Mac M., California

Spotlight on Service: WSI Contact Position

(Two years of continuous abstinence and completion of one AWOL strongly suggested.)

- Acts as the liaison between the meeting and World Service Incorporated (WSI).
- Makes sure that his/her own name and contact information are accurately recorded with WSI on the FA website (www.foodaddicts.org) by creating or updating his/her own online profile. (If the member does not already have an online profile, then he/she can create one on the FA Website by going to "Login," and "Create Profile." If the member already has an online profile, then he/she logs in and verifies the profile information.)
- Provides his/her contact information (first name, last name, phone number and email address, ensuring all are exactly the same as listed in his/her FA online profile) to the Web & Directory Contact and confirms that his/her online profile information is up to date.
- Receives and reviews all correspondence sent by WSI via email and takes necessary action.
- Receives and prints the Frontier Sponsor List, the Frontier Phone List, the Universal Language List, and the *Gratitude in Action* newsletter sent by WSI via email and ensures an adequate number of copies are always available on the literature table.
- Reads the WSI correspondence aloud at the business meeting, makes copies available to members as needed or requested, and gives one copy to the secretary, who files it permanently in the business meeting binder. The meeting can use its Seventh Tradition to reimburse the WSI Contact for any expenses incurred.
- Announces the World Service Business Convention and the World Service Fellowship Convention and all related details (i.e., dates, deadlines).
- In the absence of the Web & Directory Contact, the WSI Contact can submit meeting information changes using the online Meeting Change Form.



Personal Reflections...WSI Contact Position

When I came into this program in 1996, my lifeline was a connection with my fellowship in Boston, those pioneers who paved the way through their experience, strength and hope. Their wisdom was gleaned over years of working the program ahead of me and it gave me inspiration, clarity, and rooted me in this program.

Service at any level and service where I can give back helps my recovery, but I find particular value in the World Service Inc (WSI) Contact position. Being a WSI contact keeps me connected to World Service and connected to my roots. It's called "World Service" for a reason. Dedicated, committed service is being done on our behalf around the world. While I love my local

fellowship, it's important for me to remember that I am a part of an organization, a fellowship, a movement, greater than our work at the local level. This continues to give me strength, just as it did twenty-two years ago.

F.A. is more than my own personal recovery, a set of principles, a template for living, and the support I receive from my weekly meetings. It is a society of food addicts in action. It is vital to my recovery to contribute to that society and maintain my connection to the broader fellowship. Reading the WSI update each month helps me build and sustain this bridge between my group and the larger organization. My work as a WSI contact also inspires me to go to the business convention each year, which brings me face-to-face with hundreds of my fellowship around the globe.

I am writing this on Canada's Thanksgiving Day. I am reminded that Thanksgiving is both about *thanks* and as well as about *giving*. The program teaches me to practice "thanksgiving" every day.

Dave I., Canada



Susan D., California

When I joined FA, one of the big differences I noticed between this program and the other program I had been a member of for so many years was the emphasis on service. For so many years in the other program, I avoided service at all costs. But in FA, my sponsor didn't give me much of a choice. I was told that if I got "in the middle of the bed," so to speak, I would be unlikely to fall off the edge. Service was a big part of how that would happen for me. It would make me feel committed to my meetings, accountable to my fellows, and invested in the success of my fellowship. Long term abstinence would be a natural result.

Through service, I became less self-centered, and that began to change years of self-pity, self-absorption and my habit of criticizing those who were actually doing all the work, while I was sitting on the "sidelines."

I don't remember the first time I served as WSI contact. But I know that it was a natural progression in the kind of values FA had gradually instilled in me. My interest in understanding how the groups in my local fellowship functioned expanded into an interest in understanding how FA as a whole worked.

I came into FA in a relatively young fellowship, far away from the centers of FA. More recently, I have lived on the frontier, where (after four years) we now have two tiny meetings. By receiving periodic WSI emails, and informing myself and my meetings about what is happening in our worldwide fellowship, I have become even more invested in FA, and in turn, in my own personal recovery. Serving as WSI contact reinforces for me that I am part of a wider fellowship, and teaches me many of the reasons and principles behind the practices that make

FA FA. By serving as WSI contact, I feel truly connected to FA. It makes it easy to feel like I am “in the middle of the bed,” even if I am geographically far from the center of FA.

Rachel W., Israel

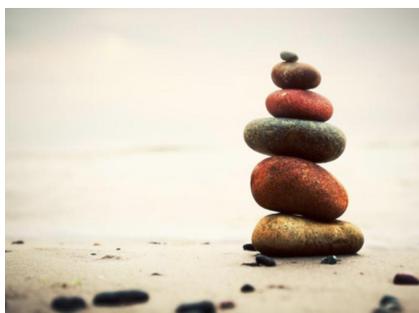
My first experience with FA was in a small fellowship in rural Vermont...and I do mean *small*; we were 5 people. As soon as I reached 90 days of abstinence, I was immediately given service positions. It was not a choice; with only 5 members, the need was great. I was willing, reluctant but willing, to take on certain ones, but the sound of the WSI contact terrified me. I didn't know what it was, mind you. I just knew it sounded big and complicated and probably involved doing things that I didn't understand and probably wouldn't want to do.

Fast forward to today, 14 years later. I am currently the WSI contact for 2 of my committed meetings – and that is by choice. I like the position for several reasons, not the least of which is that service of any kind helps me stay abstinent and carry the message of recovery. As WSI contact I am constantly reminded that I am part of an international fellowship, something that goes way beyond my local meetings. As a result, I have served on various WSI committees, participated in several WSI events and attended the annual business convention each spring. When reading WSI announcements at meetings, I have the opportunity to share a bit about my experience of these activities, hopefully encouraging others to get involved.

Doing service in FA has taught me to try things that I don't particularly want to do – just because. That continues to be a lesson that is, quite literally, saving my life.

Glenny D., Maine

Traditions Corner - Attraction vs. Promotion



Although FA members can understandably be excited by a desire to get the word out about our program, we can sometimes be confused about how to do this since Tradition 11 states “our public policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.” The Traditions Review Committee (TRC) notes the importance of distinguishing between the two concepts. While we might ultimately receive less publicity, we are to inform, not promote. As stated in *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, we “publicize its principles and its work but not its individual members” (p. 182). When the primary goal of the activity is to emphasize weight loss, it dilutes our program's primary purpose of reaching the individual who is suffering from food addiction.

The following are examples of inquiries the TRC has received which have been seen as **promotional** activities:

- Making t-shirts that have “Ask me how I lost weight”/ FA printed on them.
- Sending press releases connecting FA with particular seasons (bathing suit season, Halloween).
- Giving away trinkets at a FA information table while wearing buttons with “before” pictures.
- Setting up a table at a shopping center to distribute and communicate information about FA to the shoppers.
- Creating a poster advertising FA meetings and locations that portrayed before and after photos of a member who experienced extreme weight loss in program. Photos would have the head cropped out to avoid issues of anonymity.

The TRC believes the following activities may be used in the spirit of **attraction**:

- Paying for classified ads advertising meetings and Information Sessions.
- Sharing actual statistics regarding medical claims.
- Participating in a Health Fair at a community health facility.
- Using a screen to project photos of FA members who are speaking at large meetings or PI sessions, including, where feasible, the FA logo or a photo of one of our trifolds. (Remember, though that the goal is to demonstrate the difference of FA recovery as a complete recovery and not simply as a weight loss program.)

Highlight: *FA Book*

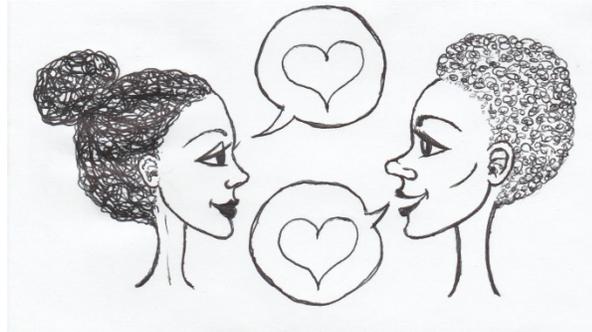
Did you know that the FA website includes [a link dedicated to the FA Book](#)? This page includes options to order the soft cover book, a large-print version, and the e-book. It also has a link to the first chapter, “Perhaps You’re a Food Addict?”, which anyone can read for free and that you can easily share with newcomers and others interested in FA.

Some meetings have purchased copies for public libraries, clinics, and other venues or shared them with faith leaders, doctors, and others who might benefit from knowing about FA. How is your meeting using the FA book to help spread the message of recovery?

Words to Live By

“[I]f we don’t reach out to other addicts and talk about our addiction, we’ll forget that our disease is incurable. Service helps us remember that we are in remission from food addiction for just one day and only if we continue to live the 12 steps.”

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous,
p. 409



Susan D., California

Subscribe to *Gratitude in Action*

- Go to the FA homepage at 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 on our highlighted position—the Public Information Representative

Please email your stories of experience with the Public Information Representative position, *especially with outreach to healthcare providers*, to GIA@foodaddicts.org by **January 12**. Other submissions are welcome on a rolling basis. We are also looking for artists who would like to produce line drawings for future editions. Please contact us at the email above to let us know your interest.