



# The Sunshiner

## Confessions of a Sunshiner Co-Editor

Hi Fellows! Thanks for reading the Sunshiner. Together with Meaghan, I have been the co-editor for almost a year, and it has been a great way of giving service. But I have a confession to make! I am the co-editor of the Sunshiner, but this piece you are reading is only the second thing I have ever submitted! Maybe you can relate?

This edition's theme is 'together we get better' and that applies to our newsletter too! The goal of each Sunshiner is to reflect the Ottawa OA community in all its amazing and diverse perspectives. From newcomers to members with decades of recovery. And like sharing at a meeting, you never know when what you have to say will be the thing that someone else needs to hear so they can keep going for the next 24 hours.

So as you are reading this edition, please think about what you might be able to contribute to the next one. It could be something like:

- A personal testimony
- A poem
- A photo you took
- A brief reflection on a reading that inspired you
- A slogan, saying or practice that helps you in your recovery

If you have something to submit or any questions, you can send it any time to [sunshiner@oa-ottawa.ca](mailto:sunshiner@oa-ottawa.ca). The theme for our Summer edition is "Honesty, Open mindedness, and Willingness" and the deadline for submissions is June 21st.

Thanks again for reading this month's Sunshiner. Without our readers and contributors, the Sunshiner could not exist!

Yours in service - Erica S.

## Other Features In this edition

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# Together, we get better

A Word from Meaghan H.

Co-Editor of the Sunshiner

What would this program look like if we weren't in it together? I remember first coming to OA, going to some meetings, buying the book, and deciding that I would go off and do the program alone while I made a geographic change.

*By myself, OA and the 12 steps did not get me better.* In fact, my binges became worse, and I started vomiting.

The changes for me happened when I was no longer alone. Being in a room with recovered compulsive eaters who shared their stories gave me hope. Building relationships with my fellows gave me love and acceptance. Getting a sponsor gave me a guide in working the 12 steps (and more) – and helped me access the miracle. Becoming a sponsor gave me new levels of gratitude and a sense of purpose and self-worth.

For me, the Program does not work without you. *I have been to meetings where there was only one other member – and they contributed to my recovery and kept me abstinent for another 24 hours.*

As a newcomer, going to dinner with my fellows before a meeting was a lifeline, and particularly important when I was struggling in the rest of life.

*Today, I count OA members as some of those who are dearest to my heart – friendships which span time, distance, and place – and always bring me back to my HP's love.*

I have heard old timers say how important it is to stay in the middle of the pack; that in the wild, it is those outside, or on the edges of the herd that are the most at risk. It is in my best interest to stay in the middle of it all – do service, go to meetings, be with my fellows – not be alone – and in doing so, stay close to my HP and my program.

*I am also reminded of the term 'a sponsor sandwich.'* Today, I am grateful to have a sponsor, and I sponsor others. These relationships are a commitment – and they keep me in the program and with you.

We all need each other for OA's success and for our individual recoveries – including those of us who are long timers, returning, struggling, and new. Please keep coming back.

**LIBÉRATION PAR LES ÉTAPES**

**Samedi, 27 avril 2024 de 10 h à 15 h**

**RÉUNION OUVERTE**

**1 conférencier(ère), 2 ateliers**



Inscription : 9h30 à 10h

Apporte ton dîner et ton breuvage, aucun restaurant à proximité.

Merci de ne pas porter de parfum par respect pour nos membres qui souffrent d'allergies.

7<sup>e</sup> tradition : don suggéré 10 \$ ou selon ton budget.

Endroit : Cap Santé Outaouais (accès pour personnes à mobilité réduite)  
92, Boul. St-Raymond, salle 304  
Gatineau (Québec)  
J8Y 1S7

Pour information : Chantal L. : 819-431-2815 ou Louise C. : 819-923-2648

# This is a "we" program.

By Rebecca P.

I'm a compulsive eater, anorexic, and bulimic. I've been in OA for many years and I know that this is a "we" program. However, when I recently travelled to Scotland from Canada for a 5-week work trip, *I went into isolation from my fellows and HP without realizing it.*

When I landed in early February, it was dark, cold, and wet in Scotland. I also started feeling homesick after a week. Work was hectic and I had a long commute to and from the hotel so I would get home after dark and feel trapped in the hotel room. I would ignore my feelings when I got to the hotel and watch TV. I stopped journaling and was not thinking of program much at all. I had looked into OA meetings when I arrived, but the timings of face-to-face meetings were awkward with my work schedule, and I didn't want to do online meetings while there. I reasoned that I would be ok without meetings for a while because my food had been so quiet for so long.

However, I was still speaking to my sponsor and sponsee once a week while there. That was the extent of my connection to program.

Needless to say, after about 2.5 weeks of coasting like this, food started to become a problem. *I found myself eating compulsively even when I didn't "want" to.* In the evenings, I was lonely and bored, and food became my exciting "solution". Two evenings of eating desserts for dinner and waking up one morning thinking about throwing up scared me, and I realized, "I need to stop isolating and reach out for help". I wasn't bingeing yet, but when throwing up enters my mind, I know I'm incredibly close to the edge of a cliff.

I reached out to my sponsor and a few members back in Ottawa and told them what I was doing with food and how out of control I was feeling. I told them about my feelings of loneliness and homesickness. I did some step work and gave it away to a member. I found the willingness to attend two face-to-face meetings because I knew I needed personal connection.

*And guess what - it helped.* It didn't take away the discomfort of being away from home in a hotel room, but I relied on my fellows to get me from one meal at a time without picking up my trigger foods. It wasn't perfect, but it was enough. And where was HP in all of this you might ask? Well, I wish I could say I turned to HP in my time of need, but I when I'm in the food, HP is very quiet, if audible at all. So I did think of HP at times, but I needed my fellows to support me through until the food got quieter. "God with skin on" - that's who I relied on :)

I'm back in Canada now and still need to watch out for coasting in program. I only have a daily reprieve and it's hard to face all the feelings I have going on. *But I would rather face my feelings than return to the zombie life I lived when I was in the food.* I'm grateful for OA and my OA family. We can get better together.

Special congratulations to Danielle G who celebrated 20 years of abstinence  
on Saturday, March 2nd, 2024!



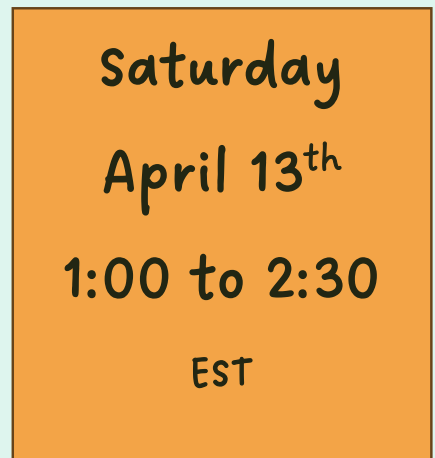
ODIG 12 Step Within Committee Presents



Zoom Only

Zoom meeting ID & password will be emailed out one day prior.

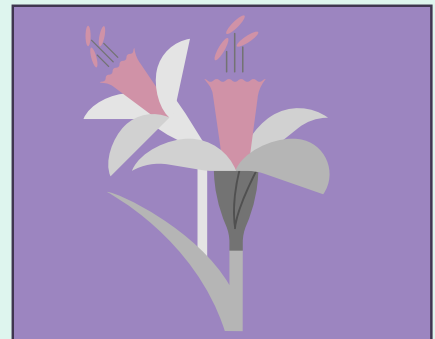
To receive information, sign up for the Ottawa District Intergroup email updates at [oa-ottawa.ca](mailto:oa-ottawa.ca)



Seventh Tradition will be collected electronically.

For more information, contact Ann S.

613 206-0801



# The Seeds of Hope

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The theme for this spring edition is togetherness and I find that togetherness is a hard idea for an overeater such as myself to understand. Eating, in many cultures and in many places in the world, is a social activity. Meals are daily events that structure whole families together, feasts and festivals are community building experiences, and it is for good reason that many faiths and ideologies use food to celebrate the end of a spiritual cycle or period of observance.

But overeating is not eating. For me, the disease of overeating is a shameful one that I take much more effort in hiding than fixing. Overeating is stealing food from a pantry and eating it alone in the basement. Overeating is slipping out of work when no one is watching to eat a second lunch. Overeating is being so uncomfortable in your body that you grow disconnected to it; wearing baggy clothes to hide yourself from others even when in public, and not letting people touch you so you aren't reminded that this body is, in fact, yours. Overeating is looking in the mirror and seeing a stranger look back at you and asking that stranger what you did to deserve this.

It is said that overeating is a disease of isolation. Surely all diseases are isolating though, in their own ways. What Overeaters Anonymous does for me is tell me that, while I might be alone right now, there is hope that one day I might not be. I hear stories of recovery every time I go to a meeting, online or in person. People are willing to talk as if they know me and care about me. Even more than my problems with food, it is my loneliness that is killing me. But just recently I gave out my number to a newcomer at my weekly meeting. They reached out to me a week later with a problem, and I was able to help in what little way I could. That act of togetherness was perhaps more important for me than them. I felt a part of something, and I came away with the knowledge that I was a positive part of someone else's life. It is through these acts that we, as OA members, foster togetherness and plants the seeds of hope that grow into change.

The Theme for the Summer Sunshiner is  
"Honesty, Open mindedness and Willingness."

Sharing your recovery through the Sunshiner is a  
wonderful way to do service.

Email submissions, suggestions, and feedback to

[sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org](mailto:sunshiner@oa-ottawa.org) by June 21st