

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa . New Zealand . Australia . Hawaii . Hong Kong . Japan . Philippines . Singapore
Bangladesh . Nepal . Indonesia . India . Malaysia . Thailand . China . Pakistan

a network of  communities

NA in Indonesia

I'm an addict named Vickie L.. The first time I used drugs, I was about 15 years old and the event was a night out with two other girls. The fact that all three of us were named "Vickie" is not the only reason that this was an unforgettable evening. What I found that night blew my mind...in more ways than one. I was quite excited about this discovery and was looking forward to the next opportunity to do it again before I even got home that night.

However, that unforgettable evening was not over yet. I got in bed, covered up and here comes my mother to hug me and tell me that she is glad that I am home. She immediately knew that I was high and it seemed as though her entire life flashed before her eyes because her perfect, precious daughter was high. When she said that she was awakening my father, I pleaded with her not to do so, but she brought him to my room immediately. I truly believe that if he had beaten me or just hit me once, I would have used that as a "blaming" technique in my angry excuse to use again. Yet my father hugged my mother and he cried. That kept me from using again for about ten years.

Talk about a progressive disease! Even after ten years between the first and second times using, I can look back and see exactly what that phrase means. It was just as though I had continued to get high all those years and from then on, I was on a downward spiral at the rate of a non-stop avalanche.

Because of using, my life included such as the following: my children taking care of themselves...and me; my parents and grandmother going through enough heartbreak to well make up for my ten years of abstinence; giving up a job that I really liked working with juvenile delinquents in a detention center; losing almost everything...including my mind.

Although the following events did not take place all at the same time, some were continuous through out my active addiction. I experienced physical and mental abuse, beaten up, back broken, rape, and much more. But to top it all off, I was gunshot in the left side of my head (left temporal). During the neurosurgery, my family was told not to expect me to live, but that if I did, I would be paralyzed from the neck down, have total memory loss and completely lose my left eye. None of this happened, not even slightly losing any vision. While in active addiction, miracle after miracle after miracle happened to keep me alive.

Did I stop using? No! I decided that I would quit this drug, but not that one or that other one and also decided that maybe I should add this one or two. Insanity in active addiction.

When I finally hit bottom and admitted myself into the hospital for help, I had no idea what was about to happen with my life. After "Detox", the hospital took me to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting and my whole world suddenly became real. I honestly shared with them that I knew I had a problem with this drug and that drug, but I did not know how I would be able to live without a few other drugs. They knew what I meant, understood what I was talking about and told me about Narcotics Anonymous. They explained to me that the disease of addiction can attempt to easily convince an addict that she needs drugs, while they are killing her all along! They told me that an addict "cannot do just one" of any drug, that "one is too many and a thousand is never enough".

Everything that those members of NA told me that night, I could relate to! I was beginning to understand exactly what they were sharing with me! And one of the most memorable feelings of that evening was that

I finally felt at home! I finally felt that I fit in somewhere, that I belonged!

This night my clean date: April 12, 1994 and I thank NA and the God of my understanding for that evening that turned my whole life around and I could finally begin to get to know the real world...and the real Vickie. Since I have been clean, there have been even more miracles! The God of my understanding has continuous "coincidences" take place and I am constantly amazed. There have been some very painful times, such as my mother's death, but my strength comes from the very loving, spiritual fellowship of NA and from a relationship with the God of my understanding that I could not have previously dreamed about. I remember when I was a few months clean, a man shared in a meeting that it is a good idea to write out a list about your dreams. He said to make a list of the dreams that you would like to see come true in the next five years; the next ten years; and fifteen and twenty. He also suggested keeping them in a journal, perhaps, and to look back on them one day...that you would be surprised at how many of them have come true. I looked back on my list for five years and it is amazing! Yes, almost all of them have come true and the ones that did not, believe me, I am grateful that they didn't! I must add that one of them missed it by a little. I dreamed to visit Ireland because it is the homeland of my ancestry. That has somewhat taken place because I flew over it en route to Indonesia!

After very much prayer and watching many closed doors opening, I accepted a position in a recovery centre in Bogor as the female house administrator and drug addiction counsellor. The primary means of recovery at this centre is to have all of the residents in NA or we know that it will not work.

The first meeting of Narcotics Anonymous in Indonesia took place on April 1, 1997 in Jakarta. This was started by an addict named David G.. He recognised over 50,000 addicts (in Jakarta alone) with no recovery program available. There was a "med detox", but no NA meetings, no aftercare of any nature. David G. knew through his own experience, strength and hope that if this did not immediately change, many deaths could not be prevented. NA began and there are now many recovering addicts in Indonesia!

In Bogor, there are three meetings per week: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays...with more to

come. The attendance for two of these meetings is usually 50-70 members. One of the meetings is closed for addicts with HIV/AIDS. We see that this is seriously needed in Indonesia. We've come to believe that there are other diseases that quite often adjoin themselves with the disease of addiction. At the recovery center, the present statistics are as follows: 64 residents, 20% HIV positive and 80% Hepatitis C positive. However, twelve of the residents have not been tested as of yet and with practically watching these percentages grow, we know that it will continue to do so.

NA in Indonesia is presently in need of areas, regions, conventions and especially in need of translated literature! Friends of ours in the New Hope Area of NA in North Carolina of the United States got together and told our story here to the World Service Office. The members there bent over backwards in order to get NA literature (English is certainly better than none) and key tags to us! I wish many more could have seen these members, some who had over a year clean, go up to get their key tags for the first time! I believe many of us have been taking such as this for granted in comparison with the members here.

I see the Steps, the Traditions, the spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous at work on a daily basis with these residents here. I know without the meetings, without the unity of the fellowship none of us could survive. We have so much to give together, such unconditional love that comes with the experience of recovery.

Vickie L.

Please send articles, list of events, or other material to apfnews@hotmail.com or mail it to Ivan, 28/d/ Police Court Lane, 3rd Flr., Fort Mumbai 400 001, India.



The Asian Pacific Forum Newsletter presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publishing of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous.

Tokyo or Bust....from APF Chairperson

I am really looking forward to our meeting in Tokyo in March 2000. I look forward to meeting old friends from NA communities that make up the Asia Pacific Zone and to meeting new delegates at their first APF meeting. Plus all that there is the excitement of going to a new city and a new culture.

Following the meeting, the Japan fellowship is hosting our first Asia Pacific Convention combined with the First Japan Region convention. Judging from our e-mails, there should be a truly international presence for this celebration of recovery. I have attended the previous APF meetings and conventions in Bangkok and Calcutta and sometimes I can't believe that I have been given the privilege of serving the fellowship in this way.

This has been my first year as Chairperson and this year we have had a very dynamic Admin committee. With myself in Australia, Masa in Japan, and Tali in Hawaii, our e-mail systems get a thorough work out. Since we came together in February 99, we have developed good working and personal relationships and have been great support for each other even though we live thousands of miles apart.

At the World Service Conference in April 99 the zonal forums were allocated time to give reports. All the APF members who were there went to the front of the room and addressed the conference and took questions. This was the first time this had happened at the WSC and this presentation received a standing ovation. Many members from other regions were very welcoming and very interested to hear about NA in the APF countries. As a sideline at the conference, certain APF members raised a considerable sum of money for the APF by providing sit-up massages to weary conference participants.

We are now having more contacts with the other zonal forums, particularly the Latin American and the European Delegates Meeting (EDM). The past year has seen Erik represent the APF at the EDM in Barcelona Spain and this year Wolfgang, a member from the EDM will attend our Tokyo meeting. There has been more sharing of information and experience between the APF and EDM this year particularly in the area of Public Information.

Apart from the WSC, we only meet once a year, so it is hard to fit everything in a three-day meeting. This year, apart from our routine business and reports from

all the communities that make up the APF, we will have sessions with the world services contingent, plus Train-the-Trainer Public Information, and Translations reports. Our planned discussion periods will include "Development trips".

In October the APF funded members from Calcutta to visit Bangladesh for the purposes of increasing communications and translations development. This was the only development trip for the past year because we felt constrained by lack of funds and the knowledge that we would need the bulk of our funds for the Tokyo meeting. That aside, this has been by far our best year for fund-raising.

Through various activities including raffles, merchandise sales (particularly by members from Hawaii), and direct contributions we have raised over US\$8,000 for the past year. We have still needed the assistance of World Services provide for the shortfall for this years budget of US\$11,000. We are noticing that as our NA communities grow that little by little we become more self supporting.

Other items for discussion will include funding and our continuing relationship with World Services. Also policy and guidelines: Our internal policy needs to reflect changes in our growing structure with the increasing size of our meetings. We started off as a small group but as we grow we seem to need more guidelines and the challenge is to keep it simple (important spiritual principle)

For months I have been receiving multiple e-mails daily, some from total strangers. We get really good feedback about our newsletter and website, (thanks to Ivan and Simon). Everywhere I go, I notice there is growing interest in the activities of the APF at group level. It is exciting to hear how Na is developing all over. It is exciting to hear from members in Indonesia about the growth in meetings there, and at the same time harrowing to hear of the numbers of addicts who are still dying and struggling with this disease.

I want to say something really cool to finish off, but all I can say is what a pleasure it has been to work as part of a team with two very wonderful and generous people, Tali our incredibly well respected Treasurer and Masa, very energetic and resourceful vice-chair extraordinaire.

Hope to see you in Tokyo , Ron B (APF Chairperson)

Crossing Borders

Greetings from Calcutta, India. I am an addict, Sumit. This is a report of my trip to Dhaka, Bangladesh from 15th Sept. to 21st Sept. 1999. I travelled by an AC Bus which took 20 hours to reach Dhaka. It was a long, nice and comfortable journey. I reached Dhaka at around 2 am in the morning. As soon as I got off the bus, I phoned Henry. Even though it was in the wee hours of the morning, Babul and Mukur met me and gave me a warm welcome. They made me feel at home as if I had never left my hometown. After my long journey, I was hungry so we visited a Dhaba (Road Side food joint) to eat. Typical of being NA members, as soon as we sat to eat, we began discussing about NA in the city. I forgot all about my tiredness and lack of sleep.

Thirty minutes away from Dhaka, in a remote place, there is one rehab called BARACA. The place was very peaceful, but there was no electricity because of a dispute with the landowner. This rehab has around 100 inmates and is run by a NA member. They have a NA group inside the rehab, which meets thrice a week. Also the counselling centre acts as a midway home for the ongoing recovering addicts inside the city. I felt good, inspired and hopeful when I saw NA growing even without outside help. There is a group in proper Dhaka which I attended. The meeting started around 8pm, with the Serenity Prayer. I could feel the warm welcome of NA members in the room. We all hugged and exchanged views about the fellowship. I could feel my Higher Power working in each and every step of this journey. I shared about my long adventurous journey and the hope that once I reach Dhaka all my pain and tiredness would end with a hug from another NA members. Before 1947, Bangladesh was a part of India. Today, it is a different country. The language spoken is Bengali though the dialect is different from the bengali spoken at Calcutta.

There was controversy in Dhaka about representation at the last APF meeting. Some members approved with the representation others disapproved. I realised that a service structure is needed for better co-ordination among groups in this region. There are 4 cities, Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajsahi and Khulna, where almost 20 NA groups function. Only 2 groups are registered with WSO.

A few members had formed personal groups, which made growth difficult. I shared that this is a problem all over the world in NA. I shared that time and understanding will solve these problems. I suggested to form a RSC in the region and ASCs in the area.. There is no formal LTC at Bangladesh. A few NA members have translated the Serenity Prayer in Bengali, which they use at meetings. I passed on the translated Bengali IP's on a floppy which has been approved by the WSO and printed in Calcutta, alongwith the Bengali software which we use in Calcutta for processing these files. They may have to make major changes with words and sentences as per their requirement. Throughout this trip, I felt a warm welcome from all members in Dhaka. They were always around to help me, right to the moment of taking my bus back home, it was Babul who saw me off at the bus stand. Good-bye NA fellowship in Dhaka and see you soon again. As I was supposed to leave for Mauritius on 29th Sept, I had to come back quickly to prepare for my journey. I could not visit other places such as Chittagong, Rajsahi and Khulna in Bangladesh where NA is growing.

Here in Mauritius we have started a NA group "Ocean of Miracles", which is still to be registered with the WSO, I thank all NA members in the APF region for their kind co-operation and support.

We do recover, NA is the proof.

An addict, Sumit.

APF Activities Calendar

21-23 March 2000

APF Meeting at Japan
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24-26 March 2000

Japanese Regional Convention

March 31-April 2, 2000

Millennium of Miracles
The 16th Annual Gathering of the
Fellowship of Oahu, Hawaii
Email: Gathering_2000@hotmail.com

30Aug-3 Sept 2000

28World Convention of NA
Cartagana, Columbia

