



## Successful OA Members Have Sponsors

Did you know people who have failed at many paid diet and calorie clubs have succeeded in Overeaters Anonymous? Could it be because the program is suggested? Could it be because the solution is spiritual as noted in the 12 Steps? Or, could the reasons be found in the sponsorship component of the program? Most likely, the answer is as individual as our members!

Sponsorship is a key component to successfully working our program. Each of the steps starts with “We.” Together, we get better. Join us as we ‘Trudge the Road to Happy Destiny’ and learn about how several of our members view sponsorship and working the steps one day at a time in Overeaters Anonymous.

### Who Needs Sponsorship? I do.

When I think I am in charge of my program, I believe I don’t really *need* a sponsor. That kind of thinking can put my abstinence at risk. There are words I may resist which are exactly what I need—words like accountability (the fact or condition of being

responsible), willingness (the quality or state of being prepared to do something) and commitment (the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause or an activity.)

When I have a sponsor, I find I am better able to maintain accountability, willingness and commitment to my abstinence and working the steps. And what do these give me? I get happiness (pleasure, delight, enjoyment), contentment (longer lasting satisfaction and gratitude) and achievement (success) in all areas of my life. Happiness, content and achievement in all areas of my life? Yes!

### Obtaining a Sponsor: Find Someone Who Has What You Want

In our program, one sponsorship suggestion is to “find someone who has what you want and ask how they got it.” Have you heard a member share how she lost 100 pounds, how he worked step 9 with family members or how she works the program at work? Perhaps someone has serenity in a stressful household or is at peace although there is illness in their family. Talk to the person after a meeting or get the person’s phone number and ask how they were able to do it.

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The theme for the first quarter 2019 Cocoon will be *Service*. See page 6 for more details.

## Milwaukee Area Intergroup

*Serving Eastern Wisconsin*

MAI Website [oamilwaukee.org](http://oamilwaukee.org)

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

### Contact Info

414-259-0640

Milwaukee Area Intergroup

PO Box 270054

Milwaukee, WI 53227

### QR Code

direct to website



### Board of Directors

(new board members take office at November meeting, based on October elections)

**Chair, Heidi B:** [chair@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:chair@oamilwaukee.org)

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**Secretary, Joy M:** [secretary@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:secretary@oamilwaukee.org)

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**Region 5 Reps, Lynn H. and Kris WL:**  
[region5rep@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:region5rep@oamilwaukee.org)

**World Service Rep, Lynn H:**  
[wsorep@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:wsorep@oamilwaukee.org)

Leave message for any board member:  
414-259-0640

### MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email?  
Send an email to [emailblast@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:emailblast@oamilwaukee.org)  
with “subscribe” in Subject. Include in the body of the  
email your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen  
by other people receiving the mailings.

### MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m.  
Martin Luther Lutheran Church  
9235 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226  
Each member group can have two voting  
representatives. All OA members are welcome.

## OA World Service

[oa.org](http://oa.org)

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: [oa.org/podcasts/](http://oa.org/podcasts/). A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

A link also is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information.

**Spanish OA Website** [Espanol.oa.org](mailto:Espanol.oa.org)

**French OA Website** [Francais.oa.org](mailto:Francais.oa.org)

## Region 5

[region5oa.org](http://region5oa.org)

*Serving Midwest US and Canada*

### Cocoon Submissions

**Yes, we need and want your stories of recovery, poems, pictures, and news!**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1st Quarter	Dec. 17	Service

Send to [cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org) or  
OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054,  
Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Cocoon Editor: Cindy F.

### Editorial Policy

*Out of the Cocoon* is the *quarterly* newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole.

### Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email [12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org) or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. food, step, maintenance, late night calls, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

### Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name, phone number and type of sponsor you are to the list of available sponsors so you can help another member. Contact the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee as indicated above.

## Highlights from the MAI Sponsorship Workshop

Milwaukee Area Intergroup held a Sponsorship workshop in August. Speakers and attendees discussed sponsoring and being sponsored, as well as answered questions.

These included

- Why should someone in program have a sponsor?/What are the benefits of having a sponsor?
- What if I am hesitant to get a sponsor?
- What if I want to change sponsors?
- Why should I be a sponsor?
- What if I am hesitant to be a sponsor?
- What can I do to be a good sponsor?
- How do you suggest working the steps with your sponsee?
- What is the time commitment to being a sponsor?
- How do I release a sponsee?

Attendees were asked to highlight their takeaways from the session. Here are some of the comments:

“A sponsor is a guide for life’s journey.” It is a person to share your experiences with. It strengthens both sponsee’s and sponsor’s commitment to abstinence. Anyone with 30 days of abstinence who has gone through the first 3 steps meets the sponsorship requirements. If you can listen, if you can make calls, if you can be nonjudgmental, then you are ready. It is highly encouraged. Your own sponsor and your Higher Power will help you.”

“Keys to being a good sponsor: Abstinence and Commitment to working the Twelve Steps.”

“I can’t keep it unless I am willing to give it away.”

“A sponsor doesn’t need to be all or nothing.”

“Besides calling a sponsor, find a buddy to call daily.”

“Practice humility by being willing to say ‘I don’t know’ to a sponsee’s question.”

“Don’t insert yourself into another’s story by discounting a sponsee’s feelings or comments.”

“As a sponsor, be honest about your availability.”  
“Your sponsor is there to help you be a sponsor.”

“Many resources exist to help you be a good sponsor.”

“It is important to have a sponsor to get support in this program, It is one of the tools. Without a sponsor, it is likely you will get the same thing you had before program.

“It is important for the sponsor and sponsee to agree on time commitments, food plan, communication style (phone, text, email) and how often, type of sponsorship needed and provided, etc.”

“Someone does not have to be perfect in their program to be a sponsor, just be willing to be honest and share your own experience, strength and hope. If you have a slip, be honest with yourself and your sponsor, and then decide with your sponsor how to talk to your sponsee. That doesn’t mean you have to stop sponsoring.”

“There are different types of sponsors although food, step and maintenance are the most common. One person can have more than one sponsor or one sponsor can provide multiple types of sponsorship as long as there is mutual agreement.”

“To get a sponsor or let others know you are available to sponsor, let it be known at your meetings, contact the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee at [12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org), or call the MAI phone number at 414-259-0640 and your information will relayed to the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee.”

“World Service has a brochure titled ‘Sponsoring Through the Steps’ that can help answer additional questions about sponsoring. It can be ordered through a local meeting or online at [oa.org](http://oa.org).”

Much more was shared at the workshop. The resulting list was too extensive to put in an issue of the *Cocoon*. If you are interested in getting this unofficial document that was based on what OA Milwaukee members shared, send an email to [cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org) or [12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org) or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message as to how to get it to you.

## A Personal Reflection on the Doctor's Opinion

This is a personal reflection on the Doctor's Opinion in the *Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book*. I'd like to share it in the hope it may help others relate to it and help them in their recovery

### The Doctor's Opinion—Good News xxv - xxvi:

As I began this reading, my initial feeling was one of rejoicing—perhaps because this book and its message have become my very good friends. But it occurred to me that this book is a *gospel*—it carries *good news*, and if memory serves me, that is what gospel means. And whether it is a *gospel* or not, reading this causes me to rejoice. Men, for whom other methods had failed, “appear to have recovered”! The doctor (and I) is/are excited by the possibility of the “rapid growth inherent in this group”—a group which activates the recovery process through the sharing of personal experiences with others. The doctor has complete trust. He says “you may rely absolutely on anything they [recovered alcoholics] say about themselves.”

### Allergy of the Body, Mind Obsession xxvi - xxvii

Here it says the alcoholic must *believe*, stronger than the word *understand*, that the body is abnormal, not just the mind. It talks about the allergy concept—how this concept, whether scientifically accurate or not, explains things that otherwise cannot be accounted for. For me it was liberating to be told that I had an allergy of the body and to accept it, to *believe* it. It was monumental to experience the physical difference when I eliminated sugar from my diet. 21 days without sugar, was the accepted belief at the time in OA, 21 days and your body would be cleared of the addictive substance. It is important for me to renew, in my heart and mind, these liberating, saving truths. The obsession of the mind would have me *believe* otherwise.

### Clearing the Brain, page xxvii

Of great importance to the doctor (and me) is the *imperative* of clearing the brain of the alcoholic. While in my early days in OA, I had considered and accepted the idea of a physical allergy to sugars for me, I don't think I came close to appreciating the effect of the sugar on my brain. I am directed today, through this reading, to consider seriously how my mind is affected. Not only is my mood altered in negative ways—irritability, discontent, unclear thinking, etc.—but my thinking regarding food and

eating choices is severely compromised. For me to have recovery, it is *imperative* that I be free of the sugar for a continuous, extended period and to stay free.

### Excerpt from my email to another member

I am grateful for the renewed sanity that I am blessed with recently, via the Big Book. The sanity to see that I MUST eliminate those substances that I'm allergic to, which is sugar for sure. And I need to be willing to watch for other substances that might have this allergic/“insane” effect on me. This sanity has been renewed through studying the Doctor's Opinion in the Big Book, and I see I need to keep refreshing myself with this truth. Otherwise, my mental obsession will catch me off guard and I will succumb once again, and lose the truth (become “crazy” in my thinking, i.e., believing untruths). It is indeed a challenge to believe I need “a treatment” (OA program and abstinence) when the “illness” can easily cloud my ability to see that I have a condition needing the treatment. I need constant fortification from meetings, literature, etc. so that I can guard against the slip into insanity—and it has happened over and over, because of complacency, in the past.

### We Help Each Other Change page xxvii

The doctor mentions the medical profession's belief that “some form of moral psychology was of urgent importance to the alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond our conception.” Referring to the medical profession, “We are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lie outside our synthetic knowledge.” They had not experienced addiction. It would take the experience of those who had been addicted to help guide alcoholics. This is the crux of outreach and sponsorship in OA. The doctor observed the program work because alcoholics shared their experience. The doctor explains how telling his story helped one member get better and then another. It could not be taught from the medical community and others who had not experienced alcoholism.

The doctor mentions (but not by name) how Bill W. was being cared for in his hospital's alcoholic treatment area, and that Bill “acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once.”

*Continued on page 4*

## ...Personal Thoughts on The Doctor's Opinion of the Big Book

From page 3

once.” This would have been the 6-step program of the religious movement, the Oxford Group, steps which were later modified into the 12 Steps of AA. One of the steps, similar to AA/OA's 12th step, called for “carrying the message” to others. Thus, following his own rehabilitation and ensuing sobriety, Bill was allowed to “tell his story to other patients” of the hospital. There were some misgivings at first, but before long, the plan/program was having additional successes with “hopeless” men, enough to begin to impress this doctor and others of the medical community.

As I have learned from other materials, this assimilation of ideas and circumstances that created the nucleus of the AA philosophy was a miracle of connecting forces. Bill was the vessel, the vehicle, where these concepts were merged together. Out of that miracle of connections has developed a widening circle of miracles that includes the recovering members of Overeaters Anonymous.

### Free From Cravings - pages xxvii-xxviii

The doctor speaks of the men who he considers to be “amazing” cases and describes their unselfishness, lack of any profit motive, and community spirit, “They believe in themselves and still more in the Power which pulls [them] back from the gates of death.” The doctor is inspired by their remarkable changes. I, too, am inspired by the recovered alcoholics. And I am inspired again and again when I hear the stories of overeaters and their remarkable journeys from disease to recovery as a result of applying this program.

The doctor goes on to say that the alcoholic ought to be freed from his craving for liquor, before psychological measures can be most effective. And then discusses that the chronic alcoholic has been effected by an allergy and that the “phenomenon of craving” brought on by it occurs only in this class of drinker, never in the average drinker. The comparison to my own disease (allergy and cravings) is so clear, and yet I have the complication of ferreting out which foods I am allergic to. I have found this to be a gray area where I can completely lose my way. Also, there is the area of eating behaviors which may or may not be “allergies,” but which have great power over my

ability to eat appropriately. As an “allergic type” who has formed the habit and can't break it, I can never safely use these foods and behaviors.

### Grounded in a Higher Power—page xxviii

Also as an “allergic type” (or addictive type), the doctor says they (alcoholics)—and I include myself with them—must have our ideals grounded in a power greater than ourselves, a higher power, if we are to re-create our lives. I have to desire that re-creation every day and I need to ground myself accordingly each and every day.

-JM

**Editor's Note:** There is more to this personal reflection of the Doctor's Opinion. It will be continued in the First Quarter of 2019 issue of *The Cocoon* which will be distributed at the January Intergroup meeting.

## Indianapolis Region 5 Convention Takeaways

I attended the Region 5 Convention in Indianapolis this year and brought back the following thoughts and memories:

Living in the solution. It is a day-to-day process, that takes work.

One of the speakers started a Hope Journal. He collected quips and quotes from meetings and literature.

I can go from hopeless to hopeful in less than a minute.

Honesty, Strength and Experience shared with humor and sadness and real life.

People came from all over with the same goal. Some were traveling from region to region looking, listening, and learning for Recovery.

There was much hugging, new friendships built, and a Power Greater than ourselves ever present.

It was an opportunity to restart, reconnect or build on what was already known.

-Sue W.

## Intergroup Service...Anyone? You Can Do It Too

Hi, my name is Joy M. and I'm a compulsive overeater. I've known this for more than 41 years and I've been an active OA member for approximately 33 of those years. I lived in northern Illinois till 2009 when I moved to Oak Creek, Wisc. Back in Illinois, I was active in the Suburban North Intergroup during two periods of that time between 1977 and 2009. During those periods, I served as recording secretary for the intergroup and helped establish a physical office in Chicago.

Here in the Milwaukee area, I became active with the Milwaukee Area Intergroup (MAI) in the summer of 2013, attending monthly meetings as an Intergroup Representative for the Franklin OA group. I found MAI to be an inspiring organization. I saw energy and dedication all put to good use in serving OA in the area. I was motivated to do more than just attend and bring handouts and announcements back to my group. I heard wisdom and kindness and saw all kinds of support being provided by those in attendance, serving the fellowship as they maintained recovery.

In January 2014, I was moved by my Higher Power to get involved in producing the (then) bimonthly newsletter *Out of the Cocoon* and I continued to attend MAI meetings regularly, paid attention and did my best to contribute. I worked as *Cocoon* editor for two years, felt proud to be a part of and contributing to a very active intergroup. After two years, it was time for me to leave that position open so that someone else might serve and grow as I had done.

I was planning to continue on in intergroup in some other capacity, perhaps chair of Professional Outreach, or some other position that might need filling. In my heart and mind, I was open to serve as needed. Little did I suspect that the "need" would be that of MAI Chair. The next two years are now history and I smile as I say that. You may recall that I was Chair when MAI lost its faithful office manager, Marilyn (due to her family's issues), and, almost simultaneously, MAI gave up its physical office and made many transitions in the way it operated. Somehow, with HP's help, MAI came through that successfully and today, under its current Chair, Heidi B., is moving along steadily toward an updated modern website that will serve MAI and its OA

members for years to come. Those years as Chair were not always easy, but it was an honor for me to serve in that capacity. And I learned and grew, and learned and grew.

Currently, I am nearing the end of a one-year term as MAI Secretary and am looking ahead to what the future might hold. I look forward to contributing more to the Milwaukee Area Intergroup, and I hope that some of you might be hearing from your sponsor or your Higher Power that it is time for you to give intergroup service a try. It can't hurt. It can only help – yourself and others. Please come and see for yourself.

-Joy M.

**Note:** Milwaukee Area Intergroup meets the third Monday of each month at Martin Luther Church at 92nd and Bluemound, 6:30-8 p.m. Each group can have two representatives for Intergroup and there are no abstinence or participation requirements for those positions, just a willingness to do service. The MAI board is elected at the October Intergroup meeting, (although there have been years when all positions were not filled at that time). The board members need to have one year of current, abstinence and have served in some role beyond being a member of OA, such as being a group rep, speaking at a marathon, helping at convention or retreat. The elected chairperson then appoints committee chairs at the November Intergroup meeting. If interested in serving, send a message to [chair@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:chair@oamilwaukee.org) or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message.

### Next Cocoon Topic: Service

Why do you give service? How you decide what service to give? Have you noticed any service positions that are needed that you could fill, even if it isn't a specified position? Have you noticed anything in general that you would like to do to help OA grow in the Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin area?

You are invited to submit articles answering these questions or to discuss anything else about service for the next Cocoon. Also, articles about any other experience, strength and hope are welcome. The deadline is December 17.

## ...Successful OA Members Have Sponsors

From page 1

OA is a program of shared successes and failures. We share what works and what didn't work with one another so together we recover.

Perhaps at this point, you need a sponsor and have tried and haven't found one who isn't booked. You can also get a sponsor through the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee. The bottom of page 2 of the *Cocoon* explains how.

### New Knees, New Me

Pain, pain go away, don't come back another day!!!  
Let me eat, leave me alone.

Needed two new knees—  
kept on denying, putting it off, ran from pain,  
became friends with discomfort.  
Are you kidding??

Now have two new knees, two new parts—  
dancing, walking, skipping,  
facing adventures together.

We can do this,  
We are doing this,  
We will do this!!!

-Donna H.

Definitions of sponsors and the only requirement stated by World Service:

“Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence.”

-from *OA.org* and the *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet

### What Do You Want From a Sponsoring Relationship?

In the beginning, “I don't know,” may be your answer for what you want from the relationship. I wanted to get abstinent and lose weight. I knew if I called in my food, I would eat moderately. I did call in my food, ate moderately and lost weight. I maintained my weight loss and could wear my new clothes, season after season, year after year, which was a miracle to me.

And, I needed help working the steps and dealing with life on life's terms. I needed to be able to talk through situations that came up for me and learn how to deal with my emotions. I was grateful to learn how to have difficult conversations in appropriate ways. It wasn't something I learned in my home growing up. My parents couldn't teach me what they didn't know.

### My Unexpected Benefits of Sponsoring Relationships

Early on, we learn we need to share recovery to keep our recovery. By doing service in a variety of ways including becoming a sponsor, it helps me maintain my recovery.

So, what did I get that I didn't expect going into this? I continue to get more and more honest with myself. I continue to learn. I learn what I need to be healthy. I continue to learn my Higher Power's plan for me in this life. I grow in self-respect, self-love and self-confidence. I had hidden the best parts of myself from me and the world. Some days it is as if I am on a wonderful treasure hunt, discovering buried treasure on my road map of life as I share with my sponsor and listen to myponsees.

I was unhappy when I went to my first OA meeting. I thought it was because of my weight. Working the steps and helping others to do the same, I progressed from a person who looked at what was wrong with the world to seeing life is good. I didn't even know that was possible when I walked through the door. I found life had riches, as the OA Promise states, Beyond My Wildest Dreams. I hope you share your unexpected benefits as well.

~Anonymous

## Your Service as a Sponsor is Valuable and Greatly Needed

“Get a sponsor.” “I need a sponsor.” “How do I get a sponsor?”

These are common statements said to and by a newcomer and heard at OA meetings. Those of us in program for any length of time suggest to a newcomer they need to get a sponsor as soon as possible. However, we forget to tell them how to do it or we use the OA suggestion of “Look for someone who has what you want and ask him or her to be a sponsor.” or “Watch for people who say they are available sponsors when you go to your meetings.” Locally, we say, “Go to page 2 of *The Cocoon* and contact the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee.” Many people have strong recovery in this program and yet already have their available time filled with sponsees. Therefore, it seems there is a shortage of available sponsors for newcomers and those who do not have a sponsor yet.

How is this evidenced? I attend some of the biggest meetings in the Milwaukee area. They have many people in the group who identify themselves as sponsors. Yet, when it comes to identifying if there are available sponsors, the room falls silent. On one hand, this is good because it means so many of us are using the available sponsors. On the other, it makes it difficult for someone new to get started.

There also are several people in those rooms who have been in program for a year or more who do not identify as being a sponsor. Is it because they do not feel they are “abstinent enough,” aren’t abstinent at all, are defining abstinence too harshly, don’t have their own sponsor to use as a role model, don’t want to sponsor or something else? Only they can answer that question.

Sponsorship is one of our tools, an expectation outlined in our steps, and is a way we can share the gifts that we have received in the program with another person, among other things. WSO defines as sponsor as “Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence.” I like that. It means I don’t have to be perfect or know everything. So, I sponsor. Sponsoring helps me stay in my program.

If you currently are not a sponsor and would just like to try it, maybe you would consider sponsoring a

newcomer for their first 12 days or the first 30 days and help that person get grounded in the program so they can receive its blessings from the beginning. Maybe that connection will give you a little confidence too and that can built into a longer relationship. It doesn’t have to stop after that initial commitment. This opportunity also is open to those who may have a fairly full schedule, but like to help newcomers or find at a certain time in their monthly or seasonal schedule, they have a little extra time they can spend on program.

If any of this resonates with you, contact the Twelfth-Step-Within Committee at [12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org) or [newcomers@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:newcomers@oamilwaukee.org) or leave a message at 414-259-0640. You do not have to live in the Milwaukee area to sponsor someone in the Milwaukee area.

If you are not sure if now is a good time for you, think of the success you have received because you have had someone to guide you in your program and then consult your sponsor and Higher Power,

-Cindy F.

## A Sponsor is...

- A sponsor is...
  - A guide
  - A cheerleader
  - A reassurance
- A sponsor is...
  - A phone call away
  - A quick response
  - A lifeline
- A sponsor is...
  - Keeping me in line
  - Helping me be me
  - Trudging a similar path
- A sponsor is...
  - Kind
  - Gentle
  - Loving
- A sponsor is...
  - A friend
  - An ally
  - A commitment

-Sue W