



## What it Takes to Work My Program

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says, “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” The significant word for me is THOROUGHLY. I have found, for myself, that I must thoroughly—methodically, carefully, systematically—follow the path set out by the founders of AA, and by our OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. For me, I must work all three parts of the program—physical, emotional, and spiritual. If one is left out, then the three-legged stool falls down. I have tried to skimp and it just doesn’t work for me.

With all the OA program has to offer, it is workable to bring all three aspects of the program into my life and my day, each and every day. And, if I want the recovery that is awaiting me each day, I must do the footwork—use the tools, be honest, prayerful, and comprehensive in my efforts. Painstakingly (I learned that word from the *Big Book*), I write and execute my action plan, including quite meditation time, exercising my body, reading OA literature and writing about it, planning my meals and committing to that plan, reaching out to other OA members, sponsoring and having a sponsor, getting to a meeting every day, and if I can’t, listening to an OA podcast, and having some prayer time, time with god, time to remember, each and every day, that I am not doing this alone. I have a spiritual and emotional disease, which

manifests in compulsive overeating. Each day that I address my spiritual and emotional condition, I am moving in a positive direction with recovery of my disease of compulsive eating.

~Terrie

## Together in Many Ways

We are in this together. We are written into the steps. You’ll find us in any of our literature. We are in the directions, the recovery, and for a specific, page 164 of the Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. Look us up!

Our phone numbers are on We Care lists. Our hands go up as sponsors and for other service positions. If you’ve been feeling alone, join us at a meeting, convention, newcomer’s meeting or on a call. We were never meant to suffer with this illness alone. –

~Anonymous

Our *Cocoon* is an impressive example of the on-going work of OA members in MAI’s communities. You can give service by taking a few of your program moments to read a *Cocoon* article, and give your own comments on it (anonymously or with your name) to be posted in the blog on our website. Just email a few word to [yourstory@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:yourstory@oamilwaukee.org). Your words can make a difference to those who visit the [oamilwaukee.org](http://oamilwaukee.org) website.

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The theme for the first quarter 2024 will be “Setting up a Food Plan or Action Plan that Helps You Be Abstinent.” How have you determined your food plan or your action plan? How has it changed over time? Due: Feb. 1

## Milwaukee Area Intergroup

*Serving Eastern Wisconsin*

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

Facebook Overeaters Anonymous - OA Milwaukee

### Contact Info

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### QR Code

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### Board of Directors

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

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### 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., via Zoom. Contact [chair@oamilwaukee.org](mailto:chair@oamilwaukee.org) for the information. 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

**We need and want your stories of recovery, poems, and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!**

Issue	Deadline	Topic
1st Quarter	Feb. 1	Setting Up a Food Plan or an Action Plan that Helps You Be Abstinent

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

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, for newcomer, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs you have.

## Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

## Together We Learn, Experience, Get Better

“Together We Get Better” was the theme for the 2023 Milwaukee Area Intergroup Convention. As I sat in convention, these reflections came to mind.

“Today OA offers me the opportunity to be with fellow sufferers who know the pain that excess food has caused. OA offers me recovery from compulsive overeating. I do not need to live in isolation any longer because there are people who understand my disease. What a MIRACLE! I no longer need to isolate myself, as I have come to believe in a Power greater than myself, and I share the camaraderie of fellow compulsive overeaters.” (pg. 25 *Voices of Recovery*)

I did not come to OA 14 years ago to be in a fellowship. I was desperate, as the food was controlling me. Food used to be my best friend, then it became my worst enemy. I wrestled with this twisted codependent relationship with food for 36 years of my life.

As my life became more and more unmanageable, I lost jobs, lost a marriage, was 300 lbs, and long lasting friendships seemed to be unattainable to me. When I walked into my first OA meeting spring of 2009, I was greeted kindly and we read the first step in the *Overeaters Anonymous 12 Steps and 12 Traditions!* What a huge relief that I was not crazy or weak willed, but that I had a disease and OA had a solution. I was not alone. I kept coming back and was told that OA fellows would love me until I could love myself.

Fourteen years later, and three years after forced isolation because of COVID, I saw my OA family

members at convention—those who welcomed me 14 years ago and throughout the years, encouraged me, showed me by their examples how to live life on life terms without eating over it. I’m so grateful for this amazing fellowship I’ve found in OA.

I have had friends for fourteen years in this fellowship. My relationships at work and in my personal life have greatly improved because of this amazing way of life. I could not have accomplished any of this on my own. God has done for me what I could never do alone. I hear my Higher Power, God, speak through the fellows in OA. I hear what I need to hear, the truth, encouragement, strength, hope. It is SO true that Together WE get better as the OA promise states, “No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together.”

Thank you to all who helped put on this amazing convention, for all those who attended the convention - who went to any lengths to suit up and show up! I love you all! I will keep coming and carry the message and be of service. It’s a gift that was freely given to me that I must return. I put my hand in yours.  
~Kim B.

## No Advice Giving, Please!

"People may seem to want my advice, but that is no reason for me to give it. In OA, I am just another member, not a counselor." (*For Today*, Feb. 24)

For me, the first part of this statement, "People may seem to want my advice..." isn't true. I don't get the sense that people in program want my advice, and I'm not interested in giving it. My OA cohorts and I know the ropes, including knowing this is not the place for advice giving. However, I know that on certain occasions I've asked a sponsor or two or another OA sister or brother to share their experience, strength, and hope with similar situations that I'm experiencing to help me figure something out, but that still isn't advice giving.

We're all equals here, and I love it! In other words, nobody is driving the proverbial bus: the other cohorts and I are just some bozos on the bus.

~Bobbi

### Overeaters Anonymous Responsibility Pledge:

**“Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.”**

## Carrying the Message

# MAI Public Information/Professional Outreach History and 2024 Campaign Outlined

In Fall of 2023, Milwaukee Area Intergroup voted to include a column in each issue of *The Cocoon* dedicated to helping members “Carry the Message.” This is the first of those articles.



This graphic will be used on all of our “Carry the Message” materials and will be incorporated into all of our activity flyers during 2024.

recovery and abstinence, and I really wanted to keep that because this was a very positive change for me.

I’ve done a lot of different activities to carry the message, including making a pitch to a newcomer in the moments before a meeting started, handing them a pamphlet, talking about what OA is like, what OA has done for me, and more.

Sometimes it was taking a poster to a coffee shop or library, asking permission to hang the poster in hopes someone will look at it and perhaps remember seeing it or maybe pull off a tab with the phone number of Milwaukee Area Intergroup (MAI). In this case, the poster and the motivation to hang it was provided by MAI. Usually a meeting group was involved in this and the chosen site for the poster was near the location of that meeting.

I’ve participated in a health fair by volunteering my time at a table or booth for Overeaters Anonymous. In this instance, there was planning at MAI to bring

members together to represent OA, to hand out materials, to answer questions and again talk about what OA is like and what it’s done for me.

Every time and in every way I’ve extended my “heart and hand,” I felt the fulfillment of doing a positive thing: taking action, “being the message” for others as best I could. Of course, I’m not a professional and sometimes I’d hoped to see a person come to a meeting and they didn’t. So not all was rosy. But to paraphrase some wise person, someone was abstinent and getting recovery, and that “someone” was me.

Then the MAI Public Information (PI) and Professional Outreach (PO) committees formed The Marching Band as a way of taking up the mantle of Carrying the OA Message in a focused way. The Marching Band usually met on Zoom, and it grew into a group with a common purpose. I was very happy to be a part of it. We were guided, by experienced PI and PO members and MAI’s Communications Specialist (paid consultant), in ways that we could spread information about OA in either online media or in a poster campaign. The Marching Band chose first to reach out through online media. For months, we met regularly and we performed small tasks that helped put the name of Overeaters Anonymous in front of the chosen online news source public. Because our consultant guided us, we knew our postings were seen by large numbers in many communities of MAI’s geographic area. We included a link to the MAI website for people to click for more information in every post.

Taking action with the other Marching Band members really helped my recovery and gave me lots of contact with other members also reaching for recovery. We had fun, encouraged each other onward, and kept our own recovery alive, while putting the name of OA in front of more and more individuals. During the time of this online media campaign, the number of followers of the MAI Facebook page increased by 300 percent! MAI is working in so many ways to help

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## What I Notice and How I See It All In Gratitude

“Just noticing” is one of my favorite ways to be grateful. When a possum showed himself and walked across the length of our tree line, I was delighted and said thank you. There was bark rubbed off trees across the line, deer droppings and deer print evidence, yet we had no deer sightings. When a doe and a buck with two small nubs showed up in the yard at dusk, we watched for a full five minutes as they made their way across the backyards. I thanked God/HP and the deer for gracing us.

When we laugh easily and unexpectedly, my heart is grateful. When an unexpected text from our child shows up, I say a gratitude prayer.

When someone sent a lengthy message with devastating news they received, I said a gratitude

prayer they shared it. I was so glad to be able to know. I was grateful to be abstinent. Grateful they asked for what they needed, prayers and positive thoughts. I was grateful I could feel my sadness, gladness and fear of what the next months would hold. I was grateful I could talk about it with my sponsor and my spouse.

I am grateful I can just notice when things run out at a store and be grateful, I can afford to go to a store. My heart is full when I cook, and it turns out especially well and when I can laugh when it doesn't.

I just notice when the sun is shining, when the heat goes on in my car on a cold day or I have a blanket to lay over my lap as I relax on my comfy couch.

I wonder, what do you ‘just notice?’ Grateful to all members and my wonderful meetings, I notice!

~Anonymous

## Doing My Footwork Allowed Me to Walk Away From My Past

"I wish for some future dream and forget to work on my current defect. I want to blame the past for how I behave today." (*Voices of Recovery*, Oct. 22)

Yup, I'm my past. It has been easy for me to slip into either one of these character defects: worried about the future and eating over my worries or blaming the past for my overeating. This was an easy way to cope, because my disease was in charge or nearly in charge of me for my first 33 years of life until I became recovered. When I was worrying about the future, bingeing on food helped me focus on overeating instead of thinking about my fears.

Blaming the past allowed me to blame people from my past and, frankly, get angry at them for what I perceived as the cause of my overeating. And although this was generally not an entry to overeating, feeling like a "victim" fueled my diseased mind to feel unhappy and powerless.

Flash forward to now, and I am so glad to have turned my will and my life over to my Higher Power. Throughout this process, I have felt well supported by my Program cohorts—including each of you, and some therapy. I have followed the steps and humbly asked HP to relieve me of my disease. And He did, one day at a time while I have done the footwork. Footwork has included following my food plan and attending meetings. Additionally, I have learned in

these rooms that I was the one who put the excessive amounts of food in my mouth. Absolutely no one was forcing me to eat, including those people from my past who applied pressure on me to be thin. The truth is, they were doing what they perceived as right for me.

So the net is, in this current transformed life of mine, I'm taking responsibility for what I do. Right here and right now. Thank you, HP, for your heavenly guidance. I can't do this alone. This is truly a "we" Program. Am I perfect at this? No, but I'm making progress.

~Bobbi



## Carrying the Message

### MAI Public Information/Professional Outreach History and 2024 Campaign Outlined

*From page 4*

members carry OA's message of recovery. I feel so fortunate to be a part of it. I hope you'll join me when we get the new campaign rolling!

What follows is the actual plan written for the Milwaukee Area Intergroup. It spells out how the intergroup can support us in carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers both as individuals and as autonomous groups.

#### **MAI PI/PO PLAN FOR LATE 2023 AND 2024**

PI = Public Information,  
PO = Professional Outreach

A planning session by the PI/PO Steering Committee was held in-person late summer 2023. Present were the PO Chair, PI Chair, Communications Chair, and Communications Specialist/Consultant. As a result, a strategy, goal, and plan for Carrying the Message over the next year and beyond was laid out.

#### PIPO Strategy:

To equip, train and support local meetings in Eastern Wisconsin to better Carry the Message of OA recovery within their local community, to the general public and health professionals.

#### 2023/2024 Goal:

To plan workable projects/campaigns to Carry the Message in Your Local Communities that are within the capacity of Milwaukee Area Intergroups's volunteers and budget.

#### 2023/2024 Plan:

PIPO Steering Committee will develop a "Menu of Tools" to help Carry the Message in Your Local Community. The budget used during 2023 was approved. The following is a list of those "tools."

Digital outreach using *Patch*, an online newspaper, to post seasonal posters, meeting dates/times and

more (targeted toward younger people), with guidance and coaching from MAI

Posting of timeless paper posters, with guidance and coaching from MAI

Talking to your healthcare professionals, with guidance and coaching from MAI about literature available for professionals

Quarterly column about Carrying the Message in your local community in *The Cocoon*, if approved by MAI. (MAI did approve this and this is the first of those columns.)

Setting up an exhibit at local health fair/walk run, with template from MAI

Offering a Newcomers meeting in your local community, with template from MAI  
A monthly OA meeting dedicated to Carrying the Message in Your Local Community, to be known as the "Carry the Message Café"

PIPO Steering Committee with the Communications Meeting Editor will reach every meeting group in the MAI area—whether in-person, hybrid, or virtual—to let them know about the Menu of Tools that MAI has to offer to Carry the Message in Your Local Community. Meetings are autonomous; each meeting will make its own decision about whether and what activities they may choose to perform, with MAI guidance and coaching. The budget needed for 2023 was already approved.

PIPO Steering Committee is considering a **pilot project** of two new tools to start Spring 2024: 1.) Direct mail, including digital mail and 2.) Exhibit tables at local farmers' markets to pass out OA materials. Based on the learnings from these pilots, the new items may be added to the Menu of Tools for 2024/2025. The budget needed for the pilot projects would be requested for the 2024 budget.

~Joy M