

General Service Association of ABA
President's Report 12 March 2008

I would like to start with congratulating ABA on its success over the last 15 years. What a tremendous accomplishment and gift from our Higher Power. Without the support and encouragement of all those present tonight and countless other nights, ABA would not be able to help so many suffering from anorexia and bulimia around the world. Thank you to everyone for their time, experience, strength and hope. We couldn't have done it without you!

At this time, I would like to thank, in particular, my fellow board members for their tireless efforts and genuine support of ABA.

- > Terry K., our vice president, brought with her a personal understating of eating disorders and a wealth of experience in treating this disease. She worked faithfully to combat this devastating disease. Terry's commitment to the 12 steps and her personal recovery made her indispensable to the Board. Due to other commitments, Terry is no longer able to serve on the Board. I would like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication to ABA and the GSA.
- > Phyllis W., our secretary, is diligent and tenacious about providing accurate board meeting minutes, her compassionate nature lightens the load for the rest of us and, as a non-eating disordered board member, she is invaluable in providing the board with a different and sometimes, a much more rational, perspective. Her many years of recovery and service in another fellowship has helped guide us through sometimes unfamiliar waters. Phyllis is standing for re-election.
- > Jacqueline R., our treasurer, has worked admirably on the finances of the GSA. Her ability to pay attention to details, her selflessness and her willingness to take on extra tasks made her indispensable to the Board.
- > Bill A., our personnel committee chair, was integral to the operations of the Board. His extensive knowledge and commitment to 12 step programs was a great asset to us. Bill was able to keep us on track and ensured we were following the traditions to the letter. His genuineness, sense of humor and authenticity made him a special part of our team. I would like to take this opportunity to let him know how invaluable his years of service have been to the GSA.
- > Rick K., who took over the Personnel Committee chair when it became vacant, and was voted chair in his absence, brings with him a wealth of experience in recovery and service work. His easy going manner, ability to think outside the box and his solid understanding of the 12 steps makes him an important part of our team.
- > Ron B. took on many tasks on the board and provided insight into challenging issues facing the Board. Ron's intimate understanding of the traditions and his access to resources in the community made him vital to the Board's operations.

Ron is also not able to continue on the Board and his presence on the Board will greatly missed.

- > Crystal F., due to family obligations, will not be able to stay on the Board. I would like to thank her for her efforts and I wish her well in the future. Not only did Crystal act as a member on the Board; she was also the Administrative Assistant for the GSA. Her smiling face will be missed.
- > Owen F., chair of the phone and internet committee, played an instrumental role in providing technical support to the GSA. His enthusiasm is greatly appreciated.
- > Gin K.'s personal knowledge of the effect eating disorders on the family, brings a different perspective to the table. Her approachable personality and quick smile brings a bright light to the Board.
- > Jen M.'s first hand knowledge of eating disorders and her desire to increase awareness of the devastation of eating disorders makes her an important part of our team. Jen demonstrates her responsibility to carrying the message to others suffering from an eating disorder through her ongoing advocacy efforts.
- > Shahin M.'s 12 step journey and recovery shows in her dedication and commitment to helping others who suffer from eating disorders. Her work behind the scenes is invaluable and her willingness to challenge myths surrounding eating disorders makes her a unique member of our Board. Shahin also recently graciously accepted the position of chair of the Public Information Committee when it became vacant.

If the Board could please rise so we can all show our appreciation...

I would also like to express my gratitude to all those people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure ABA continues to thrive and serve the anorexic and bulimic who still suffers. To all those who are sponsors, check-in buddies and committee members, you are the backbone of ABA and your time, care, attention and love are a reflection of what our Higher Power is able to do!

I would like to, especially, thank Joan J., who gives of her time on an ongoing basis to make it possible for people suffering from eating disorders to have a place to go where there is hope and healing. Joan, you truly are precious gem in ABA and the GSA.

THE PAST YEAR

The last year has seen ABA grow, not only in terms of the fellowship, but also in the public awareness of the struggle facing those suffering from anorexia and bulimia. This is evident through the increase in groups registering to the GSA around the world and the increase in book sales of the Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous textbook. We also

continue to receive phone calls and e-mails from around the world expressing interest in our fellowship and requesting further information on how to start new groups.

As promising as this is for ABA, it also brings with it many challenges for our General Service Association, including:

- > Ensuring the ABA fellowship continues to follow the GSA guidelines and the 12 traditions as set out by AA.
- > Recruiting Board members and committee chairs.
- > Increased need for sober sponsors and for check-in buddies.
- > Ensuring the integrity of translations of our textbook in foreign countries.
- > Ongoing staffing issues to make certain our textbook orders are being filled in a timely manner and ensuring phone calls and e-mails are responded to appropriately.
- > Integrating technical access to our network in order to allow groups in other cities and countries to participate ie: teleconferencing, videoconferencing or online.
- > Creating and implementing an introduction for ABA groups that clearly states the focus of our addiction, which is the illusion of control.

In addition, questions, requests and concerns have been raised from groups around the world. For example:

1. More portable ABA literature such as pamphlets on the tools, sponsorship, the traditions, our addiction - the illusion of control, check-in buddies, the role and function of the GSA.
2. Other ABA literature, including a worldwide meeting list and an AA version of the 20 questions for ABA.
3. How can groups outside of Edmonton access GSA meetings and the GSA AGM?
4. Can groups request and obtain meeting minutes from GSA meetings and the GSA AGM?
5. The ability of ABA members outside of Edmonton to participate in the election of Board members and the carrying out of GSA business.
6. Creating an opportunity for each group to have a GSR or representative that could participate at Board meetings and at the AGM.

We continue to host visitors from around the world who are interested in ABA. Having attended meetings in Edmonton seems to give visitors the confidence and knowledge to start meetings themselves.

We are extremely fortunate in Edmonton to have six meeting per week available to our members. We also have two phone meetings a week available to ABA members worldwide.

Our annual ABA retreat in October 2007 saw the greatest attendance yet. A family component was added to the last two retreats. This component allows family members to learn more about eating disorders, ABA and the effect of this disease on the whole

family. This last year, we had a whole morning dedicated to family members sharing their experience, strength and hope of recovery for the whole family. As outlined in our ABA text, 'To the Family', this opportunity allowed family members to give voice to this disease from different perspective.

Another new and exciting development this year is the addition of our pocket textbook.

The Public Information Committee, while not active this past year, continued to share their experience, strength and hope at a treatment center every three weeks.

The Personnel Committee has faced a major challenge this year of recruiting and hiring Administrative Assistants for the GSA. These positions are paramount to our ability to meet the demands for textbook and CD sales and for general ABA information. As of now these positions are vacant and we are looking for appropriate applicants.

Donna K. and Joan J. continue to respond to phone calls for support, information and long distance sponsorship.

LOOKIN AHEAD

Translations:

Many groups around the world are requesting that the ABA textbook be translated into different languages to accommodate their meeting and fellowships. In order to ensure the integrity of our textbook, the GSA is currently researching options on translations.

Hiring Administrative Assistants:

The previous administrative assistant position is now being divided into 2 separate positions. One position will focus on book and CD orders, while the other position will focus on the e-mails, faxes, phone calls and letters coming into the GSA requesting information about our program.

The 'Daily Reflections Book':

We look forward to compiling an ABA 'Daily Reflections' book. The 'Daily Reflections' book will be a united effort of all ABA members, and I encourage everyone to submit poems, reflections and meditations that touched them during their own recovery.

Inter-group:

We would like to initiate an inter-group committee meeting that would allow groups in Edmonton and around the world to meet, provide updates and support to each other in an informal and interactive way.

We have an exciting addition to our annual activities this year.. .The First Annual ABA International Conference, which will be held in Edmonton from August 28, 2008 to August 31, 2008. ABA members from around the world will be attending and presenting at the Conference. We will also be celebrating ABA's 15th anniversary at the Conference, so I look forward to you all attending the conference and enjoying this gift of sobriety and hope.

Again, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone for their continued efforts to enhance and strengthen ABA worldwide.

Respectfully submitted by:
Donna Kostiuk, President, 2007-2008