

MNRSC Minutes: May 13, 2017

Sabathani Community Center, 310 E 38th St Minneapolis, MN 55409



www.naminnesota.org

10:30 AM to 11:30 AM	Recovery Meeting – Just for Today									
11:30 AM to Noon	Newcomer Orientation RCM & RCMA Support Group									
12:00 PM to 12:15 PM	Open, Introductions, Readings, Welcome,									
12:15 PM to 1:30 PM	Open Forum (in no particular order) • Chair election • Vice Chair election • FST member election • Motion to change voting for Chair/V-Chair, RD, and RD Alternate • Motion to pass Online Service Workshops Project Plan • Motion to approve NA Pen Pal Project Proposal • PRIDE • Volunteers needed for BtG, SBtW, and Helpline									
1:30 PM to 1:45 PM	Executive Committee Q&A Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, RD, RDA									
1:45 PM to 2:15 PM	Old Business • Record Attendance • Motion 421: To approve MNRSC Minutes from February 13, 2017 • Motion 422: To amend the MNRSC guidelines election procedures • Motion 423: To approve the online workshops project idea • Motion 424: To approve the NA Pen Pal Project Proposal									
2:15 PM to 2:30 PM	Recess									
2:30 PM to 3:00 PM	Project Leader Updates <table><tr><td>• Bridging the Gap</td><td>• SBTW</td><td>• Helpline</td></tr><tr><td>• PR Events</td><td>• Meeting Lists</td><td>• Miscellaneous</td></tr><tr><td>• Newsletters</td><td>• Website</td><td>•</td></tr></table>	• Bridging the Gap	• SBTW	• Helpline	• PR Events	• Meeting Lists	• Miscellaneous	• Newsletters	• Website	•
• Bridging the Gap	• SBTW	• Helpline								
• PR Events	• Meeting Lists	• Miscellaneous								
• Newsletters	• Website	•								
3:00 PM to 3:45 PM	New Business									
4:00 PM	Close									

Old Business

Motion 421: To approve MNRSC Minutes from February 13, 2017.

Intent: To approve the minutes

Financial Impact: None

Maker: Mark M.

Second: Sam M., RCMA Central MN

Result: passed



www.naminnesota.org

Motion 422: To amend the MNRSC guidelines election procedures:

“The MNRSC shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair who shall serve as the MNRSC Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the MNRSC Fellowship Services Team.

These Elections will happen in May of Odd Number of Years. The MNRSC shall elect a Regional Delegate and a Regional Delegate Alternate. These elections will happen in May of Even Numbered of Years.”

To read:

“The Fellowship Services Team shall select a Chair and a Vice-Chair who also serve as the MNRSC Chair and Vice-Chair. These selections will happen at the Fellowship Services meeting following the May MNRSC meeting of odd-numbered years. The Fellowship Services Team shall select a Regional Delegate and a Regional Delegate Alternate. These selections will happen in May of even-numbered of years.”

Intent: To simplify the election process. The MNRSC puts full faith in those it elects to the Fellowship Services Team giving the FST the flexibility to select those best qualified to lead and represent the team and the region.

Financial Impact: None

Maker: Jeff S

Second: Katie R., RCM RITH

Result: passed

Motion 423: To approve the Online Workshops project plan

Intent: To hold bi-monthly online workshops for fellowship development.

Financial Impact: None

Maker: _____

Second: _____

Result: Not presented



www.naminnnesota.org

Motion 424: To approve the Project Plan: NA Pen Pals

Intent: To approve the NA Pen Pal program Project Plan and establish a new MN Regional Program: NA MN Pen Pals.

This project will offer a means for incarcerated addicts, with less than a 1 year sentence, to communicate by mail with NA member volunteers. The nature of correspondence would include working steps with the NA volunteer, discussing inmates' questions and concerns about staying clean and the NA program, and getting support and encouragement, thereby giving incarcerated addicts a head start on building a recovery network and increasing their odds of success upon release.

The intent is also to fill the gap between the SBTW and BtG programs.

Financial Impact: None

Maker: Patty K, NA MN Region FST member

Second: Sam M, NA MN RCM Central MN

Result: passed

Fellowship Services Team(FST) Elections

May 13, 2017

Newly Elected

- Dan H, from the Area of Hope
- Mark M, from the RITH Area

Reelected

- Jay L, from the Back to Basics LSC
- Jeff S, from the Twin Cities Area
- Lucy K, from Central Minnesota Area

Current Fellowship Services Team Membership

- Dan H, Area of Hope
- Mark M, RITH
- Lucy K, Central Minnesota
- Sam M, Central Minnesota
- Jessie N, Wee Are Here
- Andy S, Back to Basics
- Jay L, Back to Basics
- Jeff S, Twin Cities
- Patty K, Twin Cities

** There are 3 open positions on the MN FST

Open Forum Discussion

May 13, 2017



www.naminnnesota.org

Preliminary Stuff

- Introductions

Discussion

Chair Election

- **Kit stated he would not run for re-election**

Co-Chair Election

- **Jay stated he would not run for re-election**

FST member Election

- 9 positions open/ 3 year clean time requirement/ 2 year commitment

Motion 422 to change voting procedure for Chair/V-Chair, RD and RDA Discussion:

- **Jeff:** FST will be handle leadership void in the meantime/ hold elections as needed- FST does the work, meets monthly and will have the ability to do the work quickly when opening arises or voids exist
- This is the procedure followed by the World as well
- KIT: Secretary and treasurer already are elected by FST and liaisons to UMSO MNNAC
- Jessie: FST meets monthly through conference call so they ensure work gets done
- Sam- do outgoing trusted servants overlap to train in new trusted servants? Ans: Yes- we all help eachother
- Katie- How many people are FST now? 9
- Andy- What happens if motion does not pass? Ans: No chair operates
- Chairs duties: Create MNRSC agenda, chair FST and MNRSC meetings

Motion 423 to approve online workshops

- Tabled- Mike had to step down as Project Mgr at this time
- We will look for a new PM in August
- In the meantime we will promote NAWs on-line workshops

Motion 424 to approve Pen Pal Project Proposal

- Volunteers can decide if they do not want to write a male/female
- Correspondence will be anonymous
- Contents of correspondence- volunteer gets to determine nature and duration of correspondence
- Mike- personal experience- AA BtG-type program did not give him a contact until AFTER release, although release requirement was to have names of two sponsors
- Jessie- if NA Pen Pal ends service, inmate gets assigned a new volunteer

PRIDE

- Jeff is Project Sponsor/ Joel is Project Manager



- Sam- Difference between Sponsor and Manager? Sponsor is an FST member – a service sponsor and the Single Point of Accountability
- Pride is MN Region's largest PR event

www.naminnnesota.org

Volunteers needed for BtG, SBtW, and Helpline

- Mike- We Are Here is STRUGGLING for volunteers
- Jessie- we need to be willing to be flexible on clean time reqts and to stop selecting trusted servants from the same pool of people
- Patty- RCMs and GSRs need to give emphatic and enthusiastic reports encouraging and promoting service at all levels.
- Kit – remind members that it is not soooo much that NA needs you, but YOU NEED SERVICE to enhance your recovery



Bridging the Gap Pen Pals

1. Project Scope

1.1. The Problem

A gap exists in our programs for incarcerated addicts between those eligible for Sponsorship Behind the Walls (more than 1 year remaining on their sentence) and those able to apply for Bridging the Gap (release imminent). Incarcerated addicts with less than one year remaining on their sentence have asked for an NA pen pal to do step work and/or start to build a recovery network on the outside. Increasingly shorter sentences for drug-related convictions may lead to a larger population of incarcerated addicts falling within this gap in NA programming.

1.2. The Solution

NA Pen Pals volunteer to correspond with addicts behind the walls with less than one year remaining on their sentence. Their goal is to answer inmates' questions related to recovery, share regarding NA literature available to inmates, and encourage Bridging the Gap participation close to the date of their release.

1.3. Project Benefits

- Incarcerated addicts with less than one year remaining in their sentence have the opportunity to correspond with NA members. They would gain an understanding of what life looks like when we are working a program, start to build their recovery network, and spend time inside focusing on our literature and step-work.
- Incarcerated addicts have a much greater probability of success and long-term recovery upon release.
- NA Members' recovery is enhanced by directly helping newcomers
- Local NA communities receive more newcomers seeking recovery and a new way to live.

1.4. Long Term Goals

- *To provide products and services that meet changing needs of the Region.*
With increasingly shorter sentences for drug-related convictions, there may be an increasingly larger population of incarcerated addicts with less than a one-year sentence, thus falling within this "gap" in NA programming.
- *To build and sustain cooperative relationships with other organizations and entities that address issues of addiction in order to raise awareness of Narcotics Anonymous as a viable option for recovery.*

The suggestion for a "Pen Pal program" was brought up in January at the NA PR presentation to MN DOC Release Planner's Quarterly meeting by a corrections officer from Lino Lakes. She firmly advocated for the chance for inmates to begin a dialogue with NA members and start a support network while incarcerated. Additionally, the MNRSC has received several requests from inmates (without the existence of a Pen Pal program) for an NA member to correspond with them in order could start building a support network outside of prison and/or to do step work. Therefore, A Pen Pal program demonstrates NA's



responsiveness to a need seen by our community partners at the DOC and a desire expressed by addicts seeking to begin recovery.

- *To be a trustworthy leader with the foresight to identify trends and issues affecting the fellowship and the ability to develop innovative solutions to address them.* www.naminnesota.org
- *To foster unity of purpose and a keen sense of mutual accountability and support*

1.5. Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- Contact DOC at prison and jails to determine point of contact at the facilities to sign up inmates and determine literature restrictions for inmates
- Design online form for NA members to volunteer on the www.naminnesota.org
- Recruit NA members to volunteer through www.naminnesota.org, as well as Area Service committee and GSRs reporting to individual groups
- Produce pamphlet and/or one-page information letter and registration for volunteers
- Produce one-page informational letter and registration for inmates

Exclusions

- NA members must have three months of clean-time to participate

Key Deliverables / Milestones	Completion
Establish DOC contacts and get them on board (start with the list of Release Planners that attended NA PR presentation)	June 1
Design on line sign up form for NA volunteers	June 15
Produce letter and sign-up for volunteers	June 7
Produce letter and sign-up for inmates	June7
Roll-out program to Area Service Committees and Region Website	July
Roll-out Program to Inmates (After 20 volunteers have signed up)	?

1.6. Budget Estimate

EXPENSES TO IMPLEMENT PROJECT	
Total Project Budget Estimate	\$0



www.naminnesota.org

1.7. **Project Overview**

For NA Members

1. NA Pen Pals are offered as a service opportunity to members through the Region website and newsletter and be presented at ASC business meetings and by GSRs at individual meetings.
2. After at least 20 NA members volunteer to be Pen Pals, the program would be rolled out to inmates.

For Inmates

1. DOC employees at Minnesota prisons and jails offer the NA Pen Pal program to inmates with a one-page letter regarding the NA Pen Pal program and a "Welcome to NA" IP.
2. Inmates request a Pen Pal by completing a form indicating their release date and location.
3. Inmates write an initial letter demonstrating their willingness to follow through with correspondence and offering us an idea of their questions and needs regarding recovery.

The Pen Pal Process

1. NA member volunteers correspond with incarcerated addicts (through the Region PO Box).
2. The Pen Pal team leader finds an NA member in the community to which the incarcerated addict will be released using the TSLT database.
3. The priority is to assign inmates a pen pal and connect volunteers with incarcerated addicts seeking recovery, regardless of the geographic considerations.
4. Correspondence is anonymous with the volunteer using NA Minnesota, 6066 Shingle Creek Pkwy, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430 as their return address.
5. Kit E will scan the inmates' letters to forward them to the NA volunteer through email.
6. The correspondence could remain anonymous or become open, to be determined by the volunteer and inmate after correspondence has been established.
7. The volunteer may wish to remain anonymous, not continuing a relationship after the inmate is released, or they can decide to continue to be part of the inmate's recovery network after release.
8. Regardless of this decision, volunteers will be asked to take the opportunity to introduce NA's Bridging the Gap program to inmates and encourage their participation in Bridging the Gap after release.



Online Workshops Project Plan

1. Project Scope

1.1.The Problem

NA members want to carry our message using various forms of service, but they're inexperienced and need some training. NA members don't have local experienced members to talk to about how to do service well. NA members don't have a forum to discuss best practices in doing NA service

1.2.The Solution

Regularly scheduled online workshops will provide NA members the information and support that they need to be successful trusted servants. They will provide easy access to other trusted servants with experience to discuss best practices and specific problems.

1.3.Benefits

- NA members will become more effective trusted servants
- Local Service Conferences will grow and carry the message better
- NA Minnesota is strengthened as well with more experienced trusted servants
- Suffering addicts will hear the message more effectively and more often

1.4.Long Term Goals

- To foster unity of purpose and a keen sense of mutual accountability and support.
- To build productive partnerships throughout our Region to fulfill our vision: relationships with other components of the service structure, local NA communities, and between committees and boards.
- To be responsive and accessible, inviting involvement and dialogue, and ensuring efficient delivery of services.

1.5.Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- Host bimonthly online webinar/discussions on various service topics

Tentative Schedule

- Wednesday March 15, 7:00-8:30 – Public Relations
 - Wednesday May 17, 7:00-8:30 – Hospitals & Institutions
 - Wednesday July 19, 7:00-8:30 – Navigating www.naminnnesota.org
 - Wednesday September 20, 7:00-8:30 – Bridging the Gap
 - Wednesday November 15, 7:00-8:30 – Sponsorship Behind the Walls
 - Wednesday January 17, 7:00-8:30 – Literature
- Schedule the webinars on www.naminnnesota.org
 - Line-up an experienced trusted servant to lead each webinar
 - Record and post the webinar for viewing later
 - Allow comments for each webinar to foster future Q&A

Exclusions

- No tests
- No certificates of completion

2. Plan



www.naminnesota.org

Key Deliverables / Milestones	Planned Completion Date
<i>For Each Webinar</i>	
• Schedule the webinar on www.naminnesota.org	8 weeks prior
• Line up a webinar leader	8 weeks prior
• Announce the webinar on the regional website and social media ◦ www.naminnesota.org ◦ mnrsc@googlegroups.com ◦ Facebook ◦ Twitter	6 weeks prior
• Define the structure and content of the webinar	6 weeks prior
• Announce the webinar soliciting questions and issues from NA members ◦ www.naminnesota.org ◦ mnrsc@googlegroups.com ◦ Facebook ◦ Twitter	2 weeks prior
• Review and finalize the presentation content ◦ Walkthrough ◦ Include content from questions/issues received	1 week prior
• Setup Join.me on the presenter's computer and train them on how to use the software	1 week prior
• Showtime	Showtime
• Post the recording on www.naminnesota.org	1 week later

3. Budget Estimate

EXPENSES TO IMPLEMENT PROJECT	
Total Project Budget Estimate	\$0

4. Attachments <Extra Stuff; anything that will help get the project done, like check lists or a volunteer schedule for example>



MNRSC Chair Report & Kit's Farewell Address.

May 13 , 2017

I'm old. Sixty-five years old to be exact. This is long and rambling but it's a summary of our Regional changes over the last 10 years so take advantage of an old man's experience and give it a read. Besides, you might find yourself thinking, "Huh. I didn't know that!"

Unexpectedly, turning 65 redirected my path. I don't know why, but since my birthday I've noticed one change after another in my life. I've grown a beard. Now that my health care is covered by Medicare I find myself a bit more reassured in case I ever have health issues. For reasons I won't go into, I stopped attending the meeting I helped found thirty years ago. No longer attending that meeting freed up my Sunday mornings. To fill that time, I immediately began attending a Buddhist meditation class each week. Though I'd been meditating each day for years, I hadn't had time for actual classes. Now I do. Because my second home group, Camden Bridge Narcotics Anonymous, was looking for a treasurer I allowed them to elect me to the first group level service position I've held for donkey's years. If you know me, you won't be surprised to hear they had to get used to me fulfilling my role my way.

I suppose it can be said that from the day we're born we're each in transition from one place to another. Having all of these transitions come in a short period is exciting for me. What changes are coming next?

One change, as you've probably heard, is I'm not running for re-election to the Minnesota Region Chair position. This will be the first time in decades I won't be involved in service structure based service. And that's OK.

We've come a long, long way together these last few years, you and me. Our accomplishments have gathered so much attention that what we do in Minnesota has been dubbed Minnovations.

In 2009 we took a leap, you and I, that's had major impact. Our Regional inventory brought to our attention that our committee based structure was not only ineffectual in



carrying our message, the structure itself was a barrier. No committee chairs, no committee members, no message being carried.

www.naminnnesota.org

We're a sparsely populated Region with fewer than 400 meetings in our 86,000 square miles. Roughly half of us living in the Metro. Another way to look at our Regional membership is that half of us are rural, often scattered hundreds of miles from each other and often hundreds of miles from the nearest ASC. How can we carry the message, how can we as a Region provide service opportunities to ALL our members?

What if we ditched the committees with attendance requirements, the barrier to service for many, many of us? What if we transmogrified from committees to projects?

What's the difference between a committee structure and a project based structure?

We're all familiar with committees. Committee chair, co-chair, maybe a secretary, and so on. Lots of rules about who can perform which function. How long have you been clean? Do you have a sponsor who has a sponsor? Do you work the Steps? Are you committed to being a committee member for extended periods? Are you familiar with . . . you get the picture. Lots and lots and lots and lots of process. Oh, and meeting attendance requirements.

For our region, a project based structure has many advantages. It jettisons as many barriers to service as possible. Your commitment is, by definition, limited. Why? Because projects, by their nature, have a beginning and an end. No committee meetings.

OK, work groups (sorta like committees) can meet when necessary, but typically they meet online using conference calls and webinars. People can volunteer for a two hour shift in the booth at the annual Pride festival. Their commitment lasts exactly two hours.

Or, people can sign up for the helpline, for example, for one or more weekly three hour shifts. Some sign up for 24/7 coverage to be sure as few addicts calls as possible go unanswered. That's it. No meetings. Just answer the phone. Likewise with nearly all the service opportunities we provide.

I'm not going to pretend it was easy to convince all the Areas to take that leap with us, to allow us to experiment with the new structure. Some serious opposition to change



www.naminnnesota.org

had to be overcome, let me tell you. No surprise there. You know, I know, and the dog across the street knows how addicts feel about change.

We had addicts who had never shown up at the RSC before but were they to stop change in its tracks. We overcame their fierce resistance by pointing out that the membership is always in charge. If the Region was permitted to experiment with the new Project structure and members didn't approve of the results we could always resurrect committees. We built a two year timebox into the transition. That is, we tried the new structure for two years with a final decision to be made in 2011.

By becoming Project Based we threw away our That's The Way We Always Do That!!!!!!!!!!!! mentality. We became flexible, willing to try new things, keeping what works, discarding what doesn't. You know, exactly the same way we experience our own personal recovery. We invite everyone with an idea to bring the plan to the Region. A typical response is to ask if the one who brings the idea is willing to take the lead in the project. After all, we're all in this together. We don't have a staff of special workers sitting around waiting for someone to bring work. Too often a terrific idea never becomes a reality because we don't have enough volunteers.

And that's OK.

Like any organization, we have limited resources, human, financial, time, creative energy among many, many other constraints. Which is the scarcest resource? Human. That's one way we learn whether ideas have support of the Fellowship. If no one or not enough people step up, then the idea isn't ready for implementation. Not yet, that is.

That human resource constraint invited us to think of ways to leverage the scarce human resources we do have available on any given day. Because of our limited human resources here in Minnesota, individuals can and do make tremendous contributions to carrying the message. To a large extent, we use technology to make things happen.

Technology? We had a crap website. OK, websites across the Narcotics Anonymous universe were crap and ours wasn't any different. However, time had moved on, transitioned if you will. We needed a new website to serve the Fellowship's needs. A group of us, led by Jeff S, got together to define requirements of what a state of the art Regional website would look like. Then Jeff made it happen. To this day, Jeff is asked to make presentations at service symposiums around the nation to help other Regions and



www.naminnesota.org

Areas learn the principles of design best practices. With website technology always in flux, Jeff is in the process of transitioning our website from Joomla to WordPress. He'd appreciate all the help he can get in this meticulous process.

I mentioned flexibility, a willingness to try something new. We heard online of a guy name Chris M. living in Long Island, New York who'd crated a mapping database for Narcotics Anonymous meetings. With our new website in place, we reached out to Chris to see about getting his application on our server. The Minnesota Region was one of the very first Region's to adopt Chris M.'s **Basic Meeting List Toolbox**, the BMLT. The BMLT is the backend database we use for our Regional meeting map on the website. This Regional meeting database is the foundation of all our Regional Public Relations efforts.

Why do I say that?

Because I believe, after the Basic Text, meeting lists are the most important piece of literature we publish.

Back to Kit for a second. The Region's move from committees to projects frees me to remain connected to Regional service without holding an official position. For example, I can volunteer to help staff the booth for the upcoming Pride Festival. Or I can continue to create and post to the website the twenty-five slices of our meeting list each month.

Members of the recovery professional community asked us to create a slice of the meeting list highlighting the meetings where children are welcome to make it easier for mothers or fathers to get to meetings. The BMLT makes this slicing and dicing of meeting information dead simple.

We expanded that Similar Needs list to bring together in a single place a list of meetings that focus on newcomers, LGBTQ members, young members, Men, Women, veterans and now this month we'll have a new format on the list, the + sign. This new format indicates meetings welcoming to those with HIV/AIDS. We don't tell meetings what formats to choose, they tell us what formats they've chosen and we list them to facilitate those with similar needs to find each other.



www.naminnnesota.org

BTW, the TCASC asked us to send a copy of the finished Metro meeting list file to them each month upon completion. Heck, if I was going to send the file, why not send it to anyone who wants it in the inbox each month. We now have 3,000+ people inside and outside the Fellowship receiving our monthly meeting list newsletter. We also send a Fellowship only newsletter each month to more than 2,000 members. Jay does a terrific job staying on top of both monthly newsletters.

How important is our Regional meeting list? Roughly 90% of all calls to a Narcotics Anonymous helpline are members trying to find a meeting. Our Regional meeting list generator, the BMLT, is so powerful we were the first Regions in all of NA to launch a Region-wide helpline. I know, crazy, huh? We offered all the Areas an opportunity to combine efforts with the Region by joining our Regional Helpline. Through collaboration, those Areas who had their own helplines could keep their legacy phone numbers while saving the Fellowship more than \$10,000 each year in phone expenses.

The Regional Helpline demonstrates the strength of the new Project based structure. The first Regional Helpline project ad-hoc committee (Brandon S, Monte J, and me) met in April of 2009. Four months later we launched. I know of committee based Regions, Metro Detroit for example, that have been struggling for years and years to create a Regional Helpline. So many committees and so many personalities must find a common agreement. The Minnesota Region accomplished that feat in four months.

This helpline fulfills part of our vision of providing members the opportunity to serve regardless of where they live. Geography is no longer destiny. Providing service opportunities far and wide was and is important to me having grown up on Minnesota's Iron Range. With technology and no committees to attend people can opt into a countless service opportunities that in the past were foreclosed by distance. Heck, it's not uncommon when a Helpline volunteer moves to another part of the country s/he will continue volunteering for the Minnesota Helpline until s/he gets plugged into local service.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!!! Minnesota was the very first Region in Narcotics Anonymous to have a meeting list app in the Apple app store. Why us? Chris M. was looking for a Region willing to be the pioneer, stepping through the labyrinthine Apple process. Knowing our bias for action rather than talking ideas to death, Chris brought the app idea to the Minnesota Region because, having worked with the Minnesota



Region to set up the BMLT here, he knew we're willing to cut through all the process bs to try new efforts to reach the addict still suffering. Once we learned how to wend our way through Apple's careful app onboarding process, Chris went on to help other Regions to set up their own iPhone app.

www.naminnesota.org

Want another example of how our lack of committees allows us to carry the message in surprising ways? Our Sponsorship Behind the Walls collaboration with the Hospitals and Institutions Committee in Santa Cruz, California is held up at the World level of service as a clear example of cross boundary cooperation. The Santa Cruz committee has a waiting list of members behind bars seeking NA sponsors. We have far flung members willing to work the Steps with these inmates via the US Postal Service. They have a committee up and running while we have too few members in service to create our own freestanding program.

It still bowls me over when I think of the hundreds of volunteers we've connected with the committee. What I find especially surprising is the number of members outside the Region, heck, outside the United States! who have clicked on the button on our new, improved website to participate in the selfless SBtW service. Often these are people in isolated locations where local service opportunities is limited or non-existent. I'm talking isolated members such as the middle of the Australian Outback. Or an addict named Steve who lives on an island off the coast of Scotland. And I can't begin to count the number of Canadians who now sponsor US inmates through our website's link. New Zealand? Of course. Why not?

There is a never-ending need for sponsorship of those in prison, especially male volunteers since the incarceration rate of men is about four times as many as women. If you want to help out someone behind the walls, go to our website, www.naminnesota.org, scroll to the bottom and click on the Volunteer button. It's just that simple to begin making a difference in someone's life.

After a time, the Minnesota Region launched the first Bridging the Gap program in all of Narcotics Anonymous. It took a member bringing up the BtG idea for TWENTY YEARS before the Fellowship was willing to give it a try. As we all know, a good idea is a good idea, even if no one cares. 😊

What's Bridging the Gap? Glad you asked.



www.naminnesota.org

BtG is a short time commitment to meet someone at a local NA meeting, introduce them around, explain sponsorship, and help them get a meeting list and literature. Two, maybe three meetings and the commitment's over. While it may be a small thing to our members, it's critical to those new to the community, whether they're new in recovery, fresh out of treatment, new in town, or newly released from incarceration.

I mentioned our innovative use of technology to carrying the message. In the case of Bridging the Gap, Monte suggested we repurpose our BMLT meeting list map. Now, instead of displaying nearby meetings when someone clicks anywhere on the map, this repurposed version reveals nearby Bridging the Gap volunteers. With a simple click on the map, the program leader (first Robin E. who heard the project idea and made it happen, then Marvella until her health issues made it no longer possible, now Lucy and Patty K) can quickly connect inmates/newcomers to willing temporary contacts. As we all know, those first few days in town or out of treatment/jail can be critical to someone's success in staying clean. If anyone of you is interested in helping make that connection, please contact bridgingthegap@naminnesota.org. We need volunteers in every part of the Region. Again, no meetings. Ever.

Inmates new to a community are especially vulnerable. They often feel lonely, ashamed, unlovable, unacceptable. I've heard from some who have taken advantage of the BtG program, some with tears in their eyes, telling how accepted and understood they felt in Narcotics Anonymous. After all, who are we to judge? If we ourselves didn't spend time behind bars it was through luck and nothing else.

Once people in Northern California learned about Bridging the Gap at one of the many Service Symposiums the Region has sent members to they started their own version. Likewise, the Georgia Region has set up a version especially for women inmates. After waiting two years (I'm not making this up) to get the map such as we use to locate volunteers, their webmaster admitted he was never going to get to that project. In two days, literally two days, Jeff S. had cloned our volunteer database and they were up and running.

Through the efforts of Patty K, the Region is on the verge of creating a flavor of Bridging the Gap for inmates in jail rather than prison who have less than a year to serve. The program is more of a pen pal connection rather than a sponsorship relationship, though



www.naminnnesota.org

that's an option the two members can decide among themselves. Again, connecting addicts to addicts is what we're here for at the Region.

Some of our innovations flopped, but that's OK. Or, like the Regional Games, some projects are a success but no volunteers step up to lead the project another time. To this day, we encourage anyone with an idea to bring it to the Region and let others kick it around. Because NA will never run out of people who think of work for others to do we frequently agree that the idea is worth a try so long as the one who brings the idea is willing to work to make it happen.

Transition fairs. Nearly all of the dozen prisons in Minnesota have half day Transition Fairs each year. These fairs offer soon to be released inmates resources to help them be successful on the outside. The Department of Corrections is delighted that Narcotics Anonymous participates on these events. Why? Each inmate, upon intake, is given a needs assessment. Guess how many of those admitted to Minnesota prisons are assessed as addicts. If you guessed EIGHTY-FOUR PERCENT you were right.

At the Transition Fair We provide a person to talk to about recovery. We provide literature and contact information. If you are interested in attending one or more of these Transition Fairs, please let us know by going to the website at www.naminnnesota.org. Click on the Help Wanted link on the left menu and choose the Fair you want to attend. Please decide early because the DoC has a screening process to let you on site. Oh, and each prison has its own process.

I mentioned Service Symposiums in passing. Another way in which the Minnesota Region is unique is that we don't have favorites. We're all equals, as our literature tells us. Where other Regions fund one or maybe two individuals to service conferences, the Minnesota Region instead decides on a specific amount to spend on the travel/lodging/food. Then any member from the Region who arrives at the conference receives an equal portion of that amount. In other words, we don't decide who may or may not be funded. That decision is up to the individual member. If the Region decides to spend \$1,500 on that conference and five people show up, they each get \$300. If that doesn't fully cover their expenses the individual will have to come up with the balance. This policy has invited creativity where several members, instead of flying, decide to carpool and share a room.



All of this, and more, is the result of ditching the committees. By reducing barriers to service we hope to make Regional service inviting to all.

www.naminnnesota.org

Meanwhile, I get to consider what I'll be doing next. Where will my passion for service bring me? Or, being old, very, very old, will I find myself sitting in the yard reading murder mysteries, drinking Diet Coke, yelling at the neighbor kids to get the hell off my lawn?

Dunno.

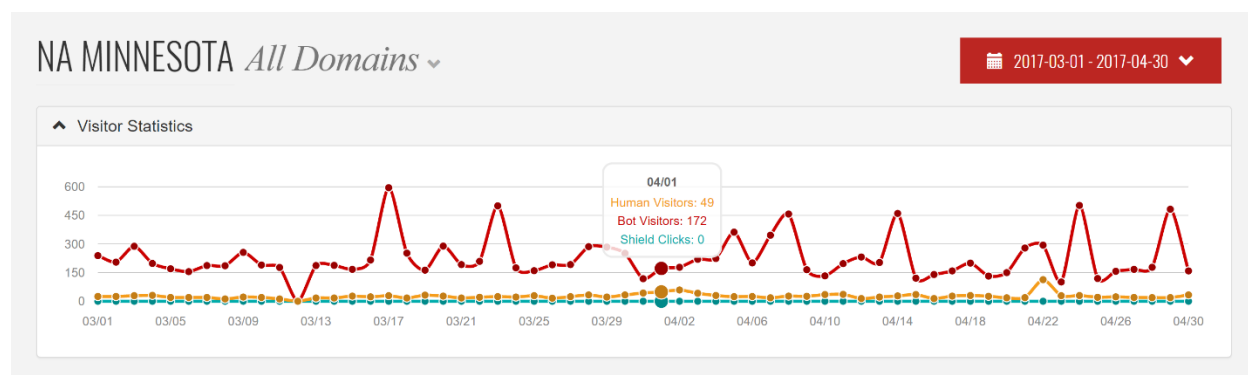
At any rate, thanks to you all for allowing me to serve. And thanks to you all for having the trust in us to allow us to try this and that new way of approaching service. Are we finding that calling Quorum is occasionally a barrier to carrying the message? Getting rid of Quorum? Can you DO that? Yes We Can.

Kit E.

Digital Project Team Report

May 13, 2017

Security



Our website has been clipping along quite nicely. We've not had a security event yet this year, but the conversion to WordPress continues.

eCommerce

MNNAC is handling their own ecommerce efforts this year. I've been supporting their efforts getting the site off the ground, and they are off and running. I'll continue to support them in any way that I can. The online



registrations are now housed under www.mnnac.org. They are using Square for their ecommerce provider. That way they can integrate on site sales and online sales into one platform. So far MNNAC 25 is going extremely well. Their preregistrations are running about 2.5 times higher than MNNAC 24 at this same time last year. 2018 promises to be the biggest and best Minnesota NA convention yet.

www.naminnnesota.org

Local area events are also taking advantage of online registrations including:

- Back to Basics – SMARB
- Back to Basics – JimmyPalooza
- Northern Lights – Camp Vermilion
- Open Door – Just for the Weekend
- South Suburban Fireside – Pig Roast
- Twin Cities – ICUCNA
- Wee Are Here – Golf Tournament

Website Upgrades

We continue to work on upgrading the website to the latest WordPress technology. That is the one large project that we are working on for 2017.

- eCommerce – Completed
- Events Calendar – Completed
- BMLT – Completed
- Main Menu articles – Completed
- Help Wanted – in progress
- Online forms – in progress

Florida Service Symposium

The region funded \$1,500 to send trusted servants to the Florida Service Symposium in March. I was asked to present a workshop on Advanced Website Techniques which was extremely well received. I went to all the workshops in the “Tech Track” and although they were quite fascinating and I learned a lot, including any more detail here would not be helpful. I have nothing more to add to Jessie’s excellent report other than that it was money well spent. These symposiums are the best way for trusted servants in various regions to get together and and share best practices.

NA Minnesota is unique in our approach to funding travel to these symposia. Anyone from the fellowship in Minnesota can go, and anyone who attends gets an equal share of the travel reimbursement. This opens these opportunities to new trusted servants who may not otherwise be exposed to the larger fellowship of NA. And we never know who our next leaders will be.

In service,

Jeff Spencer | NA Minnesota Tech Guy | 612-799-0664 | www.naminnnesota.org



LIKE US
ON FACEBOOK



FOLLOW US
ON TWITTER @naminnnesota

Project Manager Reports

May 13, 2017



Regional Delegate, Andy and Jessie – report attached

Additional comments:

www.naminnnesota.org

- MN Region funds all addicts who attend symposiums/conferences/out-of-town meetings. A dollar amount is approved at the MNRSC and divided equally among attendees at the site of the meeting. This is different from other Regions that approve specific attendees prior to an event
 - Buddy- How does the attendance of numerous members, not only trusted servants, benefit the Region?
 - Jessie- We cannot judge the ripple effect of all willing addicts attending, not just the RDs.
 - Jeff- May have the effect of inspiring others to service
 - Andy- Benefits not only our membership, but the memberships of other Regions as well

Helpline, Andy S

- We are no longer encouraging volunteers to take all 56 shifts/week due to Phone.com's new limit of 15 forward calls per shift
- Dan- Are there other service providers that will accommodate more forward calls?
- Andy- we have looked in to other providers, this is the best one
- Patty will be trained in on daily maintenance

Public Relations, Jeff S

MAT(medication assisted therapies- friendly) is a meeting list key available now for NA MN Groups to add to our meeting lists

- **Groups who wish to be identified as such, should send this change to meetinglist@naminnnesota.com**

Hazelden Employee's criticism of NA's not welcoming/ supportive of addicts who participate in Medication Assisted Therapies (MAT)

- General comments of today's MNRSC discussion: MAT is an outside issue, we do not judge other people's recovery, the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop- you are a member when you say you're a member- our groups are harming the newcomer by putting restrictions on clean-time, speaking in meetings, holding service positions on MAT people



www.naminnnesota.org

- Jeff/ Jessie Hazelden employee responded to an NA members disagreement with Hazelden employee's claim: suboxone clients have **indeed** experienced discrimination at NA mtgs- Hazelden would like to know which NA meetings are supportive of suboxone and MAT-participating addicts
- Some addicts are REQUIRED by the courts to take suboxone and their doctors prescribe it – we do not judge another person's recovery
- Dan- Brought up new IP, and old Bulletin that are in circulation
- Andy – NA literature can be Fellowship-approved, Conference-approved, Board-approved and this new IP is Board Approved and has been met with tremendous opposition
- How can we HIGHLIGHT and institute the new meeting list key, MAT (MAT-Friendly meeting)?

Treasurer, Mark M

Mark is our new treasurer- thank you for stepping up Mark!

- Mark has a lot of catching up to do and he is preparing a formal report for this month's minutes. I will send it out to you all when it is completed and include it in our files.
- Last month Mark went to the bank and is currently reviewing statements and account activity
- May 2017 Ending Balance: \$7,xxx.xx
- MNRSC NAWS 2016 contribution: \$9,000.00
- In 2016 all MNRSC projects came in under budget
- Andy- MNNAC XXIV "profit" (including seed money) was \$33,3825.51- this money goes to the MNNAC BOD, they retain the seed money, and then will send us the balance. The seed money is believed to be around \$3,000.00
- Newel demanded an audit be performed. When reminded Newel himself had volunteered some time ago to perform an audit but hasn't followed through, hilarity ensued.



MNRSC RD Team Report

November 12, 2016

Greetings Team,

Florida service symposium

Some of the workshops I attended were the professionals presentation, how to use the guiding principles, FDC purpose, corrections, unifying communications, women in service, herding cats, recovery based service versus service-based recovery, history of the traditions, advocacy with anonymity, and the NAWS update.

Professionals Presentation

We met with professionals such as the Federal Bureau of prisons, social workers, interventionists, and judges. Some of the highlights were finding out their view of NA and what they think we do well and also the areas they think we could improve.

The things they think we do well: "Has 200% more credibility than professionals" makes profound changes in inmates, "best defense against recidivism," loves the addict regardless, empathy and compassion, meeting them where they're at, inclusivity and sponsorship, attending PR events, our literature is "Probably the best"

Things we could improve:

Not all prisons get meetings, lack of volunteers, members of NA need to stop bashing other recovery outlets- it looks unprofessional, need to work on getting rid of the stigma attached to addicts.

It would be also beneficial if we could educate our social workers, judges, and elected officials about addiction and NA.

Corrections

Biggest Takeaway was "we may be the only basic text someone has ever exposed to" and also for H&I- if you do not have enough volunteers to sustain a meeting in a facility NA has an Institutional Group Guide to help inmates run their own meeting. Something else that was cool was in some places they treat meetings that are held in an institution the same as an outside meeting, they work steps with the sponsor, and the group has a vote area! :o

Unifying communications

(My favorite workshop)

"Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications"

Our server structure can sometimes be a dis-service to our members, especially newcomers.

We now have the technology to consolidate all of the BML's tease using an aggregator. So now every region that has a BMLT can be combined so that an addict can find a meeting all over the world.

Phone line and BMLT VOX

Using a Linux server we can consolidate all of the phone lines so that an addict can find a meeting anywhere without the confusion of not knowing which number to call. Using talk to text text analogy to keep the meeting list as current as possible.

How it works

1. Call the phone line
2. Enter in your ZIP Code

It will then list of the meetings nearest to your location.

NOTE this project still is in the beginning stages and needs a region to own it before I can go live.

"It is better to ask for forgiveness than permission" ;)

If you have any questions or would like to see my notes from any of the other workshops feel free to contact me.

The NAWS Annual Report is out to see it go to: <http://m.na.org/?ID=ar-2016>

Project Reminders

A few reminder about input deadlines:

- Mental Health/Illness IP Project—Ideas about what you would like to see in such an IP are due 1 June. For more information: www.na.org/mhmi
- Daily Meditation Book—Ideas about what you would like to see in a new meditation book are due 1 June. For more information: www.na.org/meditationbook
- Convention & Events Toolbox—A draft of a potential tool for those working on convention and events program is posted for input until 15 June www.na.org/conventions
- Local Service Toolbox—A draft of CBDM Basics has been posted for input until 5 July www.na.org/toolbox

Transition Fairs

Upcoming Events

- Wednesday June 27th Fairbault
 - One more volunteer needed, May 19th is the deadline for applications
- Tuesday June 27th Rush City (commitment filled)
- Tuesday July 25th Lino Lakes (commitment filled)

We were able to attend both Shakopee and St. Cloud's transition fairs and both were a success! We handed out a bunch of literature and got around 60 people signed up for Bridging the Gap.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service,