

Living Sober with the Big Book

Group History

Welland ON – Early March 1998 - a lady named Elizabeth contacts our then District Committee Member (DCM) Sandra P. (now Sandra M.) and explains that she has attended a workshop in the United States sponsored by the Salvation Army. It had been a healing workshop and the moderator had used the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the history of A. A. as founded by Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. in Akron on June 10th of 1935 as the basis of this week-end program. He had mentioned the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and Elizabeth was interested in obtaining one. During the conversation she mentioned to Sandra that the Salvation Army citadel in Welland would be interested in having a meeting of A.A. in their facility as they certainly had the space.

Mid-March 1998 – Sandra contacted Gary L., who agreed to a meeting with Elizabeth and the Salvation Army staff and discuss the possibility of opening an A.A. meeting at 116 Division St. – the site of the Salvation Army citadel at that time. The meeting took place and it was decided to hold an open A.A. meeting on Tuesday at 10:00 am – many of the persons using the facility may not have been alcoholics but we wanted to carry the A.A. message to as many people as possible. Fliers were sent out and a startup kit from Niagara District Intergroup was obtained. Murray C., Aubrey H., and Gary L. undertook the necessary action to get the meeting going. They were later joined by Gary B. from Niagara Falls.

April 14 1998 – the first meeting of Living Sober with the Big Book was held with 17 people in attendance. As we had plenty of time on our hands – we made the meeting an hour and a half and it remains that way till this day. We have a laminated handout we open the meeting with that includes the 3rd, 7th and 11th Step prayers – as well as short sections from the Big Book. This is followed by readings from both the book Living Sober and the book Alcoholics Anonymous – discussion then follows. The meeting moved several times during the first couple of years – finally settling at St. Kevin’s Church on Niagara Street – were it is held to-day.

March 5th 2013 – The meeting was turned into a group – with six members signing their name in the book. Audrey F., Murray C., Luanne C., Sandy B., Tammy P., and Gary L. – we have kept a history book since day one – with various A.A. members making random contributions to our history – fun to read. We have 12 members at this time – some more active than others – but the message is carried. February 2016

We moved to Bethel United Church at 1742 Third Concession Road in Port Colborne on April 14, 2022 where we celebrated 24 years. We have 12 members to date, 2 of our founding members - Murray C. and Aubrey H. passed away doing lockdown during the World Wide Pandemic, neither due to Covid-19.

- Group history submitted by Gary L.
- Updated 02/23 by Gary L.