

AA HISTORY OF THE RIDGEWAY GROUP

Original archives information from New York General Service Office (NYGSO) states that Jack S., Jay V., and Burley D., members of the Winners' Circle Group in Fort Erie started a meeting in Ridgeway, Ontario in 1961. The original meetings were held at the home of Jack S. in Ridgeway.

After six months, they moved to their first home group facility at All Saints Anglican Church on South Mill St.. Harry G. from Port Dover was the first speaker of the first official meeting held at this church. It was an open speaker meeting. (As of this writing in the 1980s, Jack S., Jay V., and Jean V. are the only original members still alive today, staying sober one day at a time.) The group was formed on February 27, 1961, identifies and New York Service number 000115881.

We are not quite sure who or when the name "the beautiful downtown" Ridgeway Group came to be, but the name has stuck and has been deemed quite suitable. Two theories regarding the name are 1) by a repeat of the 1980s "Laugh In" show calling "beautiful downtown Burbank", as reported by Gary W., Bob B., Art J., and Don R., and 2) correcting an misquote or misspeak from Ridgeway member Diane D. qualifying herself as "Beautiful Diane from the downtown Ridgeway Group".

After 30 years, the group moved to its second facility, the Methodist Church on Ridge Road.

Longtime secretary/treasurer Doug K. volunteered to update the following sequence of events:

While here, group conscience initiated a beginners' meeting before the 8 p.m. main hall speaker meeting. Deceased Ridgeway members Kate M. and Ed R. were instrumental in chairing this group and Bob F., Gary S., and Doug K. still remain faithfully committed to this decision to help newcomers focused on learning a new way of life without alcohol. This meeting has been growing and evolving, changing formats and continues to this day in 2020.

After 19 years there, this building, our second home facility, was sold and in 2010 the group moved back to its original home at All Saints Church (ASC). Ironically, (God's sense of humour) the new owners developed the basement (our old main hall) into a brewery.

When the Beginners' Meeting 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. time duration ends, those attending are invited to stay and encouraged to listen to the speaker where the spiritual principles learned can be witnessed through the experience, strength and hope of recovering AA members. Also, being an

open meeting allows anyone to comfortably attend and learn how to support, encourage and understand a family member or friend with a drinking problem.

We have smiling greeters at our entrance to welcome AA members and visitors with a warm handshake or hug. Ridgeway members are dedicated to keeping the doors open.

If members wish to celebrate their AA anniversaries, we set aside the last Tuesday of the month for this special event night.

A gratitude round robin is held on the last Tuesday before the Christmas holiday for members to share their gratitude for AA.

The Ridgeway group (Tuesday) and the Merritton group (Thursday) have an annual exchange of hosting each other's meetings and this has been held after Labour Day each year.

In 2019, "A DAY OF THE STEPS" was held on a Saturday and was well attended. It is hoped to be repeated as of 2020 as an annual event.

May God continue to bless us, to grow and prosper. Tuesday night is a safe place to recover, as we attempt to help the sick and suffering alcoholic one day at a time.

The following is an update to February 27, 2021:

On March 15, 2020, the All Saints Church trustees reported that the COVID 19 pandemic has forced the church doors closed including to our meeting and AA members. By God's grace, our group still functions through "ZOOM" to carry our message of recovery. Today, we reach alcoholics worldwide. Tonight, we celebrate with you our 60th anniversary online. (In previous years, each Ridgeway group member attending the celebration went in alphabetical order to give thanksgiving for their home group and AA as a whole. Afterwards, we enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by group members with roast beef on a bun and other dishes to share. Our guests and AA friends were encourage to eat first.) We certainly miss gathering with all of you in this celebration but are very grateful to be able to do so online through ZOOM.

Our thanks to Donna S. and Heidi G. for their typing.

Yours in service,

Doug K.