



August 2009 Northern CA Regional Delegate Report



Shasta/Trinity Fellowship Development Trip

After having to reschedule our planned trip to the Shasta/Trinity ASC in July, do to the holiday, Jerome, Karina and I finally made it to Redding last Sunday, August 2nd, for both the Shasta/Trinity Area PR Subcommittee Meeting and the ASC.

Jerome brought some literature to PR/H&I (They are both under the PR Umbrella up there) and this was much needed as the area is in dire financial straits. In fact, it appears that the area can no longer afford their call answering service for the area help line and will need to transition to passing around a cell phone. The members of the PR Subcommittee are an enthusiastic and dedicated bunch, and are pulling together to make the best of difficult financial times.

The Area Service Committee meeting followed, and the ASC was unable to elect anyone to either of the RCM positions, nor the secretary position. Group donations have been down substantially and expenses for the area have exceeded income for several months.

As an outside observer, I facilitated a general session to find out from the members what they view the problems to be. Karina captured all the input on a Post-it. Through all the input, three key themes appeared to emerge. At this point, we introduced the room to the idea of strategic planning for services. We emphasized the importance of having an "Action Plain" that accounts for what we call the "3 T's" (*Time, Treasure, and Talent*), all of which are scarce resources. As a simplification of the Area Planning Tool (given the feedback from the fellowship that the APT was too cumbersome), the planning process has been reduced to 5 steps. With Step 1 completed by the large group, we were then able to group and prioritize all of the identified problems under three general headings for Step 2:

Shasta/Trinity Issues:

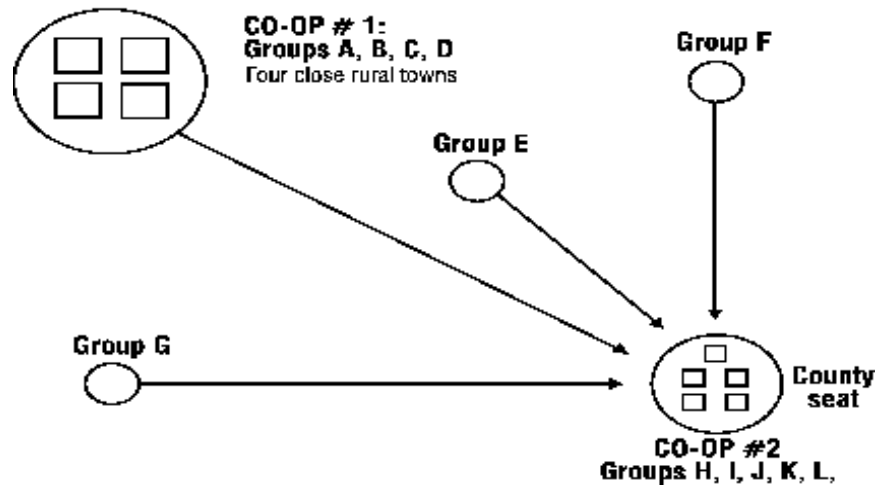
1. Lack of stable, strong home groups - causing apathy in service, long term members to leave for AA, and a general misunderstanding about our Traditions and Concepts.
2. Poor reputation of the ASC amongst the fellowship - thereby making it hard to get members to step up to positions and be of service to the area.
3. Friction between members of the ASC and the Activities subcommittee- Activities has been understaffed and over-committed. In the process, there have been some financial difficulties and the ASC has asked for more transparency and accountability. *Tensions between the two bodies are high and morale low.*

The Planning Process:

1. **Identify Issues**
2. **Prioritize Issues**
3. **Consider Solutions**
4. **Prioritize Solutions**
5. **Take Action**

The Area has implemented some creative solutions to strengthen the stability of some groups and provide for increased representation at the ASC. One of the handouts I provided the ASC was an excerpt from the *Guide to Local Services* on Area Service Committees in rural areas. The members in Shasta Lake City have adopted a “Co-op” model similar to the one from the GTLS (below) by combining two struggling meetings into an umbrella group with a single GSR. Pooling their resources, rather than trying to have 2 separate sets of trusted servants in a small community, seems to be working well for them. The idea of merging struggling groups was discussed by several GSRs, as it seems to make more sense to plan for one or two good, strong home groups in a given city more than several struggling meetings with an unclear message.

RURAL AREA WITH CO-OPs

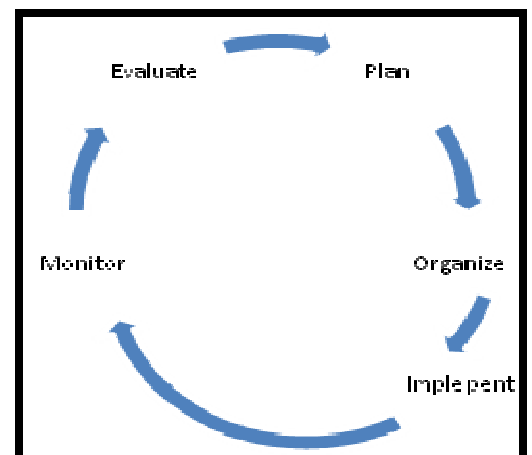


For Step 3, we broke the room into 3 small groups and assigned each of the 3 problems above to a table to brainstorm possible solutions. Each table captured a full Post-It worth of potential solutions to their assigned challenge.

Step 4 accomplished after the close to the ASC meeting by having each participant identify on the Post-Its their favorite solution for each of the problems. A member of the body has agreed to capture this input and write up a summary. The ASC will then need to form a working group, or work collectively, to create an “Action Plan” for implementing the prioritized solutions, as part of Step 5.

As part of the closing, we shared a PowerPoint on the collective input received from the world wide fellowship over the last 6+ years on the issues and challenges facing our service system. Not surprisingly, every issue the Shasta ASC identified in the general brainstorming session was reflected in the input the NAWs Service System Work Group already had. We deliberately held off until the end to show them this material, as I believe that having the group identify the issues for themselves was just as important as seeing in the end that they are not unique, and that they are not alone.

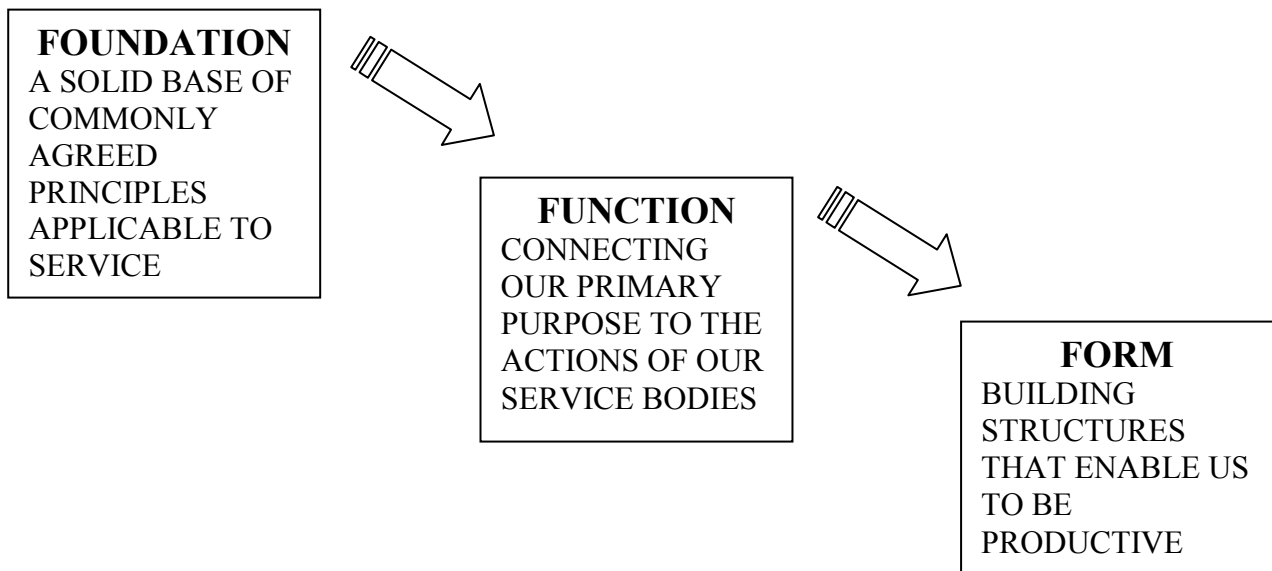
For the Shasta/Trinity Community, the work is just beginning. We reminded the group that strategic planning for services requires ongoing vigilance and commitment, as the planning wheel indicates.



We have found two truths about Fellowship development in the United States. First, Fellowship Development in the US is not easy to get our heads around, as several of our communities have had an NA infrastructure for, many years and we seem to be quite inflexibly stuck in our traditional service delivery model. Second, providing services in rural communities remains an exceedingly difficult challenge for us. In this sense, there is practically little we can do for Shasta/Trinity other than provide them some literature to help defray costs, and provide encouragement and support for them to come together and find a way of doing service that works best for them.

Along these lines, we left another handout with the ASC, entitled “*Building Strong Service Systems*”; which is an amalgamation of the best practices used in places throughout our fellowship where successful alternative systems have been implemented. At some point Shasta may need to reconsider its approaches to subcommittee structure, separate bank account for Activities, and the amount of unfilled area positions they have. They may need to look towards a leaner, “task based” method of providing local services.

Building Strong Service Systems



April 2009 World Board Meeting – Literature Development update

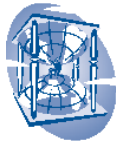
- The Polish speaking community has completed translation of Book 1 of the 5th Edition Basic Text. Given that it has taken them several years to translate this version of the book, the World Board has authorized production of Book1 of the 5th Edition for now.
- Australia has requested permission to create their own personal stories for inclusion in The Little White Book in their community. The Board has authorized this but asked that they work with the New Zealand fellowship to include potential stories from their members as well.
- The Iranians are translating Miracles Happen into Farsi. However, they will need to include several footnotes to explain certain cultural phenomena that were specific to the US in our fellowships early history, such as references to Bob Dylan, etc.
- The Swedish version of the book Just for Today will be in production shortly

NAWS 2009 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Today I will be presenting a PowerPoint based on an “Environmental Scan” of our fellowship that has been put together by NAWS Staff as an update to the NAWS strategic plan in April. An environmental scan is similar to an inventory; NAWS looked at external and internal factors that may influence Narcotics Anonymous. This scan provides a variety of information about drug use, criminal justice, and treatment trends throughout our worldwide fellowship. The environmental scan is the World Board’s first step in the development of project plans. The World Board held their second planning meeting in June. With each identified trend, NAWS considered how this will affect our members, our meetings, our service communities, and our public relations. The Board will take all identified trends, especially ones that would benefit from a more immediate response to help us maintain the integrity of our message of recovery, and develop the goals and objectives to help us address these trends. This work will result in the project plans for the 2010–2012 conference cycle, as well as the NAWS 2009 membership survey below:

NAWS 2009 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

For those who receive the NA Way you will find the survey in that magazine; for those who will be attending WCNA33, there will be an opportunity to complete the survey onsite; and for those who have access to a computer, please help us by completing the survey online. With the 2007 survey, we had over 13,000 members respond; with more than five months to complete the survey in 2009, we hope 25,000 members will participate. This is an anonymous survey. We are asking that you help us actively encourage members in your areas to participate. You can do this by emailing this link, <http://questionnaire.disc.na.org/> to the online version or by distributing paper copies of the survey yourselves, collecting the responses, and either mailing them or faxing them to the WSO or ideally by inputting the information. The deadline for survey completion is 31 December 2009



IMPORTANT DATES

- August 20-23: WCNA 33, Barcelona, Spain
- August 22: World Unity Day Celebration
- August 31: Deadline for submission of nominations to the NAWS HRP for service positions at WSC 2010
- August 31: Deadline for submission of Regional Motions for the 2010 Conference Agenda Report
- September 12-13: Travelling RSC in Eureka CA
- September 15: Deadline for review and input on Living Clean chapters 1 and 2
- October 23-25: WSLD, Fresno, CA
- October 31: Deadline to submit reference paperwork to the NAWS HRP for regionally nominated candidates for positions at WSC 2010
- December 31: Deadline for completion of 2009 Membership Survey

Thank you for all you do in service to the fellowship.

Matt Schmeck
Northern CA Regional Delegate