**Nomadic Addicts Update – January 2019**

The second deployment of Nomadic Addicts began on January 19th with some changes to the deployment times. The first deployment consisted of seven platoons visiting seven groups once a week for twelve weeks. All 84 of these commitments were made.

During a debriefing dinner for all the participants of the Nomadic Addict program time was taken to hear about successes and challenges, along with future recommendations. The biggest complaint heard was that as soon as the deployment was completed, after the twelve weeks, platoons didn’t return to the groups they were supporting. With the understanding that all seven of the platoons committed to groups which were a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour drive one way, it’s understandable that they were glad to get their time back. Of the seven platoons, a few only had three members, so another big suggestion was to cut back on the number of platoons, but increase the number of people in each platoon.

The second deployment will consist of two to three platoons with seven to ten members per platoon. The final number will be determined by the final number of committed participants. The duration of the deployment will be once a week for one month, then every other week for two months, then once a month for three months. The group’s business meeting will be attended by the platoon in all six months to offer input and to allow the groups with only one or two members to experience a group conscience and to have the support of other NA members at their business meeting. It is hoped that this gradual reduction, instead of an abrupt stop, will help the groups begin participating more with the Area than they have been, so that they can see they really aren’t alone.

One other development is that the Area has been taking advantage of using a rural co-op, which has had a huge impact on the member groups and on the Area. It is really exciting to have these isolated groups add their conscience to the Heart of Tennessee Area.

A few words about t-shirts…

When we were preparing for our first deployment, we discussed getting shirts, sort of like a uniform, for our members to wear when visiting the targeted groups.  Those of us in favor of the shirts thought the shirts would create some unity for our participating members, be an incentive to be a part of Nomadic Addicts, and help the targeted groups recognize, and reach out to, the members of Nomadic Addicts visiting their group. We also thought they would create some interest and attraction, as well as be a conversation piece.  During our discussion, there was a small minority of our committee members who believed the shirts would cause separation, and maybe even set us up to appear better than the members of the groups we were attending.  Because of that, our committee members were afraid that a Nomadic Addicts shirt would be problematic if that contentious attitude was shared by members of the targeted groups. So with all of that information, we chose to not go through with the shirts.

Before this deployment, the idea of the shirts came up again.  This time the response was quite different! Those opposed last time said that every time the members of the targeted groups saw us, they were excited! The groups LOVED Nomadic Addicts!! They also thought the shirts would bring a level of attraction to the table, as well as be a conversation starter. As a result, our committee voted unanimously to purchase shirts! We, our Area, are not purchasing the shirts. Each member has to purchase their own. There is a small up-charge for the shirts, and all the additional funds from sales of the shirts goes towards the travel budget of our Outreach Coordinator who is attending ALL the groups within our seven county rural Area numerous times, along with at least four other members every trip!!

When we were preparing for the first deployment, we had an Outreach meeting on a Friday night and had about 40 people show up! Some of them were new, but almost every single one of them was personally invited to come by two or three of our energetic members. We explained that the groups we were targeting were isolated, had men sponsoring women because of a lack of women, and were dominated by an AA presence because that was all the help they could get! As a matter of fact, one of the groups was writing their meeting times down on the back of the AA meeting schedule to give to newcomers because they weren’t even on a meeting list!

We explained how our community had exploded with growth and caught on fire for recovery over the last few years and that we wanted our surrounding communities to experience the same thing. But we didn’t want them to experience it because of an incidental result of an ember of our fire getting caught by the wind, and hopefully making its way to their community. We wanted to be intentional! We wanted to grab some torches and march them down to their communities and intentionally set their communities on fire for recovery too!! And that’s what we did!  Our name is the Heart of Tennessee Area, but we’re known as the HOT Area.  So all our language revolves around being on fire and fanning flames, or how “hot” the things we do are.  So following this ongoing theme, we came up with our Nomadic Addicts shirt design.

We love sharing this story, and others, with as many people as we can. We have watched as the excitement, energy, and fire for recovery has grown exponentially in our community!  And we want everyone to experience the same thing! To add to this phenomenal Outreach campaign, our PR team has participated in over 100 booths and presentations in the last three years! We want to bring new members to our groups, but we want our groups to be prepared when they show up!! That’s the beauty of operating all our services in one Fellowship Development Subcommittee! We all know the impact services have on each other, and when we see we’re doing way more in one arm of service than another, we can decide to cut back our efforts in one service, and then expand them in the area that was lacking.  It’s the most amazing service experience I’ve ever participated in over the 15 years I’ve been serving! 