

Reaching Out



April 2026



From the Inland Empire Area

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“Reaching out is the beginning of the struggle that will set us free. It will break down the walls that imprison us.”

— Basic Text

From the Editor

We would like to welcome all of you to the NA World Services newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We hope that the contents of this newsletter will assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts. There are three sections to *Reaching Out*. The first section, "From the Inside," is filled with letters from incarcerated addicts, sharing their experience, strength, and hope as they find and maintain recovery from addiction through NA.

The second section, "From the Outside," is an opportunity for Hospitals & Institutions subcommittees to offer their experiences obtained through carrying the NA message of recovery to addicts who are unable to attend regular meetings. You may also find personal experience from those members who heard the NA message on the inside and are now living and enjoying life on the outside.

The third and newest section, "Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside," features members sharing about successfully transitioning from treatment, a hospital, or an institution to living on the outside. We encourage submissions for *Reaching Out* from members and H&I subcommittees. Please consider that we are more likely to publish articles that focus on how NA has helped an individual to recover while incarcerated rather than those that concentrate on the horrors of drug use. Send all submissions to *Reaching Out*; NAWS, PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999; USA, or to handi@na.org

GET INVOLVED AND HELP US CARRY OUT OUR FELLOWSHIP'S PRIMARY PURPOSE!!

Our planned publication deadlines are as follows:

Issue	Deadline
July 2026	15 April 2026
October 2026	15 July 2026
January 2027	15 October 2026

And finally, did you know that electronic subscriptions to Reaching Out are free? New issues will be emailed to you four times a year. To sign up, visit www.na.org/reachingout.

From the Inside



Dear Reaching Out,

My name is TF, and I sit here in a cold, damp cell again, wondering where this road leads. I resisted change for so long, and it brought me nothing but misery. I used for the last 20 years, in and out of recovery. I never worked the Steps and kept relapsing, and now I am sitting here in prison again.

I won't do the same thing this time. I'm in NA, doing Steps, and helping guys on the yard. Maybe the youngsters will listen to my story and find hope too. They don't have to walk in my shoes. I'm going to give myself a break, learn to live a new way of life, and forgive myself for my addiction. Thank you, NA.

TF, Unknown Location

Dear Reaching Out,

I am a Native American who was born in New Mexico and transplanted to California. I come from a home in which drugs and alcohol were common. I followed the same path, which led me to a 15-to-life sentence.

I utilize the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous and my *Just for Today* book to help me realize it's not just about me anymore. I am part of an NA family and my NA group conscience. I am part of the worldwide Fellowship. The First Step is the key to success—it works for me and can work for you too—thank you, Narcotics Anonymous.

Unknown, California, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is AS. I started using at the age of 16 and now I'm 24, sitting in prison. When I got to prison, I decided to stop digging. I spend my days helping other addicts who can't see the

light yet. We now have weekly NA meetings. I am thankful for NA and all you have done for me.

AS, Wisconsin, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is AE, and I am a recovering addict, currently incarcerated. I have been in and out of jail since 2003 due to my drug use, but my addiction has kept me a prisoner to my fears and negative thoughts for as long as I can remember being alive. I am learning that true freedom is a state of mind. Even before I was incarcerated, I was only as free as my addiction permitted me to be.

I always wondered how I could get clean. How do I recover from addiction? I found out that I first had to be honest with myself, admit I had a problem with drugs and that I needed help. I had to be willing to do the work to stay clean. For many years, I ran on self-will and it resulted in nothing—a life filled with chaos and unmanageability. My life lacked identity and purpose. I had no idea who I was or what my purpose in life was.

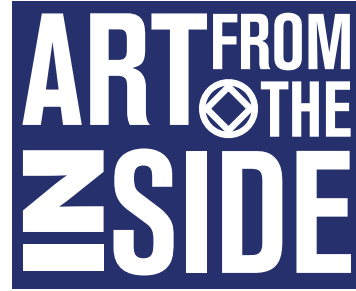
The Narcotics Anonymous program and the spiritual principles behind the Twelve Steps have helped me realize what true freedom is, even while being incarcerated. I am learning to live one day at a time, sometimes one moment at a time.

I do not have to wait until my release date to be free.

AE, Texas, USA

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change
the things I can,
and the wisdom to know
the difference.



Please note! Thank you for your new art submissions! They keep us from having to reuse older images from previous *Reaching Out* issues. We are always in need of new artwork. It is a great way to be of service from the inside. If you like to draw, please consider creating something for future issues!

Thank you...



I believe in my Higher Power



MC, Location Unknown

INCARCERATED MEMBERS

Does your facility allow the use of tablets?
 Did you know that NA has been adding free NA literature
 to many tablets across the prison system?
 Check and see if it is available where you are located,
 and if not, ask your warden/social director to make
 a request to get it added!

Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is LJ, and I am a woman and an addict. I have walked both sides of the fence with addiction and recovery. I am grateful for the experiences I have had and grown from. After addiction brought me to my knees, I found Narcotics Anonymous and managed to get ten years clean. I was very active in the program and even became a drug and alcohol counselor.

I loved who I was becoming; however, I let the relationship I was in become more important than my recovery. Little by little, I turned my back on my spiritual beliefs and became intolerant and indifferent toward them. Once again, I was faced with not liking myself and who I was. I wanted to end my life.

I picked up a gun and put it to my chest, trying to end it all. It turned out that my Higher Power had other plans for me. I survived the whole ordeal, but not without consequences. I lost a lung, part of my abdomen, and my spleen, leaving me in a great deal of pain. I was placed on strong pain medication, and it did not take long until I returned to the full nightmare of my addiction.

This time I reached new lows I had not previously faced. This has led me to the current situation I face now: currently incarcerated for an eight-year sentence in which I have no memory. I assure you, the shame overwhelms me. My first few years here, I floundered around hopelessly. It turns out there are plenty of drugs here in prison.

Thanks to H&I, I found my way into an NA meeting. Though the prison only offers them once a week, it was enough to light the fire in my soul again. I have found my principles again. One of the volunteers is even helping me work on my Steps. My spirit has been awakened, and once again I'm on the road to recovery. I follow the Fifth Tradition, carrying the message to the still-suffering addict.

It is hard to believe my time is almost up here and I will transition back into society in ten months. Without NA, I am not sure I would have survived this world. Prison is a tough environment to survive, fueled by rage and anger, and there is very little integrity to find. NA keeps me grounded and sane. I am looking forward to being released and getting involved on the outside. I have missed the Fellowship and the sense of belonging I felt when I first came in.

I know it is going to be hard because I will be starting from scratch once again. I know I will need the support of a home group and the Fellowship to get through it, to keep me humble and grateful. I look forward to service work again. Thank you, NA, and especially to H&I for saving my life, again. Keep coming back.

LJ, Florida, USA



2018 Group Anniversary Art, Mexico

From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is LM. I was first introduced to NA in 1987 while I was in jail. I had just taken part in an armed robbery—a home invasion gone bad. I was arrested (rescued) and charged with 21 felonies. I was under the influence of cocaine and heroin when I agreed to participate in this crime. When the cloud lifted, I could not believe where my addiction had led me.

About a week after I got to the jail, I ran into someone I had previously been incarcerated with. I shared some of my story with her. She invited me to go with her to my first H&I meeting. The panel members shared their experience, strength, and hope. I still was not sure if addiction was my problem and if I belonged, but I kept going back. One day, a woman came and shared her personal story. It was so identical to mine. She gave me my first shot of hope. I thought if she could change, I could change, but I had to go through my own process. I pleaded down to eight years in prison, and still I stayed involved with NA while on the inside and after I got out.

I serve on an H&I panel now, and I am so grateful to give back what was so freely given to me.

LM, Illinois, USA



CALLING ALL H&I MEMBERS!

Please submit your story to the quarterly NA newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We are looking for recovering addicts, like you, to share their experience of finding recovery behind the walls and maintaining it on the outside. Your story carries a powerful message of hope for the incarcerated addict! Thank you.

Please send your story to:
Narcotics Anonymous World Services;
PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409,
or to HandI@na.org.



Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Whether you left from a treatment center, jail, prison, hospital, or institution, you are moved from the “inside” to the “outside” to be drug-free, productive members of society. We think your experience may be invaluable to others as they embark upon their transition.

We are offering questions to help stimulate your thinking so that you may want to share your experience with us; we will publish your article in *Reaching Out* to help others.

1. What did you do on the first day of your release/discharge?
2. What steps did you take to help your recovery in the community? Do you think the transition steps are the same for addicts who are being released after 30 days or ten years?
3. What are some of the challenges you encountered when you reentered the community?
4. How did NA help you with information so that you were able to attend a meeting upon release/discharge?
5. How do you think NA may have been better able to help you in your transition, and do you have any suggestions to offer so NA may be better able to help others as they transition?

We look forward to reading your experience and providing this information to others. Thank you for helping us assist others in their transition.



“When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends—jails, institutions, or death—or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today are more fortunate. For the first time in man’s entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a simple spiritual—not religious—program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.”

Narcotics Anonymous, “We Do Recover”

Order Form

Reaching Out is a quarterly, recovery-oriented newsletter made available free of charge to incarcerated addicts through Narcotics Anonymous World Services. If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months and would like a free subscription to *Reaching Out*, complete and return the following form.

***Reaching Out* is also available in a printer-ready format, for free download at www.na.org/reachingout.**

Reaching Out is also available by a 20-copy bulk subscription at a cost of \$44.00 annually. If you are interested in purchasing a bulk subscription, please complete the following form and return it along with a check or money order.

- I am an incarcerated addict (and will be for at least six more months) and want a free subscription to *Reaching Out*.
- I want to purchase _____ 20-copy bulk subscriptions of *Reaching Out* @ \$44 each, total \$ _____.

Name _____

Identification Number _____

Facility Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Reaching Out

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www.na.org/reachingout

ATTENTION INMATES

If you are relocating and your mailing address changes while you are incarcerated, please update your new address with us so that we can maintain your subscription to *Reaching Out*.