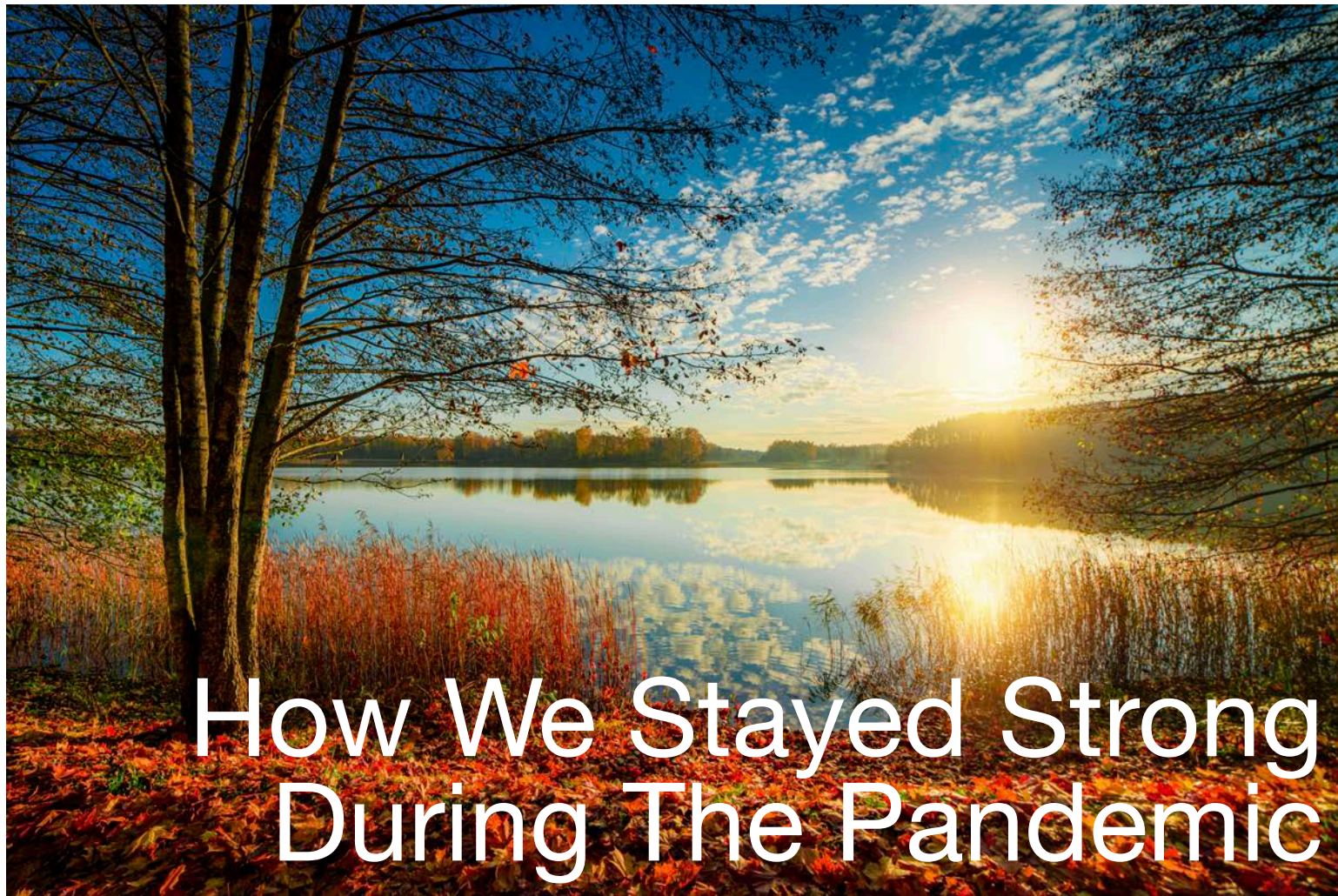


To receive the OAsis by email, please send your email address to Nancy A.: ambroses28@hotmail.com



OA Infoline:  
(201) 528-3398  
www.njioa.org

The quarterly newsletter of NJIOA — Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous



# How We Stayed Strong During The Pandemic

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER 2022

Oct 2 — Do You See What I See? A Body Image Workshop on Zoom 7:00-9:00pm  
Oct 13 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm  
End of Oct — Firelight Meeting — details TBD

### NOVEMBER 2022

**Live Event** Weekend Nov 4-6 — Region 7 Convention Ocean City, MD. All are welcome.  
Nov 10 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm  
Nov 19 — IDEA Day - details TBD - watch our website

### DECEMBER 2022

Dec 8 — NJIOA Intergroup Meeting 7:30pm  
Dec 12 — “Step 12 Within” Day Workshop

### More Details

All event flyers and info will be posted on our website: [www.njioa.org](http://www.njioa.org)

**G**roceries were hard to find during the early weeks of the pandemic. Some friends and I collaborated to source food deliveries from various suppliers. We secured a milk-man, produce suppliers, butcher boxes, coffee beans, nuts, paper goods, masks, etc. As the situation became safer, I found that I enjoyed the quality and convenience of these food deliveries and did NOT miss going to the grocery store. Now that I am HOW abstinent, being able to order good quality food that is safe for me to eat is super easy. A few well timed clicks on my phone or laptop, and I have a reliable supply of fresh fruit, veggies, dairy, and everything I need to stick to my plan of eating. I also learned some new skills for making the most out of available foods, such as making bone broth and yogurt.



These things help me stay grateful, content and connected with my food each day, and remove some of the hurdles that might lead me astray.

— Shirley S.

## I Struggled And Then Found Recovery

**H**ow has the pandemic affected my recovery? Well, I have some bad news and some good news; or in Yiddish, a little “naches” and a little “tsoris” — something to be happy about and something to be sad about. Tsores: In November of 2021, I had had enough of the pandemic; I decided that I didn't need to do anything regarding program, spirituality or my health; I felt, in my infinite wisdom, that it was just too stressful. I wanted to do what I wanted when I wanted (like a child). So I stopped following a food plan, stopped doing my reading/writing and calling my sponsor, and stopped saying my Jewish prayers in the morning. For a few weeks, I liked the freedom; especially since I am retired and no longer work, I didn't have anything I had to do. I had fun eating, reading, playing Scrabble, and cooking and going food shopping for my family. I basically proclaimed, “The heck with you Pandemic and the heck with my food addiction” And after 6 months, I had gained 40lbs. and was miserable. I asked myself the question I learned in program: “How's that working for you?” The answer was clear: doing nothing got me nothing (but trouble). Naches: Slowly, I: 1) returned to attending meetings (on Zoom of course, thank you Mr. Pandemic), 2) worked with a new sponsor; 3) created a healthy food plan to follow approved by my sponsor which involved weighing and measuring my food) 4) did a daily 10th step and a reading and writing, and 5) said my morning prayers — why morning prayers? Because the 11th step says that I must improve my conscious contact with my HP. I wish I could tell you that I regained my



“But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful.”

BB There Is A Solution, p.17

abstinence quickly but that didn't happen; I probably had 15 “day 1's.” I was attending morning NYC Zoom meetings, talking daily to my sponsor, praying, eating healthy, but still I couldn't put the food down. Why? For me the problem was that I wasn't willing to give up the little extra food I ate when I felt like I was entitled. I have Fibromyalgia, which significantly constrains my life; I've had two recent back surgeries; and, even had a brief spell of Covid. I finally realized (with the help of my sponsor and the readings) that what I was doing, by giving in to that desire to have a little extra abstinent food now and then was “feeding” the food addict inside me — the voice that said that I was unique and was entitled. When I finally drew a red line that said, “NO MORE eating anything extra,” I finally found my abstinence. I now have more than 4 months. What works for me? I wake up around 4:15am every morning, (crazy I know); I do my reading, writing and call my sponsor; I commit my food and stick to the plan; I say my morning prayers, I walk my dog, I attend part of the NYC meeting every day as well as other meetings; and I have a scheduled call every morning with a fellow to keep the isolation demon at bay. I have lost weight — though not nearly as quickly or as much as the first time I worked the program 13 years ago. But, as program always teaches

me, “Acceptance is the answer to all my problems,” and NO, I can't have that extra rice cake, or portion of fruit, even though I deserve it (NOT!). No more vacations for me. There is no reason why I can't follow my plan of action every day; it keeps me relatively sane and abstinent. Here is hoping that you find what works for you. And hopefully we won't have a pandemic again for at least another 100 years.

— Robert



“We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”

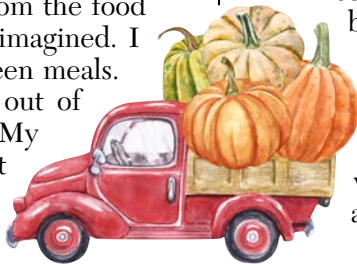
BB A Vision For You, p.164

## The Pandemic Saved Me

**A**fter a 15 year relapse, I came back into the rooms right in the middle of the pandemic. I went to my first OA meeting on Zoom, and I was enthralled. It was so easy to find a meeting at any time of the day or night, and with everyone home-bound, the meetings were well attended and full of old and new faces. The Fellowship seemed bigger and more tangible and more accessible than ever, and I really needed it. Those first days were excruciating — being separated from the food was more uncomfortable and harder than I imagined. I had to think up ways to distract myself between meals. I remember I would open the fridge door out of habit, and stand there just staring at food. My sponsor told me to pray. I didn't really want to, but I had made a commitment to follow instructions, so in those dangerous fridge

moments, I'd pause and say a prayer, like “God I don't want to eat that, help me not eat that.” and somehow I'd feel the willingness to slam the fridge closed, and head to my iPad. I'd jump on a meeting somewhere in the world, and I'd distract myself for an hour. That's how I made it through the first uncomfortable month of not compulsively eating. These days, as meetings are shifting back to a hybrid or an in-person format, I'm ok with this. I'm sure I'll continue to use Zoom for many meetings that I have come to love, but honestly I can't wait to sit in a seat beside my friends, catch smiles from across the meeting room, write my name in the We Care book, stand up to hold hands during the Serenity Prayer, and enjoy those dear hugs from an incredible Fellowship of people that have welcomed me back and given me hope and strength, at one of the most difficult times of my whole life.

— Alison L



## The Pandemic Changed My Program

Is it possible the Pandemic is still with us? Has it been 2 ½ years from the start? I am shocked that we are still in this horrendous nightmare, although it has gotten better, it will never be the same as before March 2020. I can thank my HP that my program has followed me through these last couple of years although some things have changed.

The main things I miss are my in-person meetings. I miss the camaraderie, the “after” meeting chit chat, going out for coffee. I really looked forward to driving at night (which is a thing of the past right now) to get to my meetings. Picking up coffee on the way & just sitting for an hour or two listening to shares, sharing myself about this progressive disease that I have & will always have regardless of any pandemic around.

Other changes that have occurred since the pandemic started is that I have moved from my childhood home, city, state to North Carolina. Moving can be stressful but moving in a pandemic 500 miles away can add to that stress. I did it abstinently, I worked my tools and my steps to get to where I am today. I moved my scale without it breaking! I have not gone to any NC in-person meetings yet but have been to some Zoom NC meetings. I am not feeling the same connection, so I stay on the NJ Zoom meetings. These meetings are a blessing so I can stay connected. They are an important part of my program & I cannot take them for granted. I am so grateful that I was able to join OA before the pandemic started & have these memories in my heart & soul.

— Mary Ann C.

## How The Pandemic Enhanced My Program

I really did not think that anything about my program had changed much during the pandemic until a few months in, when I noticed I was losing weight. I was hoping that I wasn't sick, because nothing had really changed; except for one thing: I was home a lot more and I was no longer eating my meals out 5-6 times a week. When going out, I don't usually bring my scale. At home everything is weighed & measured. And with weighing and measuring every mouthful at home, I had begun to lose a little weight. Guess my eyes are not as accurate as a scale & measuring cup!! Thank you God, this Program works — when I work it!

— Audrey C.

## The Fellowship Kept Me Going

When I retired in 2010 I immediately began applying for other jobs. That was my nature for I saw myself as a worker bee and in order to accept myself I needed to work and work some more. For years in this program I was happy to adhere to all the principles, which I perceived of as rules. While my program was ambitious and I met with some success along the way, I missed out on aspects of spirituality which would have led to more serenity, peace and happiness. Nonetheless, I “trudged” on. It was not a coincidence that that line in the Big Book was always one of my favorites for that was how I lived. Push push and push some more or just give up. Not a lot of balance there!! All those years, when I was working full time I still went to three or four night

meetings a week, my program did come first. Once I had a more flexible schedule, I was able to attend day meetings which were more relaxing and easier. As I have gotten older I realized that going out at night was not as comfortable and when I married in 2017 I had another reason not to feel compelled to go out at night. And then the pandemic! How was I to access meetings on the computer? Techno-averse — is that a word? I could write, talk a good game but give me anything mechanical and I was a loser. Fear — I wanted to run from it. Let anyone else set it up and just give me the link. I even had to leave an aspect of my job due to my anxiety related to the requirements of the paper work. While I could not host or set up I learned how to type in the meetings and passwords and began to attend meetings whenever someone shared them with me. I have talked with people in Paris, got a sponsee from out of state, met someone living in Morocco and have come to rely on a small group within my own area of the country as my dear friends and colleagues. The

pandemic has brought intimacy, support and good humor all around. For today, I am more stable, comfortable at home and less driven. Now the goal is to make sure, when I can, to keep up my connections, to go to meetings again as they open up and to understand that there is a time and a place for everything. The pandemic was my gift of acceptance - go slow to go fast as my friend Kathy would say and I am grateful.

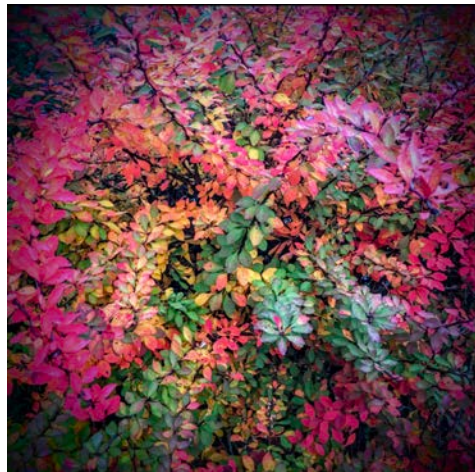
— Susan L. NJ



Original photograph by Susan L., Fair Lawn

“To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends — this is an experience you must not miss.”

BB Working With Others, p.89



Original photograph by Susan L., Fair Lawn

“[God] will show you how to create the fellowship you crave.”

BB A Vision For You, p.164





**PRAYER OF  
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
(A Prayer for Peace)

Lord,  
make me  
an instrument  
of your peace:

Where there is hatred,  
let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,  
grant that I may not  
so much seek  
to be consoled  
as to console,  
to be understood  
as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving  
that we receive,  
it is in pardoning  
that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying  
that we are born  
to eternal life.

## Virtual Meetings Deepened My Service

Three years ago after moving back home from Washington DC I started going to meetings in NYC and they fit into my schedule perfectly since they were lunch meetings. My sponsor suggested that I try to go to meetings in NJ since they were part of Region 7. I was very involved in Region 7 service when I lived in DC and to be honest I was missing that level of service. I needed to make a decision if I wanted to start doing more service and join Region 6 (NY) or try to find NJ meetings that fit into my schedule and do service in Region 7. At the end of February, 2 1/2 years ago, I went to an in person meeting in Montclair on a Saturday morning and felt so at home I knew that this could become my home group and meeting. Then the pandemic hit and the world closed down. Luckily OA as a whole was able to pivot pretty quickly and move meetings to Zoom. So I got to keep up my fellowship and actually even attend more meetings. I knew if I wanted to keep my abstinence and go to any length that I would need to fit in Zoom meetings with my hectic work schedule. I found a 7am meeting on Tuesday and



Original photograph by Susan L., Fair Lawn

*"We meet frequently so that newcomers may find the fellowship they seek."*

BB Bill's Story, p.15

Thursday mornings that fit into my schedule perfectly and these 7am meetings were a gift to me 2x a week. Even though I am back to commuting to NYC I still try to join as much as possible. I started to get more involved in NJ meetings and wanted to see what the North Jersey IG was all about. In the past I had wanted to go to a meeting but the time and location never worked in my schedule. Again apparently my HP was working in my favor and NJIOA was on Zoom. I attended my first IG meeting (via Zoom) and loved how well it was run, the enthusiasm that was apparent and immediately felt I needed to get involved. Service is so very important for me and my recovery and I am so grateful for NJIOA and all that it has given to me for my program. Some of the people that I have met through the Zoom meetings I know will be lifelong friends. And the

crazy part is that I still have not met some of these people in person! I am so full of gratitude that OA was able to bring us Zoom meetings, the IG is on Zoom and for HP placing service opportunities for me to help others. So even though we all went through so much and still are going through a lot with the pandemic I am grateful that OA was able to pivot to

Zoom meetings and be there, not only for me but for so many others that are still suffering. Thank you NJIOA and Zoom for being there.

— Maria G.

## PAST EVENTS

Intergroup sponsored a summer series consisting of a cherry blossom walk in April, a hike in July, and culminating with kayaking in August. It was "the rooms" without walls type of experience. Each activity was accompanied by a meeting with a focus on program literature, shares of experience, strength, and hope as well as reflection on the importance of collective activity and physical movement in program. There was something for everyone regardless of age, fitness level, and ability. We didn't even take the hike because of the heat, rather we had a meeting, ate our abstinent lunches, and played lawn games. It was a great time filled with fellowship, introspection, and recovery. I attended all three events and enjoyed experiencing the program in naturally beautiful settings. I found that my higher power can manifest as the G-great O-out D-doors. The wonders of nature remind me that my God is expansive, surrounds me all the time, and provides for all my needs, including natural wonders for my delight. The best part of the series was that it provided a healthy opportunity to get out of the food, isolation, relapse, etc. and get into the program. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us next year!

— Vanessa C.



Original photograph by Susan L., Fair Lawn

*"Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you."*

BB A Vision For You, p.152

## The Pandemic Broadened my Fellowship

It is interesting that a person like myself who has had to work on not being so shy over the years, would really miss the in-person meetings. It was an interesting transition to go to meetings on Zoom... To not be in the same room with someone, not be able to make that eye contact, to speak one on one with others after the meetings, to get and give hugs, that was something I missed the most. What ended up being a difficult part of dealing with the changes the pandemic had brought upon program...not being able to attend an in person meetings, also became a blessing. I was able to attend different meetings, in different areas, different countries, etc. I thought I would use my time as wisely as possible. I would get to as many meetings as I could and get to many different meetings in a day etc. As a result this benefited the OA program for me, I have meet different people, that I never would have been able to meet, I am so incredibly grateful for that change in program.

— Anonymous



## I Craved Human Connection

**P**rior to coming to OA, while reading yet another weight loss book, I came across a quiz titled something along the lines of “What are You Really Craving?” My results: connection. I’m incredibly shy, and can easily isolate as a result. I was eating to quell the loneliness, which made matters worse, not better. I avoided invitations to social gatherings because I was ashamed of my weight. It was a vicious cycle; my life had become unmanageable. So while the results of that quiz provided helpful information, the book itself didn’t help me find what I was truly craving. OA did.

The welcoming smiles and hugs, invitations to be of service, and reminders from fellows to “Let us love you until you love yourself” helped me feel a sense of belonging. The warmth and acceptance propelled me from one meeting to the next. For the duration of the meeting, I felt accepted and at home in my skin. And for the duration of the meeting, I didn’t eat. Instead, I could breathe. Eventually, I surrendered. Encouraged by my sponsor’s gentle and loving support, I developed a closer relationship with my Higher Power, and as the Big Book promised, “He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave.” By reaching out to fellows, welcoming newcomers, sharing at meetings, and sponsorship, that promise of connection materialized. About two years later, I relapsed. However, I continued to go to meetings, continued to stay connected to fellows, and continued to strengthen my relationship with my Higher Power. As long as I remained plugged in, I had hope.

Then came the pandemic. At first, I was grateful for Zoom and its ability to keep us all connected. Since I live alone, it was basically the only means of “face to face” communication I had. But, I shortly developed Zoom fatigue (yes, it’s an actual thing). I’m a teacher, and after spending all day trying to keep my students engaged in virtual learning, the last thing I wanted to do was spend more time online. I also found it increasingly harder to pay attention during meetings, and just like many of my students, seeing myself on the screen made me self-conscious. So I began to turn my camera off, and I ate. Slowly at first, but then quickly, I checked out. Since then my disease has progressed. I’ve gained all of my weight

back and then some, and once again, my life has become incredibly unmanageable. I’ve worked with numerous sponsors, and have had a few months or weeks here and there of recovery, but nothing that has lasted, despite their kind and patient generosity. At this point, I’m embarrassed by it. I don’t blame the pandemic, and I’m grateful that Zoom has created a lifeline for so many fellows who could not previously get to meetings. But it just hasn’t worked for me. When life becomes challenging—and lonely—I turn to food. When I turn to food, I turn away from my fellows and away from my Higher Power, and once again, the vicious cycle returns. I can admit powerlessness over it, but I am

struggling with steps 2 and 3. The Big Book reminds us that our reliance must be on our Higher Power if we are to recover. But I also need what one of my fellows lovingly refers to as her “God with skin.” I miss the hugs. I miss the conversations before and after the meeting. I’m craving human connection.

— Kerri

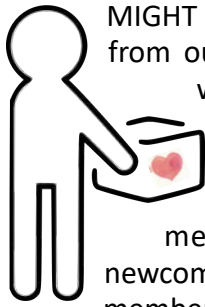
## God is Always The Answer

**T**he Pandemic changed many things for many of us, but it didn’t change my program at all. Yes, it made it harder to get out to my regular meetings. Instead, I embraced the move to virtual meetings and relied heavily on all my other program tools. I dug into the Fellowship and I trusted my spiritual life to see me through. I read the Big Book, I leaned into prayer and meditation, and you know what? God never failed me. The Big Book calls it “the loving and powerful hand of God.” That’s what it felt like to me. The virtual meetings were wonderful and gradually I tried out online meetings in other areas of the country and met new program friends from all over the world. My program stayed solid the whole time, not because of the virtual meetings but because of God. Because I sought God before everything else. I trusted God and relied on God for everything. And that’s what I learned: nothing else matters. If I have a healthy connection to the God of my understanding, I find all the power I need. I never forget these words in the Big Book: “When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God.” Amen.

— Susan S.



## CARRY THE MESSAGE



MIGHT YOU KNOW someone who could benefit from our program? Bill & Dr Bob said the only way to stay clean is to work with others. You could tell others about our program. Maybe send someone a newcomer packet. Invite them to a meeting. We have beginner meetings, newcomer meetings and meetings to support members coming back from relapse.

## INTERGROUP MEETINGS

**THE NJIOA INTERGROUP BOARD** meets on Zoom, once a month, at 7:30pm, on the second Thursday of the month. Find the link on our website [www.njioa.org](http://www.njioa.org). Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings, where NJIOA topics are presented for discussion, Board business and finances are discussed, and events are planned. If you would like to get a topic on the next meeting's agenda, please email our Intergroup Chair, ToniAnn, at [typedforu@cs.com](mailto:typedforu@cs.com).



## RECOVERY HELP LINE

Are you struggling and need to speak to someone? Do you live in a remote location and need contact? Please call our friendly volunteers below to remind you that you are not alone!

**PLEASE try all the numbers until someone answers your call**

NAME	PHONE	AVAIL TIMES (ET)
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	4PM-6PM weekdays
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	8AM-6PM weekends
AUDREY C	201-819-5575	Please text first.
JANET B	201-248-8001	Until 9PM
MARCY E	973-694-1274	ANYTIME
SUSAN L	973-704-6345	4PM-6PM weekdays
SUSAN S	201-960-1995	11AM-7PM
TERRY P	862-812-4467	9AM-11PM
TONI ANN A	973-945-0233	Before 11PM



## YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

<b>TONIANN A</b> Chair	<a href="mailto:typedforu@cs.com">typedforu@cs.com</a> 973-945-0233
<b>MARIA G</b> Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:mtg7176@gmail.com">mtg7176@gmail.com</a> 201-314-1350
<b>RONNI S</b> Secretary	<a href="mailto:ronnis.2020@outlook.com">ronnis.2020@outlook.com</a> 201-647-3613
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<b>MARK H</b> Public Information	<a href="mailto:markdhenze@msn.com">markdhenze@msn.com</a> 201-320-3025
<b>BRENDA W</b> Telephone Hot Line	<a href="mailto:BrendaOANJ@gmail.com">BrendaOANJ@gmail.com</a> 973-704-5082

## OUR 7th TRADITION

*Please make a donation.*

When we put money in the 'basket,' we help our meetings, our Group, our Region and OA World Service.

**Venmo or Zelle:**

**[njioaPAY@gmail.com](mailto:njioaPAY@gmail.com)**

By Mail:

**NJIOA, PO Box 827**

**Fairlawn, NJ 07410**



## EDITORIAL NOTE

The **OAsis** is the quarterly newsletter of NJIOA (Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous). The opinions expressed here are those of the individual authors, and not those of NJIOA or OA as a whole. The theme for the next issue is: "Prayer Changes Things." Deadline for copy is December 1, 2022. Please email writing or photography submissions to the OAsis Editors, at: **[maryanncluney@gmail.com](mailto:maryanncluney@gmail.com)**