

DONATIONS AND PRUDENT RESERVE

Many members aren't aware of how financial resources flow through Nar-Anon even though they may have been faithfully attending meetings for some time. Cash flow within this organization is very simple: dollars flow from the members to the groups; and from the groups to the Region and the World Service Organization. Funding begins and ends with each member of Nar-Anon – you and me. This organization has no money without our giving.

The Region receives their funding from the home groups. Group donations along with the proceeds of the annual Assembly account for virtually all the money available to the region to fulfill its mission:

“The Midwest Region ... to carry the message of hope to those affected by the addiction of someone near to them. The Region ... provid(es) a venue for communication with others within the region and to act on behalf of their common interests. ...Encourages growth of the fellowship through the distribution of information about Nar-Anon to the public and in support of all NarAnon Family Groups located within the (four state) region.”

The World Service Organization takes no money from outside entities. The World Organization relies heavily upon donations from groups and regions. While donations make up the largest chunk of their resource pool, this isn't their sole source of funds. The World Organization also produces literature that is sold to groups and adds some additional dollars to it's coffers.

So where does all the money go? Group conscience determines how Home Groups funds are to be used. Family Home Groups routinely give details on group spending as a part of their monthly business meetings. Often times funds go to pay rent for the meeting space, perhaps put a

bit of coffee in members' cups, make donations to the Nar-Anon Region and the World Service Organization. Most commonly, the largest expense for a home group is newcomer and outreach literature. Since a vital component of our mission is to reach out to newcomers, the Home Group funding and mission are perfectly consistent and aligned.

How about the region? Where does the Region's money go? Each year a budget is proposed and approved at the annual Assembly by attending GSRs. GSRs determine how the funds will be spent. During each GSR monthly call, a Treasurer's Report is shared. The Region's Treasurer lets all GSRs know how we're doing and provides complete transparency in terms of where funds are going – insuring dollars are being spent where GSRs have directed. Major expenses for the region are Delegate Expenses to cover participation in the every-other-year World Service Conference; as well as new group literature. The region also incurs expenses for outreach, our regional website and modest administrative and bank expenses.

And the World Organization? What does the World Service Organization's money go toward? The World Organization is responsible for salaries for 8 staff members (2 of which are full time with the balance being part-time – can you believe all the regions and groups around the world such a small staff supports??). There is also office space rental, phone and internet services, computers, copiers, printers, paper and ink. The World Service Committees whose projects require funding, such as literature production and software, website upkeep and associated fees, newsletter and subscription fees – all these expense are covered by the World Service Organization. Of note, the World Service Organization has been very challenged the last few years to be able to continue to service the entirety of Nar-Anon. US Donations have dropped (fiscal year 2012 vs 2013) nearly 15%. Unfortunately, costs have increased about 6% -- translating into a

reduction in spending power of 21%. At the same time, numbers of groups are on the rise. Increased funding is needed – and urgently.

So this cash stream of Nar-Anon – where does it start? The head of the cash stream is me. It is you. When we put a \$5 bill in the basket as it is passed at our home meeting, we give little thought to all the work that money does. What can those dollars mean to the person who is dealing with an addict with no support? Perhaps they pick up a Nar-Anon brochure at the local police department. Maybe they found the 800 number for the World Service office (which handles over 17,000 calls annually, by the way). Or possibly they completed a Google search for Nar-Anon and found a local meeting. A struggling, suffering and pain-filled person found a meeting – and sat down in the chair next to you. Only then did they realize they were no longer alone. Your donations to the Nar-Anon service structure work very hard. Very hard indeed. None of Nar-Anon's work can be done without money. And it all starts with me and you.

In the Nar-Anon service structure, Home Groups aren't expected to deplete all their cash by donating everything to the Region. Quite the contrary. The service structure wants all groups to be self-supporting and healthy. Each group is asked to determine their prudent reserve. So what is that? Prudent reserve is money that is set aside to cover operational expenses for the group in the event of declining contributions. According to the Guide to Local Services, a guideline for appropriate level of funding for a prudent reserve is three months of expenses. So a group can look at their spending over the past year and average out their expenses/3 mo period. This 3 month average is the prudent reserve for that group. Once the group's cash on hand exceeds the prudent reserve, the excess can be donated to the service structure as decided via group conscience. The goal is to help insure the group's financial health is sound and sustainable over the long term – and at the same time have funds shared among the whole of Nar-Anon.

Likewise Nar-Anon doesn't expect YOU to give sacrificially. No one expects you to surrender your personal piggy bank. Maybe you don't have the ability to give as much as the person next to you when the Tradition #7 basket is passed at your meeting. Our personal finances are as different as each of us. If you are unable to give money, perhaps there are other ways you can contribute to the group. Maybe you can be the meeting sexton (arriving a few minutes early to unlock the meeting room, check the thermostat, put out the literature, post the directional signs, etc). Maybe you can help by putting together newcomer packets. Maybe you serve as home group treasurer. Or secretary. Maybe you maintain the "call anytime" list. Maybe you make the coffee and insure sufficient supply of cups and napkins. The bottom line is this: contribute to the group however you are able. If you have time, give it. If you have money, give it. If you have talent, give it. If you have passion, give it.

Any ideas on how groups can generate cash for themselves or for donations to the Region or the World Service Organizations? You bet! Here are just a few (several are already being done by groups around the country):

- Potluck Supper
- Rummage Sales
- Bake Sales
- White Elephant Sales
- Fabric covers for SESH books (these are made by members and sold at Nar-Anon and NA conventions, with all proceeds going to Nar-Anon)
- Serenity bracelets (made by some ladies of a group and sold; proceeds again being donated to Nar-Anon)

And these represent just the tip of the iceberg. The number of ways to generate funds is directed by our Traditions and limited only by our imaginations.

If additional events and fund raisers or crafty sales (maybe you have no crafty book cover and bracelet maker members of your group) don't appeal to you, consider having a focused cause for your Tradition #7 basket donations. It could be to purchase new group literature packets for the region to provide to newly formed groups. Or perhaps for additional funding for regional outreach to touch more people who are suffering through a loved one's addiction. If you decide to direct your meeting's donations to a specific 'cause', just be certain you provide the details during meeting announcements so everyone knows.

One of my favorite restaurants for a quick meal is Chick-fil-A. Their food is good, employees are helpful and polite and the restaurants are impeccably clean. I love their grilled Asian chicken salad – with an iced tea and a small ice cream (sinfully delicious). This meal provides one person a relatively healthy single meal (okay, maybe not so much with the ice cream – but it is SOOOOO good!!). What if instead of treating myself to Chick-fil-A, I opted to give the same amount of money to Nar-Anon? With those dollars Nar-Anon could purchase 7 newcomer's packets and with the change left over, a postage stamp or two. My single meal could be exchanged for information for SEVEN families in desperate need of the help and the hope of Nar-Anon – providing for those families the gift that was so generously given to me when I walked through the door and into a Nar-Anon meeting. Seems like a worthwhile trade to me.

So how about dinner tonight? Maybe Chick-fil-A? You know what, I think I have something I can stir up at home. I have other plans for the money to cover that meal....