

March 17, 2026

Dear Friends,

I have been asked by the General Service Board, in my role as chair of the AAWS Finance Subcommittee on Self-Support, to contribute to the AAWS monthly communication letters. I do so with gratitude and a keen awareness that any understanding I have comes from shared experience within our Fellowship.

As a relatively new director on the AAWS Board, it has been both humbling and eye-opening to serve in this capacity. I am especially grateful to witness the establishment of the new Self-Support/Finance Desk and to see the care with which staff and trusted servants approach this work. Serving at this level has broadened my perspective and deepened my appreciation for the quiet, steady efforts that sustain A.A.

Our Fellowship continues to encounter new challenges as we navigate an increasingly digital world. Many members no longer carry cash. Contribution tools and payment methods change quickly. Treasurers are thoughtfully working through new tools and technologies. These are not problems so much as reminders that while our principles remain steady, our methods must adapt.

As Bill W. said in his 1960 keynote address to the General Service Conference: “Our Twelve Steps probably won't change. Our Twelve Traditions? Not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for service – let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever...”

I have experienced that evolution firsthand.

In 2020, when the church where our small rural group met was shuttered during the pandemic, we moved online almost overnight. We were grateful to remain connected, but a simple and sobering question emerged: How would the still-suffering alcoholic find us now?

Without a physical meeting place, we realized how easily we could become invisible. Members who already knew us could follow a link. But someone new; someone frightened, isolated, or desperate, had no clear path.

We did what many groups did. We placed simple notices in our local newspaper. A few members put flyers at the grocery store, the library, the banks, and even the boat ramp. It was not polished. It was simply members trying to make sure A.A. could still be found.

For some of us who had never served beyond our home group, that season revealed how fragile our connection to the still-suffering alcoholic could be, and how much we relied on services beyond ourselves.

When in-person meetings resumed, we did not want to forget that lesson. We formed an outreach effort that began at the group level and gradually extended into neighboring groups. We worked with our Intergroup to ensure meeting information remained current. We created simple business cards with phone numbers and QR codes that linked to our local Intergroup/Central Office. With guidance from aa.org and by drawing on Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) and Public Information (PI) resources and shared experience, we reached out to local healthcare providers, businesses and agencies.

What became clear over time was this: none of these services existed by accident. They were available because members before us had participated, contributed, and remained involved.

Serving as chair of the Self-Support Subcommittee has allowed me to see those same principles at work on a broader scale. Self-support is not merely about placing money in a basket. It is about participation. It is about accepting responsibility for the health and continuity of our Fellowship.

When I contribute today, I am helping sustain the services that allow A.A. to be found; meeting listings, phone lines, literature, shared experience, translation, digital access, and so much more. These are not abstract concepts. They are lifelines.

There is also a quiet dignity in shared responsibility. Being self-supporting reminds me that A.A. is not something I simply receive; it is something I help carry. I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, and I contribute so that others may stand after.

When the basket is passed in my home group, I contribute not only to meet today's expenses, but as an expression of gratitude and participation in something larger than myself. Through shared responsibility and collective support, the hand of A.A. remains available; sometimes in ways we never see.

With humility and gratitude for the opportunity to serve,

Julie C.

Non-Trustee Director, AAWS

Chair, Self-Support Subcommittee