

## **Starting a New In-Person Meeting**

Many OA fellows, both newcomers and longtime members have expressed a desire to reconnect in person. Unfortunately, the availability of in-person meetings has been limited, especially in the District of Columbia. In March a small group of fellows led by Johnny G and Kullan E took action to address this problem and launched the weekly 6 pm Thursday Hope meeting.

The Thursday Hope meeting is designated as “chairperson’s choice,” with format options including OA speakers, OA literature, OA pamphlets, the Big Book, and the AA Twelve and Twelve. It follows a slightly adapted OA-approved meeting script. The chairperson volunteers for a quarterly commitment and is responsible for choosing the topics and identifying OA speakers or relevant OA literature to read.

## **Challenges and Successes**

The biggest challenge in organizing the meeting was paying rent. Fortunately, the OA DC Metro Intergroup was able to provide temporary financial support. Another bonus that helped ramp up the meeting was a gift of OA literature from a meeting that had shut down. Today, the Thursday Hope meeting is financially self-sufficient and stable. Attendance averages 7-10 people, and since its inception, five newcomers have passed through. This has brought to light another key challenge: because of the limited number of in-person meetings in the intergroup area, there is a limited number of available sponsors in attendance. At this time, newcomers are recommended to attend Zoom meetings where they may meet other members and identify a sponsor.

## **Lessons Learned**

The experience of launching a new OA meeting highlighted the importance of having at least two trusted servants to start it, not only to share the effort but also to avoid having any one person viewed as the “owner” of the meeting. Strong promotion of the meeting contributed to its successful launch. The organizers reached out to the contact person for every single DC area meeting to inform them of this new meeting and asked that they notify their groups. Another important step was to notify the Washington DC Metro Intergroup, which in this case led to short-term financial support and literature donation.

Reflecting on this experience, Johnny G affirms that starting this meeting led to a sense of responsibility and ownership to service commitment that helps him work his program more seriously. He found that starting a new meeting takes effort but it’s not as difficult as envisioned. By partnering with another member from the initial stages, the workload was shared.

## **How You Can Help**

To all OA fellows in the District or Intergroup area: you can do a huge service by attending this meeting, sharing your experience, and enlarging the pool of available sponsors.

**NOTE:** Effective Thursday August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the meeting is moving to the Triangle Club (1638 R Street NW, Washington DC.) Until then, you can attend the meeting at St Thomas Episcopal Church (1517 18th St NW, Washington DC.)