

1st EDITION 2009

NEWSLETTER



SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS
WORLD SERVICE OFFICE
P.O. Box 190
Benson, MD 21018
(410) 893-3322
www.siawso.org

MISSION STATEMENT:

We empower those who have survived child sexual abuse (who are not abusing any child), who want to become survivors and thrivers. Using our experience, strength and hope, we do this by:

- offering referrals to SIA, self-help, support groups
- providing information to start SIA groups, intergroups, and national service offices
- creating and distributing SIA information tools (literature, newsletter, electronic media)
- offering a speakers' bureau
- guiding SIA's public information efforts worldwide

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RECOVERY WORK

LINDA'S THOUGHTS

NOTE: At times I have referred to my loving Higher Power as God and as "he". I am fully aware that many view their loving Higher Power as female, or as nature, their group, "Good Orderly Direction", whatever lifts their spirit. So, please, mentally edit as necessary and as always, take what you like and leave the rest.

SPIRITUAL GOAL

SIA's primary goal is spiritual. Why? Because when you *know* and you *feel* that a loving Higher Power loves you, accepts you just the way you are, is anxious for a relationship with you, your self-esteem skyrockets. That same Being that created

the space between the stars, the baby's laugh, and the mighty oak, loves you, *wants a relationship with you and me!*

S/He not only loves us, I believe S/He likes us. We are not alone, unless we chose to reject the love of a Higher Power. When we create a restored relationship with *the* God, we will no longer doubt that we deserve to be treated with the utmost respect. And when we reach out, God is always waiting. There is something about God's goodness that shines a light wherever we walk.

LET GO AND LET GOD

It was in my 12-Step programs that I first found a loving Higher Power. The slogan Let Go and Let God completely baffled me, and I thought I'd never "get it." Now, I use a God box. When I want to "Let go and Let God", I write whatever I need to let go of on a piece of paper and put it in a box that I've decorated. It is now God's job to take care of it. I'm done with it. I may have to go back to the box many times, but it is a concrete effort that reminds me that I have done what I can; it's God's turn. I thought it was being irresponsible to let go and let God, but if I can't do anything else about the issue I let God figure out the outcome. What a relief!

Many of us have heard the following poem in many 12-Step rooms. It explains that God provides healing only when asked and when we let go.

Broken Toys

As children bring their broken toys,
With tears for us to mend;
I brought my broken dreams to God
Because he was my friend.
But then instead of leaving Him
in peace to work alone,
I hung around and tried to help,
with ways that were my own.
At last I snatched them back and cried
"How could you be so slow?"
"My child," He said, "What could I do?
You never did let go..."

- author unknown

God isn't pushy; if we want to remain in control, S/He'll let us. It's a choice to believe. If we don't have faith, we can pray for some; we only need a little. We could say out loud, "God loves me. God loves ME!" We could write it on our refrigerators or our mirrors. Eventually, we'll believe it. Thoughts produce feelings, so if we change our thinking, our feelings will eventually fall in line.

Our expectations may need to change. Life isn't fair, and when it is unimaginably horrific, that is not evidence that God has abandoned us. S/He doesn't control anyone. S/He guides; S/He doesn't force Her/Himself on anyone, not even on child molesters.

EMPOWERMENT VS GOD DEPENDENCY

Our abusers took away our personal power and abused us. It's no wonder we hunger for self-empowerment. In a futile attempt to feel powerful, we sometimes try to become our own god. We use our intelligence, co-dependency, or our sexuality etc. to fill that spot inside of us reserved for a loving Higher Power. They don't work. We're left empty.

Some of us believe our intelligence protected us as children, and it may have. So, we continue to rely on our intelligence to resolve these issues. If recovery were an intellectual process only, most of us would be fine. We've been thinking about this for a long, long time.

The irony is that as we hunger for self-empowerment, when we go to God for help, we find power, the power to "carry it out" like never before. I felt frustrated so I tried it. I said to my loving Higher Power, "You fix me. You make me believe I was innocent; I didn't over-react. My body didn't cause the abuse; I wasn't dirty, children don't cause pedophilia etc." It's a work in progress, and it doesn't occur overnight because it's a long 18" from my head to my heart, but feelings are changing on a gut level. The perpetrators will lose their hold.

Self-reliance, in our culture, is ideal. But is it realistic? I believe in myself, but I know that I am no god. We are taught to believe that we must dig our heels in, try more, work harder, and any goal is possible with our will the victor. Self reliance is our noble goal. Christine, my mother and perpetrator, was self-reliant. She didn't rely on a loving Higher Power.

SHAME

The things Christine said were much more damaging than what she did because that is how she passed on the shame and blame. I transferred these feelings onto God, but God and child molesters are opposites. A loving Higher Power doesn't want anyone to feel shame; it is not productive. God's voice doesn't remotely sound like Christine's.

Shame never comes from God because it creates an impenetrable wall that keeps God at arm's

length. Why would S/He create the wall when all S/He wants is to help us heal?

SIA LITERATURE

Spiritual recovery, like other parts of recovery, is a process; it's about progress not perfection. SIA has a few pieces of literature that may help:

Reclaiming Our Spirituality
The Slogans
The 12 Steps

IN CONCLUSION

Why did God "allow" the abuse? I think it's the wrong question. Christine and Sam, my father, allowed this to happen. I do know that God's love isn't based on miraculous interventions. And, I won't allow a three letter word "why" to interfere in being comforted by the comforter.

I believe that God is so very sorry you and I were hurt. That was never Her/His intention for our lives. S/He was groaning when we were abused, and preparing people to help us heal. S/He didn't protect me against unimaginable pain. Instead, my loving Higher Power protected me against defeat, not pain or injustice.

I believe S/He is so proud of us for working so hard to heal! I think S/He has our picture on Her/His refrigerator!! S/He knows how much courage we must have to deal assertively with such issues. After all, God has a Ph.D. in psychology. When we begin to see ourselves through the eyes of a loving Higher Power, we will begin to love ourselves as much as we love our biological children or pets.

I believe that God is glad you and I were born. We have a purpose. We weren't mistakes. Children are blessings.

I won't allow a child molester to take away one of the greatest gifts this life has to offer – a loving relationship with a Power greater than ourselves. Spiritual healing is possible! I am not alone. We are not alone. I choose rest. *I choose to rest in the arms of a loving Higher Power.*

Humility is not blind; it is based on evidence of God's goodness. We can take our blessing personally. My God compensates. To recognize that God is providing our blessings is to recognize Her/His love for us. There are miracles all around us if we only look for them. Many of us were raised in environments that create sociopaths. If we have any resemblance of a caring, loving human being, we are evidence of miracles. We are evidence that

good wins over evil. We are evidence that some Being protected our very souls. We remain human.

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Linda D.
Co-founder/Executive Director

Linda's Keynote speech can be ordered for \$20.00 plus \$2.00 S/H

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Changes

one by one thoughts and actions rearrange
I know I have more to change and fight
but now I can see a light
Demons from my past
waiting to be revealed and set free at last
Little by little each taken off that inner shelf
and put away
opening the skies for sunny/happy days
Me a little freer to be, just me
Starting to stand tall and give it my all
Moving closer to my goals
no longer believing those things I was told
of old

Duffy, MD.

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DO YOU HAVE TALENT?

The WSO is looking for poetry, artwork or recovery articles to include in the next Newsletter. Please send them to: SIA, PO Box 190, Benson, MD 21018 or email them to Linda.sia@verizon.net

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

April 11, 2009
Sharing the Journey
Ambler, PA
(See flyer for details.)

July 24-26, 2009
2nd World Service Conference
Harford County, Maryland
More info will follow.

February 5, 6, 7, 2010
The Biden Center
Lewes, DE.
More details to follow

When your group or Intergroup plans a day-long workshop or retreat, let the WSO know and we can add it to our Newsletter and website.

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Keep It Simple: Back to Basics Retreat

SIA's Mid-Atlantic Intergroup celebrated the sixteenth annual retreat at the Delaware shore on Feb 6, 7 and 8th with 87 registrants. Perfect warm weather defied the February skies, and the beach beckoned us outdoors. Incredible copious food fed our bodies, and confronting, comforting, healing and honest workshops fed our souls and spirits. Entertainment at the Open Mic Session and the Shamebusters Game on Saturday evening went late into the night with rich talent, healing laughter, and incredible gratitude to get to know and value each other's vulnerability and innocence. The group, including a large number of newcomers, listened, laughed, processed, cried and grew together into a stronger, thriving community of recovering survivors experiencing the reality of "you are not alone." Nurture was everywhere; honesty abounded, and the new retreat center felt truly like Home. Come join us next year on Feb 5, 6 and 7th!

Claudia G, PA.

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WE CONTINUE TO GROW

We would like to welcome the following new groups to our SIA family:

PHONE Meeting/London: PHM-005

ON-LINE Meeting: ONL-006

CANADA: British Columbia, Vancouver BC-010

SWEDEN: Gothenburg SWE-002

SPAIN: Marbella, Malaga SP-001

SOUTH AFRICA: Cape Town

MEXICO: Hermosillo, Conora MX-001

ARKANSAS: Ash Flat AR-002

ARIZONA: Phoenix

CALIFORNIA: River Pines CA-212
Manteca CA-213
Santa Monica

CONNECTICUT: Norwich CT-027

DELAWARE: Rehobeth Beach

ILLINOIS: Chicago

LOUISIANA: Gretna LA-001

MARYLAND: Baltimore MD-047,
Laurel

MASSACHUSETTS: Hyannis MA-054

MINNESOTA: Richfield MN-022

NEW JERSEY: Cliffside Park MJ-045

NEW YORK: New York NY-160
Hunter (Greene County) NY-158

NORTH CAROLINA: Roanoke Rapids NC-026

OKLAHOMA: Oologah

PENNSYLVANIA: Meadville

VIRGINIA: Salem

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FROM THE TREASURER

**MATCHING GIFT?
AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION?
DONATION FOR YOUR TIME?**

Does your employer have a matching gift policy? When you send in \$50.00, your employer will match it. So, **your \$50.00 donation becomes \$100.00!** Please check it out.

Does your employer have automatic deductions for non-profits? If so, please consider **designating SIA World Service Office as the beneficiary.**

Some organizations will contribute to a non-profit of your choice if you donate your time to their organization. Call the World Service Office if you'd like more information.

©**Thank you** for anything you can do to help!

Please consider supporting your World Service Office! Your group could **pass the basket a second time** or have a **special container** for donations to the WSO.

SPECIAL THANKS to the following groups that have donated in the past 3 months:

BACK TO BASICS RETREAT:
Attendees provided over \$2,400 in sales and donations!

TUESDAY PHONE MEETING: 1 donation,

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Dupont Circle Wed.

ILLINOIS: Chicago Wd. 6:30 Men's Meeting*

NEW JERSEY: Westmont Sat. morning

NEW YORK: Rochester 5:30 Thurs.

PENNSYLVANIA: Uniontown

TEXAS: Houston/Phoenix

VERMONT: Plainfield

- * \$100 or more
- ** \$200 or more
- *** \$300 or more

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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from the most recent board meeting are included in this Newsletter. It is the first board meeting in more than one year.

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GET THIS NEWSLETTER **FREE** via EMAIL

Would you also like to receive announcements about:

**SIA retreats,
events,
and new literature**

To be added to SIA's mailing list, please send an email to:

siawso+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Your email address will be kept strictly confidential and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Or, pass around the sign-up sheet included in this Newsletter so group members can sign up to get this Newsletter.

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VOLUNTEERS – MOST APPRECIATED

We love volunteers at the World Service Office. General office work is needed. If you can get to Exit 74 off of I-95, we would love to have you help out. **If you can volunteer once**, we can use the help! Please call 410.893.3322 and leave a message for Linda or email her at Linda.sia@verizon.net. (The # button by-passes the long answering machine message.)

Thank you!

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OLD NEWSLETTERS ON-LINE

You can read old newsletters by going to:

www.siawso.org

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HAS YOUR MEETING INFO CHANGED? DO YOU WANT TO REGISTER A NEW GROUP?

You can add or make changes yourself on the SIA website: www.siawso.org Only what your group wishes to display is displayed, and it can be changed at any time.

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Looking for Help Chairing a Meeting?

Why not use SIA literature to start the meeting? There's a wealth of wonderful, healing information in our literature.

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DID YOU MOVE? DID YOUR AREA CODE OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGE?

If so, please notify us to save on postage, as well as, we can continue to send survivors to your group.

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