

1st EDITION 2011

NEWSLETTER



SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS
WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

P.O. Box 190
Benson, MD 21018
(410) 893-3322
www.siawso.org
<http://siawso.flyingcart.com>

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY SIA!!!



29 years helping survivors thrive!

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MISSION STATEMENT:

We empower those who have survived childhood 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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Twenty-nine Years of Offering Recovery to Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse

One January evening in 1982, at a kitchen table in Baltimore, three women sat together and spoke about the unspeakable: child sexual abuse, perpetrated by family members (father, mother, brother-in-law) on each woman decades before. Using the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-Step recovery model, they admitted to being powerless over their histories, asked for help from a Higher Power so that they might make peace with their past, and began to heal and thrive in the present. They began casting off shame and self blame, living their lives unencumbered by the legacy of abuse. That evening, a new mutual-help, 12-Step program was born: Survivors of Incest Anonymous.

Now -- in houses of worship, medical centers and other meeting places located around the country and in a dozen foreign countries -- women and men 18 years through their 70s and beyond sit together and speak about the unspeakable: their own reality of child sexual abuse. Guided by the 12 suggested Steps of the program, everything said in the meetings and member to member are held in strict confidence. Survivors facilitate the groups; mental health professionals do not work in the meetings and SIA is not intended to replace therapy or any other professional service when needed.

There is no typical SIA member profile; members are of all racial, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, with varying marital statuses, sexual orientations, and degrees of ability/disability. The abusers in their lives may be any family member, family friends, clergy, another child or teenager, or anyone who betrayed the child victim's innocence and trust. We define incest *very* broadly. Many of those who attend SIA meetings share their struggles and find hope and healing with self-confidence, self-esteem, explosive anger, depression, addictions and compulsions, perfectionism, isolation, thoughts of suicide, and troubled relationships with family, spouses/partners, and authority figures.

As SIA celebrates its 29th birthday, it looks back on an exciting history: a 1984 letter published in "Dear Abby" mentioned SIA and caught the attention of a national audience. Members of SIA made anonymous appearances on the national talk shows of the 1980s and 1990s including Donahue, Geraldo!, Sallie Jessie Raphael and People Are Talking to name a few.

SIA's headquarters, the World Service Office (WSO), now in Harford County, Maryland, operates as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. It helps survivors to connect with one another and carries a message of recovery to those who still suffer. The WSO operates a telephone information line staffed exclusively by survivors, makes referrals to local SIA groups, assists individuals in starting new groups; provides literature, a quarterly newsletter, and other helpful materials developed by survivors for survivors; offers a pen-pal program, and manages a speakers' bureau. For several years, SIA speakers have presented workshops at the Maryland Governor's annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.

NOTE: If you like a copy to send to a local newspaper or TV show introducing them to SIA, feel free to print it off our website or send us a SASE to the PO Box.

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WE CONTINUE TO GROW

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

ITALY, ROME [GIOIA SIA](#) Monday from 7 to 9 pm Women only gioiasia@tiscali.it

QUEBEC, MONTREAL [Survivors of Incest and Childhood Sexual Abuse Anonymous](#) Sunday 14:00-15:45 Survivors Only sicsaa@selfaware.com

ARIZONA, MESA [Mesa SIA](#) Wednesday 7-8 pm Survivors only, pro-survivors welcome mesasia@hotmail.com

PRESCOTT [SIA](#) Saturday 6-7pm Survivors Only siaprescott@yahoo.com

CALIFORNIA, VENTURA [Ventura SIA](#) Sunday 5:30-6:30 plsplawn@verizon.net

CALIFORNIA, San Jose, 95112, Monday 7:00, Willow Glen Baptist Church, 1292 Minnesota, contact: Baolin 413.504.1209

GEORGIA, WOODSTOCK Sunday 4-5 pm sawoodstock@gmail.com

IDAHO, BOISE SIA of Treasure Valley
Wednesday 7-8:30 pm Survivors only, DID
SIATreasureValley@gmail.com

MICHIGAN, WARREN SIA Wednesday 7:30-9
pm survivors only siawarrenmi@yahoo.com

NEWYORK, NEWYORK SIA Double Winners
Meeting Saturday 4:15-5:45 pm Survivors Only
ErnieNewYork@aol.com

OHIO, CINCINNATI Childhood Sexual Trauma
Thursdays-February 3-March 3, 6:30-8:45pm
Survivors Only ghudson@cinciD2L.org

PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA Thursday –
Roxborough Thursday 7-9 pm Survivors Only
grabchuk@comcast.net

PENNSYLVANIA, HUNTINGDON VALLEY
Sunday - Huntingdon Valley Sunday 6-7pm
KathyHywd@aol.com

Phone/Email Contact WASHINGTON
SIAWashington_skagit@live.com

Phone/Email Contact COLORADO
sara_reed2000@yahoo.com

Monday Night Phone Meeting Contact:
P_neumatic@yahoo.com
PHONE: Sunday 8:30 – 10:00 “Sacred Space SIA”

Texas, Austin You Are Not Alone (Men’s SIA),
Saturday 4:00-5:00pm, Near 9th and Trinity,
contact for exact location
AustinMensSIA@gmail.com

Olympia, Washington, Women’s Meeting,
Friday 12-1:00pm, United Church of Christ,
110 11th Avenue, SE cataluna316@yahoo.com

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MidAtlantic Intergroup's Retreat April 15-17, 2011 in PA.

The Mid Atlantic Intergroup is busy planning the Retreat which will be held near Philadelphia on April 15, 16, 17. We realize it is Palm Sunday but will provide list of churches at your request. The Intergroup has a lot planned for continued healing, and we are always open to suggestions. If you have any suggestion or requested workshops, please email Kathy at Kathyhywd@aol.com. We already have many people interested in coming. This is a great opportunity for healing, fellowship with other survivors/thrivers and also fun. Hope to see you there. Don't forget to put that weekend on your calendar. Mid Atlantic Intergroup

3rd World Service Conference September 30 – October 2, 2011 More details to follow

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MEDIA ATTENTION

**SIA was listed in Dear Abby January 12, 2011!
Thanks Joan in NY for writing to the newspaper
about SIA.**

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FROM THE TREASURER

Can't afford a donation? Consider what a few people are doing. They volunteer their time for a local Volunteer Program and donate the proceeds to the SIA WSO. Recently \$400.00 has been donated by individuals. That almost pays one months rent!!

**SPECIAL THANKS to all who sent in donations.
It is the ONLY way we can keep up the good
fight!**

The following groups and intergroups that donated in the last 3 months are listed below. The WSO is extremely grateful for their financial support!

INTERGROUP/RETREAT:

CALIFORNIA: **SAN JOSE CA-087** *; Sunday Davis; Wed 6:00 pm Kaiser Fabiola Bldg, Oakland;
SAN JOSE CA-087 *;

ILLINOIS: Downers Grove

MARYLAND: Shepherd Pratt Wed; Fallston Group

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PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia; *Uniontown* *;

MISSING PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS?

MISSOURI: St. Joseph, Monday Wentzville; Progress West – O’Fallon Tues;

Look on-line at www.siaawso.org. You can find some of them there.

NEBRASKA: *OMAHA* *;

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

WANT YOUR OPINION TO BE HEARD?

Special thanks to Cathy, our website/database expert, who has agreed to donate all of the donations earmarked for her to SIA minus expenses.

Why not join one of the following World Service Committees?

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NEW INTERGROUP POSTS

NOTE: If your Intergroup would like to write something for the next Newsletter, please get it to Linda by April 30, 2011.

Literature

Finance

Outreach

Group Concerns

Conference Committee

- I. Conference Planning & Conference Chair
- II. Conference Structure & Bylaws

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SURVEY INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER! MAKE SURE YOUR GROUP IS REGISTERED

If your group is registered, you can expect a survey concerning the name change. If your group is not registered, or if your group secretary isn’t active, you’ll want to let the WSO know the name and address for the current contact person. Send an email to:

If so, please contact Amanda at:

calm.determination@gmail.com

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

siamtgupdates@gmail.com

If so, please notify us so we can save on postage for undeliverable mail, and survivors will be able to find your group.

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FREE via EMAIL!! QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS RETREAT INFO NEW LITERATURE

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SERVICE VOLUNTEERS – MOST APPRECIATED

The SIA World Service Office has created a low-volume, announcement-only mailing list to share news within the fellowship. Items sent out over this list will include retreat information, notification of events, the quarterly newsletter, and more. Your email address will be kept strictly confidential, and you may unsubscribe at any time.

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 only once or regularly**, we can use the help! Please call 410.893.3322 and leave a message for Linda. (The # button bypasses the long answering machine message.)

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

siaawso+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Thank you!

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**MATCHING GIFT?
AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION?
DONATIONS 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.**

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

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**RECOVERY WORKS
CAN NOW BE FOUND AS AN INSERT**

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RECOVERY WORKS

March 2011

LINDA'S THOUGHT

As always, take what you like and leave the rest.

GRIEF

It was soooooooooooooooooo painful when I let go of my fantasy family. There were times when my parents were healthy, and I loved believing I was loved. The relationship with Christine (my mother and perpetrator) improved as I got to be an adult. Was I going to risk losing what I'd been waiting for my whole life?

I wanted my perpetrator (my mother, Christine) and my sister suddenly to see the world through my eyes. Why did I have that expectation? They hadn't done that ever before! It was I who started empathizing with Little Linda. I started parenting Little Linda. I kept hoping that my mother or sister would contact me so we could "work it out." It never happened. I'd changed; they remained exactly the same.

Some people can still have contact with their family or origin and lose the fantasy. It has to do with your expectations and what makes you comfortable. We may need to keep reminding our Inner Child(ren) that s/he doesn't need her/his family of origin in order to feel innocent and good and clean and beautiful. Even if the family magically changed and made amends, the doubt is now in *our* minds.

We don't need them to heal. What is the need? To feel a part of something? To have roots? To feel normal? To feel innocent? To feel lovable? I got those needs met elsewhere. If we keep going back to empty wells, we're only going to find empty wells. We can't get milk from a hardware store no matter how many times we go back to the hardware store.

Life isn't fair. Our families should do something so that we can feel better about ourselves. But they probably won't. Now, I am responsible to let Little Linda off the hook. When I removed my own doubt concerning my innocence and Christine's guilty

verdict, I quit going to a child molester to feel good about myself.

I know it's a cliché, but the truth does set us free. Remember if these were the kinds of people to tell the truth and accept responsibility for their actions, they wouldn't have abused or enable in the first place. I value my opinion, and my opinion is sufficient. So is yours.

Linda D.

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Be gentle with yourself,

Linda D. Co-founder/Executive Director

SIA's literature, "Grieving the Ideal Family" elaborates on these ideas.

See you at the April retreat near Philadelphia.

Linda's Keynote speech, NOW IN CD OR AUDIO CASSETTE, can be ordered for \$20.00 plus \$2.00 S/H. Please let us know which one you want: CD or audio.

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A THRIVER'S LETTER

TO HER SISTERS

This is the letter that I wrote to my sister after I disclosed to the family that my father sexually abused me for years as a child. It might help another survivor to get through the terrible emotional trauma of being ostracized by family members after daring to reveal family secrets. I have changed my sisters' names to protect their identity.

Dear Madison,

Yesterday I asked our sisters Gabrielle and Kylie how you are doing. I asked them if you ever ask about me and wonder how I am, or if you continue to pretend that I do not exist. They replied that as far as you are concerned, you are the youngest sibling. I am writing to

tell you that in spite of your desire to erase me from your mind and life, I do exist. I am a living, breathing human being, and no matter how much you would like that not to be true, you cannot lie to yourself. You cannot ignore the truth that is within you. I exist in your mind, and the very fact that you try and pretend that your younger sister is dead should show you that you have a problem inside yourself.

You have hated me and treated me badly most of my life. You might want to check yourself out to see where that hatred stems from. I have been working on myself in therapy for many years, and I am not only liberating myself from being the victim of childhood incest, but I have freed myself from any need that I used to have for you to like me or to treat me well.

You wrote to me that I have a malignant brain, but you are the one with the problem in your mind. For more than four decades, I carried around the malignancy of having been a victim of child sexual abuse, but I am free from that. I am no longer sick and dysfunctional. I no longer suffer from terrible emotional problems, from phobias and anxiety disorders. I no longer have nightmares and no longer hate people, especially women. I no longer suffer from the multitude of physical problems that plagued me for fifteen years. I no longer have Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome; I have healed from it, even though doctors say there is no cure and no real treatment for the disease.

You told me that if I wrote to you again that you would flush my letter down the toilet, “a proper receptacle for your crap,” is how you put it. That’s fine with me. That is your right to do so. But it is also my right to express myself about the violation that I suffered as a child. A crime was committed against me, and I have a right to speak about it. If that makes you uncomfortable, then that is something you

ought to look at within yourself.

Your behavior is why child sexual abuse continues. Those who try and silence victims by calling them names, by trying to demean them and by using threats against them throw a blanket of protection around child abusers. So go ahead and flush this letter down your toilet because you can’t flush the truth and won’t stop me from speaking it. Your pretending that I do not share this planet with you will not stop my book from existing, nor will it stop me from getting my book into the hands of other survivors of child sexual abuse. I intend on helping people, even if you don’t want to help yourself.

My book does not mention anything about any abuse of you, Gabrielle, or Kylie, but it does tell my story and my experiences. I want you to know that your hatred of me no longer affects me. I free myself of your rage, and with this letter, I release myself of any power that you previously held over me. I was not to blame for the abuse and will not accept any blame for exposing it. My guilt dies with you, our father, and anyone else in the family that has ever made me feel badly for talking about what happened to me as a child.

Sincerely, Alethea

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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 with written permission to print it.

CATHY'S CORNER

I am Cathy R., and I am volunteering to maintain the SIA website and meeting and donor database. I live Baltimore, MD, only 20 minutes away from the SIA Home Office. I am also an email responder for International SIA website inquiries, as well as several US States. I work a full-time job in addition to volunteering, and my 2nd full-time job is recovering from the effects of incest.

Status of Meeting Directory when I started:

The website registrations and listing used to be accomplished through mail and individual logged into a database. Since the website registration began, SIA has been maintaining both the database directory and the online directory. The two applications are not linked, which means that if a change is made to a meeting online, it has to be applied again to the data base. Sometimes, a change in one registration did not make it to the other and, therefore, we had a large number of inactive meetings still listed on the print directory, or on the web not on the printed Directory.

I have now verified most meetings on both lists. Going forward, all meetings will be registered on the website by the contact person of that group or by myself even if they send in a paper registration.

Those meetings will still have the option to be registered without listing all of the group's information online.

Some Facts:

- * 106 groups are registered and listed online.
- * 133 groups are listed in the database directory.
- * 27 groups in the database are not verified or listed online.

SIA Meeting List Updates:

I have attempted to contact all groups to determine:

- 1) If they are active
- 2) If they want to be listed online and what information should be included
- 3) If any information is incorrect, I have corrected it in the database.

PLEASE HELP KEEP MEETING INFO UPDATED:

- If you are not sure if your meeting is listed in either directory, please contact me.
- Send any and all meeting changes, updates, closings, etc. to my SIA email address: siamtupdates@gmail.com.
- I do not have verification that some groups or are still active—see page 9 for the list. It is important that meeting info is kept up to date for the newcomer.

****Please contact me at siamtgupdates@gmail.com to confirm if your meeting is still active or not.****

ALABAMA: GC:AL-001 (Group contact for AL is Mary Kay)

ARKANSAS: AR-001 (Contact person is Susan,) and **AR-002** (Contact person is Carol)

CALIFORNIA: CA-212 in River Pines
(Contact person is Freda)

FLORIDA: GC:FL-001 (Group contact for FL is Buzz)

HAWAII: GC:HI-001 (Group contact for HI is Dan)

MARYLAND: GC: MD-001 (Group contact for MD is Judy)

MINNESOTA: MN-021 (Contact person is Elizabeth)

NORTH CAROLINA: NC-024 (Contact person is Mary)

NEW JERSEY: NJ-043 (Contact person is Natalie)

OHIO: OH-005 (Contact person is Teresa,) and **OH-053 in Orwell** (Contact person is Clorice)

OKLAHOMA: OK-003 (Contact person is Susan)

ONTARIO, CANADA: ONT-023 in Toronto (Contact person is Alan)

PENNSYLVANIA: PA-060 in Ephrata
(Contact person is Beth)

TENNESSEE: TN-029 (Contact person is Debbie,) **TN-032** (Contact person is Jewelie)—**Both are in Nashville**

TEXAS: TX-058 (Contact person is Laurie,) and **TX-061** (Contact person is Tantra)

VIRGINIA: VA-032 (Contact person is Gayle,) **VA-033** (Contact person is Colleen,) **VA-034 in Salem** (Contact person is Colleen,) and **VA-035 in Reston** (Contact person is Jennifer)

WASHINGTON, DC: DC-002 (Contact person is Aline) and **DC-011** (Contact person is Yvonne)

WISCONSIN: WI-017 (Contact person is Tammy)

ONLINE GROUPS: ONL-014 (Contact person is Alex)

SIA Website Updates:

- Historical Copies of SIA Newsletters and World Service Conference Notes have been moved from under the “Literature” tab to their own tab entitled “SIA Newsletters.”
- There is now a "Donor Letters" section under the SIA Newsletter tab. All letters from the past years are archived there.
- There is now an excel spreadsheet of the literature order form located under the “Online Store” tab for people who want to mail in their order.
- There is now a "Starting a Meeting" tab on the site which contains ideas for spreading the word about meetings under a section with the same name.
- The SIA “bittersweet” poster is now available on line. It has tear off tabs along the bottom the SIA phone number and website info. Groups can print it out and add their own group’s info for getting the word out.

March 2011

Secretary: Please read at 3 consecutive meetings and provide a copy for all members.

Dear and Deeply Valued Sisters and Brothers of SIA,

As a survivor of life-long sexual abuse on all levels – physical, emotional and mental (verbal and written) by my father, I know all too well the painful feelings of isolation, depression, shame and of feeling “different” from other people. The reasons for these feelings were unconscious for a long time until the pain was so great that I had to start looking within and start to, slowly, with support, begin to face the origins of that deep pain.

I found SIA over 20 years ago in New York City when I attended a Speaker meeting of a 12-Step program. When I entered the meeting, I was aghast to see the scheduled speaker sitting in front of the room holding a stuffed animal in her arms. This just didn't compute! Then as she began to tell her story, she identified herself as an incest survivor and I was absolutely cringing inside. I didn't know how she could possibly say such a thing in front of a room full of people! However, after hearing her articulate, heartfelt and poignant story, all of my judgments about her melted away, and when the meeting was over, I found myself approaching her, thanking her, and asking where the incest survivor meetings were held. She gave me the time and location of the Beginner's meeting as well as her name and number saying, “Call anytime.” I was deeply touched by her kindness and generosity and grateful to finally find some help.

It took about four months to walk into my first SIA meeting and once again my preconceived fear-based ideas were challenged. Instead of a room full of women crying and sharing the graphic details of the abuse they suffered, *I discovered a refuge of shared and palpable strength, integrity, gentleness, understand and compassion. The greatest gift for me that day was the realization that I was no longer alone.* I truly don't know how I would have survived all I had to face about my past without the presence of SIA in my life. Just having the gentle 12-Adapted Steps has given me so much solace when I have lived in areas when there is not an active SIA meeting available. The fact that our precious fellowship even exists does so much to chip away at the denial – within

ourselves and within society – that so often surrounds us in our journey of healing.

Just as we need SIA for ourselves and for all the incest survivors who still suffer alone, our beloved World Service Office needs us so that it can continue its important work of connecting survivors with survivors. Printing literature, maintaining the website, paying the rent and the telephone bill are just a few of the many and varied tasks and responsibilities that go along with being able to sustain our precious World Service Office. Please give what you can. *All amounts are appreciated and tax-deductible.* Remember, together we can make it,

Susannah S
Grateful and Blossoming Incest Survivor

P.S. I was given my first cuddlie (stuffed animal friend) by another SIA member during my first year in the fellowship. Now I have a whole family of cuddlies and I love each and every one!