Baltimore Intergroup Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Dear Friends in the Fellowship,

This is an important time of year for us. November traditionally marks the celebration of Gratitude Month in A.A. While we are grateful for our sobriety every day, we enter this season of thankfulness and generosity with the opportunity to put gratitude into action.

As you know, A.A. is fully self-supporting, which means we must decline outside contributions to maintain our autonomy. That also means that support necessary for A.A.'s survival and day-to-day operations can only come from individual A.A. members and A.A. groups.

Our Baltimore Intergroup provides:

Service to 700 meetings and groups in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and parts of Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties • **a 24-hour help line** to answer calls from people seeking help for their alcoholism • **a searchable, mobile-friendly website**, accessed by alcoholics and professionals looking for meetings • **a bookstore of AAWS and Grapevine publications** in the office and online with shipping • **monthly bulletins** with current anniversaries, announcements and meeting information • **a resource for individuals and groups** who are starting new meetings, have questions about the Traditions, safety, or need additional information • **opportunities for fellowship** through events such as the Sobriety Show, Bull Roast and Golf Tournament • **and information and resources to professionals and outside organizations** who want to know more about A.A.

COVID brought changes to the way A.A. members support Intergroup. Pre-pandemic, most contributions came from A.A. groups. Now, most of our support comes from individuals. This trend has happened across the country, not just in Baltimore, for several reasons:

- **There are fewer in-person groups having a harder time meeting their expenses**. For many groups, rent has gone up while collections have gone down. There's less for groups to contribute to Intergroup, G.S.O., Maryland General Service, and the Institutions Committee.
- **Many members have stopped carrying cash**. When groups pass the basket, it helps to include electronic payment information, QR codes, or venmo handles so members can contribute to the group even if they don't have cash.
- **Online groups have a harder time "passing" the virtual basket**. While overhead for the online meeting are low, groups still need to contribute to A.A. service entities. Virtual baskets are important, but often overlooked, or secretaries forget to post them in the chat.
- **Many members still contribute just $1 to the basket.** The value of $1 in 1950 is equivalent to $12.32 in 2022. Are we valuing our gratitude to A.A. the same way our early members did? Could we be contributing a few dollars more each time the basket is passed?
- **Many members don't know what Intergroup does to help all of us maintain sobriety**. They may not understand the necessity of supporting the behind-the-scenes work that makes 12th Step work possible and helps all of us maintain sobriety.

We've got pre-addressed Gratitude Envelopes to pass in meetings for members to make individual contributions—let us know if you want us to send them to you. We also have a QR code to pass in meetings for online contributions. Most importantly, we encourage recurring contributions and Faithful Fiver membership so we can plan our monthly and yearly budget with confidence.

Here are other ways—big and small—that you can share your gratitude and support A.A. during Gratitude Month and beyond:

- **Pass a GRATITUDE BOX in your home group during the month of November**. These special collections are separate from regular group contributions. If you would like Intergroup to send your group a box, please let us know and we'll make sure you receive one.
- **Consider including Intergroup in your YEAR-END GIFT GIVING.** Individuals may contribute up to $5,000 per year and can bequeath a one-time gift of up to $10,000 in their wills. We are grateful for your support in any amount.
- **Become a FAITHFUL FIVER**. Make a recurring weekly or monthly contribution between $5 and $400 that goes directly to Intergroup. These regular contributions provide us with budgetary stability from month to month.
- **BUY A TICKET for the Bull & Oyster Roast on November 20th**. Our activities are not just fun fellowship events, but important fundraisers that account for 14% of Intergroup's total income. If you can't attend, buy a ticket for a friend.
- **CONTRIBUTE the cost of a drink into the basket.** Each time the basket is passed, your generosity of $2 or more will be an example to others. As Bill wrote in *Language of the Heart*, "We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid."

As Bill W. wrote in 1967, ***"Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion—to our survival as a Fellowship."*** Your support will ***"help carry the A.A. message to our friends in medicine, psychiatry, religion and the community—friends whom A.A. has needed to survive."*** Most importantly, your generosity enables us to fulfill our common purpose of carrying the message of hope and recovery to still suffering alcoholics.

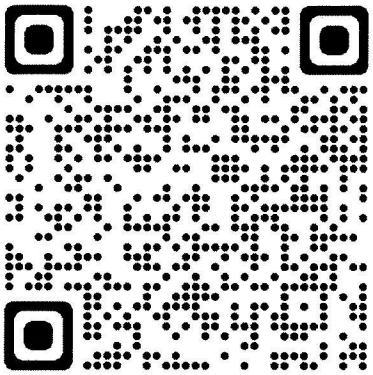
Thank you for your remarkable commitment to A.A. Through your service and support, you demonstrate A.A.'s Responsibility Statement: *I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.*

In gratitude,

Dave L.
Intergroup Council Chairperson

Jen G.
Intergroup Administrator

Here's a QR code for online Gratitude Month contributions.

You can affix this code to the top of your Gratitude Box or make a copy to pass in the basket so individuals who don't have cash can still show their gratitude for Gratitude Month.

We are grateful for your support in any amount. Thank you for your service, for passing it on, and for all you do for A.A.!