

Twelfth Step Within Format for Information Gathering: “Ideas that Work”

TRAVELING HOPEFULS

Type of Project: Service

Project Name: Traveling Hopefuls

Project Goal: Bring abstinence and strong recovery to an underserved or non-abstinent area to carry the hope that there is a solution.

Resources Needed (budget, volunteers, materials, etc.): A car (or public transport), abstinent volunteers, willingness, and gas or public transit money (usually provided by the group or intergroup requesting speakers); a place to stay overnight may be necessary if the location is further than three to four hours of driving or transit time

Implementation Process (including length of time for planning and implementation):

Abstinent members of our meetings get the word out to conferences, intergroup meetings, regional assemblies, and marathons that we are available to travel and speak. We usually travel on the weekends because of our work schedules. We also receive face-to-face requests at other events or by email or phone. Usually the requesting group wants a four- to eight-week lead time to publicize the event and make arrangements. Thanks to technology, it's a snap to get directions! At the event, we tell our stories, talk about using the Tools, and focus on the importance of the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous. A minimum of three hours is usually needed. Hearing the same strong message from multiple people seems to be an effective way to promote hope. We try to arrange to eat a meal with the group, so that they can see how we manage our food.

Additional Comments (including things of which to be mindful): We have a name, “Traveling Hopefuls,” and t-shirts with a logo on them to get people's attention. As we speak, we focus on the importance of abstinence no matter what, which also helps us! We usually have a meeting on the way to the speaker event and another one on the way home, making a wonderful day of recovery and service. We've noticed that when we have fun, taking the disease seriously but not ourselves, people relax and understand the message. All of us have experienced relapse at one time or another and are now enjoying sustained abstinence with a total weight loss of over 450 pounds. We bring pictures, and our smiling faces say a lot, too.

Results: The results are in our Higher Power's hands, but we bring experience, strength, and hope to whoever asks. We have a great time doing this service, and it strengthens our commitment to abstinence and recovery. We have great fun, and we are not a glum lot!