

WHERE ARE THE REMOTE COMMUNITY ALCOHOLICS IN YOUR AREA?

A. A. World Services has defined a remote community as any community to which it is difficult to carry A.A.'s message because of language, culture or geography. Initially Southern New Jersey, Area 45, asked their existing PI Committee to ascertain if there were any remote communities in our Area, and **IF** so, to suggest how we might reach them with A.A.'s message of hope. Not surprisingly the PI chairperson first looked for American Indians and while he did locate a few, he soon realized that we really have no American Indian communities in South Jersey. But he was quick to point out that doesn't mean we don't have any isolated alcoholics who desperately want to get to A. A. meetings but who can't. For example what can an alcoholic single parent of preschool children do if she/he cannot afford a babysitter and there are no meetings which offer babysitting services? Granted this might be deemed more of a "Special Need" than a remote community situation but either way: "Whenever anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A. A. always to be there. And for that: I AM RESPONSIBLE".

In 1999, Southern New Jersey's General Assembly voted to combine the Seniors Helping Seniors and Special Needs Committees and expand their efforts of carrying the A. A. message to include Remote Communities. We have identified Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian communities in Area 45. After some networking, we identified Korean and Vietnamese religious leaders who were happy to receive the Big Book and the pamphlets: "This is A. A.", "Is A. A. for You?", and "44 Questions" in their native languages and to make this literature available to their respective communities. We sought the advice of a Chinese A. A. member as to how we might effectively reach the Asian community. She felt that this would best be accomplished by PI and/or CPC education of medical doctors. Ultimately, we would place the appropriate foreign language, A. A. literature with doctors who service Asian communities.

To help educate our fellowship, Area 45 displayed at its General Service Convention this year, the same posters that were used in the Remote Communities Hospitality Suite at A.A.'s International Convention in Minneapolis, MN and had members available to answer questions.

So where are the remote community alcoholics in your Area? Everywhere!

Let us give you one final example.

One member of our Fellowship, who routinely takes A. A. meetings into correctional facilities, noted that for many weeks an inmate wanted to speak with him. That the inmate didn't was probably due to time constraints or his deference to the vociferous inmates surrounding the A. A. member after every meeting. About eight weeks passed before the inmate finally broke through in halting English. He had desperately wanted to thank the host for bringing them meetings. That's all he wanted...to give thanks. The host asked him if he could read English. "Very poorly", was the reply. The host asked him what his native language was. The following week this inmate beamed with joy on receiving his very own copy of the Big Book in his native Hindi. A remote community of one, isolated in a correctional facility...who would have anticipated this?

So where are they?

All around you!

Be observant!

Be understanding! Be compassionate! Be responsible!

Be mindful of the challenge found in the "Legacy of Service" Section of our Service Manual:

"Our Twelfth Step...carrying the message...is the basic service that the A. A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A. A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die."