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This month, we are pleased to share reflections from two trusted servants who recently completed their service as Panel 75 Delegates to the General Service Conference: Joel C., Area 85 Northwest Ontario, and Jay T., Area 27 Louisiana. Coming from Areas that are about as far apart as two delegates can be while still serving within the U.S./Canada Conference structure, they nevertheless shared a common commitment to carrying the message through service.

As delegates, they participated in two General Service Conferences (Panel 75 & 76) representing areas separated by more than a thousand miles and vastly different geographic and cultural experiences, they experienced firsthand the discussions, deliberations, and spiritual principles that help guide A.A. services throughout the U.S. and Canada. Their service at the Conference included leadership roles as the chair of the Conference Committee on Archives and delegate chair of the 2026 General Service Conference, giving them a unique perspective on the importance of participation, responsibility, and self-support in carrying out A.A.'s service work.

Joel C. Area 85- Northwest Ontario Delegate - Panel 75

Dear Friends,

In reflecting on my time at the last two General Service Conferences, I want to share some thoughts on our Seventh Tradition and how self-support functions across our fellowship—in my own life, within my group, throughout our Area, and at the Conference itself.

Before coming into the program, I was alright at managing money, but I lacked any real spiritual foundation. I felt constantly insecure about my finances, always worried about things outside of my control, or feeling like I was lagging behind. This program has taught me that if I take care of my spiritual house and do honest work, I will always be taken care of. I may not always have as much as I *want*, but I will always have what I *need*, and that gives me much confidence.

This same principle applies at the group level, where we share a collective duty to keep our own house in order. I often tell newcomers and sponsees that when it comes to "putting money in the hat," we give what we can, when we can. Not everyone walks through our doors with the means to make large or regular contributions, and even long-term members can fall on hard financial times. But as long as a group has members

who honestly practice the Seventh Tradition by giving whatever they can, that group will remain self-supporting. Our Higher Power will keep those doors open as long as there is a need for that group.

At the Area level, our groups and members have a responsibility to maintain that same self-sufficiency. In my Area, we aim to contribute to GSO[the General Service Board or GSB] annually after covering our local expenses. Last year, due to financial insecurity, we were unable to make that contribution, though we did remain entirely self-supporting. This year, we needed to increase our budget. We faced rising costs, and one of our sub-committees needed additional funds to expand its services. While we weren't happy about missing our GSO contribution last year, we took care of our house first. Because of that honest effort, we not only got our finances back on track but actually expanded our local services and returned to contributing to GSO this year. I can see our Higher Power's fingerprints all over that journey.

At the General Service Conference, I witnessed the beautiful, fully ripened fruits of this labor. By remaining self-supporting from the individual member all the way to the bottom of the triangle, we successfully bar outside influence from the room. The decisions affecting the whole of our fellowship are made by the same people who love A.A. as much as you and I. While we have a few non-alcoholic friends of A.A. in the room, the vast majority of the Conference consists of people who have directly benefited from this program.

We may stumble and make mistakes from time to time, but with the love, dedication, and collective Higher Power present in that room, I know we will always get to where we need to be. We might not always have what we want financially, but we will always have what we need.

Keeping our house in order starts with you and me. I personally had to reevaluate my own contributions recently—two dollars in the hat doesn't two dollars like it used to. When we work the Seventh Tradition honestly, we fulfill our duty to keep ourselves, our groups, our Areas, and A.A. as a whole self-supporting. Our house is broad, roomy, all inclusive, never exclusive, and we need to keep it that way. Practicing self-support keeps our house in order and keeps it open for the next sufferer.

Chii Miigwetch (many thanks),

Joel C
Area 85 Delegate - Panel 75

Jay T., Panel 75, Area 27, 76th GSC Delegate Chair

Dear Friends,

What was it worth to me when I first entered the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous? What did the Tradition of self-support through our own contributions mean when I walked in lost, hopeless, beaten down, and yet somehow willing to give A.A. a chance? To be

honest, it didn't mean much at all. Not because it wasn't important, but because I was completely ignorant of how A.A. worked. All I knew was that I needed help and there it was. There was a comfortable room with chairs. There was coffee brewing in the corner. There may have been a few snacks on a table. Most importantly, there was a group of smiling people who seemed genuinely happy to see me. They welcomed me to their meeting even though they had never met me before. I didn't stop to wonder who paid the rent. I didn't ask who bought the coffee. I didn't think about who printed the literature or kept the lights on. All I knew was that when I needed help, A.A. was there. And that was enough. Over time, I learned that none of those things happened by accident. The room was there because someone paid for it. The coffee was there because someone bought it. The literature was there because someone made sure it was available. The meeting was there because alcoholics before me accepted responsibility for preserving it.

When I was the alcoholic still suffering, I didn't think much about self-support. I thought about survival. Today, after years of sobriety and spiritual growth, my understanding of self-support has changed. Self-support feels less like an obligation and more like a responsibility - one of the many things that helps keep me tied securely to the safe harbor of Alcoholics Anonymous. But the benefit is no longer primarily about me.

On March 13, 2004, I walked through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous confused, hopeless, frightened, and desperate for something I could not even define. Today, when I think about self-support, my thoughts are less focused on what A.A. does for me and more focused on what A.A. must remain available to do for someone else.

Somewhere tonight, someone is sitting where I once sat. They need what I found: a room, a chair, a welcoming smile, and a message of hope.

As a delegate, I have been privileged to see some of the service structure that helps make those things possible. What I have come to appreciate is that the spiritual mission of Alcoholics Anonymous intersects with the practical realities of carrying the message in a complex world.

The message itself remains beautifully simple: one alcoholic helping another. What I did not understand when I was new is that all of this is supported in only two ways: the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and groups, and the sale of our Conference-approved literature.

There are no outside donors. There are no government grants. There are no wealthy benefactors underwriting our services. There is only us. Dollars in the basket. Literature on the rack. Contributions from grateful members and groups. Conference-approved literature purchased and shared. Repeated thousands of times across the Fellowship.

Individually, these acts may seem small. Collectively, they keep the lights on, the coffee brewing, the literature available, and the hand of A.A. extended to the alcoholic who still suffers.

What was freely given to me was preserved by those who came before me. Through their service, their contributions, and their commitment, they made sure that when I finally became willing, Alcoholics Anonymous would be waiting. Today, I have the privilege and responsibility of helping preserve it for those who come after me.

Perhaps that is what self-support means to me today. Not paying for my sobriety. But helping ensure that what was there for me will still be there for the next alcoholic who walks through the door.

Yours in fellowship,

Jay T., Panel 75, Area 27, 76th GSC Delegate Chair