

**Please direct all
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January 25, 2024

To: GSB Trustees, AAWS Board, AA Grapevine Board, Trustees Emeriti, Appointed Committee Members, Current Delegates, Past Delegates, Past Trustees, All Conference Members, IGCOs: U.S. and Canada, International GSOs, GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers, Area Registrars, GSO/AA Grapevine Employees

Dear A.A. Friends,

On behalf of the General Service Office, I wish you a very Happy New Year! Although we A.A.s strive to live one day at a time, for many of us the new year brings a spirit of renewal and an added spark of hope. I share this spirit for A.A.'s future as well!

I want to provide an update to my most recent letter regarding A.A.'s finances in which I shared details of the challenges we've been facing and the need for sustained increases in contributions. The response from the Fellowship in the last two months has been extremely heartwarming. We have heard from many of you expressing your support, concerns, and understanding in the form of heartfelt messages and generous contributions to the General Service Board. I want to personally express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

I'm very encouraged and happy to share that we have seen recent increases in both the number of contributions received as well as total dollar amounts. In fact, in December, we received contributions from more than 9,000 groups and members. The average we typically receive in December is 6,900. This increased participation has resulted in the highest amount ever received in the month of December, just over \$1.65 million. We also saw an increase in participation in November just following the call for help. On a year-to-date basis, contributions to the General Service Board also have exceeded the highest ever received at over \$10.8 million. This amount also exceeds the amount budgeted for 2023, which was \$10.5 million.

Your positive response and increases in participation and dollar amounts have been very helpful to operations in the last few months, however, we are still facing difficulties meeting expenses. Gross literature sales in December were strong, but profits for 2023 will be below budget. As I mentioned in my November message, the reduction in literature sales and profits has been the driving factor in the

loss in income. Although contributions have increased post-pandemic, literature profits have dropped at a higher rate. Our literature is a vital spiritual tool and service to our Fellowship. The volume in which it is purchased is based on the needs of the Fellowship. It is very important to keep it affordable so it can be distributed as widely as possible and assuring it finds its way into the hands of those who need it. But we cannot rely on increased literature profits to solve our financial challenges.

In addition, the ability to rebuild the Reserve Fund is also challenging. As of December year end, the balance is sufficient to cover approximately 7.28 months' operating expenses, which is less than the general expectation of 9 to 12 months.

Your overwhelming response also brings to mind the principle of participation that resides within our Seventh Tradition. Even more significant than financial contributions is our participation, which fills us with the spirit of belonging and connection to A.A. This is in line with the overarching goal to meet and overcome our financial challenges in the long term. That is, more frequent and sustained contributions but also from a larger representation of our groups and members.

Bill W.'s insights on the Seventh Tradition reinforce the answer to our financial challenges:

"But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. 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. "When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer." (The Language of the Heart, p. 221)

The AAWS and AA Grapevine Boards, in strong collaboration with the office, have been working very hard for the last several months preparing the 2024 budget. The General Service Board will review, discuss, and finalize the budget during their next scheduled quarterly Board Weekend at the end of this month. Several projects and items have been deferred in order to present a balanced budget.

So let's keep it going—continued participation! Perhaps your group, or you personally, may consider setting up a reoccurring contribution to the General Service Board. It's very simple to set up through our online contributions site, which can be accessed through [AA.org](https://www.aa.org) or by clicking [here](#). There are options to make a one-time, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly contribution.

Thank you again for your participation not only with our Seventh Tradition but with all each and every one of you do for our beloved Fellowship. Your participation is the very best investment in A.A.'s future and keeps Alcoholics Anonymous vibrant and available for all who need it today, tomorrow, and beyond.

With gratitude for all the sacrifices you make for A.A.,

Bob W.

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General Manager, G.S.O.
