

Name of Intergroup: Snake River Intergroup
General geographic area: Idaho
Number of Groups: 15 (including the monthly 12th Step Within)
Intergroup Chair: Genna A.
Website address (if any): N/A

News from our Intergroup: Snake River continues to grow and develop through the challenging public health environment. Intergroup meets quarterly via phone (Free Conference Call.com), and that has worked out so far. We had a “Day in OA” scheduled for June, but it has been rescheduled until September 2020 in a virtual meeting format. That event is currently in the early development stages.

How has your Intergroup adjusted to the changing public health environment? Meetings have changed to phone or Zoom. Meetings have had business meetings to solicit group input regarding reopening their meetings, and most (if not all) have decided to continue with the current protocol until things settle. There was an initial “learning curve” with Zoom, but it has been very rewarding to watch folks adapt and grow, and in some cases, even attend MORE meetings and get to know more people than they did with face-to-face meetings.

Has the OA fellowship in your area been strengthened or weakened by the current public health environment? Why? I would have to say BOTH. It has been strengthened, because I think people are becoming more willing to “pick up the phone” and reach out—in fact—some meetings have had an increase in attendance from the fellowship because it is simple to just “dial-in” to a meeting from wherever you are. On the other hand, I think it has been weakened because we aren’t able to reach as many newcomers with the online/Zoom formats. I suspect there are a number of contributing factors for this – 1) No face-to-face meetings, 2) we are not publishing our Zoom/dial-in information on the website because some meetings have had problems with spammers (although we do list the person to contact for the virtual meeting info on the website), and 3) it can be difficult to “meet” people, find a sponsor, and work the steps without traditional face-to-face connections.

Retreats and/or Events we have offered this year: Our “Day in OA” retreat was scheduled for June of this year, then rescheduled to be hosted virtually in September. Normally, this full-day workshop consists of speakers, two or more individual tracks with different topics to choose from, and fellowship building games, activities, and raffles. Our Sun Valley/Hailey groups plan to host this event in September virtually, and the specifics are currently being worked out.

Other services our Intergroup offers: We have a monthly 12-Step Within group that meets on the third Wednesday of each month. This meeting has evolved to an “open topic” format to allow each struggling member to receive individualized help specific to their current issues. Struggling members are encouraged to attend, as well as abstinent sponsors for an opportunity to share experience, strength and hope.

Has your Intergroup hosted a Region One Outreach or Intergroup Renewal workshop? Please tell us about your experience and outcomes. Yes, we did last year and it was wonderful to have time getting to know our Region One sisters in recovery!! We had a full day of speakers, sharing, making connections, and activities. The event was hosted with perfect weather (thanks HP) in Hailey, ID – a wonderful mountain community – with about 30 members in attendance. One of our members is a professional caterer, so we were able to enjoy a wonderful and abstinent catered lunch (for those that wanted to partake). At the end of the day, we were all filled with a sense of fellowship, solution, purpose, and the knowledge that even though each of our journeys may be different, we share a common bond and we are never alone in this program.

What we are doing to make OA known in our community: One of our members has done an amazing job of keeping our online/Zoom phone list updated. Recently, she has included direct links in the document so that the members can quickly access the meeting with a simple click. This list is sent out to newcomers when they call each contact – in hopes that we can reach them during this challenging time.

What we’re doing to strengthen our meetings and help our members recover: In addition to the monthly 12-Step Within meeting (listed above), we encourage members to “hang out” after each virtual meeting for individual support/questions, etc. This is the time when people can get to know a potential sponsor, exchange phone numbers, etc.

We encourage members to give service by: Leading virtual meetings, taking care of the literature and arranging to drop off items to members as requested, updating the phone lists, being a meeting representative, etc. We also encourage members to call and check on each other often, as so many are isolated right now.

Tips and ideas we’d like to share with other Intergroups: Be willing to adapt and explore other ways to connect. It wasn’t easy (still isn’t sometimes) to host virtual meetings for some groups, but it has been worth it. Periodically, we will do an informal “Zoom training” session for members that may be having a

hard time navigating the application. Encourage participation in outside virtual events and workshops too.

We'd like to hear ideas from other Intergroups about: How to get virtual meeting information online without giving out passwords, etc. What is working for others?

Submitted by: Genna A., Snake River Intergroup Chair

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