

Alcoholics Anonymous to Hold 23rd World Service Meeting

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Delegates representing Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) the world over will gather for the Fellowship's 23rd World Service Meeting (WSM) at the Sofitel Victoria Warsaw Hotel in Warsaw, Poland. The event will take place October 12-16, 2014 and is being hosted by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of the United States and Canada.

Since its beginnings in 1969 the WSM has served as a forum for the worldwide sharing of experience and ideas on ways to carry the A.A. message of recovery from alcoholism. The event alternates biennially between New York and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; Oviedo, Spain; Malahide, Ireland; and Mexico City, Mexico.

The WSM has been described as a living and growing exchange of experience, capable of responding to the ideas and needs of A.A. worldwide, and its success over the past four decades in bringing together worldwide A.A. service centers reflects a final vision of A.A. co-founder Bill W., who believed there could be "one world of A.A." to assure that help would always be available for sick alcoholics wherever they are or whatever language they speak and that A.A. could cross all barriers of race, language, religion and culture that "divided and shattered the world of our time." The first WSM was held slightly more than a year before Bill W.'s death.

Comprised of some 61 delegates from 39 different countries or linguistic zones around the world, attendance is limited to delegates from the participating countries. Sessions will be conducted in English and Spanish, with simultaneous translations. The standing committees on literature and publishing, finance, and working with others will each meet twice during the week.

The 2014 WSM's theme is "The Three Legacies: Vital for All Generations." By the first legacy, "Recovery," A.A. members recover from alcoholism, by the second legacy, "Unity," the A.A. Fellowship stays together, and by the third legacy, "Service," A.A. functions and serves its primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to all who need and want it. The Three Legacies theme is woven through the workshop and presentation topics for the October meeting.

A.A. traces its beginnings back to Bill W.'s 1935 meeting with co-founder Dr. Bob S., of Akron, Ohio, a physician who also suffered from alcoholism. After Dr. Bob took his last drink on June 10 of that year, the two men set about to aid other alcoholics. By 1939 the Fellowship had about 100 members and set about writing and publishing *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the society's basic text.

Today, A.A. has a presence in over 170 countries, with an estimated total of 115,300 groups and more than 2 million members worldwide. The book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, now in its fourth edition, has sold over 35 million copies and has been translated into 69 languages. Said A.A. co-founder Bill W. in 1960: "From the beginning, communication in A.A. has been no ordinary transmission of helpful ideas and attitudes. Because of our kinship in suffering, and because our common means of deliverance are effective for ourselves only when constantly carried to others, our channels of contact have always been charged with the language of the heart."

It was Bill W.'s belief that A.A. membership on other continents would someday exceed that of the U.S. and Canada, and the World Service Meeting is proof that the Fellowship will continue to thrive and grow wherever the need for recovery exists.

A.A., as spelled out in its Preamble, "is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

As A.A.'s "senior service office," the General Service Office in New York City serves A.A. groups and members in the U.S. and Canada, while there are currently 61 autonomous A.A. service offices worldwide.

For more information, contact the International desk at the General Service Office at international@aa.org or (212) 870-3021.