

Seniors in Sobriety

In 1990 in Southeastern New York, Cookie, (who later was a delegate on Panel 49)Class A Trustee Joan Jackson , and other AA members developed under the special Needs committee, the Sober over Sixty subcommittee.

Then, Stan and Marion B. with others, hosted the first Sober over Sixty conference on Kona, Hawaii in May 2006. Since then, the name has been changed to Seniors in Sobriety.

The first “Carrying the Message to the Older Alcoholic” meeting took place during the 11th International AA Convention in Minneapolis in July, 2000. Stan and Marion B. from Hawaii chaired a workshop titled, “Carrying the Message to the Older Alcoholic

The August/September 2002 Box 459 ran the article, “Carrying the Message to the Older Alcoholic.”

In mid 2003, an ad hoc committee, Cooperation with the Elder Community, was formed in Area 17, District 8, Hawaii, and became a standing committee in May, 2004.

In July 2004, an ad hoc committee, Cooperation with the Elder Community, was formed in Area 9, mid-southern California. In May 2005, it became a permanent standing committee.

Significant challenges were encountered in both Hawaii and California during the ad hoc committee process. Many people believed that seniors should come under auspices of the Special Needs Committee and that a new committee was not necessary or required to meet the need of the elder community. The response to this was that “aging in not a special need but a universal phase of the life with its own blessings and challenges.

In May, 2006, Area 3, Arizona, authorized an ad hoc Cooperation with the Elder Community committee. The same challenges to becoming a standing committee prevail there.

Also in May, 2006, was the First Annual International Sober Over Sixty Conference in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii.

The October/November 2006 Box 459 ran the article “Seniors In Sobriety Becoming a Focus.”

Seniors in Sobriety meetings are springing up all over the country, from Colorado to New York to Florida and Canada.

More and more evidence validates the seriousness of problem drinking among seniors. The same evidence concludes that little is being done about it. For example, one survey shows that the prevalence of problem drinking in nursing homes is as high as 49% but less than 17% of treatment facilities tailor their programs for seniors.

A promising statistic is that elders have recovery rates as high as 85% IF THEY ARE INTRODUCED TO TREATMENT PROGRAMS.

Marion, who spear-headed this Cooperation with the Elder Community committee status so passionately is no longer with us. She called her self, “chronologically gifted” and we are. And sober.

Mahalo

Mare L.
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Area 17, Hawaii