



What is the AA Service Structure & How May I Be of Service?

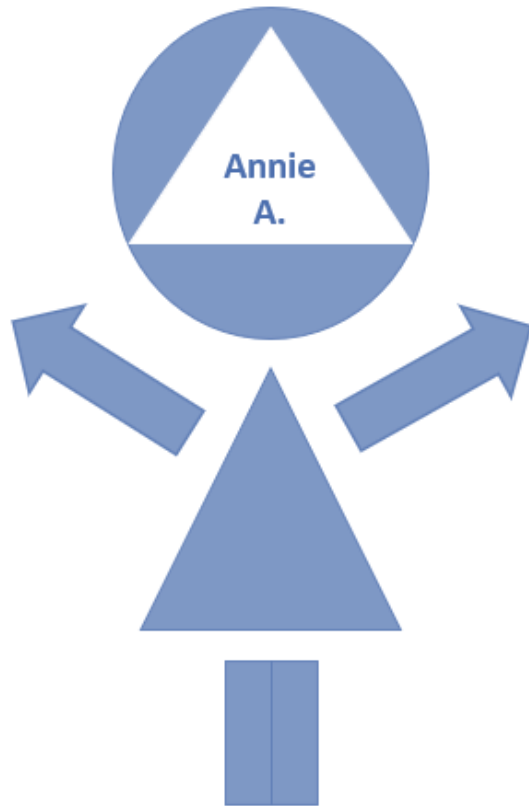
Let me introduce myself,
as Annie A. I am a recovering
Alcoholic, who is the Service
Sponsor for Victor E. Let's
start by introducing Victor E.

Who is Victor E.?

Victor E. (Victory) is a comic strip character from the Grapevine, AA's meeting in print. The key to Victor E. is that he represents *Everyone* in AA. He portrays all of us sober alcoholics.

He has been led to General Service by his Service Sponsor.

Many of us are lucky enough to have our Sobriety Sponsor guide us in General Service.



**Service
Committees**

Home Group

None of that makes sense.
What the heck are you
talking about? I want to
participate but I feel lost.
How can I be involved?

Delegate

GSRs

Area

DCMs

General Service Conference

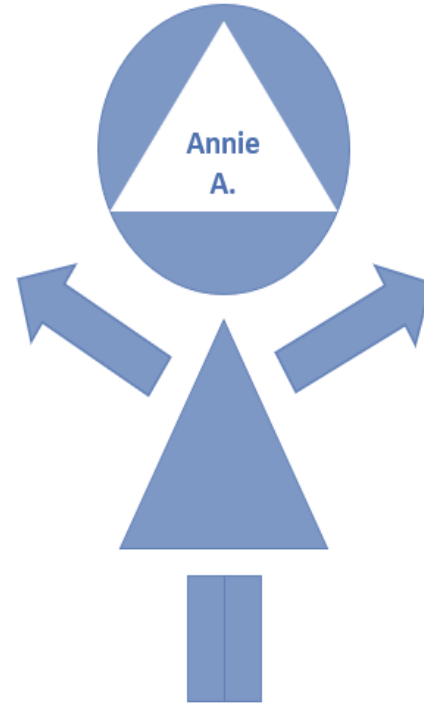


**The Late Bernard B. Smith, one
of the architect of the
Conference structure. We have
excerpted his opening talk at
the 1954 meeting.**

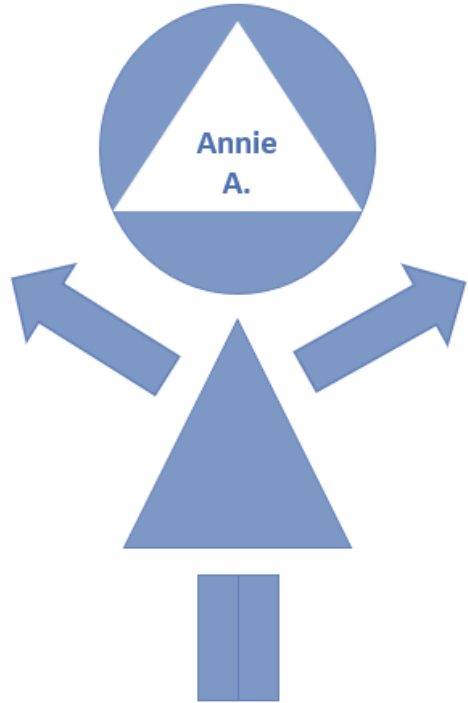
**“We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We
do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness
one short
block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born
tonight, destined
for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a
permanent haven for all
alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back
to life.”**

Let's see if we can help Victor E. so he is not too frustrated or intimidated to get more involved with General Service.

First things first, we tend to make things more complicated than they need to be. Many of the acronyms and AA jargon can be found in the Service Manual and on page 23 in the Area 50 Handbook.



Then, like most of us AAs, we ask for help. A Service Sponsor can help us navigate through the jargon and acronyms. Just like you found your AA Sponsor, ask someone to be your AA Service Sponsor.



**Don't fret Victor E.
Let's break this down so we can
work together and make sense of it.**



**Our Primary Purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.
We need to be ready for the alcoholic still stumbling in the darkness.**

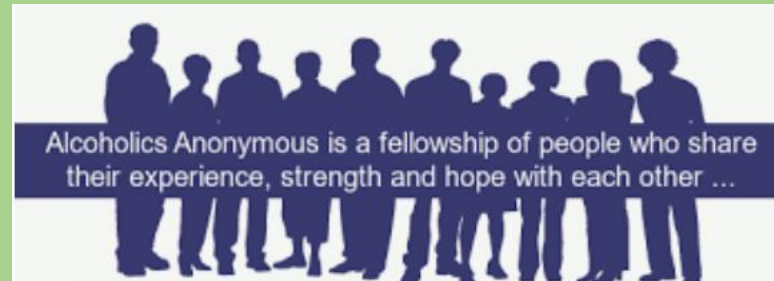


Alcoholics Find AA Meetings

We find an AA meeting, we show up at meetings and we begin to get sober...

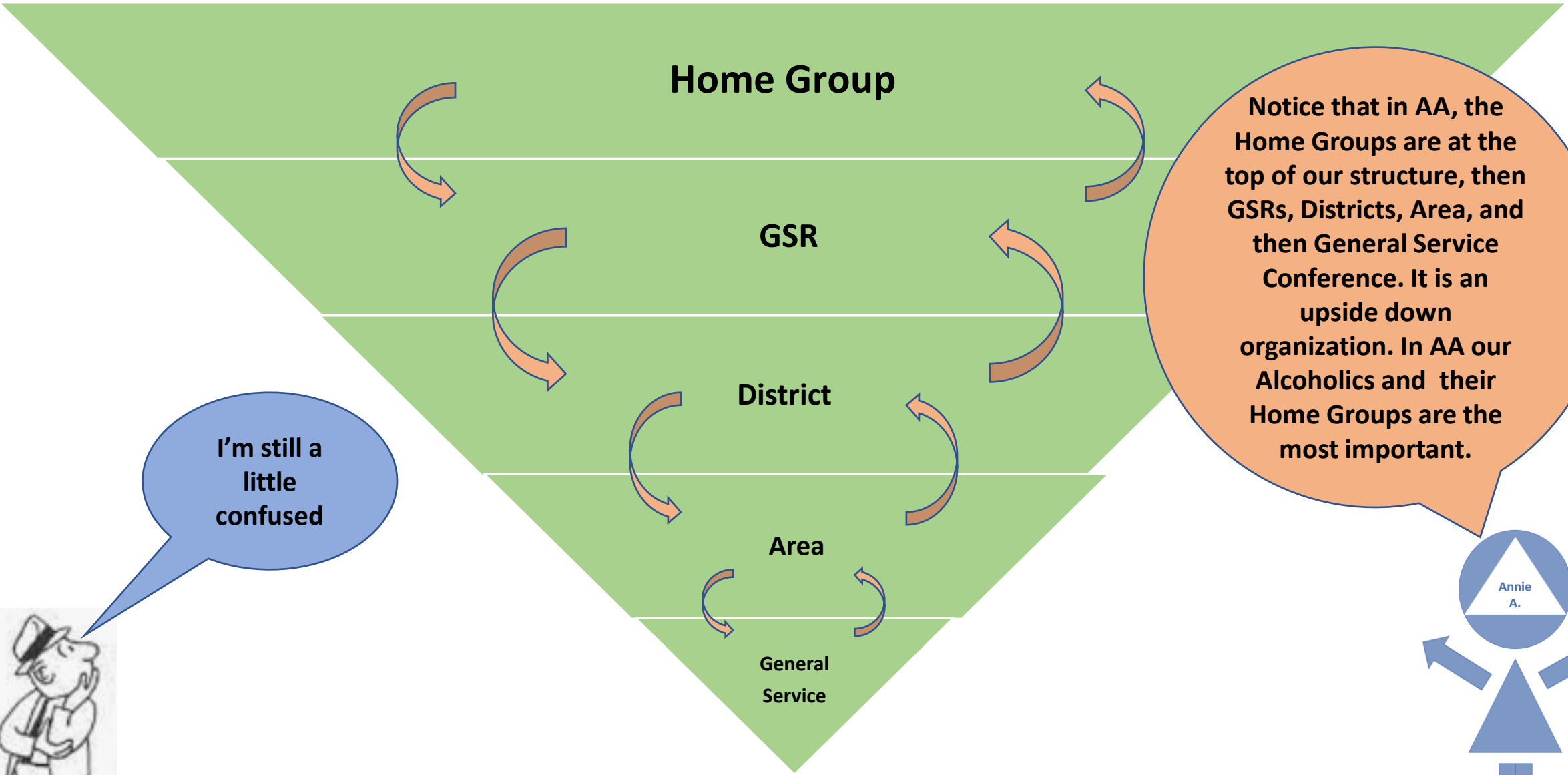
The purpose of all AA group meetings, as the Preamble states, is for AA members to share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Home Groups



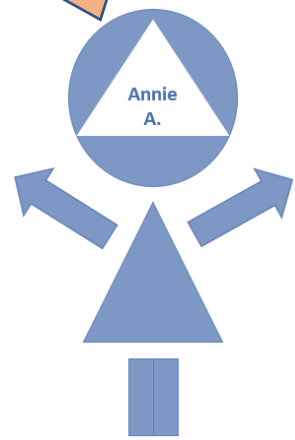
When we found our way to an AA Meeting and it changed our lives, we have become more comfortable with a Sponsor and the 12 Steps. HGs follow Step 12 and Tradition 5. Now is a good time to become active in General Service. We usually get involved in our Home Group first.

We hear about sobriety and service. We hear acronyms like GSR (General Service Representative), DCM (District Committee Member), and we are invited to get involved and take part in voting on various AA motions all the way down to the General Service Conference.



Notice that in AA, the Home Groups are at the top of our structure, then GSRs, Districts, Area, and then General Service Conference. It is an upside down organization. In AA our Alcoholics and their Home Groups are the most important.

I'm still a little confused



THE UPSIDE DOWN TRIANGLE

GSRs



At the Home Group Business Meeting, ideas are shared at the Group level concerning matters regarding the Group and AA as a whole. As a result of the Group conscience, items are brought to the attention of the District, which are then brought to the Area.

The GSR is elected from and represents the Home Group. The GSR provides feedback of the motions that are voted on at the District, Area, and the General Service Conference.

These motions are very important. For example, there had been a motion regarding a new edition of the Big Book. Our Home Groups had a voice in that. Wow!

**[GSRs are invited by Area 50 to attend a Coffee Hour monthly.](#)
[Coffee Hour is not just for GSRs. Please refer to the Area 50 event calendar.](#)**

[Events – Area 50 WNY](#)

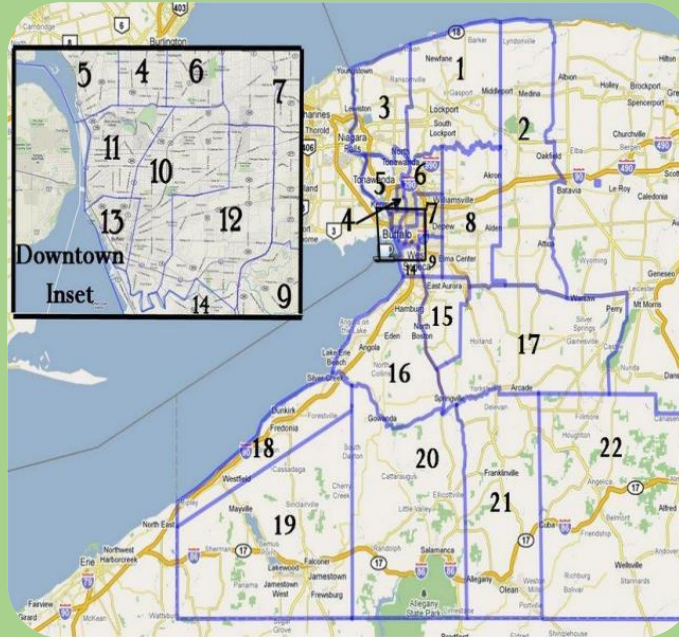
Districts



The geographical units known as Districts link the Home Groups to each other and Area 50.

At the District level the GSR carries the Home Group voice forward. The DCM leads the District meetings with all of the GSRs present.

AREA 50



Each Area elects a Delegate to carry the voice of all AA members, the Home Groups, and Districts in our Area to the General Service Conference. The Delegate is the Area Representative at the General Service Conference, like the Service Representative (GSR) is to the Home Group.

Western New York, Area 50, is made up of 22 Districts. Can you find your District?

General Service Conference

The 93 Area delegates, along with 21 trustees, 6 non-trustee directors, and 15 AA staff at the General Service Office meet annually. This meeting is referred to as the General Service Conference.

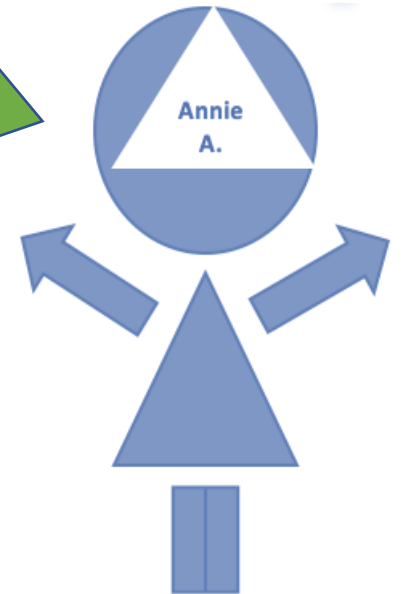


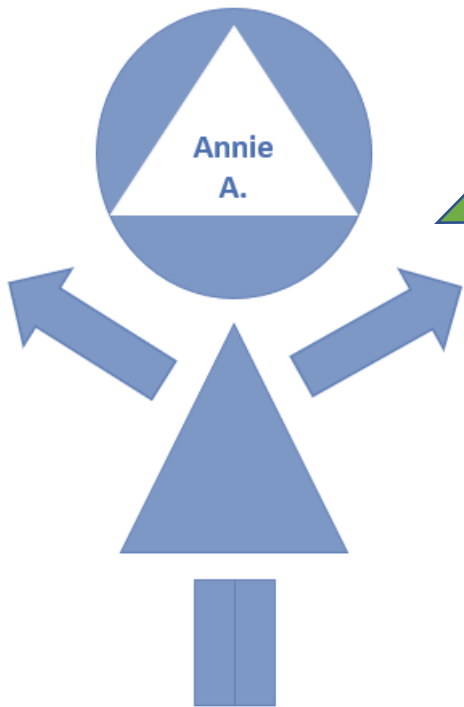
Leading up to the General Service Conference, proposed agenda items can be submitted to the General Service Board by individuals, Home Groups, Districts, and the Area. The informed Delegate knows the Area's conscience, but represents AA as a whole.

**Are you
saying
that my
voice
matters
?**



So, you see Victor E., everyone has a voice. That's why we need GSRs and DCMs to be informed of what's going on in the world of AA. They need to be informed to effectively act as the conduit from Home Group, to District, to Area. Then the Delegate carries an informed voice to the General Service Conference.



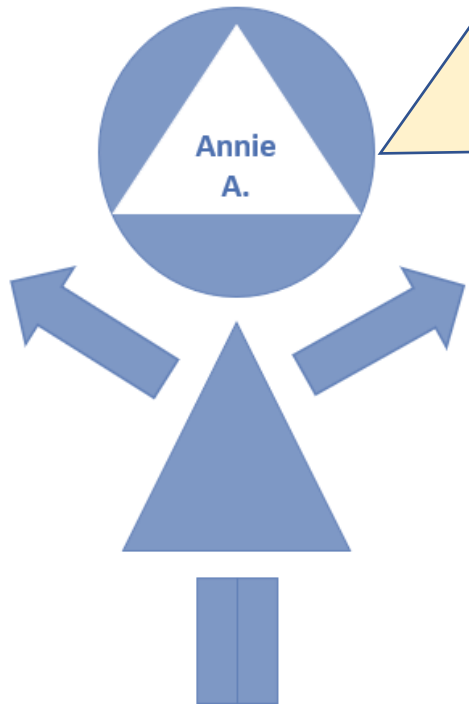


**Your voice is very important in A.A.!
How else can we make sure we are following Bernard B. Smith's suggestion?**

I do have another important question: I see by the Upside Down Triangle that the Intergroups are not a part of the General Service Structure. What does this mean?



That's a great question!



Many Intergroups existed before the General Service structure in WNY, unlike many other parts of AA in the United States. Most Areas have 1 Intergroup. Our Area has 4 Intergroups: Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Genesee/Wyoming and NYPenn.

Intergroups are a very important but separate service entity that primarily focus on local needs, such as the maintenance of that region's Meeting List, Bookstore, Hotline, Twelve Step Call List, Chat Feature (if one is in place), newsletter, and respective Website. (Occasionally however, some Areas may provide the same kinds of Services.)

Intergroup Reps vote on matters affecting any of the above. Generally, Intergroups do not have a vote in the overall General Service structure. However, in Area 50, each of the Intergroups can participate in Area Business meetings through a liaison who has a vote on all Area matters.

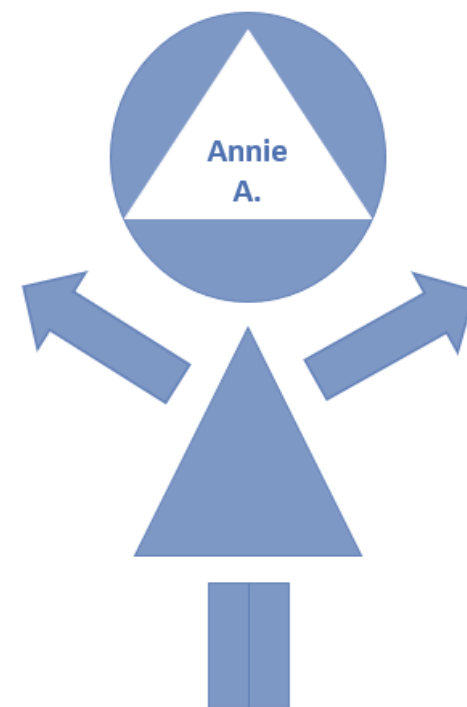
To have a voice at Intergroup or General Service, your group needs representation. Ideally, each Home Group should have both a GSR and an Intergroup Representative. This ensures communication and mutual cooperation between the two entities. Election to these roles should be conducted at your Home Group's business meeting.





I understand a little more about the way AA is structured and the importance of the parts of the upside down triangle and the Intergroups role. I know now that I don't have to have all the answers or even understand everything to be in General Service. I must be willing to ask for help and learn. I am going to find a Service Sponsor to help me help others. It is our purpose and I want to belong!!!

You are right, Victor E.!
Asking for help is the best way to understand more about the structure and language of AA General Service. Stick around and you will be the best General Service person ever. General Service positions rotate every 2 years; you will have many opportunities to get involved. Remember to look in the AA Service Manual and Area 50 Handbook for more information.



AA Area 50 thanks Area 28 Past Delegate Nikki O. for conceiving most of this Presentation. Nikki has also brought us a new character, Annie A. We thank the AA Grapevine for Victor E., as well.

Thank you to our Area 50 DCMs, who asked for a simple Presentation about the AA General Structure and How AAs May Be of Service.

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