DECEMBER

OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE

2026



Miracles and Gifts - Ronnie B.'s story

Hope - Nathaniel W.'s story

District 16 Newsletter

RONNIE B.

MIRACLES AND GIFTS



The program and the people have given me a new life beyond anything I could imagine.
Before the miracles and gifts there was pain, a big black void and I was certain without any doubt that alcohol was the solution. No one would understand the pain I've been through. If you had my life. You would drink too.

Soon after coming into the program I wondered when the line was crossed and I became an alcoholic? It didn't take long to realize it was from that very first drink at 12 years old. I remember clearly how it made me feel and I only had a couple of swigs of rum and coke. Magical and euphoric. I knew for a long time I didn't want to drink so much all of the time, but kept doing it anyways. Many times in life I said,
"That's it, I'll never drink again". Especially after the feeling of alcohol poisoning.
It wasn't long after that I would forget the pain and would chase that high again.
Day after day. Year after year.
The day my daughter was born in 2001 was the day I made a solid commitment to quit drinking. The inspiration and love felt was beyond incredible. Alcohol or pot could finally be put in the past. It only lasted about a week and a beer sounded good. Funny thing is I never really liked beer.

In February of 2014. Scared, timid and still not willing to say I am an alcoholic. I walked into the Tuesday night Madison Heights meeting. Spiritually bankrupt. Scared. Feeling alone. Hopeless. My idea of surrendering was surrendering to alcohol. I could not fight anymore. I'm just going to drink for the rest of my life. Not liking church or AA. How I ended up here still amazes me. Something greater than me led me here.
Admitting I was an alcoholic did not come easy. I didn't have to lose everything or get another dui. I knew that I could not quit drinking by myself.
First incredible hope. - Was at the end of a meeting. They said, "lets say a prayer for the still sick and suffering" It was at that moment. I realized that these complete strangers were praying for me. I was touched, moved and inspired. It was one of the building blocks to get closer to this incredible new world ahead.
At the end of my first meeting a white hair gentleman names Mike. Shook my hand and sincerely said, "Keep coming back"
That was also a key building block.
December 4th will be my 12th anniversary. Not cocky or over confident. I have been chairing in my home group every December to help give me that little bit of extra insurance. When I truly surrendered. The right people came into my life at the right time.
So far this has been the greatest journey in my life. The number one miracle that has happened in my life was my daughter being born. #2. AA. Have many miracles that have happened because of AA.
As I heard once, "If I don't find a new high. I'll keep chasing the old one". I found that here. Something better than alcohol or any drug has ever given me. A new high. A connection. Leaving the past behind, working the steps, getting a sponsor, making amends and always enlarging my spiritual life. I am truly awake, present and alive today. Today I have peace, love, serenity, kindness. In closing, thank you, all of you. Tuesdays at 7pm is my home group in Madison Heights. You are all welcome. Hope to see and meet you soon. Share the love. From my experience. It comes back 10 fold.

NATHANIEL W.

HOPE



There were times in my life when I genuinely believed I was beyond help. Times when I thought I had ruined everything, hurt everyone I loved, and lost the ability to change.

My experience with alcohol started when I was around 12 or 13, stealing beers out of my mother's refrigerator. In highschool, I started going to parties and drinking around bonfires. Even back then, there were a few of us who seemed to take it a little further than everybody else. We weren't just having a couple of drinks. We were getting wasted.

At the time, I didn't think much of it. I thought that's what being young was about. I didn't understand that I was already developing a relationship with alcohol that would eventually take so much from me.

Then, from around 2017 to 2019, I was drinking on and off but a lot of those times, I was on probation. I wasn't drinking because I couldn't drink. And I remember counting down the days until I got off probation so I could start drinking again. I wasn't looking forward to freedom from alcohol. I was looking forward to getting back to it. I didn't want to accept that when I drank, my life became unmanageable.

My family would reprimand me when I drank in front of them. My relationships suffered. I wasn't fully present for my son.But I couldn't see it. Or maybe I just didn't want to see it.

I think one of the hardest things about alcoholism for me was that I could recognize the consequences without accepting what they were telling me.

But instead of asking myself what I needed to change, I kept asking myself why everybody else couldn't understand me.

In 2021, I got my first DUI. I was ordered to attend 20 AA meetings. I attended those 20 meetings. And then I stopped. I never got a sponsor. I never really got into the program. Instead of looking for similarities with the people sharing, I looked for differences. Today, I understand that alcoholism doesn't have to look exactly the same in every person. Once I got off probation, I went right back to drinking in 2023. I thought I had it figured out. I thought I had beaten alcoholism. As my drinking continued, things got worse.

I was arguing with my mom and my fiancée, yelling at my son and friends who didn't deserve it. My fiancée called the police because she was afraid I was going to hurt someone or myself. On January 19th into the morning of January 20th, I got my second DUI. And I remember asking myself a question that I couldn't escape: "What have I become?"

My fiancée was gone. My son was going to be upset when I didn't show up to pick him up on Thursday. I had hurt people I loved. I had put myself and other people in danger.

That was my bottom. Because, for the first time, I was willing to admit that I couldn't keep doing what I had been doing. I wanted to change. I came back to AA on January 22nd, 2026, at a Thursday night meeting in Clawson. I was nervous, but when I walked through the door, I saw smiling faces. I heard laughter. I felt warmth. And I felt something I hadn't felt in a long time: hope. I saw people who had been through things I couldn't imagine, but who were still showing up, still laughing, still living. And I remember thinking, "I'm home."



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248-541-6565

AA OF OAKLAND COUNTY:

248-332-3521

AA OF DETROIT WAYNE COUNTY:

313-831-5550

OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE IS THE NEWSLETTER OF DISTRICT 16. THE NEWSLETTER CONTAINS ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETING CHANGES, EVENTS, NEWS & INFORMATION AROUND THE DISTRICT, AND STORIES ABOUT SOBRIETY AND RECOVERY.

ANY A.A. MEMBER IS INVITED TO SUBMIT MATERIAL TO THE NEWSLETTER.

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

DISTRICT16NEWS@GMAIL.COM

BOB P--DISTRICT COMMITEE MEMBER

DAVE S.-- ALTERNATIVE DISTRICT COMMITEE MEMBER

PETER S-- TREASURER

TANA M --SECRETARY





DISTRICT 16 MEETS AT 7:00PM ON THE 4TH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT:

1ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MADISON HEIGHTS
246 E. 11 MILE ROAD,
MADISON HEIGHTS, MI 48071

IF GROUPS WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO DISTRICT 16, PLEASE MAIL A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER:
PAYABLE TO: DISTRICT 16 OF AREA 33 A.A.,
PO BOX: 725362, BERKLEY, MI 48072

