

A Brief History of the ACA in the Ottawa Region

The origins of ACA in the Ottawa/Gatineau Region date from January 1986. Wayne C. who had been travelling out West attended several ACA meetings in the Vancouver area. He brought the Vancouver material to Ottawa and asked "Serenity Renewal for Families" for space to hold the first meetings. Sister Louise of Serenity Renewal was also very instrumental in getting our fellowship off the ground, her knowledge and involvement in adult child issues were of great benefit to our fellowship.

From the original closed group of ten members it blossomed six months later, to between eighty and one hundred. It was now an open group and people had found out by word of mouth. After one year the Queensway Carleton Hospital Group was formed and other groups followed until membership reached its peak around the mid-nineties with 10 groups. The Inner Peace Group held its first meeting on October 1, 1991. The only French group met on Sunday evenings at St. Paul University.

The largest groups met at St. Paul where attendees ranged from 25 to 50 individuals. These meetings occurred on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays (English) and Sunday (French) evenings. The other meetings took place mainly at suburban locations and had much smaller attendances of less than 15 persons. These meetings were usually short-lived and were the first to disappear in the late 90's. The meetings that had the smallest attendance occurred on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. regardless of location.

As far as can be recall none of the Ottawa meetings had to pay rent or buy insurance, but some would give a donation to their host. However, in the summer of 2008, the last three groups that were all at St. Paul were forced to shut down because the university decided to limit the organisation to one meeting per week and charge this group rent (\$35 a week) and insisted we have liability insurance of \$2 million (costed at about \$1200 annually then). None of the groups could afford this. During the fall, a committee was created to look into restarting some meetings. The result was that 2 meetings were formed: a Monday meeting at Brewer Park and a Wednesday meeting at the Overbrook Community Centre. The Overbrook meeting folded in April 2010 years due to renovations at that location whereas the Brewer meeting lasted until the COVID lockdown in March 2020.

Starting in August 2020 a web-based ZOOM meeting called the "Travelini Group" was set up to serve the members of the Ottawa region. As of August 2022, it was still operating. It is hoped that a new in-person meeting will be formed sometime in the future.