

JULY

OUTSIDE THE

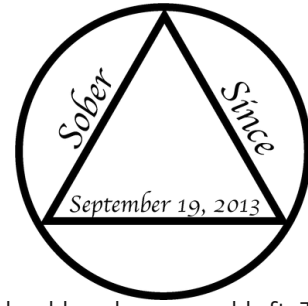
2026

BOTTLE



False Pride Almost Killed Me - Eric A's story
Alcohol Finds Its Prey - Lizzie A.'s Story

District 16 Newsletter

ERIC A.**FALSE PRIDE ALMOST KILLED ME**

I grew up in Royal Oak with a homemaker mother and an engineer father. They were loving, wonderful, and nonalcoholic parents—so great that I sometimes made up stories about them being strict just to fit in with others. My early childhood was vibrant and full of neighborhood kids, but starting school at four proved to be a mistake. By second grade, I struggled immensely to concentrate. Teachers labeled me “unattentively distracted,” while kids used much harsher words that cut deep. Ashamed of my inability to keep up, I quickly fell behind. I learned that keeping silent eased my daily anxiety and fears. I loved writing creative stories, but receiving no recognition, I quit entirely. This began my core issue: deeply believing I wasn't worthy.

In fifth grade, I was prescribed Ritalin for ADHD and dyslexia. My grades jumped from D's to A's overnight. Everyone celebrated—except me. I felt completely robotic and emotionally hollow, detached from the shift. I took Ritalin until eighth grade, then entered high school without it. At fifteen, I had my first drink on Christmas night. My sister and I filled a milk glass with vodka and chugged it. Within minutes, I felt overwhelming tranquility, followed by severe vomiting.

High school was a disaster; I drank strictly to get drunk, with no exceptions. I found my crowd, the “land of broken toys.” I met my future wife at seventeen and married her at twenty-one. Nonstop partying escalated when I enrolled in community college and had too much free time. I started drinking earlier and staying out later.

My wife finally packed her bags and left. Terrified of losing her permanently, I swore to clean up my act. I stayed completely sober for three years straight out of pure fear. We reunited, bought a house, and had two beautiful daughters. From the outside, it looked like I had successfully beaten my demons. But fear is a temporary fix, not a permanent cure. Blinded by false pride, I thought I could handle casual drinking like a normal person. I picked up a drink, and the downward spiral resumed instantly. Blackouts became regular, and I hid bottles around the house.

The breaking point arrived on a freezing winter night. After an intense argument with my wife about my drinking, I grabbed my keys and stormed out into a raging blizzard, heavily intoxicated. Traveling fast down a slick road, I lost total control. The car spun violently and slammed head-first into a massive oak tree, trapping me inside the crumpled wreckage. As sirens approached, my false pride shattered completely. I realized I was entirely powerless over alcohol.

Waking up in the hospital, the illusion of control was gone. For the first time, I chose absolute honesty and admitted, “I need help.” My recovery began in rehab, where I was forced to confront the anxious child who felt unworthy. Healing meant sitting with my anxiety instead of silencing it. In rehab, I rediscovered writing. Putting my history onto paper became my truest therapy. The stories once ignored became my lifeline. Rebuilding my marriage and earning back my daughters' trust took years of daily action. Today, I no longer drink to feel a fleeting peace. True peace came from letting go of the pride that almost killed me, accepting my flaws, and finally believing that I am worthy.

LIZZIE A.

ALCOHOL FINDS ITS PREY



My story may look different than others you've heard. Some would call it "tame." I never got a DUI. I never lost a job. I never ended up in jail. I never lost people in my life. I earned a master's degree, built my own business, traveled the world, and surrounded myself with wonderful friends and family. And I am an alcoholic.

Alcohol is funny like that- it isn't picky. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, fat or skinny, the valedictorian or the dropout. It finds its prey in cunning ways.

For most of my life, I didn't feel seen or heard. I learned early that expressing emotions or anxieties was often met with "suck it up" or "get over it." Over time, I became fiercely independent, stuffing down my feelings and convincing myself I didn't need anyone. The truth was, I desperately wanted to be liked. I wanted everyone to be happy, and I often felt responsible for making that happen. I thought being an empath was a good quality, until it wasn't. I spent years pouring into everyone else while quietly emptying myself.

Then I found alcohol.

I was a drinker in college like everyone else, but only here and there. Even in my late twenties and early thirties, I could go out with friends and have a glass of wine and be done with it like "normal" people. But one day something clicked in my brain—WOW this drink makes me feel better! My social anxieties, insecurities and basically non-existent self-worth all became a non-issue. COOL!!! So one drink became two, two became four, and four became bottles. I thought

being a "wine snob" made it better—going for tastings, buying exotic bottles to pair with dinners, talking with the vintners about their processes—that's fine right? Sure, if you leave it at that, which I couldn't do. Eventually I was pre-gaming for the dinner, and pre-gaming the pre-game, and of course having more after I got home until I could barely hold my eyes open. Sick as a dog and fighting withdrawals every single morning, I looked at myself in the mirror and I didn't recognize the person I saw. I told my husband I thought I had a drinking problem. I had never been in trouble a day in my life- heck, I haven't even been pulled over since 2006, so miss "goodie two shoes" had no idea what to think with that revelation. So I sought treatment. Then again. I was going to meetings but I wasn't sober. I thought I could drink like a normal person again. I was wrong. I needed a longer, more in-depth treatment plan, so I decided to go to a 28-day program on the beach in Florida. If I was going to be somewhere for that long, I was going to be in the sun and the sand! I checked myself into rehab for the third time on Christmas Eve 2025. Something this last time stuck for me. Something in me changed. I realized what I was doing wasn't working and I didn't have to live this way anymore.

Today, I don't miss alcohol. What I do miss is the person I was becoming while I was drinking—and that's because she no longer exists. In her place is someone stronger, calmer, and more authentic than I ever thought possible. Someone who doesn't need a drink to feel worthy, accepted, or enough.

Sobriety didn't take anything away from me. It gave me my life back. Every day, I wake up grateful—not because life is perfect, but because I finally get to live it fully, present for all of it. The good, the hard, and everything in between.

TAKE THE STEPS...TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

DESIGN FOR LIVING

A 14-WEEK ONLINE STEP TAKING GROUP



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August 20–November 19, 2026

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Created in 2012 for the Sobriety First Group of Royal Oak, Michigan, this biannual offering is for anyone who desires a deeper experience of the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today, Design for Living is offered online for participants who have days to multiple years of sobriety, and join from all over the world.

The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking.

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Find more information;
<https://designforlivingroyaloak.webnode.page>

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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 COMMITTEE MEMBER

DAVE S.-- ALTERNATIVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

PETER S-- TREASURER

TANA M --SECRETARY

Clawson's Women's Way
AA GROUP



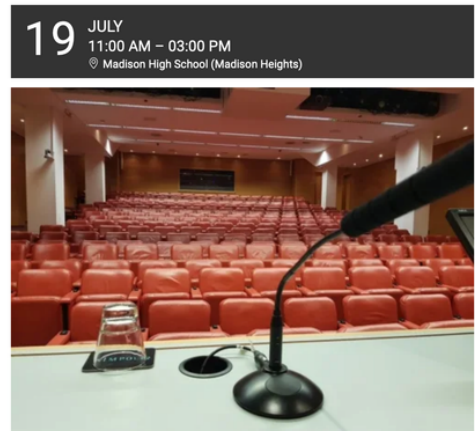
We're Changing
TIME AND LOCATION!



NEW TIME:
5:45PM



NEW LOCATION:
Grace Apostolic Church Clawson
700 E Elmwood Ave,
Clawson, MI 48017



Area Assembly

915 E Eleven Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI 48071

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