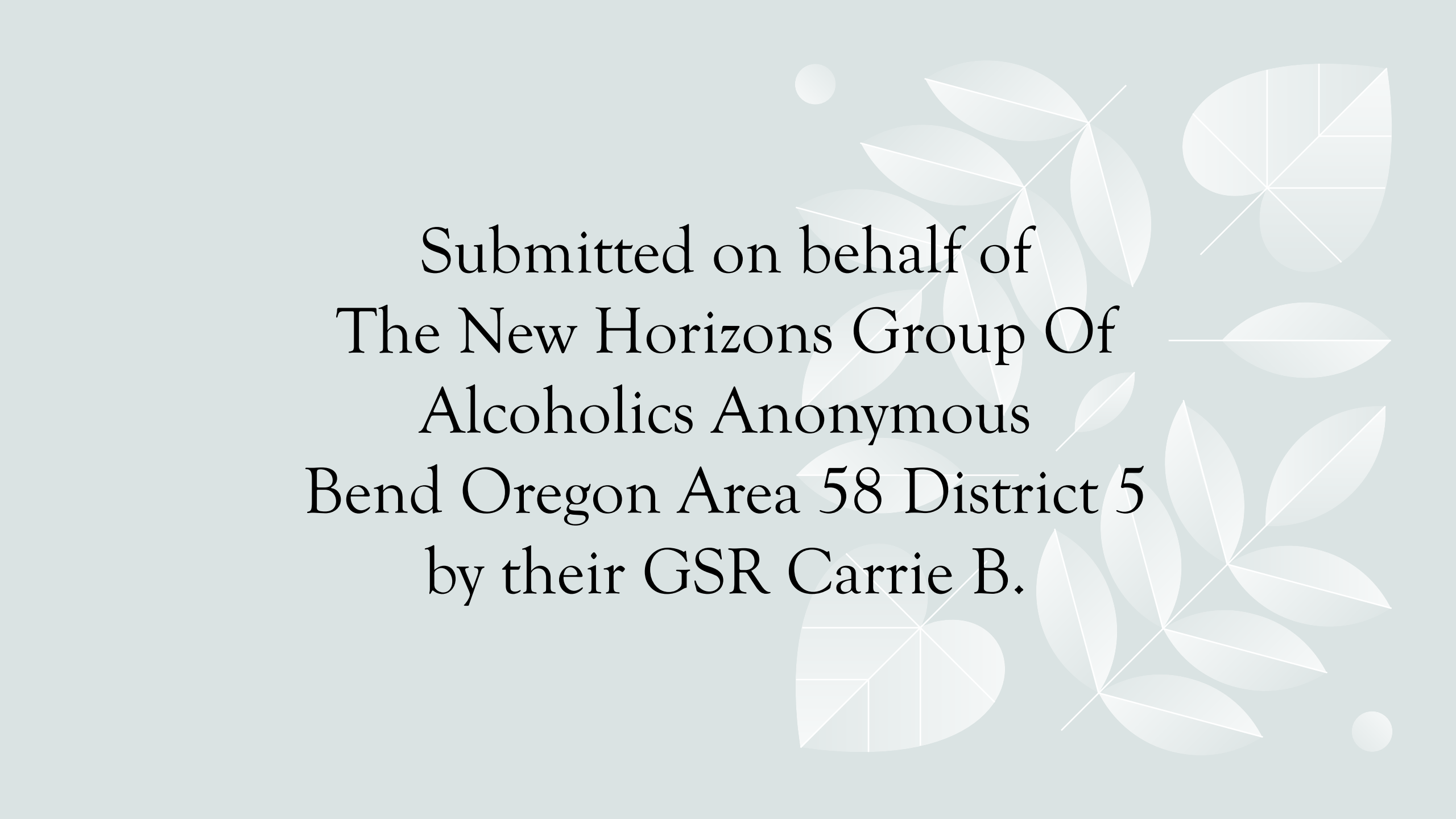




# Literature

ITEM K: Consider a request that the words “Donation” and “Contribution” be swapped under Warranty One in the pamphlet, “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated.”



Submitted on behalf of  
The New Horizons Group Of  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
Bend Oregon Area 58 District 5  
by their GSR Carrie B.

# Background Notes

Excerpt from the October 27, 2023, AAWS Board Meeting Minutes:

Recommendation: Regarding a proposal (originally P.A.I. #9 submitted in 2022), the committee recommended that the AAWS board forward this item to the 74th General Service Conference, adding background regarding the 2006 Advisory Action as it relates to the terms "contribution" and "donation." The committee discussed that AAWS considered the original PAI submitted last year. The pamphlet was revised as follows: "So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit contributions from individual members, we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense" (the 2006 Advisory Action recommended that the word "donation" be replaced with the word "contribution" in A.A.W.S. literature as it comes up for reprint.) However, the submitter believes that the wording should be as noted in the proposal. The committee agreed that forwarding this item to the 74th General Service Conference might be helpful, given that sentiment within the Fellowship may have shifted since the 2006 Advisory Action. Advisory Action from the 56th General Service Conference (2006)

# Background Notes

Our Group would like to make a motion to suggest the word "Donation" and "Contribution" be swapped around in the 12 Concepts Illustrated under Warranty One.

From: "So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member's donations, "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense."

To: "So long as we refuse to take outside donations and limit individual member's contributions, "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense."

The background features a light blue-grey gradient with several stylized, semi-transparent white leaf patterns and small circles scattered across it. The leaves have detailed vein structures, while the circles are simple solid shapes.

# **Donation vs. Contribution: What's the Difference?**



For most people, the words “donation” and “contribution” may mean the same thing. That’s why these two words are often interchanged, especially in terms of charity.

I mean, if you’re donating to charity, then you’re contributing to their cause. That means the same thing, right?

Not really. Contrary to what most people think, donation and contribution can mean very different things. So, using one instead of the other can change the meaning of what you’re trying to say and may even confuse some people.

So, before you interchange them again, let’s differentiate donation vs. contribution.

# What is a Donation?

ACCORDING TO THE DICTIONARY, A DONATION IS SOMETHING THAT IS GIVEN TO A CHARITY. IT CAN ALSO BE DESCRIBED AS A GIFT OR ANYTHING GIVEN TO BENEFIT A CAUSE.

FOR EXAMPLE:

*SHE MADE A SIGNIFICANT DONATION TO HER FAVORITE CHARITY AFTER SHE WON THE LOTTERY.*

OR:

*YOUR DONATION CAN HELP SAVE LIVES. \_\_\_\_\_*

IN THE EXAMPLES ABOVE, THE TERM “DONATION” REFERS TO SOMETHING HANDED OVER OR BESTOWED UPON A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR CAUSE.

A DONATION CAN TAKE ANY FORM. IT CAN BE MONETARY, MATERIAL THINGS, OR SERVICES.

# What is a Contribution?

Contribution is defined in the Meriam-Webster dictionary as the giving or supplying of something that plays a significant part in making something happen. It also defines it as something given as a part or share.

Other dictionaries, meanwhile, defined contribution as:

- ❑ a gift or payment to a common fund or collection
- ❑ a sum of money given in order to help pay for something
- ❑ something that you give or do to help produce or achieve something together with other people
- ❑ the part played by a person in bringing about a result or helping something to advance

If we sum up all these definitions, contribution best be described as something given to a common pool to achieve a common cause.

Here are some examples:

- ❑ *Albert Einstein made a substantial contribution to the advancement of science.*
- ❑ *We all made a contribution to the new A.A. Club being built on Farmers Blvd.*
- ❑ *All contributions, no matter the amount, will go a long way in helping us rent, coffee and other supplies.*

If you notice in the above examples, the word “contribution” is used to denote something that helped bring about a common goal.





## **Differentiating Donation vs. Contribution**

With the above definitions, we can infer that donation and contribution have differences:

# **A donation usually denotes a \*charitable endowment while a contribution may not necessarily have altruistic (unselfish) motives.**

For example, if you want to urge people to give to your cause, telling them to “donate” instead of “contribute” would be more appropriate.

However, this doesn’t necessarily mean you can’t use the word “contribute” in a charitable setting.

For instance, you can say:

*“He made a large contribution to the Gina D. Go To Fund.”*

or:

*“Your contributions to the Southeast Queens Group took us closer to our goal of having our group anniversary and reduced the amount of cost each individual member had to pay.”*

\*An Endowment is a donation of money or property to a nonprofit organization, which uses the resulting investment income for a specific purpose.



## **A donation benefits a cause while a contribution is given to make something happen.**

Contributing to something helps bring it to fruition. Meaning, there is one ultimate goal.

Like when you say:

*“Some A.A. members made large contributions to building the new A.A. club house on Farmers Blvd.”*

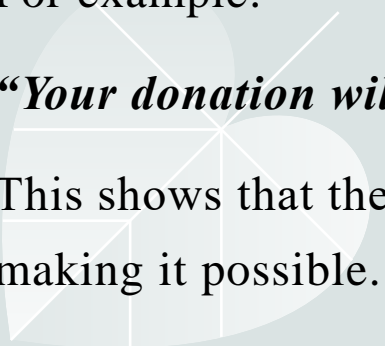
In this context, the ultimate goal is to build a new A.A. club house for current and future A.A. members.

But if you use the word “donation” or “donate”, it denotes that the cause is ongoing.

For example:

*“Your donation will help us feed the homeless.”*

This shows that the charity’s mission of helping the homeless is currently happening and that the donations are making it possible.



A donation is voluntarily given while a contribution can be obligatory.

- ❑ When you say “donate”, you are giving people the option to decline since a donation is always voluntary. But if you say “contribute”, it is more obligatory and that it’s their responsibility to “pitch in”.
- ❑ Examples: “*Please donate so we can help the poor*” rather than “*Please contribute so we can help the poor*”.
- ❑ “*Please contribute so we can help pay the rent and keep the doors open.*” It is our obligation to ourselves and A.A. as a whole to *contribute*, especially when we are giving it away in order to keep it.

**The reason we changed the name of the "Alcoholic Foundation" to the "General Service Office" when we adopted the 7th tradition is because words like "foundation and donation" can imply a charitable organization. The 7th tradition, like all the rest, is a spiritual principle. One of the ways I've been taught to support the 7th Tradition is to never use the "D" word in an AA setting. We don't "donate" to Alcoholics Anonymous. We "Contribute". Groups, Districts, Areas, and even AA as a whole, don't accept "donations" We are fully self supporting through our own "Contributions".**

**The word "donation" implies something given for charity. My sobriety is not a charity. It's something I get to participate in. In the same way I get to contribute to my household bills. I don't donate to the electric company or my mortgage. I Do however "donate" to the Animal Shelter, Meals on Wheels, and other charitable organizations.**

**Questions to ask yourself that may help this distinction to make sense:**

- ❖ Do you "donate" to your household bills where you live? Or do you contribute?**
- ❖ Do you donate to your state at the end of the year, and the IRS when you do your taxes? Or are you a contributing member of society?**

**"In the midst of this exciting turn of affairs, the Conference agreed that the Alcoholic Foundation ought to be renamed the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, and this was done. The word "Foundation" stood for charity, paternalism and maybe big money. A.A. would have none of these; from here out we could assume full responsibility and pay our expenses ourselves." P-44 Legacy Of Service**

Thank You!

