SEEDS OF SERENITY

CMA's Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 4, Spring 2024

Crystal Meth Anonymous®



Girl Power

CMA's Chipmunk • This Girl's Power to Recover • Letter to My Disease
The Evolution of Women's Meetings in CMA • Service From My Heart
Remembering Trish M. • Our Helpline Could Use Some Girl Power!

CMA'S CHIPMUNK

By Dale G.

When you go online to place a chip or medallion order, it arrives at your door without fail. What you may not know, is that our online store is girl-powered. Every order passes through our chipmunk, Yvonne W., and is lovingly hand-packed either by her or the women in her sober living home.

Almost 10 years ago, an opportunity presented itself to our Board Chair, James C. because CMA needed a fulfillment solution, and James had recently had a memorable experience. He was in Arizona when Tom L. took him to Yvonne's home. The house had just received a shipment of donations, and the women were busy sorting and putting everything away. James was impressed by their organization, and soon after, he called Yvonne to ask if she would consider becoming our order fulfillment coordinator. Yvonne recalls, "James called me and said, 'Hey, when I was at your house, I noticed you guys worked like a well-oiled machine. Do you want to do fulfillment?' And I'm like, well, what does that even mean? I mean, as far as the donations went, we're so used to doing it. Everybody just moves in the right direction. It all gets done. You know, nobody has to give directions. Everybody just knows." She continues, "I didn't even know what fulfillment was, but when he explained it to me, I was like, oh, heck yeah, I would love to do that."

Taking on the job meant turning part of her garage into a chip order fulfillment station. She would need to store bins of chips at the house, learn fulfillment software, and keep up with dozens of orders each month. Soon, they would need to open up additional storage space nearby when CMA started bulk ordering thousands of chips and medallions.

Through it all, Yvonne embraced her role with excitement and fervor unmatched by previous fulfillment personnel. She brought special touches to the process that truly made our ordering process unique. She even writes notes to those ordering chips. "I always handwrite a note because I want it to be personal, and I want them to know that I am rooting for them. Usually, when someone orders just one chip or medallion, I know it is for a birthday, so I just try to relay a message that it's a big deal. I tell them to keep going, I keep encouraging, it's just so awesome."

At some point, Yvonne began including printed quotes in each order, each bearing an inspirational message. "Well, actually," Yvonne states, "I have a friend who does that, and we've been the recipient of it. She creates them herself. She prints them out, she cuts them up, and she rolls them up all by herself. They're called scrolls for the soul. And, that's how we started. She has never charged us for them. She gladly makes them, and we put them in the orders, knowing each one will find the right home." She continues, "Sometimes I will see a scroll show up on Facebook and I will share it with my friend. It makes me smile."

As a long-haul driver, Yvonne is on the road a lot, and when she is away, her sponsees and the women she helps step in to ensure the orders are fulfilled. "Throughout the years, the women in my life really helped out. Right now, Moe is a big help. It is easy for her because she's done fulfillment for a T-shirt company before. So she caught on quickly. She enjoys it just as much as I do."



Her enthusiasm for the role is contagious. When folks meet her at conferences and realize she is the one who has been sending their orders, there are always hugs. "I meet these people that I've only known by a name online, and I get to put a face with that name." Her face beams as she speaks about her participation in helping out new meetings online and taking chip orders for them. "I am so lucky; I get to interact with meetings that are just starting out and that no one's really heard of yet. Like someone who called me from Omaha, Nebraska. He was kind of looking for help on what he needed to do to start a meeting. I was able to talk to him, give him some tips and give him some other names and numbers for people in Omaha that could give him support for that meeting, hoping they could band together." She tears up, "It's just like this never-ending circle that just keeps getting wider and wider."

Reflecting on a moment she considers special, she reminisces about working late into the night fulfilling orders. "It's just, I sit out in that garage sometimes, and I just feel the presence of Bill C., our founder. One time we were cleaning out the storage, we were going through all of Bill C's things and there was a broken desk lamp that was in a box to go to the trash, and I see this little lamp and I think, this is perfect for my chip table. I brought it home and got a bulb for it, and that light sits on the work table. Bill shines his light right down on every chip order that goes out, there are many nights that it's just me and Bill. He is shining his light on me, and I know he's happy. I know he's loving what we're doing. And, you know, everybody gets a little bit of Bill's light. I love that."



GET YOUR CMA SWAG!

Mugs, T-shirts, and Hoodies are now available at the CMA Store for the discerning crystal meth addict.

Visit https://cma-online-store2.mybigcommerce.com/cma-swag/





THIS GIRL'S POWER TO RECOVER

A conversation with Carrie W.

By Roberto F.

R: Hello Carrie, would you like to identify?

C: I love identifying! Hi everybody, I'm Carrie W, I have 20 years of sobriety, and my sobriety date is November 27th, 2003.

R: Thank you so much! So, when you came to CMA 20 years ago, what was it like when you arrived? What did you see?

K: I started doing NA and AA here and I just was not feeling really a part of it. Then a woman came into a woman's AA meeting, took one look at me, and said, "You're a tweaker aren't you?" I said. "Yeah," and she said, "This meeting's f*ing boring isn't it?" I was like, "Yeah," and she said, "You should come to a CMA meeting." I said, "I don't have a car." She said, "Call me and I'll pick you up, the next one's on Wednesday." She took me to this CMA meeting in Long Beach 19 years ago. There were like four people in the room when I walked in, but that meeting was so fantastic because it was all gay men, and me, and Nina the woman who took me. When they spoke it was my story. I was like, Oh my God this is exactly who I am and exactly where I need to be!

R: So throughout those years how did you find your posse? How did you create the group of people around you?

K: Well, Rick H was the person who had the most amount of time and he only had a couple of years under his belt. We were all so young and we just clung to each other and went everywhere together! We clung to each other, and went absolutely everywhere together because we had nothing to do. Mark and I especially had no job, no family, nothing to do, and nowhere to go. So all we did was just keep hitting meetings and hitting sober parties. We filled up as much of our day with that as we could because we couldn't f*ing sleep because we were still all f*ing humming stuff like that, and we were littermates.

I didn't know that these people were going to become my best friends. I didn't know that at all you know? If I had picked who were going to be my best friends I would be friendless because I've never seen those people again. But my Higher Power put certain people on my path and they were the people that I clung to and not, you know, for any reason other than they were there and because they were meant to be there.

R: Did you feel any different because you're a woman?

C: Well I was having a big problem in straight 12-Step programs because there was a lot of 13th stepping going on. I know that happens in all the programs but coming to CMA in Los Angeles, it was predominantly gay men. I felt safe there and it was exactly what I needed because these men were able to love me and I was able to sit on their lap and kiss them and we groped each other. It was completely inappropriate because I had no boundaries and everything was totally over sexualized for me as well but the difference was, I was totally safe. I can't say that for them–I can't say that they were totally safe–but I can tell you that I was totally safe. It's exactly what I needed, because I didn't have boundaries with men. Thank God those men just wanted to love me and not hate me or f*k me. That would have been terrible.

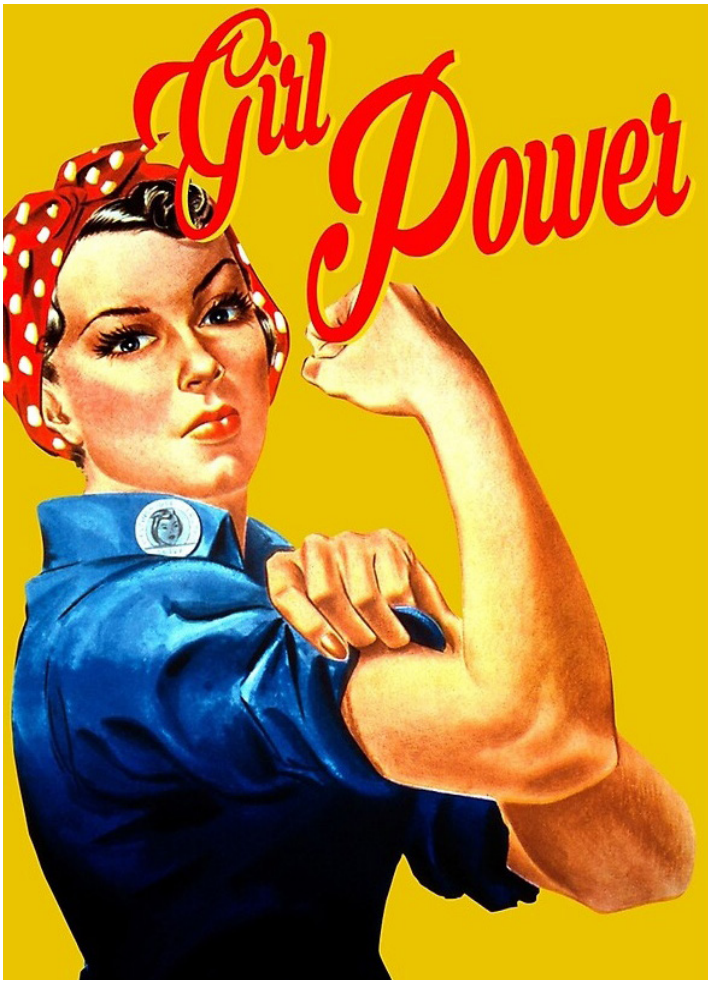
R: So now when you look at CMA with a bunch of powerful women that grew in recovery in women's meetings, how does that feel?

C: Yeah, when I got here there were only a few of us and we didn't all go to the same meetings. I feel like we rarely interacted or crossed paths but I stuck around and CMA started to get bigger. We made it bigger in Long Beach–Mark and I and our sponsor at the time, Ron M, who was also there at the beginning. I don't know if I mentioned him–he's deceased. He died clean and sober. We started making CMA bigger, started more meetings, and obviously it grew in Los Angeles and now it's grown worldwide. But you know as that started to happen, women started trickling in, and the

thing is is that you can f*ing get sober here! Just in case anybody's wondering if a woman can get sober in CMA, the answer is yes!

But for a long time there were only a few of us like Gina B, who's my girl. I think in a sense for a long time we were the faces of CMA in Los Angeles County and Long Beach especially. But now there are women's groups and I have three female sponsees. It's crazy because I was only sponsoring gay men because that's all that there were. Now there's "Bitches Breaking Bad" and "Ice Queens" and there are whole CMA meetings devoted to just women's groups which used to seem impossible. Once upon a time, like in my day, that was impossible. It would have been me and maybe five years later me and Gina in a room talking to each other, which we did in her living room all the time, so maybe that was the first women's meeting in CMA.

R: Alright, so I'm gonna break the news to CMA worldwide: You're dating somebody in the rooms of CMA?



C: Yes I am dating. It's a young relationship–only two months at this point, but it's a really beautiful relationship. The reason that I was so open to it is because I thought he was gay! I met him in a gay meeting. One of his best friends, who I think is the person who introduced me to him is gay, and you know, why would I think anything outside of that? So when he wanted to spend time with me, I was totally open to it, and didn't even question it. And then later I found out he was straight but yeah, he is so wonderful. He'd hate me saying this but I love gay men. They saved my life, they are my best friends, they are what I want in a man except they don't want to have sex with me or date me. His name is Rudy, he is like a gay man in all of the best ways and he also offers what I need from a straight man, so he's like this beautiful combination. I'm so grateful that my Higher Power put this man on my path, that's amazing!

R: What would you say to the girls who are just arriving in the rooms and not sure what's happening? What do you tell them?

C: Well, it's hard for everybody but women have this extra challenge of trying to figure out how to be a woman in this world and a sober woman in this world and it's really tough, and it's tough for everybody. I really don't know what to say about it other than women can get sober and tweaker women ice queens can get sober in CMA. There's more evidence of that now than there ever has been. And oh my God, please utilize our gay men because they are the best f*ing creatures that walk this Earth. I would be dead without them! Work the f*ing Steps for God's sake, work the f*ing steps!

R: Thank you so much. I love you!



LETTER TO MY DISEASE

By Becca W.

Were you out to get me at such a young age, or had you always been inside me since the beginning of days?

I feel like we were meant to be together as fucked up as that sounds, from the moment you took me our love had no bounds.

Everything was better, funner, and full of wonder, the feeling that I felt inside me was like the power of thunder.

It took a while for me to feel your growing darkness, a devouring virus that made me feel unconscious. You were growing at such a rate I couldn't control, every aspect of me was lost until you swallowed me whole.

And from then on I moved through the world in a sleepless state, hardened like a rock from my despairing fate.

You played me like a game of chess, watching and waiting to cause me maximum distress.

My body and soul were payment for glitz and gold, but the supply ran out quickly and I needed more so I wouldn't be alone.

Its scouring voice, said, "I am heartless, but I'm no puppeteer. You took me and liked me, you made the choice, my dear."

I was battered and broken, too weak to move, and I yelled, "Dear God, please help me. I have nothing else to prove."

That day changed everything when I felt God hold my hand. I had a new purpose in life now, one I didn't fully understand.

"Place your trust in me, my child, for I will show you the way. This was all a test so you may live in the brightest of days."

"I know you don't see it now, but you will soon understand: Your pain is a gift that will help you heal your fellow man."

"Your life will be full of riches unlike you've ever known. Just stay by my side and you will forever sit at my throne."



THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S MEETINGS IN CMA: Sarah's Journey

By Dale G & Sarah G.

The landscape of Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) meetings for women has undergone significant transformation, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We talked to Sarah, who shared her experience about that time and the pivotal role women's meetings have played in this evolution.

Early Experiences in CMA

Reflecting on her initial involvement with CMA, Sarah notes, "When I was new, I didn't notice anything different than going to my AA meetings, to be honest. I was raised in old dirty biker AA, so it was biker women who took me to CMA." In Denver, CO, the presence of women in CMA was somewhat comparable to AA, though CMA was considerably smaller.

Service and Realizations

Sarah's first General Services Conference was a turning point. Held in Colorado, her home state, she was surrounded by familiar faces. It became apparent to her that the presence of women in Colorado CMA was being noticed. "People started approaching me and saying things like, 'Oh, Colorado CMA is known for its women.'" She recalls about the Conference: "There were very few women in the photo we took that year, less than ten of us." This lack of female representation became clearer with each annual photo, a tradition that highlights the women at the conference. Over time, the number of women in these photos has grown and grown.

The Impact of the Pandemic

The pandemic marked a critical period for CMA. As online meetings became the norm, she initially hesitated to join due to anxiety. "I was afraid to go to online meetings at first," she admits, but friends encouraged her by sending links to meetings. However, the experience was often isolating. "I would get into a room of men and most of the time I was not acknowledged."

This discomfort highlighted the need for a dedicated space for women in CMA. The pandemic also coincided with Sarah's most challenging mental health episode. "I started going to more and more meetings, but I needed a space where I could share openly. Women couldn't share openly. "We felt like we couldn't talk about having a hysterectomy because of a cyst on an ovary. The dominant gay culture had never heard women's shares and we just wanted a space where we could save our lives without feeling dirty or gross"

Starting "Bitches Breaking Bad"

The idea for a women's meeting materialized during a conversation with a fellow member. "I think I'm going to start a women's meeting and we'll do it by conference call," Sarah proposed. Initially hesitant due to fear and logistical concerns, she finally announced the meeting's start date: April 16th, 2020. "We had no name. I had no Zoom account," she admits, but the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Naming the meeting was an unintentional yet fitting decision. "We named it 'Bitches Breaking Bad' on accident," Sarah explains, stemming from a group text message. Despite some resistance to the name, the meeting has been transformative. "I hope that this meeting gives women an opportunity to consider having a new experience with women."

Creating a Safe Space

The importance of a dedicated women's meeting became evident quickly. Sarah recounts a poignant moment during their first meeting: "A beautiful woman said, 'I have been waiting for this meeting. I'm so desperate for this connection because as we speak, I'm sitting, in my bathroom on a pile of towels, actively having a miscarriage.'" This level of vulnerability and need for support underscored the necessity of a women-only space in CMA. The format of "Bitches Breaking Bad" emphasizes empowerment. The goal is to build each other up and create a supportive community. The meeting is explicitly inclusive, welcoming all who identify as women. "I really want to emphasize how being in a room with other women can help with the guilt and shame we have felt from losing our children, or even just having a hard time with society's expectations as women." Normalizing

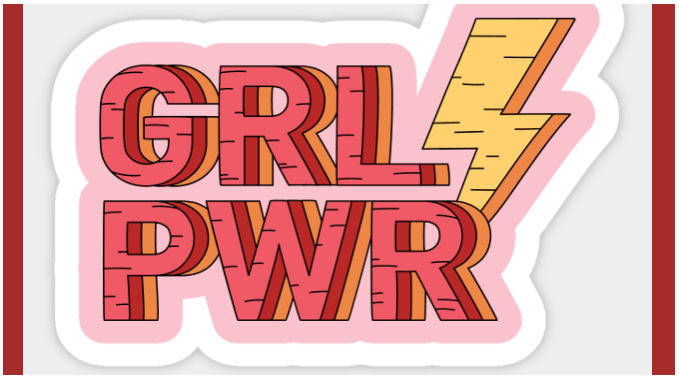
these issues is having an effect on CMA as a whole. Recently a line was added to "Are You a Tweaker" that reflects this difficulty that women experience.

Growth and Future Aspirations
Women's meetings in CMA have expanded, accommodating different time zones. The meetings have fostered a core group of dedicated women who continuously work to create a safe space. "In that first meeting, we didn't have a sponsorship announcement, but now we now have women who are actively sponsoring," Sarah notes, highlighting the meeting's success in fostering a generational approach that keeps women in CMA.

Sarah reflects on the broader impact of these meetings: "I love to hear the feedback about how many men have been impacted by the women showing up, by the women sharing their stories." The presence of women in CMA has shifted perceptions and encouraged inclusivity.

Continuing the Journey
Despite the progress, Sarah acknowledges ongoing challenges. "I rarely see a woman of color," she observes, emphasizing the need for continued growth and inclusivity. Back when we opened the meeting to all who identify as a woman, we didn't even understand what that meant" But now the experience of these meetings in CMA shows it means ALL women.

In Sarah's words, "Empowered women empower women. And that's really fucking important." The growth of women's meetings is a testament to the power of community and the transformative impact of creating spaces where women can share, support, and thrive together in their recovery journey.



OUR HELPLINE COULD USE SOME GIRL POWER!

By Jimmie C.

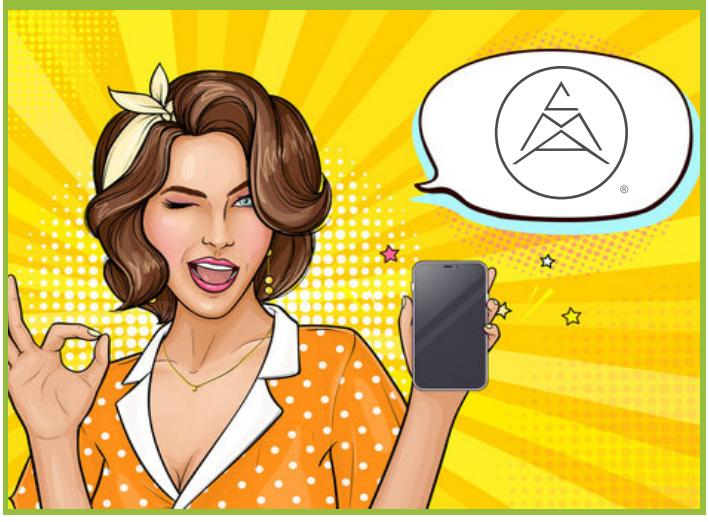
I have watched with great enjoyment over the last few years as women have been making their presence known in the Fellowship of Crystal Meth Anonymous. Getting to work in service with the women I do has been and continues to be a joy.

As the Coordinator of the CMA Helpline (855-638-4373), I am always thrilled when a member of the fellowship messages me with interest in serving on the Helpline. I am even more excited when that member happens to be a woman.

We get a good number of calls a month from women and currently, a majority of those calls are answered by a man. Currently, six women are serving on the Helpline. That is six out of 40 total volunteers. Now, we have no control over who answers anyone's call, but having more women on the Helpline Staff increases the odds that a woman would answer that call.

If you have one year of clean time, can commit to a minimum of one hour per week on a recurring basis, and have a telephone that no one else answers, you can work on the Helpline.

Anyone interested in being of service on the Helpline, please contact us at helpline@cmagso.net for information.



SERVICE FROM MY HEART

By Ashley C.

This morning, I didn't want to wake up, or rather, I didn't want to get up out of my bed. But today is something I call "CMA Saturday." Today is a day when I will attend at least two—but usually more—online committee calls.

Some might wonder why I do this. It's simple really: my sponsor does service like this. I want what he has, so I do service the same way–the way it was encouraged in me and the way I encourage it in my sponsees. More than that, though, I enjoy it. Even on days when there are early morning starts, tech issues, and personalities to contend with, I get to be part of something greater than myself.

My first service position was coffee person –one of those jobs that newcomers usually volunteer for because it's less intimidating. At the time, I thought it was a rather insignificant position, but I showed up anyway. Every week, I was there, washing cups, making coffee, and getting up halfway through the meeting to start a new pot. I have this character defect that still shows up sometimes. I will start projects that maintain my interest for a few hours, sometimes a day, but I give up when it gets hard or boring, or when something new comes along. When I finished my first service commitment, it was the first time I had completed something—stuck it out all the way to the end. Before then, I didn't think I was the kind of person who could finish anything.

I picked up another service commitment, chairing the meeting. The commitment was for six months, but I showed up three nights a week for a year to open the door. I began to get to know people, their stories, and they began to know me. By this point, I was starting to see that I could finish what I started. One service position led to another, first at the meeting level, then at the Area level. I thought I had the perfect amount of service commitments– any more and surely my life would be unmanageable. With the "subtle" encouragement of my sponsor, I went to a General Services Committee meeting. Coincidentally, it was right as they were electing service positions. I was voted in as secretary.

I asked my sponsor how I was going to manage all of this—I think it was three service commitments at that point—and he told me that the more time he made for service, the more time he had for everything else in his life. This idea still sticks with me to this day. Of course, at the time, I thought he was feeding me a line, but I already had the commitments, so I kept them. Eventually, I started having fun being the person I got to be when I did service: knowledgeable, responsible, and confident.

I'm not going to list all of the service positions I have been entrusted with over the years, but I will say that each has taught me something: how to play with others, how to be accountable, how to speak my mind, and how to put the needs of the many above my personal wants. It's funny to think how one Saturday a month (and sometimes a Sunday, a Tuesday, a special event, a Wednesday, or a trip to the conference) can do so much to help me step into the woman I never thought I could be.

Not everyone in CMA does the same amount or the same type of service as others. No one can or have to do everything. We help each other.

I've tried to stop doing service a few times when I thought that the changes in my life would make it impossible. Then, I end up with another, different, service position. My higher power has jokes. Really though, I am grateful. One summer I tried to pull away from the fellowship. But, because I have put my heart in service and the people I love in this fellowship count on me to do my part, I kept showing up. My commitments kept me plugged in. They gave me a reason to keep going to Area, to keep going to meetings, and to keep my CMA Saturday scheduled in my calendar.

So on days like today, when I want to just stay in bed and sleep, when I think maybe I don't need recovery, service gets me out of bed. Service gets me to go see people. Service saved my life early in recovery and continues to do so now. I don't always do it perfectly, but I always do it with my heart.

REMEMBERING TRISH M.

As we approach CMA's 30th anniversary, we reflect on the generations of service members who have contributed to CMA's success and resilience. Since this newsletter is dedicated to our women, we can't help but think back to our first female GSC chair, Trish M.

Trish entered service at a pivotal time following our restructuring, which established all of our levels of service. As a trustee from the Mid South Region, Trish dove into service, beginning her career on the Communications Committee and spearheading many significant projects. One of her early contributions was advocating for a speaker recording project. Her enthusiasm for ensuring the message was carried through these recordings was instrumental in moving the project forward.

Trish also played a crucial role in making sure our meeting formats were accessible online for anyone wanting to start a meeting. She spent countless hours reviewing and editing meeting formats into the final versions we use today. Her focus was always on the newcomer and helping those new to service feel they had a place within the service structure. This included our delegates. At the conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Trish recognized the need for delegates to have more support and guidance. She sought out ways to ensure their questions were answered. She advocated for our International Delegates to make sure they felt at home at the General Service Conference, she was a powerful voice to make sure we added a place for them at every Conference. She was also an early advocate for the CMA App, joining that committee early on and helping to design some of the features that we are beginning to use now.

When the pandemic hit, Trish was our GSC chair and she ensured we quickly adapted, creating a space for online meetings and issuing guidance to the fellowship during that critical time. She had to do what no-one had done before, lead an online General Service Conference in 2020. She brought a human touch to the role of GSC Chair, emphasizing inclusivity and compassion.

Trish passed away in 2021, but she left an enduring mark on CMA. She will never be forgotten.

