



History of the PINK CAN – District 43 (Area 59) Alcoholics Anonymous

I was 4 years sober and doing service at the prison for AA. The need for more literature – AA Big Books in particular – surfaced in conversation again and again. Our District did not have enough money for a new line item to be added for this purpose. I decided to ask an old timer if he had any suggestions for this need. His name is Buck W. and he told me of when he lived in Florida and something that they did there. They collected 1 lb. coffee cans with plastic lids. Then they painted them pink and labeled them “Donations for Literature for Prisons”. He told me some people would empty the change from their pockets, or sometimes throw a dollar or more into the cans. The money was then taken to the monthly district meeting and given to the treasurer. This sounded like a good idea to me, since it would be a separate collection from the 7th tradition basket collection taken at the meetings. Anyone who wanted to donate money directly for this cause could do so knowing where their money was going to be used.

I announced the need for the coffee cans at the meetings that I attended. Some cans that members gave me were coffee cans with plastic lids and some were metal cans with metal lids. Of the latter, a member (Joel B.) collected these from a second hand shop and cut a slit in the metal lid for me. All of the cans were spray painted pink and a label was glued on.

Around this same time the district was in need of a Treasurer and I volunteered to fill the position. I told everyone about the pink cans that I was working on and many members collected more cans for me. More painting and labeling and then a goal to furnish every meeting within the district with a can. From the beginning the Pink Can initiative has been a success. The first year (2011) a total of \$638.76 was collected. The second year (2012) a total of \$533.57 was collected. Many Big Books have been purchased and donated to the prisons. Any prisoner who requests a Big Book – when available – receives one and may keep it as their own.

Many thanks to Buck W. for a great idea and to all of the members who helped to collect the cans for this effort. Also, thank you to the members who have and continue to donate money for this cause and the GSR’s who bring the money each month to the treasurer. And lastly, a big thank you goes out to the past Chair of the Corrections and Institutions committee, Kris R. She coordinated the needs of the prison and then the purchasing and delivery of the books. She was instrumental in the success of this new venture for District 43.

Written and submitted by Susan A.

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