

Minutes of the 2013 LifeRing Annual Meeting and Congress in Denver, Colorado (Brief Version)

May 31 – June 2

Day One: Capitol Community Center – Denver, Colorado

Those in attendance included Board Members, Convenors, and other Members of the LifeRing Organization. Attendance was very good.

Morning Session

The Organic Development of LifeRing Communities

Each LifeRing Community is growing and developing according to the internal strengths and weaknesses inherent in each group.

Real organic growth is happening in the smaller LifeRing Communities; some of these groups are following the traditional path, while others are trying different ways of recovery within the framework of the three S's. Changes will happen. It's how LifeRing learns to deal with these changes that is important and will define its future.

--- Lunch Break ---

Afternoon Session

Discussion - Convenor Training Workshop

The afternoon session began with a discussion of Convenor Training, and Workshops.

Discussion - Strategic Planning and Fundraising

The Strategic Planning effort and the close relationship of it to several other committees, including Fundraising, were discussed.

The mission of the Fundraising Committee, and the results of recent and promising visits to the D.C. Area were also discussed. It was emphasized that it was critical that LifeRing define its Planning Mission to obtain such funding.

These topics concluded the first day of the meeting.

Day 2: St. Cajetan's Event Center - Auraria University Campus, Denver, Colorado

This day consisted of several presentations. The attendance was excellent.

Speakers:

Gabor Maté, M.D.

Note: Dr. Maté's presentation was jointly funded by LifeRing and the Love and Trauma Center of Denver.

Many Dr. Maté's comments were based upon his interaction with patients at the Vancouver Downtown Eastside Clinic where he practices. His contention: *Addiction always originates in pain, both psychological and physical, and that such pain most often occurs in childhood. There is a direct correlation between such pain and addictions later in life.*

The Love and Trauma Center of Denver

This presentation centered on "Addiction-Focused Trauma Therapy." Methods and examples were given of how to address such trauma in the recovery process.

Candice Shelby, Ph.D.

Dr. Shelby's presentation was drawn from her forthcoming book entitled "Addiction: Beyond Choice or Disease."

Her contention was that both the "disease" and the "choice" models of addiction are deficient in themselves. She presented a model for understanding addiction that incorporated both these elements. *She stressed that addiction is a pattern of action that results from complex systems interacting with one another and must be understood at many levels.*

Presentations by Three Non-12 Step Recovery Organizations

- LifeRing
- SMART Recovery
- Women for Sobriety

The day concluded with the LifeRing Banquet and Awards Dinner that was held at the "Le Central" restaurant in Denver.

Day Three: Capitol Community Center – Denver, Colorado

2013 LifeRing Congress - General Meeting

This day was devoted to the Annual Congress. Topics included:

- Presentation and voting for the new absentee ballot proposal
- Presentation and voting for the finance report of 2012
- Presentation and voting of two Directives to the Board
- Presentation and voting of an amendment to increase the number of board members required to comprise a quorum
- Nomination of board members

Discussion and Vote on a Proposed Bylaw Amendment to Allow Absentee Voting

The immediate order of business was to consider the adoption of a new system that allows for absentee voting. An overview of the “Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) System” that will be used was given.

Briefly, the RCV system requires a majority vote for each candidate running for a board seat, if that candidate is to be seated. If there is no majority, iterative processes are used until majorities are attained.

It was emphasized that each voter must rank all candidates in order of preference on their ballots or their votes will not be counted.

Those present voted to approve the new voting system.

Finances for the Year 2012

The account basis for 2012, was presented and approved

Directives to the Board

Two directives were presented: Briefly,

Directive 1: Calls for tobacco to be considered as an “illicit or non-medically-indicated drug.” In all policy decisions, tobacco shall be treated like alcohol in the Bylaws.

Directive 1 was voted down.

Directive 2: Calls for any meeting, other than those that focus on recovery from alcohol and illicit or non-medically approved drugs, to be considered an “Associate Meeting.”

Examples of such meetings were provided. Such meetings will have the full support of LifeRing, but will not be considered Public LifeRing Secular Recovery Meetings and will not be eligible to elect voting delegates.

Directive 2 was tabled

Number of Board Members Required to Comprise a Quorum

There was a discussion and vote on a proposed bylaw amendment that would increase the number of board members required to satisfy the definition of a quorum from four to five for all Board of Directors Meetings.

Those present approved the adoption of this amendment.

Nomination of Board Candidates

Five candidates were nominated. There were no other nominations forthcoming from the floor.

Adjournment

2013 LifeRing Congress - Board of Directors Meeting

Five of the nine Board Members were present, constituting a quorum according to the recent bylaw amendment (see above).

Accordingly, the Board Chair called the meeting to order. Four other board members were present.

The primary purpose of this meeting is ordinarily to elect officers. However, since new board members will likely not be seated until the July meeting, and that such new members should vote for those officers, it was decided that these elections should be delayed until then.

The results of voting on the bylaws amendments (positive for absentee voting and positive for the "quorum" amendment), and Directives 1 and 2 (negative for both), were briefly discussed and felt to be appropriate.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made. It was seconded and carried unanimously, thus concluding the 2013 LifeRing Annual Meeting and Congress.

Submitted by the Secretary, June 14, 2013.