

## Recovery Group Marks First Anniversary

By JERI LOVE

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The daimoku was strong and the spirits were high as members of the so-called Lotus Group recently celebrated their first “year of consistency” — meeting on the third Sunday of every month, despite obstacles, to help members use their Buddhist practice to overcome the suffering of addiction in their lives.

“We are committed to proving the validity of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism as the basis for our development as first-rate human beings,” said Frazier Thompson, co-founder of group. “Through our faith, education, awareness and by encouraging self-empowerment, we have an opportunity to revitalize appreciation for our own lives.”

The meetings are open to members and guests who either have an addiction problem or are in a relationship with a person who is addicted. The members define addiction as “a pathological relationship with any mood-altering person, place, substance or thing that has life-damaging consequences. The key word is *pathological*. This is what separates a habit from addiction, and it is why there is no such thing as a positive addiction.”

The meetings serve as a forum, providing an open and supportive environment where participants have an opportunity to share, participate in faith-based dialogue and come to terms with their own issues, as they relate to addiction and co-dependency.

It was at Robert Inatomi’s suggestion that the members start meeting a year ago. Having a son in recovery for six years, Mr. Inatomi, who is Los Angeles #1 Joint Territory guidance staff, said that addiction affects everyone, not just the person with the problem.

“Whatever you’re chanting for, don’t give up,” Mr. Inatomi told the members during his words of encouragement. “All of your prayers will be answered.”

He added, “The sooner you get to the Gohonzon, the quicker you will have the freedom to live a full life.”

At the end of the meeting, the members made a determination to expand this faith-based activity to reach out to more members who are suffering because of addiction.

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