

Meet Carlos Isaia

Board Member, Action Alliance Foundation



AAF Board Member Carlos Isaia is all about kindness. In fact, it's a major reason he agreed to serve on Action Alliance Foundation's Board of Directors. "AAF's business model IS kindness," explains Carlos. "I'm a big proponent for sober living, and am excited and honored to be involved with an organization that provides this opportunity to homeless addicts and alcoholics, regardless of their ability to pay."

Carlos, who has been sober since 2000, began drinking at the tender age of 9, sneaking mini-cans of Coors during a party he attended with his parents. He hid the evidence, and couldn't wait to do it again.

Growing up in Fullerton and Placentia, Carlos was very involved with music, playing synthesizer in a band with high school classmates. He continued to drink throughout his youth but was able to get by. At the age of 21, however, he burned a lot of bridges, and realized his drinking was the basis for his problems.

After completing a 30-day stint in rehab at the age of 22 and beginning to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous, Carlos did well for the next 10 years. He excelled professionally, primarily as a recording engineer on feature films. He learned on the job and worked on more than 200 feature films, including Academy Award nominated *Gods and Monsters* with Ian McKellen and Brendan Fraser. In fact, you can even look Carlos up on IMDb!

"Unfortunately, work became my drug of choice during this time, and I often worked 90 hour weeks," says Carlos. He stopped going to AA meetings, and started second-guessing if he really had a problem. He started drinking again, and within a short time, it's as if he'd never stopped.

Soon, Carlos was fired for being difficult to work with, was unwelcome at his home, and started using cocaine. He was able to move back to his parents' home and did achieve a brief period of sobriety, but relapsed again.

In 2000, Carlos realized he needed to change – NOW. He went to detox, and during his time there, he overheard someone reading aloud from AA's *Big Book*. It was a passage that resonates with him to this day:

The less people tolerated us, the more we withdrew from society, from life itself. As we became subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of his mad realm, the chilling vapor that is loneliness thickened ever becoming blacker.

After his discharge from detox, Carlos recommitted to attending AA meetings, and connected with his sponsor – none other than George Folk, President and Founder of Action Alliance Foundation, who remains his sponsor to this day. Carlos started volunteering to manage the coffee bar at the AA meeting location he attended, and also helped mentor other people in recovery.

Within two years, George referred Carlos for a position at Woodglen Recovery Junction. In the years since, he's held a number of positions at Woodglen, including his current position as Detox Supervisor. He is also a Certified Addiction Specialist and became a house manager for Action Alliance in 2023.

Today, Carlos is still involved with music (he occasionally plays keyboards for a friend who owns a recording studio), enjoys being outdoors at National Parks like Death Valley and Joshua Tree, and is close to his sister and brother (his parents have both passed away). He's also reconnected with old friends, including some from his high school days.

"AA's 11th step is all about spirituality," notes Carlos. "My faith has grown exponentially in recent years, particularly since becoming a house manager for Action Alliance. I have more opportunities to help more people through their recovery journeys than most – and it's a role I treasure."