

### **BOARD VISION STATEMENT**

**All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.**

### **BOARD MISSION STATEMENT**

**Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES**

**Al-Anon's spiritual principles permeate our policies and practices; we apply emerging technology and communication options:**

- **To increase the visibility of Al-Anon so that it is recognized as the number one resource throughout the world for helping friends and families of alcoholics.**
- **To empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive and flexible.**
- **To achieve a viable future for Al-Anon Family Groups, the Board will be adaptive and strategic in its use of talents, skills and abilities.**

July 2018

Dear Al-Anon members:

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board letter is to share highlights from our 2018 International Convention and the July 2018 Board Week. You will also find updates from our Policy Chairperson, a finance update from our Treasurer and a Conference Leadership Team (CLT) update.

Our 2018 International Convention was a resounding success. Members from around the world and their guests arrived by train, car and plane, and a few even arrived by bicycle. Attendance records were broken with 4,044 attendees. This included 49 Alateens, 271 members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and 40 guests. The spirit of love, acceptance and unity was on full display. We joined in a celebration of *One Day at A Time* (B-6), filling the city of Baltimore with joy and laughter and demonstrating the inclusiveness, diversity and vibrancy of our fellowship. What better way to increase the visibility of Al-Anon and let people know that our Family Groups are the number one resource throughout the world for helping families and friends of alcoholics?

While the International Convention included over 131 workshops, speaker meetings and panel discussions, our Big Meetings on Friday and Saturday evenings and on Sunday morning were the highlight of the Convention. Each Big Meeting speaker shared their personal journey with eloquence, love and humor. Friday evening's International Big Meeting kicked off with our

Language of Love Parade, where 500 members from around the world shared their love and enthusiasm for our fellowship. The Board of Trustees, in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* and in recognition of our special bond with Alcoholics Anonymous, presented the General Manager of A.A., Greg T., and the Chairperson of the A.A. General Service Board, Michelle G., with a *One Day at a Time 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (B6-50) commemorative book and a framed Resolution of Gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous.

A copy of the Resolution can be found at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) by clicking on the Members tab and then Board of Trustees. Friday evening's Big Meeting included speakers from New Zealand, South Africa and the Netherlands. Our Saturday night Big Meeting focused on the family. Our speakers represented the diversity of our fellowship and reminded us that no matter our age or background or whom we love, the disease of alcoholism knows no boundaries. The Sunday morning Big Meeting closed our Convention with personal sharings related to our speakers' journeys in seeking a Higher Power of their understanding.

The Day of Connecting was attended by 1,200 members. This is the first time the Board of Trustees planned the program for the Day of Connecting. It is the hope of the Board that the Trustees' efforts will help members of the Al-Anon fellowship get to know their Trustees better, witness them in action within the fellowship, and make stronger personal connections to the Board members—their trusted servants. This connection between the Board and our Al-Anon/Alateen members aligns with the strategic goal of our Board to reach out and to connect with the membership. Plans are underway to hold a Day of Connecting in conjunction with the 2023 International in Albuquerque.

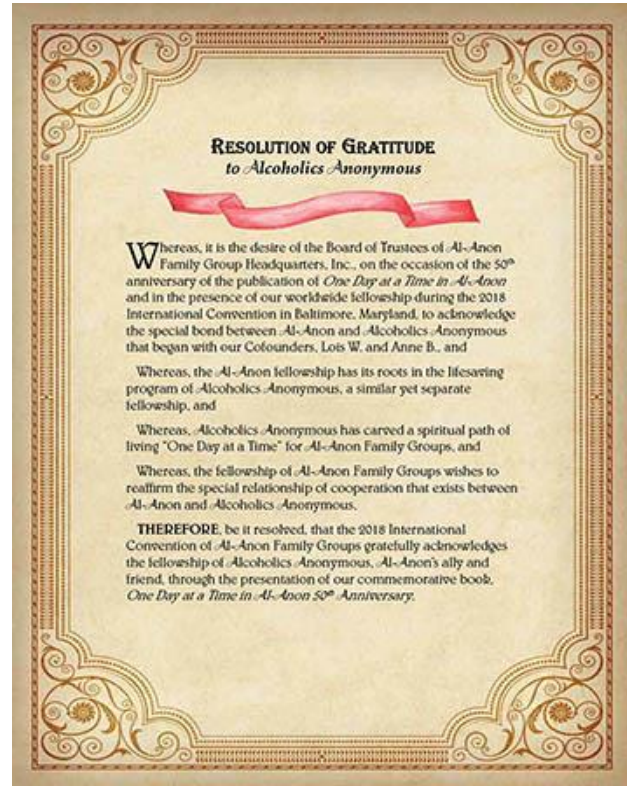
Our International Convention is a culmination of more than six years of work carried out by our World Service Office (WSO) Staff. Planning for an International Convention begins with the bid process: For Baltimore, the bid process began in April 2012. A deluge of details culminates in our International Convention. We commend our WSO Staff for a job well done and look forward to welcoming you to Albuquerque in 2023.

The 2019 World Service Conference (WSC) will be held in Virginia Beach. One of the exciting actions for the Board each July is approving the following year's Conference Theme. The CLT recommended and the Board is pleased to announce the approval of the 2019 WSC Theme:

***Action is Attraction – There is No Growth in the Comfort Zone***

***La acción es atracción – No hay crecimiento en la zona de comodidad***

***L'action, c'est l'attrait – Il n'y a pas de croissance dans la zone de confort***



Over the past year a Task Force of the CLT was charged with discussing the possibility of offering professional interpretation in Spanish and French during the WSC. The CLT and the Board of Trustees recognize that, while the WSC is English speaking, our WSC Structure serves three languages: Spanish, French and English. The Board realized that in order to remain true to its Mission and Vision Statements and Strategic Plan Priorities, it needed to take a look at interpretation during the WSC and how offering or not offering interpretation could impact the WSC Structure and AI-Anon as a whole. After lengthy discussion, scrutinizing of costs by our Finance Committee and seeking of guidance from our Higher Power, the Board of Trustees approved the following:

**MOTION:**

*to approve a special project to provide professional interpretation, when required, to support Spanish- and French- speaking Delegates who attend the World Service Conference. The project will start in 2019 as a three-year trial, with the annual net Conference cost of over \$100,000 to be transferred from the Reserve Fund.*

Logistics regarding the process of providing interpretation will be posted on the WSC Members AFG Connects community. While interpretation during the WSC will be provided, it is with the understanding that only oral interpretation, and not written translation of presentations, can be provided.

Please refer to the CLT Update contained within this letter for additional information regarding plans for the 2019 WSC.

The 2018 International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) will meet October 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Virginia Beach. The purpose of the IAGSM is for General Service Offices to share the experience of AI-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates. Delegate participation at the IAGSM encourages the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of our Traditions. Ultimately, this helps fulfill the primary purpose of AI-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the AI-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amidst cultural and language differences. The International Coordination Committee (ICC) holds the responsibility of planning the IAGSM agenda and bringing forward to the Board the suggested theme. The theme for the 2018 IAGSM fits perfectly with the meeting’s intent:

**“Leading by Example: Structures Supporting Structures”**

Our AI-Anon groups are spiritual entities, yet we find we are not immune to the same difficulties that affect the world around us. Over the past several years, our fellowship has reported an increase within their groups of the same behaviors demonstrated outside our meeting rooms; stalking, bullying, financial coercion and presentation of outside issues. Recent correspondence from members, conversations between the Executive Director and members of the fellowship, discussions at the 2018 WSC and increases in member use of the WSO online meeting search led to a robust discussion amongst Conference Staff and, subsequently, the Board of Trustees during our July meeting. The conversation centered around the potential legal and financial risk to AI-Anon Family Groups stemming from potentially dangerous and harmful situations.

Following the recommendations of our WSO Staff—the frontline workers who, on a daily basis, deal with members seeking assistance—the Board of Trustees identified the need to **take proactive action to encourage AI-Anon Family Groups to discuss safety** (which may entail the distribution of service materials regarding safety to all groups), and to **support Areas who**

**have created robust “Do Not Refer” policies**, particularly in matters where safety and affiliation with outside entities are involved.

In 2011 and 2012, the WSC held two policy discussions related to Area “Do Not Refer” policies. Many ideas and good practices can be extracted from these conversations. The 2012 discussion offered encouragement for Areas to create these policies:

“If the Areas have a process in place and the WSO sees it as fair and balanced, then the Policy Committee would discuss whether they would have a ‘Do Not Refer’ policy. We may consider not referring, but not delist.” (pg. 50)

Since then, several Areas have acted to create thoughtful and balanced policies and have removed meetings from local listings while maintaining their rights as groups. However, those meetings remain accessible to current or potential new members through the WSO meeting search and toll-free number.

Following a three-hour deliberation, which included review of past Conference materials, submissions from members presenting their concerns and considerations, and review of those Areas that currently have “Do Not Refer” policies in place that appear to be fair and balanced, the Board of Trustees made, seconded and carried the following:

- *MOTION:*  
*that the Board of Trustees directs the World Service Office to send a statement alerting all registered groups on the importance of discussing and creating safety guidelines.*
- *MOTION:*  
*that the Board of Trustees direct the WSO Staff to utilize the Policy Committee criteria presented at the 2012 World Service Conference to ensure that an Area has established a fair and balanced “Do Not Refer” and “Re-Refer” policy. These criteria allow the WSO to support Area “Do Not Refer” group conscience decisions and remove group meetings from the WSO meeting list. Groups not being referred by the WSO remain active and registered.*

As noted within the motions, the Board, in their legal authority, has directed the WSO to send a statement alerting all registered groups on the importance of discussing and creating safety guidelines. This will be communicated through AFG Connects, *In the Loop* and other modes of communication as defined by the WSO.

“Do Not Refer” and “Re-Refer” policies that Areas have put in place will be reviewed by the WSO to ensure they are within the spirit of being fair and balanced, as framed by the Policy Committee in the 2012 WSC discussion. If it is determined that these policies satisfy the spirit of that guidance, groups that are not being displayed on Areas’ meeting lists will no longer be displayed on the WSO meeting search or given out on the toll-free meeting line. It is important to note that groups not being referred by the WSO remain active and registered. Areas determining the need to establish “Do Not Refer” and “Re-Refer” policies must submit their policies to the WSO for review. Further details outlining the process will be communicated through AFG Connects and *In the Loop*.

The WSO Administrative Team joined the Board and Executive Committee members in a day-long Strategic-Planning Session. With the assistance of a strategic-planning consultant, we clarified the forward direction of the organization and the operations of the WSO, as well as how



we can appropriately connect. We discussed that the Board is the “What,” responsible for strategic direction and that the Staff is the “How,” responsible for implementing the “What.” We outlined the beginning of a new Mission and Vision Statement and new Strategic Plan Priorities; our goal is to finalize them in October. The Board recognized the importance of working as a team with Staff and the Executive Committee in these discussions. We are working from the belief that we support what we help to create.

In July of 2016, the Board, Executive Committee members and Staff initiated an annual “Meet and Greet.” This is a continued opportunity to introduce Staff, Board and Executive Committee members to one another. Concept Eleven reminds us that the WSO Staff not only *support* the world leadership of the Board; they *share* world leadership with us. We believe the Board is best equipped to lead when it is self-aware, functions in constructive partnership with the Executive Director and Staff, and is committed to continually improving its performance.

Each Board meeting, a Board Development session is held. These discussions typically relate to the fiduciary and foresight responsibilities of the Board. The July topic was related to our Attributes of Board Leadership statement, which is signed by the Trustees each year.

Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) Events are returning in 2019. Two Areas have submitted and received confirmation that they can hold a TEAM Event in 2019. The Board provides top priority to Areas that have not previously held a TEAM event in an effort to balance our participation across the Structure. Is your Area interested in filling the remaining seven openings for 2019? If so, WSC members can check out AFG Connects for additional information.

As stated in the January 2018 Chairperson of the Board Letter, while our By-Laws have been updated to reflect changes as they have occurred, the Board should also periodically review our By-Laws to ensure timely amendments are added when necessary. Our By-Laws formalize the Board’s legal structure and practices. The Board’s needs evolve over time, as do the external circumstances within which the Board functions. In July, the Board spent four hours reviewing recommendations from the By-Laws Task Force regarding updates and changes to the AFG, Inc. By-Laws. Our goal is to complete this review in October and approve the changes in January. A presentation of changes will be brought to the 2019 WSC.

This year’s Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect will be held Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> in Houston, Texas at the Marriott Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Freeway. Road Trip! Is an interactive day with presentations, personal sharings, round table discussions, and most importantly, fellowship. You can make plans to attend by registering: This year we will offer registration both by mail and online. You may want to come a few days early or stay a few days after and enjoy the warm Texas hospitality. Online registration is available at [al-anon.org/roadtrip](http://al-anon.org/roadtrip)

Is your Area interested in hosting the 2019 Road Trip!? The Board provides the program; you provide the location. Area Delegates can obtain a digital copy of the event request form on **AFG Connects WSC Members**. It outlines the simple requirements. Do not let this opportunity pass you by! Bids are due no later than **September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018** for a Road Trip! to happen in your Area on **October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. Names of all Areas that submit a bid and meet the requirements go into a hat. One lucky Area will be drawn in October 2018! If your Area has not yet been selected and meets all criteria, why not try again?

Two weeks following the posting of this letter, the Trustees will begin contacting their assigned Delegates. The purpose of this contact is to allow Trustees to offer clarification for any information contained in this letter, if desired. If you prefer not to have the Trustee phone you, please let

him/her know when the initial contact is made.

**Did our question in the April Chairperson of the Board Letter regarding the Regional Trustee process stimulate conversation in your Area?**

It is the hope of the Board of Trustees that the actions taken during our July meeting will encourage the growth of new groups and the continued strength and diversity of our current meetings. The decisions of Board of Trustees were made with the utmost of care, consideration of all factors and information and ultimately, with the guidance of our collective Higher Power. We look forward to seeing many of you in Houston!

With continued gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie L. G.", written in a cursive style.

Debbie L. G.  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc.