

# 2022 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SUMMARY

ENHANCING  
OUR RECOVERY  
THROUGH  
ABUNDANCE,  
UNITY AND  
UNDERSTANDING

ENRIQUECER  
NUESTRA RECUPERACIÓN  
A TRAVÉS DE LA  
ABUNDANCIA,  
UNIDAD Y  
COMPRENSIÓN

ENRICHIR  
NOTRE  
RÉTABLISSEMENT  
PAR L'ABONDANCE,  
L'UNITÉ ET LA  
COMPRÉHENSION



**62nd Annual**

World Service Conference 2022



# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2022 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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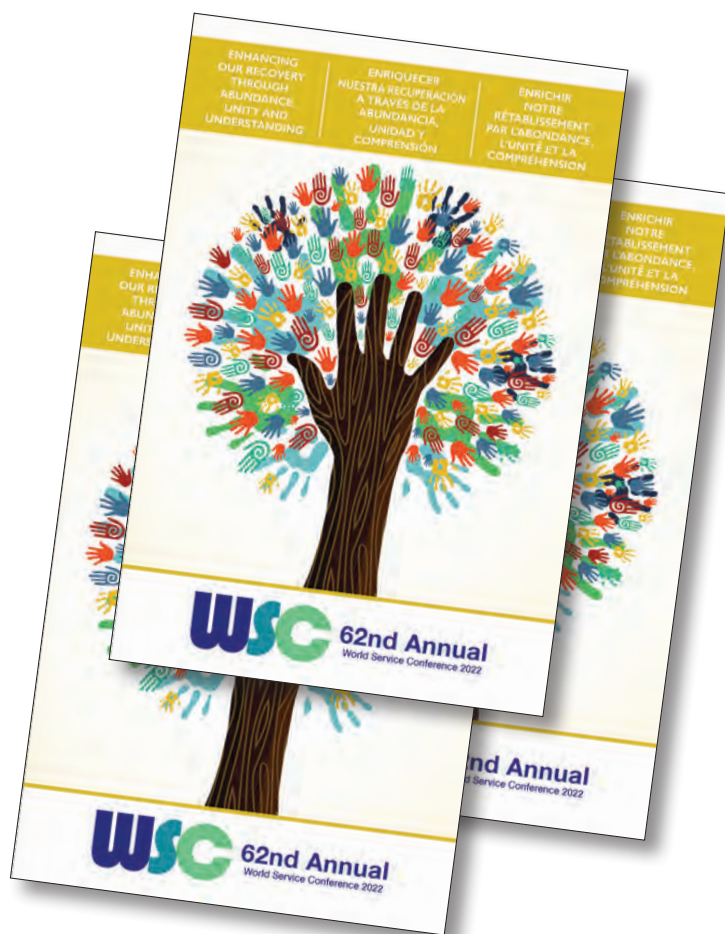
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**“Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.”**  
*2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v2, page 184*



# VISION

Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.



## MISSION

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences.



## DOMAINS & GOAL STATEMENTS

**Members:** AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics.

**Recovery & Service Tools:** AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

**Awareness:** AFG, Inc. builds public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program.

**Financial Sustainability:** AFG, Inc. encourages membership and organizational self-support by aligning resource allocation with its core purpose and strategic priorities.

**Global Engagement:** AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape.



## Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

The 2022 Conference Summary is available in color online at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) in the Members section. Remember, you can enlarge the text by using the zoom button.

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# PRE-CONFERENCE

## 2022 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference Staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for this year's Conference.

Assignment	Panel 60 (2020-2022)	Panel 61 (2021-2023)	Panel 62 (2022-2024)
<b>Conference Committee on Trustees</b>	Bill H., ON(N) Marcia M., CT Sue R., Chair, SD	John McG., Chair Elect, CA(N) Karla K., TN Kit S., MN(S)	Gene T., AZ Linda H., MN(N) Pamela C., MT
<b>Literature Committee</b>	Bob C., SC Linette L., AK Noah P., NH Margaret R., NE	Ann F., OH Lori F., PA Gregg R., IL(N) Terry R., KS	Diane G., AB/NWT Katharine R., WA
<b>Public Outreach Committee</b>	Joy F., SK Heather M., UT	Diane B., FL(S) Linda C., KY Peggy D., TX(W) Penni S., HI	Owen H., BC/YK Renita M., WIUPMI Jane P., MA
<b>Road Trip! Program Task Force</b>	Tammy M., LA		Kari O., CO
<b>Area Web and/or Tech Coordinator Guideline Task Force</b>	Katy P., IA	Hélène A., QC(W) Kristine G., MI	Joanne C., OR Katie O'C., NJ

# THE BOARD'S GOALS FOR CONFERENCE

Prior to the start of Conference, the Board's Goals for the Conference were posted to AFG Connects, as follows:

The Conference, Al-Anon's largest group conscience, will act in the spirit of unity and goodwill to assure that Al-Anon's world services are continually available to the Al-Anon fellowship:

**GOAL 1:** The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action.

**GOAL 2:** The Conference will provide guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) on services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.

**GOAL 3:** Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the Structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

Conference members were asked to select one Goal and share, in a sentence or two, how they will strive to support the Goal they selected during the Conference week. Here is a sampling of what they shared:

## **GOAL 1: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action.**

- I will strive to support this goal during Conference and contribute to an atmosphere of harmony by limiting myself to only necessary and constructive comments. It is not necessary for me to comment on every single item on the agenda!
- Remaining close to my Higher Power, practicing the principles of humility, presuming goodwill and understanding, I commit to listening with an open mind, praying before speaking, being honest and holding myself accountable to the spiritual principles of the Conference Etiquette, as well as asking for help when I need it.
- I value the loving and respectful tone members use during sometimes difficult discussions at Conference, and the patience and flexibility shown by our Conference leadership. My goal is to listen with tolerance and understanding and to allow my Higher Power to guide my participation.
- I will keep Tradition Two in mind, remembering that Higher Power is present. I will listen to others and my Higher Power with an open mind, and I will do my best to participate with harmony and goodwill.
- I will bring my spirituality and open mind to the WSC where the principles are put into action for the betterment and development of Al-Anon as a whole.

## **GOAL 2: The Conference will provide guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) on services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.**

- I often think of the Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) as entities that serve both me and the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. It is useful to remember that the World Service Conference is a two-way communication process, and we, the Delegates, have important insights and wisdom to share with the WSO.

- The Conference is a wonderful opportunity for the Delegates to hear from Trustees and Staff so that we might take back important information to our groups. It is also a place where Delegates can speak and share ideas or concerns and support our Staff and Trustees in a spirit of unity (Tradition One) and ensure we give help to families and friends of alcoholics (Tradition Five).
- I see my role as Delegate as being, in part, to represent the voice of the Al-Anon groups in my Area at the WSC. Some of the ways I strive to accomplish that goal are to be honest, open, and willing by speaking my truth; by participating in all discussions and votes; and by supporting the group conscience.
- It is with gratitude and respect that I look forward to exercising the responsibilities given to the Delegates, WSO Staff, and other Conference members to act in harmony with spirit and the principles of our Al-Anon fellowship and to serve as a guardian of our Traditions. Together, we will participate with a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

## **GOAL 3: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the Structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.**

- For me, this goal reinforces the links of service. It gives me a better understanding of why we have a Conference. I want to be able to absorb the information presented and relay it back to my Area.
- In this ever-evolving world of rapidly flowing information, I trust the process, and I trust the spiritual flow at the World Service Conference. Hopefully, I will be able to articulate with clarity, unity, and understanding all of the discussions and decisions that will affect my Area and Al-Anon as a whole.
- In this fast-changing world, I hope to better understand the links of service and the importance of our Structure. I hope to expand my understanding and compassion at all levels. I hope to encourage the members in my Area to expand their knowledge of and involvement with all aspects of our fellowship.
- Goal 3 reminds me of the deeper level of recovery that is available when I choose to practice the healing, kind, respectful ways the Traditions and Concepts allow me to be with others. I will be placing principles above personalities; honoring clearly defined service responsibilities; communicating with and for the Area members, whom I represent; and I will remember it is God, not me, who is in charge of the Conference.

## SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Lori H., Panel 60, Missouri, Co-Chairperson

Heather M., Panel 60, Utah, Co-Chairperson

Prior to the opening of the 2022 World Service Conference (WSC), Delegates held a session to share Area successes and challenges. All other Conference members—WSO Volunteers (Trustees and Executive Committee members) and Staff—were invited to attend as guests with no voice.

The Co-Chairperson opened the meeting by inviting the attendees to participate in an icebreaker. She explained that she had made small signs containing various service topics/words, service positions, or slogans. She fastened these signs on each person's back, and the members were then instructed to mingle among each other to try to determine what the sign on their back said. They were only allowed to ask each person three questions. As they guessed the correct answer, they could then be free to continue to interact with other participants. It was a great way for Delegates to meet and greet those they had not had the opportunity to see face-to-face in the last two years.

After completing the icebreaker, Delegates were invited to share their challenges and successes over the past year.

### Some of their comments included:

#### Challenges:

- Our Area has been struggling to get members to step into service roles.
- There are many open service positions in my Area, but we have been plugging along. Many of us have had to wear two or three different hats.
- Our Alateen members have been struggling. We really need to get back to face-to-face meetings.
- We lost our Alateen certification this last year and therefore lost all of our Alateen groups. We are struggling with updating our Alateen processes so we can be certified again.
- Our meetings are struggling with deciding whether to go hybrid, all virtual, or go back face-to-face.
- We have had several members step down from their service positions, leaving a lot of positions open.
- We continue to struggle with Alateen meetings.
- Our Area Officers have been struggling to convince our Assembly that being virtual is what the future will look like. We need to be proactive and spend some of our funds to get the equipment that we will need.
- Our Area is concerned about the upcoming elections in October. Since most members have been meeting via Zoom, will they really know who they are electing to positions?
- My Area has been struggling to keep our meeting information up-to-date.

#### Successes:

- We recently held our first face-to-face convention in two years!
- We have developed a quarterly team-building meeting with our AMIAS. It has worked to help keep everyone connected.
- A big success in my Area has been within the Spanish-speaking membership. We now have voice translation available, and all our reports are being translated for printing purposes.

- Our Area has increased our Alateen meetings by five!
- We have been able to update our Alateen procedures, and this is a great success for our Area.
- We have had success in using Zoom to connect with the professional community. We call it, "Each One, Reach One." Our public outreach has been working well.
- We have used the last two years as an opportunity to update our Area website, which is now user-friendly.
- Our Area has developed a new policy on how to handle excess funds. We have been able to send a \$6,000 contribution to the WSO.
- Due to today's technology, we now have no barriers in sharing the "language of the heart."
- The loss of our Alateen certification has motivated our Area to examine a lot of our policies and procedures that have not been updated in many years.
- My Area has established two new service positions—an Equipment Coordinator and an Electronic Group Coordinator. These positions will assist us in updating our old equipment—some of it is more than 15 years old.
- My Area became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit this year.
- Our Area Public Outreach Coordinator held a fundraising project by putting the AFG logo on face masks. Permission was given by the WSO to allow for this project.
- Contributions have increased in my Area. We were able to make a \$10,000 contribution to the WSO.
- Our Area has held successful virtual Assemblies with increased participation.
- We just held our first face-to-face convention with 200 attendees, including 15 Alateen members!
- At the beginning of this Panel, our Area did not have a Delegate, an Alternate Delegate, or a Chairperson. Now we do. This was a struggle and is now a success.

After the Challenges/Successes portion, the Delegates spent time at their breakout tables discussing several questions and then reported their answers back to the groups.

Maureen H., Panel 61, Indiana was elected to serve as Chairperson for the 2023 Sharing Area Highlights session and Kristine G., Panel 61, Michigan was elected Co-Chairperson.

### *Al-Anon Declaration*

*Let It Begin with Me*

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,  
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen  
always be there, and — *Let It Begin with Me.*



Al-Anon Family Groups®  
hope for families & friends of alcoholics

The meeting closed with all members reciting the Al-Anon Declaration.

## OPENING DINNER

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

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Prior to the official opening of Conference, Conference members and support Staff attended the Opening Dinner.

The Conference Co-Chairperson began her welcome by reading the 2022 Conference theme, “Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding,” in English, French, and Spanish. She finished by saying, “What a wonderful theme that can be applied in so many ways as part of our recovery.”



Following introductions and then dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 62 Delegates and any other first-time Conference members.

Terry F., At-Large member of the Executive Committee, was the opening dinner speaker. Her talk can be found on page 60.

The Conference Co-Chairperson closed the dinner by sharing, “As we begin this week at the 62nd World Service Conference, keep in mind that you are here because you were elected ‘to be the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon to help them continue to function in unity’ (page 150 in the “World Service Handbook” section of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P24/27] v2). Whether this is your first Conference or your last, we are a fellowship of equals. We do want everyone to succeed. I am so pleased to be serving alongside you. Get some rest, and we will see you in the morning.”

All attendees then gathered in a circle to recite the Al-Anon Declaration in unison.



# GENERAL SESSIONS

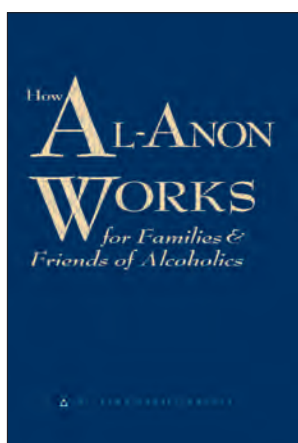
## CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Nancy S., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

Greetings and welcome, Conference members. It is so good to see all of you here today, ready to apply and experience the 2022 World Service Conference theme of “Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding.”



I am inspired and filled with gratitude to be part of this historic World Service Conference. The past two years have been challenging in many ways, and this gathering is proof of our commitment to recovery principles throughout life’s challenges. In spite of the uncertainties and concerns, we have moved forward, persevered, and dreamed big. We are here today to continue the “62-year conversation” with each other, where the spiritual principles of our personal recovery are applied to the business of Al-Anon.



In *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), the descriptive text for Concept Eleven reminds me: “Concept Eleven is about partnership and collaboration. The spiritual principle it embodies is that we are not alone and that we do not need to work in isolation. It reflects our collective experience, which has shown us that with mutual trust, respect for each other, and dedication to a common goal, we can achieve amazing results.... The same spiritual principles that guide personal recovery from alcoholism also direct the business practices of Al-Anon. Whether applied to Al-Anon service or our personal lives, these principles help us work

and live in harmony with each other. There is no difference between good spiritual practice and good business practice. As our cofounder Lois W. said, ‘I don’t think there is a spiritual part of the program. I think Al-Anon is a spiritual program. Every activity can have a spiritual motive.’”

I did not learn abundant thinking from my family. I grew up struggling to understand the concept of “enough,” both materially and emotionally. And for us, “common welfare” meant keeping the alcoholics happy and satisfied as much as possible. What I grew up understanding was that it didn’t matter what I did, it would never be enough to solve my family’s problems. That didn’t stop me from continuing to try to help them or trying to solve the world’s problems.

In Al-Anon I have learned to practice abundance by something as simple as setting out an extra chair to welcome the newcomer. I share what was freely given to me, without expectation of reciprocity. I have an abundance of blessings all around me, and I endeavor to have abundant gratitude.

I can demonstrate unity by supporting the decisions made through our group conscience process. I support our trusted servants and apply the Traditions and Concepts to my recovery and my life.

I share understanding when I listen without judgment to find how we are alike, instead of searching for our separateness and differences.

I am encouraged during difficult or fearful times by a meditation of “God is with me.” It is a clear reminder that even if I am by myself, I am not alone. I can always be guided by a Power greater than myself, if I choose to accept that guidance. I know in my head that whatever situation I’m trying to control will work out just like it’s meant to, but my heart frequently resists the surrender. In Al-Anon service, I have learned that the will of God will never take me where the grace of God cannot protect me.

It is because of the spirituality of Al-Anon that I am honored, grateful, and humbled to tap this gavel, and continue our conversation at this 62nd World Service Conference. Welcome, friends!



## WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

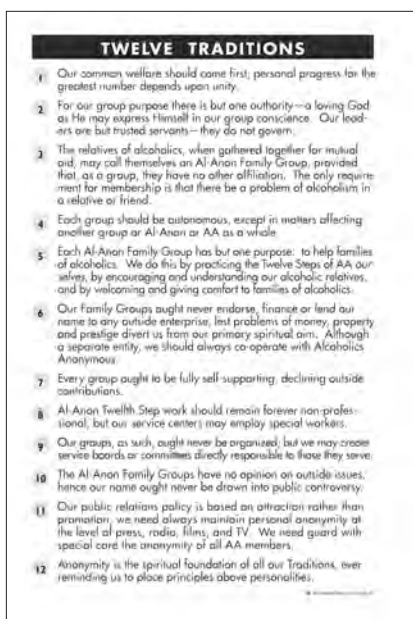
Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my honor and privilege to welcome all of you to the 62<sup>nd</sup> World Service Conference. This year's Conference theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding," will be our spiritual compass, guiding us as we "navigate" through this year's Conference.

To me the meaning of abundance is having more than enough of something. In order for me to think abundantly, I have to actively practice gratitude, let go of my fears, and have faith that no matter what lies ahead, my Higher Power is already there.

Tradition One speaks of unity and our common welfare. The principle of unity helps me remember that we are all working towards the same goal of helping families and friends of alcoholics. Practicing unity helps me stay focused on the value of working with others for the common good.

Understanding for me requires acceptance along with an open heart and an open mind. To me understanding means treating others the way that I want to be treated, with kindness, dignity, and respect. Being understanding helps me to encourage others without controlling or giving advice, which allows me to have more harmonious relationships.



At the 1963 World Service Conference, the Conference members voted to end the three-year trial period and make the Conference permanent. In the *1963 Conference Summary* it says, "The permanent Conference will watch over the policies of Headquarters. It will be the guardian of our Traditions and will hold all Al-Anon together in unity. Al-Anon's future is in dedicated hands." We are those "dedicated hands."

Let's invite our Higher Powers to join us as we begin this 62<sup>nd</sup> World Service Conference. My hope is that we can work together with inspiration and joy to make the best decisions possible for the future of Al-Anon Family Groups. Using the principles of abundance, unity, and understanding, we can make this the best Conference ever!

The Chairperson concluded her welcoming remarks with a reading of the Twelve Traditions.

## DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Hello WSC!

I'd like to start with a very simple question. Why? Why are you here? Why do you continue to give back in service? Why are you a trusted servant, Volunteer, or Staff member at the WSO? I want you to take a moment and think about "why." Not "why" on the surface, but "why" at the depth of your core. Why are you sitting here at the 2022 World Service Conference?

In 2001, I found myself barely surviving the effects of the disease of alcoholism. From the time I was a young child I developed behaviors and coping mechanisms that served as tools to survive this insidious disease. At 16 years old, I was angry, bitter, and resentful. I spent most of my days in in-school suspension from fighting and blatant disrespect for anyone of authority. I had lost the ability to trust and to feel emotions, except anger. As a young athlete I had dreams of playing collegiate and professional sports. However, my dreams and desire to dream were diminishing in front of me.

As I was slowly losing faith in the Higher Power I believed in as a child, little did I know that God had bigger plans for me than I could ever dream of. Within a few short months, I was introduced to Alateen. I was surrounded by women who loved, practiced, and believed wholeheartedly in our service structure. These women introduced me to all three Legacies and shared with me why we carry the message by practicing Step Twelve through giving of our time, talents, and contributions.

I attended my first Assembly and fell in love with service. I listened intently to the Delegate share about her experiences at the World Service Conference. Quite honestly, I had no idea what the World Service Conference or a Delegate was. What I did know is that I wanted to experience what she was sharing. I quickly realized that I was aspiring to be that woman who was passionately sharing about this worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

My Service Sponsor encouraged me to stand for many service positions along the way. As an Alateen member, I served on the Alateen Advisory Committee in 2004 and 2005. Our meetings were held in the Board Room at the WSO. I remember walking in and sitting down for the first time. I couldn't believe I was sitting in the Board Room at Al-Anon Family Groups. I had a fleeting thought that turned into a prayer—that one day, if God was willing, I would love to have the opportunity to return to the WSO.

Over the years I believe that my Higher Power has strategically placed me in the roles where I would learn the most. Here are some lessons I have gained through experience, which I am grateful to have guide me today:

- Invest in the members you have, not what you don't. Share your "why" with those members. Help them find their "why" and they will pass it on to others.
- Provide members something to take home with them every meeting—a nugget of information. What's the one nugget of information you can provide that will make a member stop and say, "Wow—I can't wait to see what the takeaway is next month"?
- Carry a message that's infectious and understandable. Exude passion when communicating. Yes, topics are hard—but deliver them in way that's easy to understand. Gaining the membership's/members'/Staff's buy-in depends on how the information is presented.

- “Trust the Process”—I have found myself navigating through situations in service where it wouldn’t have been unnatural to crumble. There is so much wisdom in three simple words. “Trust the Process.” Always know that if you are in line with your Higher Power’s will, there is something to be learned.
- Be open-minded, listen intently to all perspectives shared, and support the group conscience regardless of how you voted. Just because I disagree doesn’t give me permission to not support the group conscience decision.
- Most importantly—we have 36 Legacies and General Warranties to help navigate us through daily life and participation in the service structure. Never lose sight of the foundation that was provided through application of the Steps.

My greatest lessons learned have provided a deep understanding of “why” I continue to serve Al-Anon. They have provided insight into greater understanding of Lois’s vision and the call to action explained in Step Twelve.

In 2017, I arrived at my first WSC. A dream had been realized for a kid who had lost the ability to dream. I walked in the meeting room prior to anyone arriving. On a table to my right, a beautiful display of Alateen history and to my left, the international flags of countries we support. At the front of the room, prominently hanging, were our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. I felt an unexplainable, undeniable spiritual presence I had never felt before. I found my seat, where a sash lay with the word Missouri on it. I was in awe. After Conference started, we had an opportunity to introduce ourselves for the first time. I slipped my sash on and said, “I’m Sarah S., Panel 57, Missouri.” At that moment, I felt the vastness of participating in Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide. I left that 2017 WSC with this thought: “I’m home.”

After my term ended, I had no idea what the future would hold, but I was willing to do whatever my Higher Power led me to. When I learned of Marsha W.’s retirement, I think my heart stopped beating for a moment. I heard this audible voice from my Higher Power: “Sarah, that could be you. Submit your résumé.” Once again, I thought obtaining the position would only be a dream; however, I submitted my résumé and trusted the process. I stand before you as the new Director of Programs.

I’d like to take an opportunity to share with you a bit about my professional background. I have nearly 20 years of operations management, people management, and sales experience. I have received many awards over the years, including for customer service feedback, quality inspections, sales increases, and National Operations Manager of the Year. I’ve tripled companies in size and learned to reassess needs and make adjustments to maintain exponential sales growth during an unprecedented pandemic. Yes, my professional experience was important to analyze during the selection process, but that experience is simply what I know how to do and doesn’t define who I am.

As the Director of Programs, I have been provided an opportunity to oversee the department that provides the resources that brings our program to life. My prayer is that we remain innovative and creative to implement programs that will carry the message to groups and members internationally and domestically. Being selected to serve as the Director of Programs is the greatest honor and privilege of my life.

In closing, Tradition Five states, “Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.” My vision as the Director of Programs is to galvanize enthusiasm and empower our dedicated Staff to carry the message to potential members who

might reach out in desperation. My “why” is because my destiny is intertwined with the destiny of Al-Anon as a whole. I know in the depths of my soul that God has strategically placed me here as a piece of the puzzle to help achieve Al-Anon Family Groups’ Mission and Vision. This week, as you all participate in the largest group conscience in Al-Anon Family Groups, may you find your “why,” may you experience being a piece of the puzzle that creates the big picture of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups, and may you experience the understanding, love, and peace of the program in a new way.

## INTRODUCTIONS (ROLL CALL)

Nancy S., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

As a way of introducing Conference members to each other, the Chairperson called each group represented at this Conference to the front of the room. She read a brief description of each group, followed by the individuals in each group introducing themselves with their name, their service role or position, and their home group. This introduction served as the official roll call for the 2022 WSC.

### **Delegates:**

In addition to listening to, participating in, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, Delegates bring the viewpoint of their Areas on these matters. They also return to their Areas to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide. Delegates are the bridge of understanding that links the groups in their Area with world Al-Anon. They are the trusted servants of Al-Anon as a whole.

### **Board of Trustees:**

In addition to listening to, participating in, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, members of the Board of Trustees have a legal responsibility for the funds and services provided by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and protects Al-Anon principles from distortion and dilution. The Board is the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. The Board of Trustees ensures the goals and directions of the Conference are carried out by the WSO in accordance with Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions. More about the Board of Trustees can be found in Concept Seven.

### **Executive Committee:**

Members of the Executive Committee listen to, participate in, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They are also entrusted with legal management of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This authority is granted to the Executive Committee by the Board of Trustees so that the Executive Committee can provide oversight on daily affairs at the World Service Office. More about the Executive Committee can be found in Concept Eight.

### **Voting WSO Staff Members:**

Voting WSO Staff members listen to, participate in, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They are Al-Anon members and paid workers at the WSO. Voting WSO Staff are in direct contact with Al-Anon members worldwide through correspondence and sometimes travel. Voting WSO Staff not only support but also share in the world leadership of the Trustees. More about the voting WSO Staff can be found in Concept Eleven.

### **Non-panel Area Representative:**

A nonpanel Area is one that has not yet joined the Conference. Representatives from nonpanel Areas may attend Conference with voice but no vote.

### **Non-voting WSO Staff Members:**

Non-voting WSO Staff members work at the World Service Office in service roles affecting the members of Al-Anon worldwide as well as other Staff and Volunteers. They often develop and implement new plans to more effectively provide services to the fellowship or for the Staff. They are a visible image of world service when members visit the WSO. More about non-voting WSO Staff is found in Concept Eleven, and more about the functions of the WSO is found in the “World Service Handbook.”

### **Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management:**

The ECRPM Chairperson’s primary responsibility is to ensure that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM and handle the management of our property is upheld. This includes management of the actual WSO building and its grounds. The ECRPM Chairperson has voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote at Conference. More about the ECRPM can be found in Concept Eight.

### **Conference Recorders (Conference Summary and Audio Recorders):**

The Conference Recorders ensure that an accurate record of the Conference is available to members and retained for the Al-Anon Archives.

### **WSC Interpreters:**

The interpreters provide simultaneous oral translation services from English to French, English to Spanish, and vice versa when required to make it possible for non-English-speaking WSC Members to participate in the Conference.

## **CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE, PROCEDURES, AND VOTING**

### **Conference Leadership Team**

Nancy S., Trustee, Conference Chairperson  
Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson  
Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Vali F., Executive Director  
Sarah S., Director of Programs  
Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus  
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Twenty-one percent of Conference members who submitted a Conference Evaluation last year noted that there was a need to clarify procedures, with such statements as:

- Clarify motion and amendment procedures.
- Areas handle motions and discussion of motions differently.
- A session on courtesy and etiquette could improve the flow.

The Conference procedures outlined in the “Conference Procedures” document are the framework by which the *Conference* functions, which *may differ* from the procedures used in the Areas.

Prior to reviewing Conference Procedures, Conference members participated in a Conference Etiquette activity that included looking at mores, such as these three:

- **Two Minutes at the Mic**—*During discussions, limiting our time at the microphone embodies the spiritual principles of humility and trust.*



- **Stay on Topic**—*The spiritual principle of simplicity while we stay on topic will help us reach our primary goal to help families and friends of alcoholics.*
- **No Side Conversations**—*The spiritual principle of courtesy is shown when we actively listen and form our own conclusions, leaving out reactions, opinions, and judgments.*



### **Following the Etiquette activity, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) went over the five key elements of KBDM, which are:**

- Open communication between leadership and membership.
- Dialogue before deliberation.
- Common access to full information for all decision-makers.
- Existence in a culture of trust.
- Confidence in the competency of our partners.

One of the main takeaways of a Knowledge-Based culture, is that thorough discussion takes place before a motion comes to the floor, which is why, while a Conference member may propose a topic for Conference discussion as outlined in the Conference Procedures document, the process for presenting a floor motion section of the document was omitted in December 2020. However, it was noted that it is possible for a floor motion to be presented following a full discussion of a topic.



Members of the Conference Leadership Team explained the process for members to participate in discussions during Conference. The information is outlined in the “Conference Procedures” document.

The CLT noted that the minority opinion is important. The Conference benefits from hearing a variety of voices and opinions. Conference members with a minority viewpoint are protected by Concept Five: “The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.” All viewpoints add value to a discussion and are honored throughout the Conference. In sharing one’s minority opinion *during the discussion*, the Conference member is ensuring that his/her minority opinion has been heard.

Prior to voting on a motion, the Conference will have had a full discussion and at the end of the discussion, the Conference Chairperson will have asked if the Conference is ready to move to a motion. If the will of the Conference is to move to a motion, the minority opinion, if any, has been heard, and those with a minority opinion, as with all others, choose to vote their conscience.

Conference members then reviewed Abstentions. An abstention is a formal decision to refrain from voting for or against a motion. A member may decide to do this if they feel undecided about the measure, feel inadequately informed about the issue at hand, or have not participated in the discussion. Abstentions do not count as votes and, therefore, lower the number of voting members on that particular motion.

Prior to closing the session, the CLT played a narrated PowerPoint presentation of voting procedures.

## MOTION TO ADMIT THE GLOBAL ELECTRONIC AREA

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board

The first motion of the 2022 World Service Conference was framed by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in the following way:

“I am filled with gratitude that my Higher Power has allowed me to be here for this monumental and historic event. In true Al-Anon style, today we get an opportunity to ‘make our circle bigger’ by welcoming the Global Electronic Area to be part of the World Service Conference Structure and allowing their Delegate to be a voting member.”

### Background:

Earlier this year, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) received a request from the non-panel Global Electronic Area to join the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. The CLT considered the request for admission on its merits, considering population,

geography (or not, in this case), expense, as well as policy. The CLT unanimously agreed to recommend that the Board approve a motion to admit the non-panel Global Electronic Area into the WSC Structure. The Board unanimously approved the motion, which will be presented to the Conference for its consideration and approval.

Kathy M., Trustee, was invited to share her experience involving Alaska, the last non-panel Area to be admitted to the WSC Structure.

“When I first started attending meetings in Anchorage, Alaska, our state was not part of the World Service Conference Structure. We barely had an Intergroup, and we were not really connected to other groups in our state. We were not connected to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

“There were some members who attended A.A.’s Assembly all over the state. At one of those Assemblies, a WSO Trustee was invited to speak. The seed was planted about becoming part of the WSC Structure, and the members in attendance voted to become a temporary Assembly and to hold an Interim Assembly to decide if Alaska would become an Area.

“That was in 1986. I didn’t even know what the World Service Conference was, but I became a Group Representative anyway and attended the Interim Assembly. Most of Alaska’s GRs voted to become a part of the WSC Structure. There were some who voted no, and I was one of those members. At that time, my Al-Anon world was pretty small, and I was convinced one of the people pushing for us to join just wanted a free trip to New York. We did elect our first Delegate that day, and she attended the Conference in 1987.

“Three years later, in 1989, I was elected as Alaska’s second Delegate to the World Service Conference. How things change if I let them, if I have an open mind and trust the group conscience. I attended the Conference in 1990 and 1991. My life and program were changed by that experience; I truly felt a part of the worldwide fellowship.

“Now, 34 years later, I am a part of the Task Force that supported the formation of the Global Electronic Area. In 1987 and 1990, we had no idea of the possibilities that lay ahead. I am so grateful to be a part of this Task Force and to be able to share my experience, strength, and hope from Alaska, while realizing that as much as I have grown in this fellowship, the fellowship itself has grown tremendously.

“And once again, I feel my life and program are being changed by this experience, and I am truly in awe that we have come this far and have embraced the world physically and virtually.”

The non-panel Global Electronic Area Delegate was asked to leave the room while the Conference discussed the motion as presented.

### The discussion included:

- I do not feel I have enough information to make an informed vote. Does our *Service Manual* talk about a non-panel Area sending a representative to Conference? Has the Area had their first Assembly? Have they elected GRs and DRs? How do we find out this information? It feels like they may need some extra time to organize.

*The groups in the non-panel Area have elected GRs who, with support of the Non-Panel Area Task Force (TF), came together to hold an election for a Temporary Chairperson. The Temporary Chairperson worked with the Area members, WSO Staff, and a Trustee on the TF to gather the GRs together at their first Assembly with the sole agenda item being to elect four Area Officers. That first Assembly resulted in the election of a Delegate, and the request to join the WSC Structure was made by the deadline on the non-panel Area’s behalf.*

*A second Assembly of Area GRs was held to elect the remaining Area Officers. Those Officers have been meeting weekly since that time to coordinate Area duties.*

- Why would a Delegate outside of the WSC Structure be eligible to stand for the Global Electronic Area (GEA) considering the expense of translation, travel, etc., and what about the Delegate's involvement in the General Service Office (GSO) they came from? To clarify, outside the Structure would be if the Delegate lived outside of the US or Canada.

*As Al-Anon Family Groups' senior service structure responsible for creating policy which applies globally and ensuring the consistency of Al-Anon's message across the world, the WSC Structure is the logical choice of service structure for groups seeking to attract global member participation. As an Area, these groups have the autonomy to elect any Area GR as Delegate, and that member could live anywhere in the world. Delegates elected within the WSC Structure are required to speak English, Spanish, or French so no additional translation costs will be incurred. Any electronic groups currently part of the GEA that wish to attract local members within GSO structures will have the opportunity to join a GSO if/when the structures are able and choose to support electronic groups. These groups would then be removed from the GEA and into the appropriate GSO. Electronic groups moving to a GSO agree to honor the Al-Anon principle of "obedience to the unenforceable" and to follow the GSO's service manual.*

- Do we really want to put the new Area into a Region all on their own? Should we assign them to a Region?

*The Board of Trustees agreed the GEA will be assigned to the Region in which the Area Delegate lives or to a Region selected from the hat if the Delegate lives outside the WSC Structure. The new GEA Delegate lives in the US Southeast, so the Area will participate in the US Southeast Region if Conference approves the motion. We could remove that specific wording from the motion.*

- Can I receive some clarification on how the Regional Trustee process will proceed? Will the Global Electronic Area bounce from Region to Region depending on where the Delegate resides? What if this Delegate decides to stand for Regional Trustee after the allotted time has passed after his term as Delegate? How will that be handled?

*We don't know what we don't know. We are all learning more as we go.*

- The *Service Manual* states that a non-panel Area may ask the Conference for permission to send a representative to the Conference. Such representation is limited to two years with voice but no vote. Why are we voting to admit the Area now?

*The Area could have sent a representative up to two times and then petitioned to join or no longer attend. This Area has moved quickly; the members want to stop being a non-panel Area and become part of the WSC Structure.*

- Are we limiting the motion by stating "Panel 62"? Should it be more generic to allow for future panels?

*It is okay to include the panel number because panels rotate. We are identifying their first/original panel number.*

- The *Service Manual* defines a Region as a geographical grouping of Areas. Was this considered in the assignment to a Region?

*There was discussion regarding which Region to assign the Area to so that the Area could benefit by being part of a Region. Hopefully, the Delegate could attend a Regional Delegates Meeting of some type and have the support of others who have experience, strength, and hope to share.*

- What would we do if a future Delegate from the Global Electronic Area did not reside in the US or Canada?

*We do not have that answer at this time. The Board is having conversations about that. We will have three years to clarify this issue before the next Panel comes forward.*

- Do you foresee additional non-geographical Areas coming into the WSC Structure? How would that impact the current voting structure?

*We do not know at this time, but hopefully we can continue making our circle bigger. The voting structure might need to be considered at that time if necessary.*

- Was limited voice and no vote considered? Why are we rushing to admit an Area and have a Delegate attend the Conference with voice and vote when the Area is not fully formed? Has the Delegate had the opportunity to hear the conscience of his Area?

*The Al-Anon members who formed electronic meetings some 15-plus years ago were told they could not become Al-Anon Family Groups. During that time, we believed that only face-to-face meetings could be considered a group. Throughout the time between then and now, we have expanded our ability to reach out to these meetings/groups. We have held meetings with them and, in communicating with them and allowing them to discuss among themselves, it has become very clear the members want to have elected representation. This timing does not feel like a rush to them. Their question is more along the lines of, "What is taking you so long?" The only voice these groups have had is their CMAs. Now these groups have elected GRs so they can have their voice represented by someone other than a member of the WSO Staff. More than 200 GRs attended the Assembly meetings, and it is clear that they want to be represented.*

- I was at first excited, and then I had some concerns. This will enhance Al-Anon as a whole, but then when I asked if they had formed Districts and was told that they had not, I thought maybe we should let the Delegate come to find out how to organize the Area. Maybe we just need to support them and let them come into their own for next year.

*This is an interesting time, and we are learning how to negotiate these changes. One of the things that is happening today is that this is a pioneer movement—an historic moment! The WSO has been the voice and has maintained connection with these groups. It is very*

*emotional when you think what it was like for Al-Anon groups to form. Originally, the Board members did not come from Regions; they came from New York. We are in the process they were in when Al-Anon first started. We have the opportunity to recognize that these were Al-Anon groups all along. They were contributing and working with the Staff all along, over all these years. Over the last eight months, we have been working diligently and directly with them. They have the right to decide how to form their Area; that is their business, not ours. We don't know some of it yet, but we are trusting the process. Eventually we will be able to see the outcome, but we don't know yet what that is.*

- What happens when we have another electronic Area? I thought the reason for the name Global Electronic Area was supposed to be inclusive of all electronic groups right now?

*That is a question for the future. We do not know.*

- Al-Anon has increasingly become invisible in many aspects. It seems like there is some exclusivity and only certain people can attend. Rural groups are very, very concerned about what is going to happen to them. Where will they go? There are groups of very enthusiastic members we need to acknowledge.
- Last year we made a decision to move forward with this process by revising the Policy Digest and the “World Service Handbook.” If the electronic groups were able to organize and elect a Delegate, in my opinion, they have done what we have asked, and we need to move forward with the motion.

Conference members were asked to use the electronic voting set-up time for personal meditation and prayer prior to voting.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to admit the non-panel Area into the World Service Conference Structure. See Motion #1 on page 67.

Ozzie A., Panel 62, Global Electronic Area, was welcomed back into the room at this historic moment in Al-Anon with a standing ovation. He continued as a voting member of the 2022 World Service Conference.

## SEATING MOTION

Following the approval of the motion to admit the Global Electronic Area to the World Service Conference Structure, the second order of business was to vote on a motion brought forth by the Conference Leadership Team. It dealt with seating certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference.

### **The following persons were seated:**

#### **With voice, but no vote:**

##### **Niketa Williams**

Director of Finance & Operations, Non-Al-Anon Member

##### **Scot P.**

Associate Director—Brand Communications, Al-Anon Member

#### **With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) business, but no vote:**

##### **Elizabeth (Liz) D.**

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

The motion carried. See Motion #2 on page 67.

## APPROVALS

### 2021 Auditor's Report

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (non-member)

The Director of Finance & Operations began by introducing herself to the new Conference members and commenting, “I have been with Al-Anon now for five and a half years and this will be my sixth World Service Conference. You may be aware that my position requires me *not* to be a member. However, I have learned so much about the program since starting. My coworkers, the Executive Director, the Volunteers, and you all teach me so much about this program. Each year at Conference, I understand more and more why so many of you devote your time and energy to service. I came from a background in public accounting where I worked as an auditor for many years, working with a variety of nonprofits. Having the opportunity to work at Al-Anon has allowed me to pursue my goal of working for a nonprofit. I enjoy the feeling that we are helping many people find hope and recovery from the disease of alcoholism.”

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, including the opinion letter of the auditors, was posted on AFG Connects for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director defined some of the terms in the audit and interspersed the presentation with Al-Anon trivia questions. A copy of the audit can be found on the website.

### **Independent Auditor's Report**

The Director of Finance & Operations explained the purpose of the audit and its details to Conference members. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. were audited by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the financial statements were in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, and we were issued a clean opinion, which is the highest opinion that can be given.

### **What Is an Audit?**

We have an independent organization come to our location. DHG LLP is a nationwide firm that audits similar nonprofits to Al-Anon. Auditors ask questions and confirm account and investment balances. They review payroll records and check stubs and observe our internal controls. Lastly, they conduct inquiries to ensure no fraud has occurred.

### **Various Statements within the Audit**

The audited financial statements consist of four main reports:

- The statement of financial position displays our financial position on December 31, 2021. It is similar to a balance sheet.
- The statement of activities displays our revenue and expenses across all three funds during the year. This is similar to a profit and loss statement.
- The statement of functional expenses displays the three functional areas of expenses—it shows what is being spent on the program, literature distribution, and general and administrative expenses.
- The statement of cash flows reports our cash inflows and outflows for the year. This is helpful information for our bankers to understand our operations.

## Investment Income

Investment performance helps to grow the Reserve Fund. It provides for an annual transfer to the General Fund if needed. The Reserve Fund is important because it provides an annual transfer to the General Fund. The reason for this is that literature sales and contributions alone would not support our work. The improvements in the market resulted in a gain of \$1,826,000, which helped make up the losses from 2020. Al-Anon continues to be invested in mature stocks and bonds. We have long-term relationships with our investment managers. The transfer from the Reserve Fund is needed in order to balance the budget each year. Currently the Reserve Fund holds eight months of operating expenses. The Board objective is to have 12 months of operating reserves.

## Functional Expenses

Services for the program and literature distribution make up 71 percent of our total expenses. Program expenses include Group Services, Group Records, Outreach to Professionals, Conference, International Services, and Digital Strategies. General and administrative expenses make up 29 percent, which includes the Finance, IT, Human Resources, and Administrative departments.

## Statement of Activities

The statement of activities displays our revenue and expenses across all three funds during the year. This is similar to a profit and loss statement. The statement of functional expenses displays the three functional areas of expenses—it tells you what is being spent on the program, literature distribution, and general and administrative expenses.

Our total revenue in the general fund for 2021 was \$5,173,609. Of that, contributions were 52 percent of revenue and literature sales were about 38 percent. This is the second year in a row that contributions have exceeded literature sales. Magazine sales and investment income make up the rest. Literature sales and contributions make up 90 percent of our revenue.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

The purpose of the financial statement notes is to provide additional information to help a reader of the statements understand them better. Most of the information is required by accounting standards and is consistent from year to year. There were no new footnotes in 2021.

## Summary

We continued to remain open to provide support and had goals that needed to be accomplished. We launched the trilingual Online Store, offering the opportunity for our Spanish- and French-speaking members to purchase literature online. We completed the English version of the new daily reader. As part of our Strategic Plan, we are updating guidelines in all three languages. In some cases, those guidelines had not been translated. We are committed to offering materials in all three languages. We hosted the 70th Anniversary virtually and completed the 2021 Membership Survey. Member contributions and purchases of literature helped to make these goals a reality.

## Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- You showed us five years of contributions, with 2020 having the highest value, and mentioned that those contributions came in during the pandemic due to a special appeal. Is this something we can do again?

*That was a direct special appeal for that time period only.*

- You mentioned that bankers were interested in our financial sheets. Do we have debt that would cause their interest?

*We do not have any debt, but we do have banking. Because of that, they want to know our status.*

- In looking at the Reserve Fund, do we ever move money from the General Fund to the Reserve Fund instead of the other way around?

*When we had excess funds, we were able to do a transfer back, but in 2020 and 2021 we could not.*

- How much of our income comes in electronically rather than through paper checks? Do we know how much we receive in donations through the Online Store?

*Currently, we do not track that amount independently, but we are aware that we do receive quite a bit, especially now through the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App.*

- A Canadian member was not able to get a receipt of his donation for tax purposes. Where do I direct this member to obtain a receipt?

*The WSO does send tax deduction reports to Canadians. Please ask that member to contact the WSO, and we will work with them to get the report they need.*

- Does the WSO pay fees for online contributions? If so, what is the fee?

*All of the credit card companies have a transaction fee, and each card has a different fee. I believe PayPal, Visa, and Discover have a one-to-two-percent transaction fee.*

A motion to approve the 2021 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #3 on page 67.

## 2022 Finance Committee Report

Cindy M., Trustee, Treasurer, AFG, Inc.

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (non-member)

The Treasurer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. opened this session by explaining the makeup of the Finance Committee. The Treasurer is the Chair of the Finance Committee, which meets monthly prior to the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee is comprised of the Treasurer, the Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, a Volunteer member of the Board or Executive Committee (appointed by the Chairperson of the Board), and the Director of Finance & Operations (who is an ex-officio member, which means she attends with voice but no vote). The Volunteer member of the Finance Committee this past year was the Chair of the Policy Committee. The Finance Committee's statement of purpose reads, "The primary function of the Finance Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, and always aligns the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program."

The Treasurer went on to share: "The Director of Finance & Operations has provided members with the 2021 Audit Report which included our 2021 finances. On behalf of the Finance Committee, I would like to, once again, thank the fellowship for their continued, consistent contributions, which have exceeded literature purchases for the second year in a row! It takes every group, District, AIS/LDC, Area, and international structure supporting the WSO in order for the WSO to continue serving our fellowship. And thank



## AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC. 2022 BUDGET

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Fiscal Year Period: FYE 2022

	2022 Budget	2021 Actual
<b>Revenue</b>		
Literature Sales	2,604,381	2,389,064
Less cost of goods sold	(546,920)	(482,313)
Contributions	2,850,000	2,623,242
Magazine Sales	235,000	238,040
Subscription Income	32,000	33,328
Investment Income	60,000	66,001
Fund Transfers	225,600	225,600
Other - currency adjustment		(55,908)
Total cash revenue	\$ 5,460,061	\$ 5,037,054
Noncash contributions		\$ 136,555
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,460,061</b>	<b>\$ 5,173,609</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries	3,302,103	3,076,116
Benefits	483,307	468,507
Payroll Taxes	245,216	227,259
Occupancy	260,031	264,991
Packing & Shipping	(20,000)	(12,120)
Postage	200,065	146,844
Telephone	53,100	53,049
Stationary & Supplies	42,000	57,508
Technology	262,375	206,301
HR/Training/Consulting	53,007	70,447
Repairs	17,070	12,007
Travel & Meetings	146,250	35,731
Conference Costs	145,316	17,935
Professional fees	83,050	75,800
Printing	135,860	90,098
Canadian Office	2,025	1,990
General services meeting	47,975	-
Membership survey	-	500
PSA Campaign	110,000	67,800
Bank and Credit Card fees	111,000	103,269
Miscellaneous	23,925	22,073
Retiree Health benefits	64,500	63,175
Depreciation	45,000	63,840
Total cash expenses	\$ 5,813,175	\$ 5,113,120
Noncash expenses		\$ 136,555
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,813,175</b>	<b>\$ 5,249,675</b>
<b>Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>\$ (353,114)</b>	<b>\$ (76,066)</b>

you to all who bought literature (both in print and electronic) even with the challenges in the supply chain with paper, labor shortages, and delivery delays. “Let me share what has gone into the development of the budget. The process begins each fall when Staff at the WSO gathers preliminary numbers. The majority of the December Finance Committee meeting is spent reviewing the details of the preliminary budget. The costs of special events (like this World Service Conference [WSC] in New York, the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting [IAGSM] in London, and Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect in Ohio) along with projects like the new *Service Manual*, new Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and the membership survey were considered.

“The Finance Committee approved and moved the preliminary budget forward for the Board to review and approve at its January meeting. Then the budget was sent to the Conference members to allow for questions prior to Conference. We answered your questions and are now ready to present the budget to the WSC for review and approval.

“In the spirit of our Conference theme, ‘Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding,’ the Director of Finance & Operations and I will be holding four training sessions after Conference, just like last year, to support Delegates in pulling together the Finance portion of the Delegate’s report. All sessions will contain the same information. Attending one session is all that is necessary. This is an optional session, so Delegates who are comfortable with the audit and budget numbers can forgo attending.

“Prior to us meeting together in those sessions, we wanted to honor our commitment to inform Conference members of special budget circumstances by updating you on our current financial situation. As of March 31, 2022, our current deficit is \$244,495. Our contributions and literature sales are not meeting our planned budget. As a result, the Finance Committee has drafted a special Appeal to Members which will be sent to the fellowship after the May Quarterly Appeal to Members letter. This timing will provide Delegates the opportunity to share this message with your Areas through the links of service. Through an abundance of support, we can continue to achieve our primary purpose of helping the families and friends of alcoholics!”

### **Overview of Budget Development Process**

The Director of Finance & Operations opened with, “We recognize that we are going into the third budget year of being impacted by the pandemic. As the need for our services continues to increase, the organization is committed to providing services in all areas to the fellowship. During these last years, some services had been reduced or even put on hold. The budget reflects a move to restore services to the fellowship.

“We begin working on the budget in October each year. The budget isn’t just prepared by me; all of the stakeholders in the budget contribute. The different teams within the Programs Department contribute to the budget process. They review their routine costs as well as their projects for the year. The two other major contributors to the budget are Finance & Operations and Administration. Again, each Department reviews their projects for the upcoming year, Strategic Plan goals, and routine costs.

“We establish timelines to allow for each step, including review and discussion. We formulate the budget internally and then present it to the Finance Committee for their review. We make any suggested changes prior to presenting the preliminary budget to the Board of Trustees in January. The budget is presented to WSC members for review in April. During the year, the budget to actual

is reviewed during Finance Committee meetings and if needed, a revised budget is presented at the July Board meeting. Most important is the oversight that is provided for the budget. The budget is constantly reviewed during the year. Any variances are explained and accounted for.

“Before we dive into the details, let’s discuss different factors that impact our budget. We talked about restoring services, but what does that really look like? On the WSC Structure Contributions report in 2021, there were currently 13,841 groups, but only 7,179 contributed, or 52 percent of groups. However, 100 percent of those groups used some type of service. They had to be registered by AFG Records to receive materials to get their group started. Members read Conference Approved Literature produced by the WSO at meetings and in their personal recovery. Members can access the *Service Manual* on our website. Members can call to get meeting information or use the website to find a meeting. There are public service announcements playing on local media that may allow a person to find Al-Anon. Lastly, groups can attend a meeting from their home or any location via our Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App. All of these services are important, and this is just a small portion of all services provided.

“Let’s take a moment to review the different areas that directly support groups in our Structure. We provided a breakdown of how the cost per group was calculated when we posted the WSC Structure Contribution report. This information is also included in the Annual Report. This is a helpful picture of how a group is supported within the Structure.

“So, when we think about goals for the year, think about the pie chart depicting the costs per group. If all of our registered groups contributed the cost per group, that would equal \$3.9 million in contributions. Now, historically, not every registered group contributes. However, if every group that contributed in 2021 contributed the \$283.33 cost per group, that would get us to 71 percent of our goal.

“Back in 1952, the first Appeal to Members letter requested that each member contribute \$1 twice a year to support the work of the WSO. Now, that \$1 has grown over the years. The average contributions still range in the \$5 amount.

“Visiting Stepping Stones demonstrated the importance of the vision that Lois had. Consider how that vision is translated today into the services we are providing. We do that by providing services in new ways, such as electronic meetings, new literature, and our continued effort to offer more communication, all in an effort to carry the message.”

### **Presentation of the 2022 Operating Budget**

The Director continued, “The budget presented today is a deficit budget. Our projected revenues collected will be less than our operating expenses. That is a bit unnerving, but it is consistent and in keeping with our mission to provide services to those seeking hope and recovery through Al-Anon.

“We are still feeling the impact of the pandemic on our literature sales. We are still experiencing supply chain issues, and the cost of paper has skyrocketed. We are continuing to reduce expenses wherever it is possible without impacting or reducing services. We reduced expenses where costs were flexible. We have some fixed costs that are consistent each year, such as printing and postage for *The Forum*.”

## **Estimated Revenue**

“We are projecting a total estimated revenue of \$5,460,000, which is an increase over the prior year budget and prior year actual.

“Literature sales are still below historical levels. We are continuing to encourage members to purchase literature, as this is how we truly carry our message. Literature sales for 2022 are projected at \$2,604,381, which is an increase of four percent over the prior year’s budget.

“We did meet our contribution goal in 2021. We plan to continue to provide ‘goals’ for the groups. We are optimistic that we will reach our budget goal for 2022. To support this goal, we are investigating expanding the methods of contributing through our Online Store and the *Mobile App*.

“The contribution goal for 2022 is \$2,850,000, which is higher than the prior year’s actuals and budget. We recognize that we need contributions to help us sustain operations.”

## **2022 Projects**

“You may have read in the Annual Report about our efforts to consolidate our electronic Al-Anon groups into one database with our physical groups, which required significant changes to the database. Many of you were able to access the electronic version of the *Service Manual* in all three languages. *A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences*, the new daily reader, is being translated and will be offered in all three languages when we launch. We have the first longitudinal study this year and we are planning for the 2023 International Convention in Albuquerque.”

## **Projected Expenses**

“Our overall expenses are budgeted for \$5,800,000. That increase reflects this WSC, the IAGSM, travel for our Staff and Volunteers, and an increase in postage rates. Internally, we have to make some technology improvements to mitigate security risks from outdated computers. Lastly, we plan to restore staffing to pre-pandemic levels.

“Labor costs are a large part of our total operating expenses. Those elements are salaries, payroll taxes, and employee benefits such as health and life insurance and pension contributions. Our labor costs reflect the people who do the work to provide services.

“We are working to restore staffing after furloughs and reductions in Staff from the past two years. We had a compensation study in 2021 which indicated that our salaries are consistent with nonprofit standards.

“Building Occupancy relates to costs to maintain the building. There is a slight decrease as there are fewer projects planned this year. Expenses here also include depreciation on the building, insurance, and utilities. As a result of the increased mailings and postage costs, you will see an increase in postage as we work to send out group updates that were on hold in 2021 with increased postage rates. Stationery and supplies are consistent with the prior year budget and reflect usage for envelopes and supplies.

“Technology is increasing as we are making an effort to improve our network security and reduce risk, as some computers are running outdated technology which presents a serious security risk. Additionally, we have budgeted for continued improvements to the *Mobile App*, compliance training for Staff, and, lastly, professional fees that we pay the auditor and our legal counsel along with fees for professional interpretation. As we are working with the international community, this last has become a great need.

“Some travel is resuming for this year’s budget. The IASGM will occur in London, and we are increasing our presence in the professional community. WSO Volunteer travel will resume and Road Trip! will be held in Ohio this year.

“Other expenses include printing costs for *The Forum* and *AFA* magazine along with the newsletters *Alateen Talk*, *Le lien* and *En action*. We have two PSA campaigns running over multiple years, and they will also run on digital networks. Bank and credit card fees are a necessary business cost and fluctuate based on our revenues.

“Miscellaneous costs are costs related to taxes, incidental office expenses, and costs related to employment advertising. Our post-retirement health benefits, which have no significant changes, are health benefit costs for our retirees. Lastly, depreciation and amortization reflect changes related to the required depreciation of our assets and intangibles.

“We have a couple of Strategies that have budget implications—one involves improving our social media content through a new way of reaching an audience. This Strategy requires training. The other involves trying to find ways to accept new forms of electronic payments. We will have to analyze our current system to determine if reconfiguration is needed.

“We are anticipating a deficit budget for 2022. We have estimated revenue to be \$5,460,061, which is higher than the 2021 actuals. We have budgeted expenses to be \$5,813,175. The budgeted deficit is \$353,114.

“We will still need contributions to maintain operations. Literature sales are improving but are still below historical levels. Staffing is important as most of our projects and services require labor resources. We will adjust the budget in July as needed.”

## **Conference members had the following questions and comments:**

- I believe paper costs have skyrocketed, but the budgeted revenue for literature only increased three to four percent. Why such a small increase?

*One thing we still have to consider is the decline of LDCs purchasing from us. We want to be realistic regarding what the LDCs will purchase in 2022. The Finance Committee is also continuing to examine the selling price of our literature.*

- I heard a suggestion from somewhere that if every member purchased at least one book, we could help the WSO with the finances. Is that a good suggestion to take back to my Area?

*Yes, that is always a good suggestion! We need to encourage our members to purchase our literature. Not only does our literature help with our finances, but our literature is an important means of carrying our message.*

- Do we have cyber security insurance?

*Yes, we do. We also have contracted with a third-party IT provider who is very good at keeping our systems secure.*

- The regular Quarterly Appeal to Members is going to be mailed soon, but you also said that there will be a special appeal as well. Is the goal of another letter to help with the deficit budget? How do you want us to share this information?

*Since we determined in March that we are only three months in and not close to our goal, we realized we are in a deficit already. We accepted the fact that the deficit can get higher, and we are already behind, so we need to have more contributions and literature sales. The reality is that we may have a larger deficit than we even realize today.*

- I am curious about the idea of a deficit. If I calculated all of my personal income and expenditure budget items, and found I had a deficit, I would not go on vacation. Is the idea that we will have a deficit budget because there is nothing left to cut? Why not cut something so that we will not have a deficit?

*We have had two years of not providing services that we want to be providing. For example, we were not sending group updates or information to newly registered groups. So, to avoid a deficit, it comes down to “what should we give up”?*

*The biggest expense line item is staffing. In 2020, we furloughed some Staff and heard concerns. The groups want the WSO to continue to carry the message, and to do so, we need Staff to continue to provide services. To avoid a deficit, we would need to lay off Staff. However, we cannot lay off 20 people one month and bring them back the next. We need consistency; we need to keep our Staff to provide services.*

*We have a lot of groups that are consistent with their contributions and purchase of literature. We have a lot of gratitude to those groups who are consistent in their giving.*

Following the presentation and discussion, a motion to approve the 2021 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #4, page 67.

## 2021 Annual Report

The Annual Report was posted to AFG Connects prior to the Conference. The Report includes updates from all WSO Departments as well as Board committees. After review, Conference members were invited to submit any questions to be sure they were clear on the material before arriving at Conference. All questions and answers were compiled and posted for all Conference members.

As has been the tradition for the last several years, updates, beginning with the Chairperson of the Board and then continuing with WSO Staff members, were presented at Conference to give Delegates a quick overview of what has been happening since the drafted Annual Report at the end of 2021 and first three months of 2022.

## Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board

One of the roles of the Board is to make long-range plans for AFG, Inc. With this role comes the responsibility to set the organizational direction for the corporation. In order to set the direction for AFG, Inc., the Board has developed our Strategic Plan. In the Strategic Planning Process, the Board of Trustees is responsible for the “what,” or the direction of the Strategic Plan. The WSO Staff is responsible for the “how” of the Strategic Plan, which involves developing Strategies and the action plans for those Strategies.

As part of the usual cadence of Plan review, the Board started in July 2021 to refresh the Strategic Plan. We looked at significant trends we thought would most impact AFG, Inc. in the next three years, such as electronic meetings, diversity and inclusion, recovery alternatives, electronic literature, and electronic contributions. We discussed what we thought brought the highest value to our members, such as adhering to Al-Anon principles, having information and literature that is more accessible, and providing options for members to meet and connect with one another to advance their recovery. We discussed how AFG could be the main resource for our community if we could be better known and increase involvement with professionals.

After talking to each other and reasoning things out through a process which included the Strategic Leadership Team, Board members, and Executive Committee members, the Board of Trustees, at its January 2022 Board meeting, approved the refreshed Strategic Plan that I am happy to share with you today.

Our mission: Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually-based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier-free meetings, information, and shared experiences.

Our vision: Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

To help us accomplish this mission and vision, we have five Goal statements.

- **Members:** AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics.
- **Recovery and Service Tools:** AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.
- **Awareness:** AFG, Inc. builds public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program.
- **Financial Sustainability:** AFG, Inc. encourages membership and organizational self-support by aligning resource allocation with its core purpose and strategic priorities.
- **Global Engagement:** AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operation to meet the needs of the global landscape.

Each Goal is supported by Strategic Objectives, or “the what”—what we are going to do to help us accomplish the Goals. Each Strategic Objective is supported by Strategies, or “the how”—how we are going to accomplish the Strategic Objective. I would like to share with you the Strategic Objectives for each Goal. I will let Staff give the updates on the Strategies that have been developed to support the Strategic Objectives.

**The Strategic Objectives that will help us accomplish the Members Goal are:**

- Provide access to the Al-Anon program for all.
- Advance support to underserved communities by appealing to diverse audiences.

**The Strategic Objectives that support the Recovery and Service Tools Goal are:**

- Create attractive new content by gathering, processing, and disseminating pertinent information.
- Communicate the message of hope in a way that is current, appealing, and widely available.
- Reduce barriers to accessing information created by cultural and linguistic obstacles.

**The Strategic Objectives for the Awareness Goal are:**

- Identify and reduce the effects of biases that may be preventing effective outreach.
- Validate the effectiveness of the Al-Anon Family Groups program in helping our members.
- Educate the public and professionals about who we are, what we do, and why.
- Build relationships with the media, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and professionals.

The Strategic Objectives for the Financial Sustainability Goal are:

- Align resources to support the needs of the fellowship in accordance with Al-Anon's spiritual principles.
- Create opportunities for members to support AFG, Inc.
- Improve transparency of the financial needs of AFG, Inc.

The Strategic Objectives for the Global Engagement Goal are:

- Reinforce the process for passing experience on to incoming trusted servants using effective approaches for the new generation.
- Communicate leadership skills required for trusted servants and create development pathways.
- Collaborate globally to share knowledge and evolve our programs and communications.

In the Strategic Planning process, the Board has to balance foresight, being able to predict what will be needed in the future, with meeting members' needs today. This is why each year the Board reviews the Strategic Objectives and prioritizes which Strategies to move forward with, based on factors such as implementation time, cost, ongoing staff commitment, anticipated outcomes, current conditions, and trends. It might be helpful for you to think of the Strategic Plan less like a roadmap, which is static, and more like a GPS, where the route keeps changing. The Board has to keep adjusting our route so that AFG, Inc. will be available to help the families and friends of alcoholics for many years to come.

Lastly, I want to inform you about a recent change regarding when the 2023 Conference theme will be announced. In the past, the Board would approve the next year's Conference theme at the July Board meeting and the theme would be announced in the July Chairperson of the Board Letter. When next year's theme was announced in July, confusion was often created about which theme to use, and some members would begin using the new theme immediately. The intention is that the Conference theme be used from January to December of the Conference year. In order to help eliminate any confusion around which theme your Area should be using, this year the Board will approve the 2023 Conference theme at the July Board meeting, but the theme will not be announced until December. The announcement in December will be made via the WSC Members AFG Connects Community. This will be followed by an announcement in the January COB Letter. Hopefully this will eliminate confusion around which Conference theme to use.

## Vali F., Executive Director

As the Executive Director at the World Service Office, I have the privilege of leading an amazing group of dedicated, professional Staff. Their generosity and commitment astound me every day and I feel graced to work with them all.

I am directly responsible for the Admin & Digital Communications Department, which supports our WSO Volunteers, facilitates the nominating and resume solicitation processes, and envisions and produces WSO digital communications. Starting in May, Community Relations will also become part of this department. I also lead the Staff Strategic Leadership Team, which is instrumental in developing, overseeing, and executing the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan Strategies. With the Directors' Team, I also evolve the WSO organizational structure as we seek to make the best use of our limited resources.

In 2022, we have already experienced several organizational developments, and we have one more—long anticipated with a mix of sadness for us and joy for her. By this, of course, I am referring

to Marsha's retirement, which—for the sake of my makeup—I will mention only briefly now. Marsha had originally planned to retire after Conference this year. We were grateful when she agreed to postpone her departure until later this year to support the international community until the new Associate Director—International was hired and had transitioned into the role.

Speaking of which, we hope you will take a note—even write yourself a *big* “must do” reminder—to share with your Area links of service the WSO's need for a member of Al-Anon, one who has been in the program for at least six to eight years and has served beyond the group level, to lead WSO efforts to develop and implement plans and programs to serve Al-Anon Family Groups internationally.

Or perhaps someone you know sprang to mind who you recognize has the experience and passion for fulfilling this vital need in worldwide service and would consider relocating to Virginia Beach. We encourage you to reach out to that member and let them know personally that you believe he or she would be enough. I know from personal experience how much that can mean.

A related development—and this one turns out to involve a really long story—is the recent hiring of a virtual employee into the newly-created position of Programs Project Specialist. As a member, Allison G. will support all Programs teams, including International, and Community Relations in addressing member questions and will expand our current project management capabilities. Allison starts May 9, after Staff have all returned from some well-earned post-Conference vacation and regrouping time.

In the meantime, the WSO has continued our commitment to offering existing Staff opportunities to grow and evolve in new positions—for example, Anne P. has moved onto the International Team while keeping her Legal Assistant responsibilities—and to expand their knowledge through certification training. It's always an exciting time in Human Resources at the WSO!

Before I turn this over to the Directors and Associate Directors to talk about their departments and teams, I need to share one matter directly affecting our Spanish community. In the 2021 Annual Report, we published our intention to update certain words in Spanish when we published the *2022-2025 Service Manual* (P-24/27). The Spanish and French word choice corrections were approved by the Board after being confirmed with international structures. Regrettably, some major Spanish corrections, such as the change from “guía” to “política,” were not included, out of concern for the magnitude of cascading changes which would be required to WSO guidelines, CAL, the website, etc. After receiving numerous calls and emails from Spanish-speaking members disappointed by the missing updates, Staff realized that an immediate amendment to the Spanish *2022-2025 Service Manual* was required to implement these corrections. Staff are diligently working to get the updates published electronically in a v1.1 release. Stay tuned to WSC Members and *In the Loop* in all three languages for news on the v1.1 timeline. In the meantime, we are grateful for your members' understanding.

## Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (non-member)

I oversee several teams that provide support to the rest of the organization and the fellowship. My department consists of Accounting, Human Resources, Customer Service, Shipping, Publications, Translation, and Building Operations. We have 19 people working in these different teams. We like to think of ourselves as “behind the scenes.” We provide support in many different areas, such as shipping your Conference Approved Literature (CAL); providing

technical support for AFG Connects, where you receive messages and documents regarding this year's World Service Conference; and processing contributions and *Forum* receipts. While the Programs Department is charged with creating and executing the services that give voice to recovery, we are responsible for ensuring they have the tools and infrastructure needed to do so. We are constantly finding ways to streamline operations and increase efficiencies throughout the organization.

In addition to my role as Director, I serve on the Finance Committee, Retirement Plan Committee, Audit Committee, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

Since the Annual Report, our department has continued to strive to execute and facilitate the day-to-day operations and understand the changing needs of the organization.

- As part of our Strategic Plan, we have updated five more Al-Anon Guidelines in all three languages and added them to the member website.
- We are progressing on the translation of the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself*. When this book launches next year, it will be available in all three languages.
- In the Annual Report, we provided some insight into the work we are doing consolidating our electronic Al-Anon groups into one database with our physical groups. We began the process back in the fall of 2021. It required significant changes to the iMIS database, where the WSO maintains group data. In March 2022, we completed the steps to fully technologically integrate Al-Anon Family Groups meeting electronically with physical groups.
- In an effort to lower costs and streamline operations, we have reduced the number of *Forum* renewal reminders, which will save on postage costs.
- As part of our Strategic Plan, we have started exploring how to expand payment options on the Online Store for purchases and contributions, which will better support our members.

We want to sincerely and humbly thank you for allowing us to serve you.

### **Sarah S., Director of Programs**

I have the honor and privilege of serving as the Director of Programs. My primary responsibility is to oversee and supervise the Programs Department. Collectively, we envision, implement, evaluate, and eliminate WSO programs to best serve the needs of the Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship and fulfill the Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. Strategic Plan. Members of the Programs Department spend time cultivating relationships with Alcoholics Anonymous and professionals who serve families affected by the disease of alcoholism.

Currently, I supervise the following teams: Conference, Group Services, International, Literature, and, as of recent organizational shifts, AFG Records. Now I have some exciting news to share about AFG Records. Valerie Stump (non-member), formerly Group Records Coordinator, has recently been promoted to AFG Records Manager. Valerie has served the World Service Office well for over 20 years, has demonstrated her commitment to the organization, and is a shining example of our WSO Core and Aspirational Values. Valerie offers the following updates for AFG Records:

- The first and second quarter Al-Anon Annual Group Update sheets were mailed to group CMAs. The AGRCs were made aware of the mailing in the hopes of getting ahead of the

many questions that may come from those groups that either temporarily remain online, have returned to the physical location, remain closed, and/or have resumed on a hybrid basis. AFG Records is always available to assist with answering any questions.

- We have updated all the Group Records forms and instructions. A “meeting participants” section (parents, men, women, people of color, young adults, adult children and LGBTQIA+) was added to the forms. This information is optional and additional wording reminds groups that in keeping with Traditions Three and Five, Al-Anon groups welcome anyone affected by someone else's drinking. A GR section was added to the form for groups meeting in an electronic location. Additional terminology was added to the group registration forms which clarifies the traditional permission provided to groups to use Conference Approved Literature (CAL) *during* an Al-Anon meeting in keeping with Al-Anon's trademark and copyright policy.

As the Director of Programs, I am a member of the Conference, Policy Committee, International Coordination Committee, the Conference Leadership Team, and, starting after Conference, I will be the Staff appointee to the Executive Committee. I also serve on the following teams at the office: the Strategic Leadership Team, Staff Management Team, Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT), and the Directors Team. Each of these teams has very specific purposes and responsibilities that support our role as the clearinghouse and delegated authority and responsibility from the Board of Trustees.

In a few moments, the Associate Directors will share about their respective teams and the progress they have made since January. So, I won't steal their exciting news. I have one item of concern that I would like to share with this Conference. In our role as the clearinghouse, the WSO has always fielded calls from critics, both constructive and destructive, within the fellowship. But since the pandemic began, the volume of these calls has increased exponentially. We have been saddened to observe that what's often missing in the communication these days is the sweet spirit of Al-Anon, the patience and understanding, and the presumption of goodwill. Perhaps the shift stems from a general reliance on the relative anonymity of digital communication during the pandemic. Nonetheless the impact is difficult, and we would be grateful for any reminders you would be willing to share in your Areas that WSO Staff members are grateful to serve and appreciate any patience and kindness that can be extended as we navigate these changing times.

We are starting to receive more invitations to travel. Our Staff are willing and available to travel to your Area. It's always an honor and privilege to attend on behalf of the WSO.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment in carrying the message to families and friends of alcoholics. As the new Director of Programs, I have experienced the vastness of the message being carried domestically and across the globe. It's the most humbling experience I've had the privilege to participate in as a member of Al-Anon Family Groups.

### **Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations**

The Associate Director—Community Relations position is based on the foundation that my predecessor, Claire R., established during her tenure as Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals. In my new role, I am focused on public awareness and member engagement. Ongoing efforts include deepening relationships with medical

and healthcare professionals and building connections with community service agencies, college educators and administrators, and other leaders in the recovery industry.

In addition to being a Conference member, I am a member of the Public Outreach Committee, the Policy Committee, the Strategic Leadership Team, the Senior Management Team, and the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table.

During my first three months at WSO, I worked closely with Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications, and Rory Mulford, Data Analyst (non-member), on the 2021 Membership Survey Results. We created a user-friendly slide presentation, downloadable from our website. We were cognizant to use language that would speak to professionals while still being easy for non-professional members to understand and feel comfortable using as a public outreach tool to professionals.

Yadi McCoy, Event Logistics & Training Specialist (non-member), and I participated in the Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect Work Group. After having to cancel the last two years' events due to the pandemic, we have begun preparations for the live in-person event scheduled to take place in Cleveland, Ohio, October 2022. This full-day event hosted by the Board of Trustees has historically been a wonderful way to bring all levels of our membership together.

Finally, I am thrilled to be involved in planning the International Convention. I had the opportunity to participate in a site visit with Vali F., Executive Director, and Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference. I am fortunate to have attended the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore as a member, so seeing the meeting space in Albuquerque, NM first-hand was especially helpful as I will be coordinating the Day of Connecting, the pre-Convention service event.

I am awed by the dedication and commitment of our members who continue to make Al-Anon available and accessible to all. Thank you for all your service. It is my privilege to be a part of the World Service Office and to serve our fellowship.

### **Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications**

As the Associate Director—Brand Communications, I manage the Digital Communications team, which is responsible for managing the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, al-anon.org website, *In the Loop* email newsletter, the WSO social media presence, and public service announcements (PSAs), as well as creating various surveys and analyzing reports of our digital efforts. Working alongside the Literature team, we facilitate planning meetings for the annual communication calendar which supports the email newsletters, recovery magazines, and some social media posts. In my role, I serve as a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, Staff Management Team, Staff Policy Implementation Round Table, Public Outreach Committee, Policy Committee, and, in preparation for 2023, I am a member of the International Convention core team.

[These are the highlights of our activity so far in 2022:](#)

As part of the huge Strategic Plan undertaking to update and translate WSO guidelines, Staff wanted to make it easier to identify which guidelines had been recently edited. To accomplish this goal, Staff has added a blue banner with the word “New” to the top of each recently updated guideline. This was done in all three languages.

Development began on an *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* 3.0 release, which will include the ability to personalize the home screen and a more interactive newsfeed which allows replies and reactions to comments. Plus, members will be able to favorite Al-Anon

meetings held in the *Mobile App* and set reminders for when they start.

We have received many requests from members interested in purchasing the WSO Public Outreach posters, which is very exciting! However, the WSO is not selling the posters; the posters are available on al-anon.org as free downloads. Service arms can add local contact information, or groups can add their meeting information, and then print the posters out for members to distribute in public places.

In 2021, al-anon.org had over five million website sessions, the first time we ever reached that milestone. Last month, we reached one million website sessions—one day faster than we did last year—so we are on pace to exceed five million sessions once again this year.

At the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore, Al-Anon members volunteered to be interviewed on camera and share on a variety of topics. Members were recorded such that their anonymity was protected. Since then, the WSO has been editing and posting these video interviews on al-anon.org and YouTube. Until now they have only been in English, but we are pleased to share with you our first approved Spanish interview. This interview is the first piece of Spanish content we have created and posted that did not originate as English content which was then translated into Spanish. The video is being presented with English subtitles so we can all follow along and listen to this member's share. Thank you.

### **Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services**

As the Associate Director—Group Services, I want to share our enthusiasm for fulfilling our primary responsibility of making sure newcomers find help as a result of someone else's drinking! Group Services oversees activities related to Al-Anon and Alateen, including supporting meetings and members, training new and returning Alateen Coordinators and AAPPs, approving revised Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, connecting Al-Anon members to the Inmate Correspondence Service, creating the *Alateen Talk* newsletter, supporting Al-Anon Information Services, and lastly, serving the fellowship at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

[These are the highlights of our activity so far in 2022:](#)

- In January, a historic moment in Al-Anon history took place with the election of the first-ever Delegate to serve and be the voice of electronic Al-Anon Family Groups. In spite of the blizzard that took place that day and the technology that decided not to cooperate, we were able to support the elected Temporary Area Chairperson, Bob K., as he conducted the first non-panel, non-geographic Assembly in the presence of 162 of the 217 elected Group Representatives to 650 registered Al-Anon groups which met electronically. As if that was not enough excitement, we were honored to have the opportunity to continue it again on March 5 when three additional officers (Area Chairperson, Area Treasurer, and Area Secretary) were elected by 140 of 251 GRs representing 674 groups. We feel privileged to support the new Area Officers as they fulfil their responsibilities to begin creating the links of service to a new Area.
- The “Welcome Newcomer” email launched in March 2020 continues to be a resource to newcomers—with just over 20,000 emails requested to date.
- Electronic group registrations continue to grow. Meetings take place on 17 different platforms. There are over 700 registered phone and online groups supporting over 1,000 meetings. Most recently added languages include Japanese and Czech.
- The trial of Alateen meetings taking place in the *Al-Anon Family*

*Groups Mobile App* is flourishing. Group Services continues to support those Areas sponsoring Alateen meetings in the *Mobile App*. AMIAS supporting *Mobile App* meetings meet every other month to share best practices and shortcuts to keep meetings welcoming to teens.

- What has kept the Group Services team most busy is responding to members inquiring about the transformation of Al-Anon groups within our service structure. The team has tried our level best to consistently explain the policy as it relates to meeting registration and one location. We look forward to supporting those Areas that have created processes to welcome Al-Anon groups that only meet electronically into their Areas.

We want to thank you for allowing us the privilege of joining you on this journey.

### **Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference**

As the Associate Director—Conference, I am responsible for communicating with Delegates, Area Chairs, District Representatives, and past Conference members in addition to the year-round planning and implementation that takes place in relation to the World Service Conference (WSC). I am a member of the Conference Leadership Team, the Policy Committee, the Staff Management Team, and the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table. I oversee the full cyclical update process of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), and I am involved in planning International Conventions.

Although *not* a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, I *am* involved, directly or indirectly—as are all of us at the WSO—in some of the Strategies in the works that support the Board’s Strategic Plan, one of which is the *Service Manual*. I am ecstatic to report that the 2022-2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is available in an electronic format in English, French, and Spanish! I am grateful for the team’s demonstration of the WSO Core Values of interdependence, generosity, and self-sustainability throughout the whole process of publishing the 2022-2025 edition, but especially in the team’s collaboration in this first quarter, when we finalized the *Service Manual* in English, French, and Spanish! Have you seen the revised World Service Structure graphic on pages 176 and 177? For those of you who haven’t, I invite you to view the graphic—which I believe effectively conveys the links of service of our WSC Structure!

Speaking of the WSC Structure, in January, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) received a request from the non-panel Global Electronic Area to join the World Service Conference Structure. The CLT considered the request for admission on its merits, considering population, geography (or not, in this case), expense, and policy. The CLT unanimously agreed to recommend that the Board approve a motion to admit the non-panel Global Electronic Area into the World Service Conference Structure. The Board unanimously approved the motion, which was presented to the Conference for its consideration and was approved!

The CLT has created new opportunities for Delegate participation. The CLT invited three Delegates to participate on a Mentor/Mentee Pairing Task Force, three Delegates to oversee the scheduling of early morning and evening Al-Anon meetings during Conference week, and three Delegates to lead and facilitate breakouts. Thank you to all for your willingness to serve!

### **Tom C., Associate Director—Literature**

As the Associate Director—Literature, I am the Staff liaison to the Literature Committee, the Area Literature Coordinators, and

Area Newsletter Editors. I’m a member of the Staff Management Team, the Policy Committee, and the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table. When the Conference gives conceptual approval for new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces, I orchestrate the process for developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) with the Literature Committee, freelance writers who are Al-Anon members, and all others involved. When the process is done, I let the fellowship know. I also review reprint permission requests for limited excerpts, am part of *The Forum’s* review process, and answer all correspondence about CAL. Here’s what’s been happening since the beginning of this year:

Indexing and design is completed for *A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences*, the new daily reader to be introduced at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention. It is currently being translated into French and Spanish.

The WSO received over 100 submissions from Alateen members for the “Just for Tonight” Alateen bookmark. Many thanks for all the fantastic sharings! The bookmark is now being compiled.

Once the new foreword for *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) was written, it was approved by the Literature Committee, the Policy Review Task Force, and the Executive Director. It will be included in the next printing of the book. As in the *ODAT*, space for the foreword was created by replacing one of the two title pages with the foreword.

The newest members of the Literature Committee were asked to add their input to that of other Committee members regarding what portions of *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) they wanted included in a booklet of “gems,” which was given conceptual approval by the Conference last year.

For the last 11 years, the WSO has provided CAL quotations for service arms to use in fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. In March, the WSO posted 20 quotations for use in 2023 calendars on the Announcements community of AFG Connects.

*The Forum* has gained approximately 500 subscriptions since December, an increase of roughly three percent. However, subscriptions still remain about 12 percent below pre-pandemic rates.

*The Forum* Writing Guideline (F-1) was updated and posted to the Al-Anon website in January.

A team at the WSO has begun a project to make the submission process for *The Forum*, *Le lien*, and *Al-Anon y Alateen en accion* more inclusive of our French- and Spanish-speaking members.

### **Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus**

I am currently Director of Programs Emeritus at the World Service Office. I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you this update information about our partners in the international community.

As we all know, the pandemic has affected our lives worldwide. As a result, during the Ibero American (RIASA) and Central American (RECACSA) Zonal meetings, the World Service Office became aware of opportunities to improve communication with the Latin and Central American countries and made a commitment to meet with each country on a quarterly basis beginning this year. These meetings have been extremely helpful and informative for WSO Staff involved as well. The members we have met with so far have expressed their extreme gratitude for this opportunity to connect with the World Service Office. Two comments we received expressed:

“This meeting was a great opportunity to communicate with the WSO. We made history that day! We are looking forward to more meetings so we can continue to grow.”

“Thank you WSO for this opportunity.”

Oftentimes, countries face many different challenges. As the



clearinghouse, the WSO shares the experience, strength, and hope to help these evolving structures carry the message. With some having limited resources (people and financial), we appreciate their passion and dedication! It's a privilege for our international team to assist our partners in the international communities.

Just like the World Service Conference members were not able to meet in a face-to-face setting, the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) did not meet as originally planned in 2020. In case you do not know, the IAGSM is a biennial service meeting for countries that have a General Service Office or national office. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share their experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates. The IAGSM is not a decision-making body and passes any recommendations through the International Coordination Committee (ICC) to the World Service Office Board of Trustees. In addition to the ICC members who attend this meeting, there are two Board of Trustee members who attend, one from the United States and the other from Canada. Plans are proceeding to meet October 12-15, 2022 in London, England. The General Service Office for the UK and Eire is the hosting country. The theme for this meeting is "Connecting Hearts and Minds Around the World." The agenda will include seven general sessions and six workshops.

Following the Staff updates, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee was invited to share her gratitude to Marsha W. for her years of service to Al-Anon Family Groups.

### **Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee**

It has been my privilege and honor to know Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus, since serving at my first WSC as Delegate in April of 1999. At that time, Marsha was in her third year at the WSO as the Associate Director—International. Never in my wildest, biggest dreams did I imagine I would have the opportunity years later to work closely with Marsha in my roles as Trustee, Chairperson of the Board, and currently as Chairperson of the Executive Committee. Marsha has gently supported and encouraged me in a way only Marsha can, with quiet confidence, steadfast support, and most importantly sharing her honest yet loving truth. I always walk away from our conversations knowing I learned something about myself, our program, our fellowship, and a stronger sense and understanding of my Higher Power.

In her role as Associate Director—International, Marsha traveled the world on behalf of Al-Anon Family Groups, at times in places where safety was questionable, but never lost her resolve to fulfill our primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics. In 2015, in my role as Co-Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (ICC), I had the privilege of experiencing my first international trip with Marsha. We attended the Ibero American Zonal meeting (RIASA) in Asuncion, Paraguay. I was excited yet scared to death. I was fearful I would somehow make a mistake and embarrass the Board and AFG, but Marsha's steadfast presence assured me everything was exactly as it should be, and, in the thoughtful way that only Marsha can, I was not that important.

After arriving in Asuncion and getting into the car for the hotel, I noticed that our driver was packing, and it was not a suitcase. I remember looking at Marsha with what I am certain were wide eyes of surprise, and she calmly looked at me and just smiled. Upon arrival at the hotel, she shared with me that, for our personal safety, we would have a private driver throughout our visit. It seemed that US citizens were prime targets for kidnappers, and the driver would

assure our safety. She then gave me a hug, suggested I get some sleep, and went to her room.

She handled all situations that weekend with the same calm, quiet confidence, unconditional love, and support of all attending. However, in all future international trips, I ensured I asked questions before getting on the plane.

In 2016, Marsha led the WSO Staff, in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, in a reorganization of the World Service Office. Marsha served as the Staff representative on the Board's 2016 Transition Team, which included the outgoing Chairperson of the Board (COB), an At-Large member of the Executive Committee, the then current Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and me as the incoming COB. The Board charged the Transition Team with the reorganization of the WSO, which included the hiring of an Interim Executive Director. During the process, Marsha applied for and was hired to fill the newly created position of Director of Programs. At the direction of the Board of Trustees, Marsha subsequently served on the search and initial interview team for our current Executive Director.

Throughout the reorganization, Marsha brought the spirit of teamwork, offered direct support to all WSO Staff, and created a level of confidence at the WSO that great change was possible, that Staff would be supported, informed, and involved as we moved forward. Marsha also served as a key member serving on the Board of Trustees hiring team of the new Director of Finance (now Director of Finance & Operations), prior to the retirement of our former Director of Business Services.

**I want to include a few comments from Staff in their words:**

"Not to put her on a pedestal, but I have relished every moment she shares her experience, strength, and hope, and recognize her as a great inspiration in all areas of my life."

"Her love of Al-Anon, her uncommon common sense, and grace under pressure have been inspiring. From time to time we shared experiences and reasoned things out. Often, we ended up laughing. That reminds me of another thing I love about Marsha: her sense of humor and infectious hearty laugh."

"Marsha, you truly embody your program, and it is inspiring to witness. One of the things that I will miss most is your unwavering ability to make every single person that you come across feel valued and heard. You are able to put others at ease so that they may share openly and honestly. In this way you shine light on those whose voices had been kept in the dark. I have no doubt you will carry this trait with you on the next part of your journey, and in your continued service to others and the greater good."

Marsha, we thank you for all you have given and honor you for all that you are. I thank you for your friendship, your mentorship, and your unconditional love.

### **Conference members had the following comments and questions:**

- It was reported that the website had over five million sessions. What do you mean by the word "sessions"?

*Session used to be called visits, so sessions would represent visits.*

- This is a follow up question. Are all those sessions unique?

*Sessions are from unique visitors—anytime someone comes on the site, we count it.*

- How many Staff members do we have currently?

*Currently, we have 46 Staff members.*

- How many Staff members are needed to be fully staffed?

*50 is our ideal.*

- Is there any future possibility for the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* to be loaded onto a computer? It is just on the phone right now and the screens can be really small. Some members would like it to be available to use it on a computer.

*Although there is not a plan for that, the Mobile App is available on tablets and iPads for those who want a bigger screen.*

- In the past, there have been *Forum Favorites* publications. Are there any considerations for other compilations of *Forum* articles in the future?

*In 2015, the World Service Conference passed a motion regarding another volume with the working title being “The Best of Forum Favorites.” We sought input from the membership as to what were some of their favorite stories, but as we proceeded, we had concerns regarding the financial feasibility of the project. Was it viable to create another paper version of something already printed? All of the other Forum Favorites were discontinued, making sure there was still a one-year supply on hand after discontinuation. It actually took nine years before that one-year supply was depleted. That and other factors lead to the decision that another paper book would not really be the best way to be fiscally responsible. We have been using the collection of Forum sharings that were submitted for the project and circulating them in other forms, including virtually whenever possible.*

- It was reported that we have collected 100 sharings for the Alateen bookmark. Is there a release date for the bookmark?

*There is no release date at this time. We did realize, with paper supply chain issues, etc., that the Alateen Talk newsletter, which contained the sharing sheet, was delayed in being printed, so we extended the deadline for submissions to the end of March. We are now taking those sharings and compiling them into a document before putting them into a bookmark form. That document will be sent to the members of the Literature Committee for their input regarding what will eventually be included in the bookmark. Then we will develop a draft of the bookmark that goes back to the Literature Committee for a final review. We are hoping to produce the bookmark this year.*

Numerous Delegates gave kudos to the Staff for their hard work and accomplishments.

A motion to approve the 2021 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #6, page 68. The complete report can be found on pages 70 - 119.

## 2023 AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

Heather S., Program Co-Coordinator  
Suzanne M., Program Coordinator

International Conventions are fabulous combinations of fun, fellowship, and recovery, as well as opportunities to meet new friends, explore new attractions, and vacation in new locales.



Albuquerque is a wonderful, cozy community, perfectly suited for Al-Anon Family Groups to meet and connect with fellow members and share our message of help and hope with new members. The space at the Albuquerque Convention Center allows for us to think outside of the box. The Kiva Auditorium offers angle opera seating for up to 2,300 people. Another unique space, just across the street from the Convention Center, has an open-air stage and a 20,000-person capacity. This will be a great place to have a party!

Conference members enjoyed a presentation on the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention, which will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico June 29 through July 2, 2023.

One of the first assignments of the 2023 International Convention team was to develop a theme that reflected both the sentiment being heard in the fellowship and the WSO's hopes for the Convention. After idea generation, the team landed on a few keywords that got incorporated into the theme: "Hope," "Friends," and "Recovery." The result: "New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery!"

Another item discussed with the WSC members was the Day of Connecting, which is historically held the day before the Convention begins. It's a celebration of service designed to bring members together. A bonus activity, the Day of Connecting is available for those who want to engage with the WSO Volunteers and Staff directly, make a deeper connection, and hear service topics members normally don't hear at recovery-focused Conventions or business-focused Assemblies. This event will be a separate registration from Convention and will be held Thursday, June 29. It will consist of a variety of sessions and, this year, lunch will be included with the ticket price.

Imagine thousands of attendees, old friends, new friends, and friends we have yet to meet, along with music, dancing, and dozens of food trucks to choose from as we party in Civic Plaza, celebrating recovery on Thursday evening.

Registration for the International Convention and related events, including hotel and lodging information, will open November 1, 2022.

Mark your calendars. We look forward to seeing you in Albuquerque for "New Hopes, New Friends, and Renewed Recovery," June 29—July 2, 2023!

## AL-ANON WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE CHARTER

Conference Leadership Team

### Background:

With the pending motion to admit the Global Electronic Area into the World Service Conference Structure, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) drafted housekeeping updates to the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter in order to include non-geographical Areas as part of the World Service Conference Structure.

The CLT offered the updates to the Board for its consideration and approval. Following its review, the Board approved the changes as submitted.

Although the Board is responsible for the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, the World Service Conference votes on recommended changes.

### The CLT offered the following rationales for the housekeeping changes:

- Revising **2. a. Composition** to address the potential to include non-geographic Areas; to align the wording of Staff to the previously approved WSC change from "Administrative Staff" to "voting members of the WSO Administrative Staff"; and to correct the delineation of the Policy Committee as the Policy Committee is comprised of members of the Board, members of the Executive Committee, and members of the Administrative Staff.
- Revising **2. b. Composition** to clarify the World Service Conference Structure, rather than the United States and Canada.
- Revising the subtitle of **5. State and Provincial Assemblies: Purpose of** to be consistent with the title of **6. Assemblies: Composition of**.
- Providing clarity to **5. a.** by adding a leading clause: "In each Area within the WSC Structure."
- Revising **6. a. Assemblies: Composition of** to clarify the World Service Conference Structure, rather than "each state and province," and removing "in a central location" to include non-geographical Areas.
- Revising **6. b. Assemblies: Composition of** to clarify the World Service Conference Structure, rather than the United States and Canada.

Conference members reviewed and discussed the proposed text changes. Following a thorough discussion and with the addition of minor revisions to the text as presented, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the changes. See Motion #5 on page 67.

# INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Jean L., Trustee, Committee Chairperson  
Diane B., Trustee, Co-Chairperson  
Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus  
Sarah S., Director of Programs  
Vali F., Executive Director

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) provides an avenue of communication to support international growth and to encourage the worldwide unity of Al-Anon and Alateen. The ICC is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees and may make recommendations to the Board on matters affecting Al-Anon outside the World Service Conference Structure, such as translation and reprint policies and visits to and communication with evolving structures. The Committee meets three times a year during Board weeks and additionally via web-conferencing calls when necessary.

The ICC membership includes a mix of Volunteers and Staff. Each member has voice but has different roles and responsibilities. The Chair and Co-Chair work closely with the Associate Director—International to plan and facilitate ICC meetings. Two Volunteers serve as Delegates to the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). Staff members contribute expertise related to programs and operations.

This Committee also coordinates the IAGSM and participates in other international service meetings. The Committee reviews Al-Anon activities and policies relating to individuals, groups, and service arms outside the World Service Conference Structure.

## Supporting Groups and Global Structures

The Chairperson explained, “The term ‘structure’ is used a lot when working with international services. A structure is a network of groups and local service arms responsible for organizing Al-Anon services. The World Service Conference Structure is composed of state, provincial, and territorial Delegates from the United States (including Puerto Rico), Canada, and Bermuda as well as WSO Staff and Volunteers. And now, thanks to this historic Conference, it also includes a Delegate from the Global Electronic Area. Many other structures exist outside of this service area.

“A structure can have paid or volunteer Staff or a mix of both and has an elected service board that consists of Al-Anon members.”

The Chairperson continued: “Some structures provide almost all the same services as the WSO; they have a Board of Trustees; Executive, Policy, and Finance Committees; and have an annual Conference of Delegates. These are national service structures. Other structures may only provide selected services, have a small board without any committees, or may only provide services in a limited area. These are known as evolving structures.

“The ICC supports the growth of structures worldwide by considering first-time requests for translation and reprint permission, by providing input on international site visits, by representing the needs of international groups and service arms at the World Service Conference, and by coordinating and participating in international service meetings.”

## International Service Meetings

The Co-Chairperson was introduced to explain the further work of the ICC. “The ICC plans, coordinates, and attends the biennial IAGSM. This is a meeting for structures which have a national service office, also called a General Service Office or GSO. Each one of these structures is eligible to send two Delegates to the meeting. The

purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates. It encourages the growth of service structures while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of Al-Anon Traditions. This supports the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amid cultural and language differences.”

The Co-Chair continued, “The ICC has been busy working on planning the 2022 event over the last several months. Members of the ICC have been identifying general session topics for the next IAGSM. The process has included brainstorming, reviewing previous IAGSM agendas, considering theme suggestions, and reviewing topics of interest from Zonal meetings. This process has resulted in a timely and interesting list of topics:

- Welcoming and Supporting Al-Anon Family Groups Meeting Electronically
- Revising and Implementing New Alateen Safety Requirements
- Trademark Issues/Sharing, Reprints, Availability of CAL
- Finances
- Filling Service Roles
- Rejuvenating Public Outreach after COVID
- Responsibilities of a GSO

“Next in the process, the Committee identified international structures with experience to share on each topic and invited them to participate in roles such as presenters, speakers, readers, and workshop facilitators. In the recent past, there have been between 15 and 25 structures participating in the IAGSM.”

The Co-Chair went on to explain, “Zonal meetings are structured and organized service meetings, less formal than the IAGSM. Attendance is open to national and evolving service structures. This means that a structure does not have to have a GSO to attend. Zonal meetings provide opportunities for service structures to meet face-to-face, hear reports, and exchange information. As a guest, the WSO is invited to strengthen our mutual connections. Zonal meetings are hosted and attended by structures in Central America, Europe, and South America.”

More information on the work of the ICC can be found in several places:

- The descriptive text of Concept Eleven in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) details the primary responsibilities of the ICC.
- The al-anon.org website includes an International page with more about the different kinds of structures supported by the WSO.
- The website has an archive of *IAGSM Summaries* dating back to the first one in 1980.
- *World Service Conference Summaries* (P-46) include reports of IAGSMs, Zonal meetings, and international trips. *Conference Summaries* can also be found on al-anon.org.

## EUROPEAN ZONAL MEETING

Jean L., Trustee, Chairperson of ICC

“I had the privilege of attending the European Zonal Meeting, or EZM, with the Associate Director—International via web conference. We are invited guests at this meeting, so we attend with voice and no vote. We were excited to get the chance to listen, learn, and

participate with members from GSOs and evolving structures—some as large as the UK & Eire with over 700 groups, and some as small as a representative from Estonia with three groups. The mission of the EZM is to improve communication between European countries in support of Al-Anon/Alateen growth. Topics included Alateen, recognizing electronic groups, public outreach, and legal considerations about selling literature.

“I have often observed that Al-Anon members rise to challenges and that is what I observed at the EZM. Many groups that have never had online meetings now have online meetings. Some members spend their own money and send literature over 2,000 miles via train, via parcel, or personally. Some countries even struggle with political situations that we would not fathom as part of the WSC Structure. We are a resilient bunch and creative problem-solvers.

“I also have a new appreciation for worldwide members, who are just members affected by someone else’s drinking. We are all much more similar than different.

“Finally, if you are going to attend an international event via Zoom—and for me, the start time was 2:30 am—you need lots of coffee! The Associate Director—International and I decided to treat ourselves like we were traveling, so I indulged in fancy coffee and she in cookies like the ones you get on the plane.”

### **IBERO-AMERICAN ZONAL MEETING**

Sarah S., Director of Programs

The goal for the WSO representatives was to attend on behalf of the WSO, provide support, participate in workshops, answer assigned questions, and answer general questions while collaborating with each structure present.

“There are quite a few countries that have membership in this service meeting. It’s not every country in South America, but it is most of them, and it also includes Spain and Portugal in Europe and some Spanish-speaking countries like Mexico in addition to others located in Central America.

“The WSO presented information about its existing resources for collaboration and communication with the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, and participated in open discussions about the challenges of printing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

“The theme of this service meeting was ‘More United Than Ever,’ and for me that kind of meant ‘more connected than ever.’ The world feels like it’s getting smaller all the time, and it’s clearer to me, after each one of these events I participate in, that we are interdependent as service arms, that what happens in one structure can have a ripple effect on many others, and that when progress is made in one place, it can spur progress and innovation in others. As Al-Anon members, we all share a common personal goal of recovery from the family disease of alcoholism. Al-Anon trusted servants around the world share a common goal of constantly improving the ways they serve their members. Events such as this Zonal meeting help us all make progress toward that.”

### **CENTRAL AMERICAN ZONAL MEETING**

Sarah S., Director of Programs

“The Central American Zonal Meeting is much smaller than its Ibero-American cousin. There are only about eight member structures. This gives it a little bit more of an intimate feel, and the structures clearly have a familiarity with each other that lends itself to having open discussion of topics of interest.

“The WSO presented new information about its efforts to improve collaboration and communication with the structures and highlights of the World Service Conference. Staff also shared new information about the efforts of the WSO to protect Alateens, particularly those pilot meetings occurring electronically, while still attracting newcomers.

“The openness of the participating countries and the WSO allowed all present to express an appreciation for the chance to come together at the service event and share information and to directly confront the challenges shared by many.”

The Chairperson concluded, “The meeting has led to new opportunities for Staff to work one-on-one with service representatives in these structures.”

### **Ongoing Work of the ICC**

The Chairperson shared that the goal of the ICC is to support the WSO commitment of open communication with all of the structures and to strengthen our relationships.

Things are constantly happening throughout the international structures, and “we are accountable for our accomplishments and report to those we serve.”

“Here are some of our shared accomplishments:

#### **Service Arm Registrations**

- Kazakhstan registered as a new service arm.
- After many years, Russia was formally approved to become a GSO.

#### **Translation and Reprints**

- The WSO is processing the first-time request to review translated pamphlets and books from Lithuania. The WSO has sent the translated materials to independent reviewers per our process for first-time translation requests.
- We also received a first-time translation request from Bulgaria. WSO Staff are in the process of getting to know the members from Bulgaria, which is part of our usual process for approving a first translation request.
- We were also excited to receive new translation requests from Greece and Turkey.

#### **New and Renewed Contacts**

We are very excited to have been contacted by members in four new countries:

- Dominican Republic
- Hong Kong
- Antarctica
- Israel

And we also had the opportunity this past year to renew relationships with:

- Cuba
- Norway
- Greece.”

### **Closing**

The Chairperson concluded her report by saying, “Thank you for the opportunity to report on the amazing work of the ICC and Al-Anon trusted servants around the world.”

## Following the presentation, Conference members had the following questions:

- Does the ICC have information about how many members are outside the WSC?

*The WSO does not keep track of the number of members, but we do keep track of the number of groups.*

- How many countries outside of the US and Canada are in the fellowship?

*There are Al-Anon groups in 131 countries.*

## ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT WORK GROUP

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

The members of the Work Group began their presentation with an entertaining skit to explain what Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect is and how the fellowship benefits.

Once a year, all current members of the Board and At-Large Members of the Executive Committee go to a different Area and hold the entire Board Week there. Then, at the end of the week, the Road Trip! event happens. This event, which is open to local and visiting members, explains what the Board of Trustees does.

This year, 2022, marks the seventh Road Trip! The Board has been to Newfoundland, Alberta, Arkansas, Colorado, Texas, and Washington. The 2022 Road Trip! event will be in Cleveland, Ohio on October 29, 2022! Registration begins in August 2022. All members are welcome; however, there is limited space, so members were reminded to register early.



The Delegates were encouraged to ask their Area to put in a bid for 2023. Invitations were distributed to all Delegates to take back as a way of encouraging their Area. The invitation included all that is needed to know about hosting a Road Trip! event.

Bids for 2023 are due by Friday, September 23, 2022. One Area will be randomly selected to host the 2023 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect from among all of the qualified applications.

### Conference members had the following questions:

- It is not clear who is paying for the hotel where the event is held. Is it the Area, or is it part of the Board's expense?

*Since the event is hosted by the Board of Trustees, it is paid by the WSO.*

- How often can an Area apply to have a Road Trip!? My Area has applied twice.

*If you have applied before, you can apply again. If you have held the event in the past, we are asking that your Area hold off applying again until others can have the privilege.*

- California would love to hold the Road Trip!, but we realize hotel rates around us are not going to be the same as in other places. How much is cost a factor in this process? Should we encourage my Area? Can we compete with less expensive Areas?

*We ask that you think of several questions as you complete the application: Does the hotel you are looking at have a free shuttle? Does it have free meeting space that the Board could possibly utilize during the week? Do you have an airport that is accessible for multiple airlines? We encourage you to look for places that are reasonably affordable and would physically work for the Board, not necessarily the most or least expensive. We have gone to places that were expensive but also had all the other things we needed. The Board would love to get out to every Area, so please think about submitting a bid.*

- Are there any other dates available in 2023 besides October 23?

*No, as currently Road Trip! is connected to the Board meeting in October.*

The Conference Co-Chair thanked the Work Group for the information and encouraged all Delegates to share the invitations with the members in their Areas.

## SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

### Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Sue R., Chairperson, Panel 60, South Dakota

“Fellow members of Al-Anon’s World Service Conference, it is my pleasure, as Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), to report to you the work of this year’s Committee.

“The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson each year. Résumés for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office by August 15 of each year. The CCT members review the submitted résumés. They score each résumé based on skill sets, while taking into consideration the current needs of the Board and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. The CCT members are also encouraged to write comments related to their scoring decisions. When completed, the scoring sheets and accompanying comments are sent to the CCT Chairperson. The CCT Chairperson reviews the comments and rankings that were submitted by each CCT member, compiles the material, and forwards the compilation of rankings and comments to the World Service Office in early October.

“Concurrent with the CCT process, the Nominating Committee also scores each résumé for Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management. WSO receives and tallies résumé scores and forwards the results to the Board Nominating Committee for review the Wednesday before the October Board Meeting. The Nominating Committee using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has of the current Board needs, selects up to six candidates. By December 1, the Nominating Committee notifies the CCT of the potential candidates they have selected. CCT members can file an objection to a potential candidate by December 15. The final selection

of the nominees is decided by the Board at the January Board meeting. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and Executive Committee on Real Property Management nominees are given traditional approval by the Conference and may be elected by the Board at the Annual Board Meeting following the World Service Conference.

“In September 2021, we received six TAL résumés. One member withdrew their résumé, so we reviewed five résumés. We also received two résumés for the ECRPM. The CCT was composed of nine members, three from each of the three panels: 59, 60, and 61. Because of their dedication to the process, we were able to meet the submission deadline in a timely manner.

“One previous CCT Chair referred to the members of the CCT as silent servants. He is right. The only communication the CCT has with each other occurs during the August meeting hosted by the CCT chair, prior to the receipt of the résumés, to discuss the process and answer questions. We each are encouraged to use our Higher Power as a guide in the scoring process. The information we are given from the candidates is very personal, therefore we must adhere to the Al-Anon principles of anonymity and trust throughout the process.

“I would like to thank the members of the CCT for their diligence and participation in this very important process. I would also like to offer my congratulations to the nominees for TAL and the nominee for ECRPM. Finally, as we move forward while ‘Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding,’ I would like to introduce the 2022 CCT Chair John McG., Panel 61, California North, and the 2022 Chair Elect, Pamela C., Panel 62, Montana.” Thank you both for being willing to chair this Committee.

It has been my honor and privilege to be a part of this Committee and to serve the World Service Conference as the 2021 CCT Chair.”

## **Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmations**

Diane B., Chairperson of Nominating Committee

The nominating process for electing Trustees, Board Officers, and Executive Committee At-Large members is lengthy and based in the spiritual principles of Al-Anon. The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, Article 10(a) states, “The Board elects its own successors, with nominees subject to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof.” The Conference gives traditional approval through the affirmation process for the slate of Trustees to the Board and the Board Officers. The process also informs Conference members of the Board of Trustees’ nominees for At-Large members of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee on Real Property Management (ECRPM).

My experience first serving on the Nominating Committee, and then being honored to serve as its chairperson, has been different than any other nominating committee on which I have served. The spiritual journey in the selection process is transforming. This is a collaborative effort, which can include reviews by as many as 64 Al-Anon members from the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) or a Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT), the Nominating Committee, and the Board of Trustees. The reviews are thoughtful, thorough, and guided by each member’s own Higher Power.

The Nominating Committee is provided the résumés and summaries of the reviews. I have experienced discussions that have been uplifting and respectful of each candidate. We appreciate the commitment that each candidate makes to serve Al-Anon and protect our Legacies. I have grown in ways that have been totally unexpected, and I find myself in awe of how this process works.

The initial review of the résumés reveals the service of each candidate and the self-evaluation of skills, experience, and motivations. As I listen to the words that are written, I begin to form a picture in my mind of

who this person is and how this person has contributed to the fellowship of Al-Anon. Before scoring and ranking the candidate, I make a few notes and then give myself time to meditate and pray. My Higher Power is then in charge. In a few days, I again review the résumés, and more is revealed. After the scoring and ranking of each candidate is submitted, the Committee receives a summary of the scorings with comments. A meeting is scheduled, and at that meeting each application is open for discussion.

This is where the miracles happen. As a member of the Nominating Committee, I listen to each Committee member apply the Traditions, Concepts and Warranties. Concept Eleven outlines the responsibilities of the Nominating Committee, the CCT, and the RCTs. Concept Four (Principle of Participation) is the guiding principle for the Delegates on the CCT and RCTs and the Trustees on the Nominating Committee. Warranty Four ensures no action is punitive and that decisions of the Nominating Committee are fair, objective, and spiritually guided.

Warranty Five assures that our Conference decisions are made “with mutual respect and love, one member to another; that no action will be taken in anger, haste or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action will be personally punitive.” The affirmation process is guided by this principle. We trust our Higher Power and act with love and respect for those who have expressed their willingness to serve. We can ask nothing more of ourselves than this. I have been overwhelmed with respect for the dedication of those who spend their time reviewing and processing candidates. The level of concern for the future of Al-Anon is evident in the commitment of the members involved.

The next step for us today is the Conference affirmation process, which may be followed by the legal election by the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting. I extend my sincere appreciation to those who have served on the Nominating Committee and those who served on the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Regional Committees on Trustees. “Participation is the Key to Harmony.”

Following the Nominating Committee Chairperson’s report, two Trustees presented a short skit about the affirmation process. During the affirmation process, Conference members were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments about all of the candidates. Any nominees present were asked to leave the room during discussion of their candidacy and during the voting process for their candidacy.

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2022 WSC:

### **Trustees at Large:**

Ann Marie Z., first three-year term

Pennie K., first three-year term

### **Regional Trustees:**

Jean L., US North Central, second three-year term

Sally K., Canada West, first year of a remaining two-year term

### **Board Officers:**

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board

Jean L., Vice Chairperson of the Board

Cindy M., Treasurer

### **The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2022–2023:**

David B., second one-year term, Chairperson

Jeffrey F., first one-year term

Carol M., first one-year term

Sarah S., Director of Programs

### **The Board announced the appointment of Elizabeth (Liz) D. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2022–2023.**

## TEAM REPLACEMENT UPDATE

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

At the 2021 WSC, the Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) Replacement Task Force reported that the Board had been having ongoing conversations about the TEAM replacement event and that it was challenging to create an event that was different from the way Areas were already interacting with WSO Volunteers and Staff.

At the October 2021 Board meeting, after much discussion and careful consideration, the Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to put the TEAM Replacement Task Force on hold. Based on the TEAM replacement discussion at the 2021 WSC, the Board knows that it is important for members in your Areas to be able to interact with WSO Volunteers and Staff. So, I want to reiterate that there are opportunities for you and members in your Area to interact with WSO Volunteers and Staff. Some of those opportunities are:

- Inviting WSO Volunteers or Staff to attend your Area Assembly, Area World Service Committee (AWSC), Conference, or District event. As a reminder, WSO Volunteers and Staff can be invited for an in-person or virtual event. When an Area invites WSO Volunteers or Staff for an in-person event, the Area is responsible for covering the expenses of the Volunteer or Staff member.
- Smaller Areas could collaborate with Areas around them to host an event.
- Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter presentations held with current paneled Delegates. The remaining two presentations for 2022 will occur on August 6 and November 5.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we appreciate your understanding surrounding this decision. We look forward to being invited to your Area or District events.

## WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE ANNOUNCEMENT (2023)

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The dates selected for the 2023 World Service Conference are Thursday, April 20 through Sunday, April 23, 2023. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Wednesday, April 19 and depart on Monday, April 24. The Conference will be held at The Founders Inn, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were taken into consideration.

As reported in the 2021 World Service Office Annual Report, the Board of Trustees passed a motion to approve reducing Conference Week to four days, effective 2023, on a three-year trial basis.

The four-day Conference will include an Orientation Meeting for New WSC Members, Sharing Area Highlights, an Opening Lunch, Conference, the Annual Open Board of Trustees Meetings, and the Closing Dinner.



## ALATEEN GROUP FEASIBILITY

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Conference members viewed a PowerPoint based around the concept of trying to catch an upcoming train and running as fast as possible to catch up with it before it leaves the station. That is similar to what the WSO is experiencing in dealing with Alateen electronic meetings. Alateen meetings were not included as part of the 2021 WSC discussion or the Phase One work that flowed from the 2021 Motion; however, this has not slowed the train that started rolling as the result of the pandemic, both within the WSC Structure and across the globe.

The speed with which the train had begun to roll prompted WSO Staff to recommend, which the Board of Trustees approved, the allocation of Staff resources to research the feasibility of Alateen electronic groups/meetings as part of a 2021 Strategic Plan Strategy. Both the Board and Staff understand this project is very time-sensitive. The train is already rolling in different parts of the world. In the WSO's role as the clearinghouse and the senior service structure to the international communities, it's imperative to define a process for Alateen electronic groups/meetings to take place in a framework that maintains the safety of all members involved and protects Al-Anon's name and reputation.

The ultimate goal for this Strategy is to develop a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to support the implementation of Alateen electronic groups/meetings within a framework that ensures Alateen and AMIAS safety.

The presentation to the Conference provided some insight into the work the WSO Staff has been doing in response to the Board direction.

## ALATEEN RECERTIFICATION PROCESS: SHARED EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Sarah S., Director of Programs  
Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

The Associate Director—Group Services started the presentation by saying: "Staff asked the Conference Leadership Team for time on the Conference agenda because it was felt that we, the WSO Staff, WSO Volunteers, and Delegates together, needed an opportunity to reflect on the history of our recertification process and what resulted last year, and to align on what opportunities we might have for ensuring the 2022 Alateen recertification process has a more successful outcome."

The Chairperson of the Board continued. "It has been almost 20 years since the Board of Trustees passed the 2003 Alateen Motion. Some of us here today might not even have been in Al-Anon when the motion was passed. I want to remind everyone that the 2003 Alateen Motion came from the Board of Trustees. It might be helpful to start off with a brief review of the history that led to the Board passing the 2003 Alateen Motion.

### Background:

"At the 2004 WSC, the Chairperson of the Board presented background information on the reason the Board implemented Safety

and Behavioral Requirements for Alateens and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). She noted that the Board had been looking at and discussing the issue of Alateen safety with the Delegates for many years.

"At the 2002 WSC, during a 'Talking with the Delegates' session, Delegates were asked, 'What do you, as Delegates, think is the most important issue facing Al-Anon in the future?' The responses from the Delegates showed that Alateen safety was a high priority. As a result of the overwhelming response from the Delegates, the 'Talking with the Delegates' session at the 2003 WSC was devoted entirely to Alateen safety.

"More Areas were creating their own Alateen requirements. The WSO had nothing in place to support these Areas. If a potential Alateen Group Sponsor did not meet the guidelines of the Area, that person could still register an Alateen group and sponsor it. There was nothing that could be done if that person refused to step down. Many Areas perceived Alateen guidelines as optional suggestions and did not have written safety requirements in place for Alateens and for members involved in Alateen service."

The Chairperson continued, "The Board did not take Alateen safety lightly and devoted a great deal of time to the topic at Board meetings, Policy Committee meetings, and Group Services Committee meetings. The Board reviewed all of the Alateen information in the WSO Archives. In fact, the Chairperson of the Board showed the 2004 Conference members her three-inch-high stack of papers that had been studied.

"The Board, as outlined within the Bylaws and Concept Seven, has the responsibility to protect the legal rights of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. With that in mind, the Board unanimously decided that it had to take action. The Board began the process of developing requirements that the fellowship would need to adhere to in order to maintain the right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name. The Alateen motion was passed in December 2003 and was immediately sent to the Delegates, with implementation required by December 31, 2004. The 2003 Alateen motion can be found in the Appendix of the *Service Manual* (P-24/27).

"At the 2004 WSC, members unanimously voted for Motion #12, which affirmed the minimum safety and behavioral requirements for Alateen that were put into effect December 8, 2003. Conference members felt that doing so made the 2003 Alateen motion not only a Board decision, but also a Conference decision.

"The motion itself provides additional details about the intention of the Board of Trustees in approving the motion, which the 2004 Conference members then affirmed."

The Chairperson of the Board asked that Conference members read with her the first three paragraphs of the motion.

### 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees

"The Alateen Advisory Committee, the Group Services Committee, the World Service Office Policy Committee, and the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. have studied the issues concerning the safety and behavior of Alateen members and individuals involved with Alateen service. The Board has reviewed the documents and actions of previous Conferences, previous committees, and the World Service Office correspondence with legal counsel, individual members, Alateen Group Sponsors, Coordinators, as well as Area and District officers.

“The Board of Trustees has determined:

- Not all Areas have written Safety or Behavioral Requirements for Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service.
- The WSO registration procedures and policies should support Areas that have developed Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- The Al-Anon fellowship should take all necessary steps to provide a safe environment for Alateens and the Al-Anons involved with Alateen service.

“As Tradition Four states, ‘Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.’ The Board of Trustees has determined that issues of safety and behavior by Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service do affect every group and Al-Anon as a whole.”

The remainder of the 2003 Alateen Motion outlines the minimum safety and behavioral requirements for Areas to certify to use the Alateen name and provides direction to the World Service Office, to whom the Board of Trustees delegated responsibility to execute the Area certification and recertification process on an annual basis.

### Concerns

The Associate Director—Group Services continued. “As the motion describes, and consistent with the principles of delegated responsibility and authority outlined in the Twelve Concepts of Service, the Board delegated responsibility to the WSO to establish the process for Areas to certify and recertify as well as to create any necessary deadlines for completion. In 2005, Conference members were informed about a May/June timeline. Ultimately, the WSO established a June 30 deadline for all Areas to complete the recertification of AMIAS and all Alateen groups.

“Over the years, most Areas would complete the process by the deadline, but many did not.

“With the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore looming, the June 30, 2018 deadline became an issue of concern. Staff needed to ensure Area recertifications were complete in time to ensure the safety of Alateen meetings at the International Convention. So, as part of the 2018 WSO training for Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPP) and Area Alateen Coordinators (AAC), Staff asked for Area cooperation in completing the recertification by June 15.

“The WSO Staff recognized the June 15 deadline was necessary to provide adequate time for AFG Records to complete each Area’s recertification in order to comply with the Alateen Policy and the 2003 motion. AFG Records Staff recertification work includes:

- Verifying each AMIAS recertifying against the WSO “ineligible” list
- Ensuring the location address of each active Alateen meeting is valid, which is necessary to allow for accurate location of Alateen meetings using the al-anon.org search.

“Regrettably, a number of AMIAS who had registered to sponsor 2018 Convention Alateen meetings did not recertify in time and were not able to support the teens. This outcome prompted Staff to set June 15 as the deadline going forward in the hopes that WSO Staff, together with Area trusted servants, could be successful in meeting the ultimate WSO June 30 completion date in future years.

“It also prompted Staff to revisit the WSO Alateen procedures and its communication strategy. Staff started by reviewing the current Alateen Policy which, we realized, did not provide clarity for Areas regarding several requirements:

- Any changes to Area Alateen Safety and Behavior Requirements (ASBR) needed to be reviewed by local counsel and then

sent to the WSO for review and approval prior to the Area implementing the changes.

- Alateen groups needed to be afforded the same recertification importance as the AMIAS.”

The Associate Director continued, “So began a multi-year Staff effort to improve WSO communications with Areas regarding the importance of the deadline and the scope of the recertification effort. Improved training materials were created, more communication shared, and additional support steps implemented. Sadly, despite these efforts, 2019 saw multiple Areas miss the June 15 deadline. In several cases, WSO Staff had to work daily with AAPPs up to and past the June 30 deadline to complete the recertification process. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the deadline was extended, yet many Areas again missed the deadline. All this led us to 2021.”

### Impacts and Consequences

The Director of Programs explained, “In 2021, 11 Areas did not meet the Annual Alateen Recertification deadline. Following the direction of the Board of Trustees to ensure compliance with the 2003 motion, in 2021, the Staff and Volunteers recognized the WSO could not continue to extend the deadline year after year. Therefore, Staff needed to inactivate all AMIAS and Alateen groups in each of the 11 Areas. Think about that: almost one-fifth of our WSC Structure Areas weren’t certified to use the Alateen name.

“To say the least, the impacts and consequences to Alateen members and Area trusted servants were widespread.”

The Director went on: “WSO Staff and Volunteers were also very deeply impacted when the Areas did not complete the recertification by the deadline. Powerless to control Area actions, the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee Volunteers remained obligated to uphold the commitment to Alateen safety outlined in the 2003 Alateen Motion. As a result, Staff were required to inactivate 98 Alateen groups, knowing these actions would impact the ability of Alateen members to attend meetings. This process was a very emotional one for the WSO Staff and Volunteers.”

The Associate Director—Group Services continued, “Now that we have explored our history and impacts, the next question becomes: How can we work together to avoid this situation in 2022 and beyond?”

“Both the WSO Staff and Volunteers and the World Service Conference Delegates play a part.

- As Delegates, you are the link between the WSC and the Areas! You can impact the outcome by communicating the importance of adhering to the Alateen recertification deadline. As responsible trusted servants and the identified leaders in service within your respective Areas, you play a vital role in ensuring Alateen’s future.
- The WSO Staff and Volunteers are responsible for supporting Areas that want to have an Alateen program and for making the recertification process as smooth as possible.

“The 2022 annual Alateen recertification process is already in progress. Transparency is key. We are hopeful this presentation will generate awareness and a sense of urgency for completing the 2022 recertification process by the deadline. Providing this information to you in April will allow you to elevate the conversation in your respective Areas.

“The World Service Office and Board of Trustees realize the annual recertification process is a significant undertaking and can be daunting. Since 2018, the WSO has been evaluating its part in this shared responsibility and looking for opportunities to simplify the

process and increase Staff support to the Area Alateen trusted servants. The WSO's goal is to improve the likelihood and feasibility of Areas completing the recertification process on time. Here are some of the ways in which the WSO is striving to achieve its shared responsibility in creating a successful 2022 recertification process.

- **January**—The web-based recertification platform opens the second week of January with self-paced video tutorials to assist the AAPPs who want to get a jump on the process.
- **February**—The Annual Alateen Group Recertification sheet is mailed to CMAs with the intent that the earlier they get the Alateen group information, the earlier they will forward any updates to the AAPP to support the recertification process. This is new! Previously, this form was mailed in March and was called the Alateen Annual Update Sheet. Staff felt it was important to mail the sheet earlier and change the name to formally connect it to the recertification process.
- **March**—Starting in March, WSO Staff offer live trainings to AAPPs! All training sessions are recorded, and the recordings are stored for reference in the AAPP community on AFG Connects. An additional training is offered in May in an effort to support a successful recertification process.

“Through the process, WSO Staff are able to monitor each Area's progress. We start emailing Area trusted servants directly six weeks before the deadline to offer support and remind them of the June 15 deadline and the consequences for not meeting the deadline. Our goal is not to nag, but rather to remind Area trusted servants, many of whom we know to be very busy, of this service responsibility, as we recognize and appreciate the responsibility this process entails because we share it with the Areas.

“The WSO Staff is available and willing to support any individual Area trusted servant who reaches out for help.”

The Director continued: “While the WSO plays a supporting role in this recertification process, the Area's role in this shared responsibility is fundamental. Let's consider how Area Delegates can help their Area trusted servants discharge their shared responsibility for creating a successful 2022.

“To begin, encourage AAPPs not to wait—to start talking about the recertification process in January and to use all the communication methods available. We are surrounded by technology that can be used to the Area and Alateens' advantage.

“Areas are responsible for supporting the AAPP throughout this process. This is where the Delegates' role is particularly important! Open the conversation in your Area: is there something more that Area trusted servants can do to help support the AAPP in your Area? We have the slogan, ‘Together We Can Make It.’

“Most Area members want to support Alateen, even if they don't want to become an AMIAS. Yet many don't know what is needed. Delegates can lead the charge by discussing the recertification process at all Area events. This is an opportunity to ‘get creative’—AWSCs, conventions, and Assemblies are all opportunities to talk up recertification or even host a recertification at spring events.

“AAPPs, Area Alateen Coordinators, and even Delegates have the authority and responsibility to reach out for help from WSO Staff if they are uncertain! Our personal recovery teaches us to ask for help. Asking for help ensures Area Alateen programs will remain to help those teens who desperately need it. With our shared responsibility, WSO Staff are ready, willing, and committed to help Areas through the process.

“Alateen members have everything to lose if the recertification deadline is missed. Areas can create shared awareness with the teens

surrounding this process to gain teen buy-in. AMIAS and Alateen Group Sponsors can be encouraged to talk about the recertification process at Alateen meetings and invite the teens to help with the conversations. A teen could be invited to share at a service event about how important Alateen is to them. Allowing Alateens to be part of the process may encourage the AMIAS who are legally responsible for Alateen to proactively submit their recertification.”

### Future Successes

The Director of Programs continued the conversation. “As we are thinking about 2022 success, it is important to remember that providing an Alateen program is a matter of Area autonomy. We realize the pandemic has created unforeseen challenges. If your Area is now in a position where you don't have the resources, you do not have to provide an Alateen program. We learn in our personal program that we each have to take personal responsibility to understand what we can or cannot do.

“*How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), page 51, states,

‘Step Four is an inventory, a list of characteristics, thought and behavior patterns, relationships, and events that make us who we are today. We wouldn't hesitate to take inventory if we owned a toy store. It would be essential to know that we had too many dolls, not enough frisbees, or just the right number of board games. Such information would allow us to make adjustments and bring our business into balance.

‘A personal inventory does the same thing. It helps us to take stock of ourselves. This Step makes it possible to learn about...[our] unrecognized talents, our unspoken shame, secret delights, and hidden passions. The key to Step Four is that it be taken fearlessly, free from judgment. It makes no more sense to berate ourselves...because teddy bears are in short supply in our toy store. By looking at and accepting ourselves as we truly are, we can make decisions about who we choose to become.’

“Each Area within the WSC Structure has the same opportunity and responsibility to complete an inventory about their capacity to have an Alateen program. Perhaps your Area was significantly affected by the pandemic. Perhaps you have fewer groups or less interest in service. In these cases, your Area has a responsibility to take a ‘fearless inventory, free from judgment’ about supporting Alateen. Please think about these questions:

- Does the Area have the financial and member resources necessary to support Alateen?
- Are your Area members, groups, and trusted servants committed to completing the recertification process annually?

“The reading from *How Al-Anon Works* touched on unspoken shame. The Board and WSO recognize the majority of the WSC Structure feels an obligation to provide an Alateen program. We also recognize that Areas are facing unprecedented challenges and may no longer have the resources they once had. We want to reassure you there is no shame in not being able to provide an Alateen program at this time. It's okay. What is not okay is having an Alateen program and not maintaining the certification.

“As identified in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees, ‘...if an Area within the World Service Conference Structure uses the...Alateen name in conjunction with any meeting(s), group(s), convention(s), or any other gathering(s) in the Area where Alateen participation is offered, the Area must have Safety and Behavioral Requirements for all Alateen members and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service.’

“We realize Alateen is a huge commitment, and we appreciate all

Areas taking the time to evaluate their capacity so they can honor their commitments.

“We hope with an improved understanding of our shared responsibilities, the WSO and Areas can work together in shared leadership and with mutual accountability for the Alateen recertification process to achieve 2022 success!”

The Associate Director went on to share more on future successes. “As part of achieving 2022 success, the WSO is already working with those Areas currently not certified to use the Alateen name. The process of certifying after missing the deadline is time-consuming because it starts at the beginning.

“Areas are asked to start the process of recreating their Alateen program by refreshing themselves on the 2003 Alateen Motion, the Alateen Policy contained in the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,’ and all WSO guidelines related to Alateen. Areas are permitted to use their existing ASBRs, but they must be reviewed by local counsel before they are submitted to the WSO for approval to ensure they continue to comply with current local laws.

“Once received, WSO Staff prioritize dedicating time to review the submitted ASBR. The review process is painstaking and meticulous, requiring attention to detail and many hours of Staff time to ensure compliance with the motion, policy, and guidelines. Both the Area and Staff can use the review process as an opportunity to start over, look at the process in place, discuss concerns, and identify any gaps. Trusted servants from Areas who have decided to complete certification after missing the 2021 deadline have said they believe Alateen in their Area will be better served as a result of their efforts to revamp their ASBR and accompanying Area Alateen process.

“WSO Staff are thoroughly committed to working with any Area that wishes to return to having an Alateen program. We have been grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with five such Areas over the last year. Hopefully, with shared responsibility balanced between the WSO and the Areas for 2022, only Areas which make the choice not to have an Alateen program will need to start from the beginning again in the future.

“As we stated at the beginning, the 2022 annual Alateen recertification process is already underway! June 15 will be here before we know it. To date there are:

- ✓ Six Areas that have completed their recertification,
- ✓ 35 Areas in progress,
- ✓ 15 Areas that have not yet started.

“We know that no Conference members or Area Alateen trusted servants, and certainly no Alateens, want a repeat of 2021. Transparency is the key to our mutual success with this shared responsibility. Please make the recertification process a priority discussion point when you prepare your Delegate’s Report.

The Associate Director finished by stating, “We really do mean it when we say that ‘Together We Can Make It!’ We hope this information has been helpful and that your respective Areas will develop a revitalized appreciation that Alateen is Al-Anon!”

### **Conference members were given the opportunity for questions and feedback.**

- I am moved to tears and yet hopeful. If this moved me, it moved you. Awareness is needed to change. I intend to invite the Director of Programs to speak at our Assembly. I want my Area to hear from someone who started in Alateen and went on to Al-Anon.
- I am going to speak as an AAPP; nothing against what WSO has done, but what I have found is that the AMIAS are not getting

their recertification paperwork in. I am going to suggest that my Area pretends that the deadline is April 15. On that day you pay your taxes, so make that the day you do your recertification.

- Thanks to the WSO Staff for the presentation. When I got the email that we lost the recertification, I talked to the WSO. What can we do now? Both the AAPP and I got emails with the step-by-step process to get recertified. We got it back starting in September. We followed their directions! Thank you to the Staff for being available. What we have done is be in constant contact with the AAPP and Alateen Coordinator. In this instance, you might have to micromanage! We meet regularly with the AAPP and, as Delegate, I can tell you today where we are in resuming the certification process.
- Thank you for providing more information. My Area was one of the Areas that lost its certification. But I think it could have been handled differently. I never have heard why we did not pass. Most of the AMIAS were good on June 14, but we were decertified on June 15. Those who did the paperwork should be recertified, but the whole recertification was lost. Why?

*Last year, communication started in May to Areas that had not started or that had not made any progress. We could see this in our database, and we started communication right away by consistently reminding the AAPP of the June 15 deadline, and that, if not met, the Area would lose the ability to use the Alateen name. So, rather than being late one day, or just two days, etc., the WSO has a deadline to meet and at 11:59 pm on June 15, no more information will be entered into the database. That deadline is in keeping with the Motion and the Policy.*

*Once the deadline has passed, an Area is no longer certified. No matter if you are five minutes late or two years late, the Area has to start back at the beginning, which includes a legal review.*

- Once we are notified that we have missed the date, is that when the Area cannot have Alateen?

*If the June 15 deadline is missed, as of July 1, the Alateen name cannot be used. Any teenaged program members are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings. You cannot use the Alateen name—Alateen does not exist for that Area.*

- We lost our certification; the AAPP did not make the “click.” More training would be good. It was a very serious mistake. But the WSO did give us great support. We have to rewrite our policy and procedures. We are now doing extensive changes to our guidelines, although it seems very bureaucratic do this process. We have lost our teens so when we get our certification again, we will not have the longevity. We have lots of animosity. Members do not want to contribute to the WSO. At this time, I cannot invite the WSO to come to my Area, but I do not believe that the WSO is out to get us. How many Delegates can say, “I am not listening to this presentation because this didn’t happen to us?” But it was just a “click” that one person did not follow up with. I don’t think the membership knew how many times the AAPP was reminded! I talk about this at every AWSC.

*As a reminder to Areas that lose their certification, guidelines need to be reviewed by legal counsel. Some Areas have not had their requirements reviewed since 2004.*

*The laws regarding minors have changed a lot since 2003. The WSO encourages regular updates with your local legal counsel. The benefit of sending it back is that your attorney may say you need to make changes in your Area. Those reviews should be encouraged in your Area.*

## CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Fifty-four Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs) were submitted by the deadline. Prior to Conference, members were invited to vote for the top 18 topics that were most important to them. This approach is designed to identify the natural grouping of overall priorities. Two of the 54 CAIs were discussed in the General Session.

### **Topic:**

Helping members recognize that service participation is vital to personal recovery and to the future availability of Al-Anon to families and friends of alcoholics.

### **Rationale:**

Historically, many members attend Al-Anon meetings for relief, rather than recovery, not recognizing that service is an integral component of this program. Two years of limited access to seeing service in action presents us with a unique opportunity to reemphasize the necessity of participating in service for healthy personal recovery and to provide for the long-term stability of Al-Anon Family Groups as an organization. How can we see Concept Nine come to life?

### **Comments:**

- When I first came into Al-Anon, my group was a very service-oriented group. I saw service in action. I thought it was part of the deal. Everyone I saw who had what I wanted was involved in service. I did what they did to get what they got. Service *has* been happening, even though we have not been meeting. We need to emphasize that recovery is not just doing the Steps. We need service too.
- I love reflecting on this question because it was the way I arrived here: by being attracted to someone who lived by the Al-Anon principles. I asked, "How did you get to be the way you are?" I learned that she did service! She is still in my life as a Sponsor. When I got to Step Three, she took me into service. I started to sponsor others and become involved in service. I share with those whom I sponsor, and we do service. We study the Traditions and the Concepts. I get to put into practice all of these tools. I've witnessed so many people step up to the plate and share their experience, strength, and hope.
- I think we work with what we have. It is not just going to meetings. If you want to feel better, go to meetings; if you want to stay better, do the Steps. Have a meeting on service to allow members to see how it will help them get better and feel better. We do not need to guilt people in service.
- When I hear that there were two years without service, I don't think that is a true statement. The pandemic has helped those dark Districts become active by being virtual. We have snowbirds who are gone half of the year, but who can now attend virtually. We are doing service; it is just different than how we have done it before.
- We revised our election procedures because we were having problems getting qualified people to step up. We are going to start to talk about the service positions two years before elections, to help grow interest and invite people to start thinking about how

they would like to serve. But in order for that to work, we need to reach out to the groups and Districts that are not coming to Assemblies. We are going to have to reach out to them in different ways than we have done in the past.

- How I can help is by sharing how truly amazing all of this is! I am overwhelmed by how this all works. I am certain that service has changed my life. I have so much more confidence being of service, and I need to share that with others.
- I have to share that service helps me everywhere I go, not just at Assembly. I need to go to meetings and share service. This is where I learned to try and failed, and that is okay. If I just go to the Assemblies, I am speaking to the choir. I got my self-esteem healed in service. I need to share that message everywhere I go. That is where the winners were, and I followed them everywhere they went. Enthusiasm is what we need.
- We need to see the Concepts come to life. We need to create opportunities to lead. It could start small by encouraging groups to do things, reaching out to the longtime members who have the availability to lead, reaching out if our District is not strong enough, or reaching out to A.A. and seeing if there are some things we can connect on with them.
- Seems like this is a topic we have talked about a lot. Years go by and Conferences go by and it is talked about all the time. What are we not getting? Why is this a constant discussion? My first service position was doing what my Sponsor told me to do. When I sponsor others, I tell them service is part of the deal. I am concerned with why we keep coming back to the same issues.
- When my Sponsor became the new Delegate, she brought me along to what would become my first Assembly. I came back from there as the Co-Chair for Alateen! I learned by doing that I could ask other people for help and that helped me with recovery. I was afraid I would break Al-Anon, and I learned I cannot break Al-Anon.
- Yes, this is a conversation I have had over the years with many people. My home group just celebrated its 40th anniversary. There has been a dramatic decrease in service at the District and Area level. In our Area, we have modeled good leadership, so the question comes back: what am I not asking? Go back and ask people why they are not participating. I am going to go back and ask people, "What is holding you back from being of service?" I know that service has been a part of what I have learned and incorporate into my life. I am baffled at why people are not coming forward.
- My mantra with people in my group, my District, and my Area is, "Try it once!" My thoughts were that I was too busy to have another meeting, but when I heard some people share about service, I wanted to hear more. I used to cry for pain, now I cry for gratitude. If I had not gotten involved with service, I would never see you again. If I don't keep going, I will miss you. I do not want to lose that.
- What can we do to see Concept Nine come to life? "Let It Begin with Me" and see what works. We are always trying to get new Alateens, but what about those who are already here? I am working to hold an Alateen reunion and hopefully it will re-connect them and maintain a connection for the future. Our District speaker meeting had stopped, so I asked my home group if they wanted to put on a speaker meeting. It is a monthly

or quarterly event. We formed a committee and have put it on for three years. It built so much unity. They felt like they were doing something that mattered. It is still continuing. We have 27 Districts and five had no DR, but all five now have asked for a Delegate visit. Four of those Districts now have DRs. If it is not attractive, if my life isn't getting better, why would anyone want to follow me?

- I got to Al-Anon really young, and I couldn't understand why you didn't ask me to help you get your alcoholic sober. Service is the last thing I wanted to do—I have been doing service all my life. The Steps helped me find myself, helped me grow. The Traditions can help me to take the time to teach you how to treat me. The Concepts showed me how to place principles above personalities.

### **Topic:**

Rebuilding Alateen meetings after the pandemic and Alateen's Fifth Tradition.

### **Rationale:**

Alateen attendance decreased dramatically during the pandemic. The absence of seasoned members creates a void for new members who are lacking recovery experience. How can we support Alateen as it rebuilds after the pandemic in keeping with Alateen's Fifth Tradition: "Each Alateen Group has but one purpose: to help other teenagers of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves* and by encouraging and understanding the members of our immediate families"?

### **Comments:**

- I had a recent experience and discussion with A.A., and their thoughts were that Alateen was for young people with a drinking problem. We have to start reaching out to A.A. and letting them know what Alateen is and work with them so that we can maybe find some more solutions.
- My Area has been struggling with teens scattering. We have two meetings right now. We do have an Alateen Coordinator and an AAPP. We do not have many face-to-face Al-Anon meetings yet and when they do go back, they are not meeting with A.A. When we do not have A.A. and Al-Anon meetings at the same time, we also lose Alateen meetings. We are trying to get everyone back together face-to-face. We are trying to get Alateens back into the rooms.
- We have lost all of our Alateen members and groups. They did not feel safe and did not want to be on Zoom. The misconception about Alateen is not just with A.A. members but also with Al-Anon members too. We need to continue to educate our members about Alateen. We need to tell our new members about Alateen, what it is and how it works. It is like Al-Anon for you. The kids are aware of the disease even if they have never seen it, so we need to talk to our own members.
- We have a lot of AMIASSs, but we do not have a lot of Alateen members. The pandemic wiped them out. Zoom meetings did not work for them. Right now, there are more AMIASSs than there are teenagers. One of the AMIASSs said they went to the high school every time the school had a drug awareness presentation. That seemed to help teens come to the meetings.
- Before the pandemic, our Alateen membership was declining. The first question that comes to mind is: when you have a teen sponsoring another teen and the teen does not have the Alateen

message, how are they helping each other? Also, we need to reach out to professionals. We need to add information to the Newcomer Packet about parents who have a child at home.

- We had a decline, but one bright spot has been schools. We have had several meetings that have now started up in schools. It works because the schools are now back face-to-face. We are now in the process of getting insurance for our meetings, because after COVID, the institutions want us insured, so we are going to get coverage for the teens and this might make things harder.
- I am one of four AMIASSs. Currently, we have no meetings. We had to let the last Alateen meeting disband because we could not get any Al-Anon members to step up to serve as Alateen Group Sponsors. We learned we needed to strengthen our Al-Anon meetings. We do not have the people we need, and it is clumsy to get certified. We have also learned to talk to children in the fifth and sixth grades, which seems to work best because they come to Alateen before they are teens.
- A former AAPP, a former Alateen Coordinator, and our Public Outreach Coordinator have been going to A.A. members to help educate them regarding Alateen. We also hear the kids say that their parents don't make them go to Alateen. Parents don't want to force the kids to go to Alateen. We must keep working on the knowledge that this is a family disease.
- "Let It Begin with Me." What I like about Alateen's Fifth Tradition is "...understanding the members of our immediate families." I am an adult child of an alcoholic with a lot of recovery gained in my youth. I still have the effects of alcoholism, but there are some traits from this disease that I am infecting my son with. Our family is better because we all go together, and we all feel better.
- We developed a training program so that it wasn't just the Alateen Coordinator who was responsible for training. The 23 Alateen groups are hurting, and the training sessions have not been going as we planned, but we are doing the recertification on Zoom on a monthly basis. We still need an AAPP. We are planning on holding a regional Alateen meeting with two other Areas, and hopefully we are going to get our certification back. I think there is hope.
- We have a strong Alateen Coordinator who has her own Alateen story. That is driving her to come up with innovative ways to improve Alateen. She is meeting monthly with AMIASSs and taking Alateen ideas and running with them. I think this is still an issue around service. I think it is just going to take time.
- What would I be saying if I were an Alateen member standing here? Although everyone says Al-Anon is Alateen, they are not the same. In an Alateen meeting, a cell phone rings and the teen answers it, they swear, they touch, sometimes they come in high, and they smoke. As Al-Anon adults, we want to have an Alateen program, but the Alateen members do not always want an Alateen program because the Sponsors are "trained" and it is hard to tell an Al-Anon member how to sponsor an Alateen group. Sometimes, they just do not understand. This is a much bigger problem than we are talking about here.
- In an Alateen meeting, who gets uncomfortable when all the teens do is play with their cell phones? It is the adults, not the teens. We need to let them be teens and do what they need to do to keep them coming to a meeting.

## **Board of Trustees Chosen Agenda Item**

The Board of Trustees created a topic for discussion in the General Session. The Chairperson of the Board presented the topic to the Conference members.

### **Topic:**

Discussion on Regional Trustees and Trustees at Large.

### **Background:**

- 1954—After the incorporation of AFG Headquarters, Inc., the Board of Trustees was made up of seven to 11 In-Town Trustees (based in the New York area).
- 1969—In order to broaden the scope of representation, a plan was proposed to provide nominations of Board members who lived outside the greater New York area. The geographic United States was divided into two Regions, East and West, and Canada became the third. Every three years the plan was reviewed, and some modifications were made in procedures, but the number of Regions remained at three.
- 1977—The World Service Conference (WSC) agreed to expand the number of Regions, to increase the number of Regional Trustees, and to make the new plan an experimental one for the next three years. Thus, the three existing Regions divided, creating six Regions: the Western Region became the Northwest and Southwest Regions, the Eastern Region became the Northeast and Southeast Regions, and the Canadian Region became Canada East and Canada West.
- 1984—At the WSC, the Conference Committee described the rationale for the Regional Trustee system “as a way of broadening the base of the program, enhancing the understanding between the leadership and the grassroots by maintaining some degree of geographical balance.” This WSC passed a motion to change the title from “In-Town Trustee” to “Trustee at Large” to more accurately describe the In-Town Trustees and facilitate a wider area of participation.
- 1985—In order to create better balance between Regional and At Large Trustees, the Board recommended the addition of three new Regions. As a result, the 1986 WSC voted to approve the Board’s motion to add one Region per year, beginning with the US North Central in 1989, followed by the US South Central in 1990, and Canada Central in 1991. There were now nine Regions, six in the US and three in Canada.

Today, there can be up to nine Trustees at Large, who can live anywhere in the WSC Structure, and nine Regional Trustees, one from each of the nine Regions (Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, Northwest, Southwest, Canada East, Canada Central, and Canada West.)

### **Context**

The current Trustees at Large reside in the following states/Regions:

- California—Southwest Region
- South Carolina—Southeast Region
- South Dakota—Northwest Region
- Wisconsin—North Central Region
- Wyoming—Northwest Region

The current Regional Trustees reside in the following states or provinces/Regions:

- Arizona—Southwest Region

- Iowa—North Central Region
- Massachusetts—Northeast Region
- South Carolina—Southeast Region
- Texas—South Central Region
- Ontario—Canada Central
- Nova Scotia—Canada East

### **Discussion:**

Keeping in mind our spiritual principles, please consider the following questions for discussion:

- What are the advantages of having both Trustees at Large and Regional Trustees?
- What are the disadvantages of having both Trustees at Large and Regional Trustees?

### **Comments: Advantages**

- I believe an advantage of having a Regional Trustee is that I have found a closer connection with that Trustee; they rise up through the ranks of their Area and in that way, it gives me the sense the groups are more directly involved in the selection process. But I also like the opportunity for members to apply for Trustee at Large so there is not just one route to serve on the Board of Trustees.
- There is a balance right now. There are nine Regional Trustees (RT) and nine Trustees at Large.
- If you did not have RTs, it might be possible to have Trustees coming from a single Region.
- I love that there is an RT attached to our Region, but now that we have added another Area, that puzzle piece doesn’t really fit in the current picture of geographic Areas. That puzzle piece changes our picture a little bit. Maybe we have to change with this new piece of the puzzle.
- I wonder about the workload of the Board. It seems like even with the ongoing vacancies, there is still a lot of work to be done. I believe there is a perception that it is easier for the TAL to get selected. The more I understand the approval process, the more I think it is good to have both processes.
- The RT process started in 1985 and was created to broaden the scope. When I go to different meetings, there are so many differences and unique things in each of these groups. With the RT process, I can continue to enjoy the diversity of these groups that this process allows.
- By having both RT and TAL we are more likely to have a more diverse Board, and we will hear more minority options.
- The RT process keeps the Areas engaged in the process in identifying future Trustees.
- Reality or not, it feels like an RT is closer to the groups than a TAL. In our Area, the officers are concentrated in more urban areas. We have a large area that is rural. We need people in those places to be represented too. RTs may be more in touch with those types of things, instead of a TAL who may only come from larger areas/cities, etc.
- Although I don’t think we want to underestimate the “us vs them” attitude, having the RT makes some of us feel more like we belong (i.e., Canada members). If all Trustees were TAL,

would they begin to all come from large places? This would make some of us that much more disconnected. The RT process makes us feel like we have a voice and are more connected since some of us are so far away.

### **Comments: Disadvantages**

- When I was a Trustee, I was an RT. There is no difference when we all come together at the table, so do we actually need another process to select a Trustee?
- One Area thought they owned me as an RT. They thought I should vote as they wanted. Also, the Areas in the Region asked me if I was going to put in my résumé to serve a second term. If I was, they thought they might pull out the other nominations.
- That is exactly what happened in my Area. When it was time to put forward a candidate, the first question asked was if the current RT was going to stand. When members in my Area found out that person was going to stand, no one submitted a résumé.
- Although the process may possibly provide balance, perhaps we need to inform the candidates in the Region that once they submit their résumé, they could possibly roll over to the TAL position. If a member knew they could be considered for TAL, they might be more inclined to submit a résumé for either position.
- One disadvantage I see is the complexity of the process. I don't think anyone in my Area really understands any of this. If you do not have the knowledge, you do not want to put your résumé forward. It seems like only Delegates and those who come to Conference understand. This also causes barriers because it is limited to where you live. It doesn't seem to fit in the links of service, and it adds a level of geography-based screening that doesn't fit.
- It seems like there is a feeling of RT-ownership. When an RT and TAL are at the same event, members feel that the RT is "theirs," and the TAL is often snubbed or ignored. There is no ownership of this person. All members of the Board are Trustees when they get on the Board. As a RT you are not voting for your Region, but with the flavor of your Region. The RT process can be very confusing in some Areas. I liked the process of being voted in as a TAL because there was more competition.
- It saddens me that the process is confusing for a lot of Areas. When your name is put forward for RT, your name is given to the Delegate for knowledge and input. When you put your name in for TAL, the Delegate still has knowledge and input, and the Area is not left out.
- What comes to mind as a disadvantage is it suggests that there is a real difference between an RT and a TAL. For some Regional Delegates' Meetings, the RT can attend, but a TAL cannot.
- There is so much complexity to this issue. I feel new to this whole thing. It has taken me a year to understand even this much. Because of this complexity, I feel the members do not have a clue. Hopefully we can find a solution, a better way to get this information to our members about what an RT and a TAL is. I have now learned that a Trustee is a Trustee. We need a better way to communicate this to the membership.

### **Other Comments:**

- Does the travel that is involved have anything to do with the lack of résumés? Can we publish a list of the actual travel time? That might help people step up to become a Trustee.
- I was doing the numbers, and there are currently six vacancies—two RTs and four TALs. What has the vacancy rate been for these positions? We need to include the Global Electronic Area now. I have not felt connected to my Region due to the pandemic. I think possibly the whole process needs to be looked at.
- Thinking back, a lot of members from my Area over the years don't feel good enough to submit a résumé, or they think, "let him/her submit a résumé, as they are better qualified." Sometimes, someone in the Area has a little more visibility and they are encouraged more than others to submit a résumé. I am hoping that we can level the playing field to make it more equitable and encourage members who might think they are not good enough.
- Could you provide more information about what is prompting the examination of this topic?

*What I know is that the RCT/CCT/Nominating process is a very spiritual process. What I heard today is that you, as Delegates, are just now understanding the RT process and are going back to the Areas and trying to find a way to explain to the GRs how to make a decision that we are possibly struggling with. If we do not even know what is happening, does that cause a popularity contest? Are we putting personalities above principles?*

- Maybe we should make the Regions smaller to bring forward more RT availabilities. The Region may feel more invested in their Trustee, and it might make it easier to find more candidates.
- I want to thank you all for what you have given me today. It is an amazing picture of this process. I believe this all has to do with education and reading the *Service Manual*. I learned to understand the Twelve Steps. Now, I need to understand that service is for me to grow! I am going back to my Area to share what I am learning. Once I recover with the Twelve Steps, I need to become educated on the Traditions and Concepts. We need to let others know there is a total connection between all three Legacies.
- I am concerned about precedent; what example is being sent? When I go into the rooms, some people do not know what a Delegate is, and they have no idea about a Trustee. But do we dumb down the process because some people do not understand what it is all about? We have the responsibility, using the links of service, to educate and communicate what these positions are. We need to help inform and encourage and educate.

The Chairperson of the Board thanked Conference members for their comments. The Board chose this topic because of many of the things that have been mentioned today: the complexity, the acknowledgement that many Areas do not have a process for RT, and the reality that we now have a non-geographic Area. Is there something we can do differently? This was an information-gathering session. The Board will continue discussing this topic.



## DELEGATE-LED TASK AND THOUGHT FORCE PRESENTATIONS

Penni S., Panel 61, Hawaii, Task Force:  
Using the Concepts in Personal Recovery Facilitator

Lori H., Panel 60, Missouri, Task Force: Conflict Resolution Facilitator

Terry R., Panel 61, Kansas, Thought Force:  
Dreaming Big—Envisioning Our Future Facilitator

Thought and Task Forces have been an important part of the World Service Conference for quite a while. They allow opportunities to serve, explore, present, and provide Conference members with something tangible to take back to their Areas. These presentations give Delegates ways to involve their members in the discussion of an important topic in Al-Anon Family Groups.



This year, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) polled the Delegates to determine which Delegates had been personally involved with presenting 2021 Task and Thought Force material in their Areas. Based on the results of the poll, the CLT invited three Delegates to share their presentations in breakout sessions to demonstrate how they utilized a Task or Thought Force presentation in their Area.

After each Delegate Facilitator presented her Task or Thought Force material, there was time for Conference members to engage in the discussion and to share ideas.

## ELECTRONIC MEETINGS BECOMING AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Vali F., Executive Director

The Executive Director opened the session by commenting, “What a privilege to be here with you in person at this historic World Service Conference, where we have approved the admittance of Al-Anon Family Groups’ first non-geographic Area. In this next hour, we have an opportunity to share with each other updates on the enormous amount of work done by the WSC Structure geographic Areas, the international structures, and the World Service Office over what feels like one *very short* year since the 2021 WSC.

“At last year’s Conference, much was accomplished. The Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG), which consisted of Trustees, At-Large Executive Committee members, and WSO Staff, shared the history of its recommendations approved by the Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees to ask the WSC to consider recognizing permanent electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups. The EMWG shared how, through its members’ regular attendance at CMA meetings hosted by the WSO, it had become aware of the strong desire of these meetings to be a part of the service structure, to provide the opportunity for members to share their voices through the groups and an elected Delegate. The EMWG shared how recognition of these meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups would permit them to follow the path taken by thousands of groups across so many geographic Areas and even international structures over time.

“The 2021 WSC motions to amend the Policy Digest and ‘World Service Handbook’ paved the way. Thankfully, while the motions

were historic, the path is well-worn. Many people aren’t aware of the role the World Service Office plays in helping groups globally as they journey along this path. Consistent with Concept One, Al-Anon groups form the foundation of *our service structure*. Within the WSC Structure, it has been typical for many years now that groups, when forming, automatically register as part of the Area service structure in which they meet geographically. However, outside the WSC Structure, groups often form where no service structure exists.

“In these cases, the WSO, in keeping with its clearinghouse role, is charged with registering these groups and supporting them as their service structure, until such time as they are ready to form an evolving structure and, ultimately, a national structure. When the first permanent electronic meetings were forming, therefore, it was natural for the Board of Trustees to charge the WSO with taking a similar responsibility for nurturing these meetings. Unlike groups which form internationally, however, these meetings were not recognized as groups according to Al-Anon Policy and therefore could not form or even petition to join any service structure. Hence, the WSO’s ongoing role to serve as their support and voice within the WSC Structure. Until, of course, the 2021 WSC.

“The 2021 WSC approved two motions which eliminated the ‘Electronic Meetings’ section from the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies’ and removed geographic references related to service structures from the ‘World Service Handbook.’ These changes paved the way for the newly recognized electronic Al-Anon groups to form their own Area, elect a Delegate, and petition the World Service Conference to become part of a service structure. An historic moment indeed; one, we might add, being closely observed by other Twelve Step programs, including our friends at Alcoholics Anonymous, to gather lessons and experience, strength, and hope.

“As WSO Staff pointed out, though, these momentous decisions created work that extended well beyond forming the non-panel Area. Three other streams of work needed to commence immediately in the hopes of us all arriving back together at the 2022 WSC ready to admit the new Area, support the Areas in managing both physical and electronic group information online, and learn what Areas and international structures had decided in terms of whether and how to allow electronic groups to participate in their service structure.

“So now it’s time to pull back the curtain to catch a glimpse of the progress made on each of the workstreams.”

### First Workstream: Forming the Non-panel, Non-geographic Area

The Executive Director continued: “Continuing to serve in its role as the link of service, the WSO was responsible for facilitating the first workstream: forming the non-panel, non-geographic Area. Guiding Staff in this effort was the wisdom contained in the ‘World Service Handbook,’ particularly the sections ‘Area Procedures for Joining the Conference’ on pages 165-166 of the *2018-2021 Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2 and ‘Temporary Chairman’ on page 145. In their effort to gather as much historical perspective as possible, WSO Staff members discovered that in the 1990s, potentially because the Conference members did not anticipate any additional geographic Areas being formed within the WSC Structure, some details regarding how Areas joined the Conference were omitted from the Handbook. Thankfully, a trip to the WSO archives uncovered the previous versions of the Handbook where the process remained intact. This guide provided further clarity as to the interim steps required in the process, such as the selection of a Designated Chairperson prior to election of a Temporary Chairperson. These details proved very helpful and will be proposed for reincorporation

into future Handbooks with faith and hope that more Areas may yet be created.

“The Handbook process suggested the starting point for finding a member willing to serve as Temporary Chairperson involved groups from the ‘city with the largest number of groups.’ Since the new Area lacks geographic reference, Staff chose instead to start with the CMA community. From there, several seasoned CMAs were invited to form a Task Force to work with the WSO to elect a CMA from the Area as Temporary Chairperson, help communicate the need for groups to elect GRs, and encourage meetings to spread the word about the upcoming Area Officer election Assembly. The Non-panel, Non-geographic Area Task Force of Area CMAs and WSO Staff met, elected a Designated Chairperson to chair the Temporary Chairperson election meeting, and collaborated on how to proceed. The consistent goal throughout the process: to achieve the objective set by CMAs throughout the history of electronic meetings, to elect a Delegate as the first step in becoming part of the service structure, and to petition the World Service Conference for admittance so the voice of the electronic groups could be heard.

“Staff and the Task Force went to work preparing for the Assembly, including:

- Creating an ad hoc means of capturing GR information, since the current WSO technology had not been designed to support GRs for the electronic meetings.
- Surveying several geographic Areas within the WSC Structure to gather experience, strength, and hope as to how candidates in their Areas share about their service experience. This knowledge was incorporated into the questions which were asked of all non-panel Area Officers.
- Defining how best to facilitate the Assembly, which we recognized could have as many as 600 participants, in a manner that allowed us to support three languages and ensure the votes of elected Group Representatives were able to be counted.”

The Director further explained: “As with many adventures we experience along our service journeys, the first Assembly was not without challenges. Our web conferencing translation technology failed, and Staff had to scramble to ensure consistent availability of information for English-, Spanish-, and French-speaking participants. The GRs who attended were incredibly patient and respectful of the process and challenge. Ten members stood for Delegate and shared their answers to the resume questions with the Assembly. In consideration of an exhausted Staff and tired membership, the Temporary Chairperson closed this meeting after the successful and historic election of our first non-geographic Area Delegate. This step allowed the Area to complete its petition to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) for admittance to the WSC by the February 1 deadline. The Area was on its way!

“With these two vital tasks completed, the Temporary Chairperson and Task Force regrouped, scheduled the continuation of the Assembly, and continued to register GRs. At the next Assembly, three additional Area Officers were elected, and the election process drew to a close. All recognized as we wrapped up the Assembly that the list of outstanding questions to be answered by the new Area Officers was incredibly long, with questions like:

- How would the new Area capture member contributions?
- What languages would the Area support and how?
- What platform would be used to hold Area business meetings?
- How and when would Districts be formed?

“These questions and so many more face the new Area at the beginning of its journey.”

The Executive Director went on: “One question WSO Staff spent time answering for the Assembly was related to the Area name. Since Conference members have also asked about the name, we decided to share that same background here with you today.

“As you can imagine, historically, geography has defined the scope for new Area names. (The geographic orientation is reinforced by the *2018-2021 Service Manual* text on page 158 related to renaming an Area.) To create the name for this new Area, the WSO similarly reflected on the ‘scope’ of the new Area as recommended by the Electronic Meeting Work Group and Board of Trustees and approved by the World Service Conference. The scope approved was the creation of an Area to support electronic groups, seeking a global audience, and wishing to participate in a service structure linked directly to the World Service Conference. Additionally, the WSO reflected on the results of a survey of members serving as Current Mailing Addresses for the then-electronic meetings, who indicated they preferred to be identified as electronic meetings. Understanding these two boundaries on scope, the WSO established the name for the new Area to be the ‘Global Electronic Area.’

“At that Assembly, we also shared that ‘... much has changed since that small group of CMAs was surveyed and reported their preference for being identified as ‘electronic’ rather than ‘virtual.’ The WSO is available to support the new Area Officers if they wish to survey the elected GRs as to their groups’ preference for ‘electronic’ or ‘virtual’ before the name is finalized by admittance to the WSC Structure in April.”

The Director continued by stating, “The Task Force has had the opportunity to meet with the Global Electronic Area Officers since those historic Assemblies. The Officers shared that they have been meeting weekly and they came prepared with a long list of questions, not least of which was how the Area could collect and arrange payment of its Equalized Expense in three short weeks. The WSO has offered to assist in various ways, including making the AFG Connects CMA community available to the new Area until it is able to set up its own communication system with the groups, providing the list of all 600+ registered electronic groups, setting up a one-time-only payment plan for the Equalized Expense, and continuing to meet with the Area Officers as long as they find it useful. I know I’m speaking for all the WSO Staff and the Volunteers in saying that we are so grateful for these Area trusted servants.”

The Executive Director then introduced the new Panel 62 Global Electronic Area Delegate, Ozzie A., to share the following:

“Good morning my Al-Anon family,

“I am Ozzie, a grateful member of Al-Anon. I am humbled to be standing here today as an enthusiastic and committed trusted servant. Before I utter another word, I need to thank and acknowledge what is, for me, the most important entity in this room: a loving God as He expresses Himself in our group conscience. I would like to make this very clear: there is no doubt in my mind or heart that it’s because of Him that I am here today. With Him and in Him I have learned that anything and everything is possible. The man you see in front of you is nothing less than a miracle.

“It is important for me to express my gratitude to the women whose spirit, no doubt, is among us: our founders Lois and Ann. Indeed, the heart does go on, especially here today at the 62nd World Service Conference. I also thank the countless members that show up day and night and keep the message of hope alive through the loving welcome they extend in Al-Anon groups around the world every day. And finally, I thank every one of you in this room who in

one way or another have made this day possible.

“The first day I walked into Al-Anon, I was a dead man. I was dead in spirit, and perhaps that is the worst kind of death of all. Truth be told, I did not know then that I had already done my first three Steps. You see, I did not want to live anymore; my spirit was broken, I was broken, and I did not have the energy nor the desire to fix the broken shell of the man I had become. In His unique way, God created a miracle and led me to the doors of Al-Anon. Slowly, patiently, and with love unbeknownst to me, you all taught me that my life was sacred. The greatest gift my mother left me before departing this world was her faith. The woman I called “Mami” would tell me time and time again, ‘God never abandons us. Seek Him, call unto Him, and He will always respond. You are never alone.’ Thank you, Mami; I love you.

“In 2020 our world changed dramatically, and the rest is history as they say. Again, in His very unique way, God showed Himself. A simple text with a link to an Al-Anon meeting, and my recovery was saved yet again. It was in these meetings that I learned that love has no boundaries, language, or barriers that it cannot break. As Lois would say, I heard the language of the heart. She was right; it is a special language.

“With the miracle of the electronic meetings, I was in awe of our fellowship’s ability to carry the message. This year I was elected to represent these same meetings; there goes my HP in his unique way again. I am so excited to learn what’s in store for us all in this new journey. Like the St. Francis prayer, ‘I am ready, Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace and love.’ Only a loving God could have taken a broken man like me and position him as a trusted servant; amazing grace. Only a loving God could give us resources like the electronic meetings.

“I joyfully take this gift and responsibility as your trusted servant. Like my HP, the gifts of the Al-Anon program has no boundaries or limitations. Love is the greatest force known to mankind. I gladly, with every ounce of breath inside of me, take this precious gift and responsibility, knowing all along I am not alone. When the next Ozzie walks into or enters an Al-Anon meeting, through whatever platform his HP guides him to, the hands of Al-Anon and Alateen will certainly be there. Thank you, God, for this precious gift of service. I send you all my love. And I know that, one way or another, I will be listening to all of you, as a loving God expresses Himself in our group conscience. Lord, I am ready. Thank you.”

### **Second Workstream: WSO Technical & Process Work**

The Executive Director explained the next workstream. “The second stream of work that flowed from the 2021 WSC Motion turned out to require more effort than anticipated when we left Conference in 2021. The goal, then and now, has been to empower the Area Group Record Coordinators (AGRCs) for the Global Electronic and geographic Areas within the WSC Structure to be able to manage physical and electronic group records through their Area Group Records process.

“What we discovered, as is often the case with technology upgrades, was that a great deal of upfront, foundational technology work was required before we could achieve that goal. Thankfully, the wisdom of a longtime Staff member encouraged us to pause before acting so we could clarify the long-term vision. AFG Records, Group Services, International, Programs and Digital team members worked together to identify our future vision for physical, electronic, and hybrid groups. Recognizing these represented the best estimates of our ultimate needs, Staff began work to create one consistent view of Al-Anon Family Groups regardless of whether their meetings

occurred in physical locations or on electronic platforms.

“While we have not yet met our ultimate goal, which remains unchanged, Staff did complete their efforts to combine physical and electronic groups into one set of database tables. This combination allows AFG Records to record Group Representative Information for electronic groups among other data. These changes were completed early, and the upgrade went very smoothly with minimal impact.

“Accompanying the technical work, the team also spent time updating, translating, and communicating with the Areas about the registration and update forms for electronic, physical, and international groups. (As a piece of interesting trivia, you may be interested in knowing that the WSO currently manages 12 different forms per language—that’s 36 different forms!). A key component of the form changes is that all registered groups are now provided clarity as to their license to use the Al-Anon name and use excerpts of copyrighted material during their meetings. This rollout eliminates the need for electronic groups to complete a separate copyright license. This is just another step toward ensuring consistency in process across all Al-Anon Family Groups, regardless of meeting location.”

The Director continued, “So, what does that mean for your Area right now, you ask? Well, the new group forms have been rolled out, the Area Group Records Coordinators are being or have been trained, and the database is ready to accept electronic group registrations and updates. The catch? For now, and only for now, all electronic group registrations and updates have to be completed by WSO AFG Records Staff.

“As always, looking at circumstance, we can recognize the hand of Al-Anon’s Higher Power. The fact that only WSO Staff can process these records for now might be considered an HP gift for the new Global Electronic Area Officers, who have much to do before they are ready to hold an Assembly where they can make decisions about their Group Records Coordinator position! In the meantime, as you all know, geographic Areas too are only just finalizing their plans for accepting electronic groups into their Areas. So, the timing seems to work.

“Meanwhile, let me assure you, on behalf of the WSO Staff, we are actively pursuing the goal of empowering AGRCs to manage both electronic and physical group records through their Area process!”

### **Third Workstream: GSO & International Structures Work**

“The third workstream belonged to the trusted servants who serve Al-Anon Family Groups globally.

“At the European, Central, and Latin American Zonal meetings, which the WSO Staff and Volunteers attend as invited guests, we were asked to give updates about how the WSO was addressing the technological challenges. We heard many of the same questions about inviting electronic groups to join the international service structures as we have heard from the geographic Areas within the WSC. For instance, how would electronic groups join the service structure, and would it be best to create an overlay District, i.e., a District organized around, in this case, platform rather than geography, or would it be preferable to invite these meetings to join existing geographically organized Districts?

“To date, no international structure has confirmed they are ready to register electronic groups in their service structure, but we are confident this will occur soon.

### **Discoveries**

The Director explained, “Through these three workstreams, we have made many discoveries; two were particularly interesting and relevant for the Conference.

“The first may sound most familiar to the Delegates in the room, as you have all likely had at least one conversation about this topic. Group Services receives many calls a day from members and trusted servants for groups who are confused about what are the technical (versus policy) limitations related to hybrid meetings and, separately, split or concurrent meetings. As we walk through the answers WSO Staff are providing to members daily, it may be helpful to remember that, when determining how to implement policy related to electronic groups, Staff often reflect on how policy is applied to physical groups as a starting point. The WSO has been serving as a clearinghouse to Al-Anon Family Groups meeting physically for more than 70 years, so there is much wisdom for us to gain through this reflection.”

### **Hybrid meetings versus split/concurrent meetings—current technical limitations versus vision**

“Let’s start by talking about hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings can be defined as meetings held in a physical location which offer members an opportunity to alternatively attend via an electronic platform. For instance, your home group might meet at the local library at 10 am on Saturday morning. A member might be charged with bringing equipment to allow other members to participate in the meeting via Zoom. All members of the group join the meeting at the same time and participate together in unity in that one meeting. The decision to offer an electronic component is one of group autonomy as it doesn’t affect Al-Anon as a whole. Currently, the WSO cannot support listing both the physical and electronic locations for one meeting on the al-anon.org website; however, this is a technical limitation. When we reach our Goal, we will be able to support managing both the physical and electronic location data for that hybrid meeting.

“More recently, Group Services Staff has received many questions from groups discussing the idea of ‘concurrent or split’ meetings. A split meeting occurs when the group decides it wishes to hold both a physical meeting and an electronic meeting at the same time on the same day. This sometimes occurs because the group has tried hybrid unsuccessfully, or there may be other reasons. Members of the group choose which meeting they will join; they cannot attend both. We understand this situation usually arises when the group is deciding whether to return to meeting in person. Some members don’t want to or don’t feel comfortable returning to in-person meetings but want to remain a part of the same group. The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) met recently to discuss this situation. We reflected on how this situation would be handled in the case of physical groups. Since the time of the pioneers, Al-Anon groups have never been registered with two physical locations. After a thoughtful conversation, SPIRiT agreed we needed to defer the matter to the Policy Committee for consideration.”

### **Clarification required around scope of 2022 motion regarding Alateen**

The Executive Director explained, “The second topic that brought some confusion was whether Alateen meetings were included as part of the 2021 WSC Motion. Thankfully, we were able to once again reflect back to the Board-approved EMWG recommendation, which asked the Conference to approve the recognition of permanent electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups. Since only Al-Anon meetings were registered as permanent electronic meetings, the motion was not intended to give permission for the creation and registration of electronic Alateen meetings. This topic has given rise to an entirely different stream of work which is scheduled for a Conference session later this week.”

## **WSC Geographic Area Work**

The Executive Director went on to the next part of the workstream, about which WSO Staff know the least. “Perhaps not unexpectedly but a little ironically, the workstream about which WSO Staff know the least is the WSC geographic Area work. Area Delegates were encouraged to undertake conversations in their Areas between the 2021 and 2022 Conferences to determine if they are ready and willing to accept electronic groups as part of their Area. Additionally, Areas were encouraged to identify what, if any, new processes the geographic Area would create to support admittance.

“As always, we recognize it is best to hear directly from the source, so I’m going to invite two Delegates to share their experience, strength, and hope about including electronic groups in our Area service structure. In order, we will hear from Laura A., Delegate from Vermont, and Gregg R., Delegate from Illinois North.”

The Vermont Delegate shared, “At the VT Spring Assembly 2021, the Delegate presented on the WSC 2021 Motions Six and Seven, which removed the restriction of defining Areas by geographic boundaries and removed the portion in the Policy Digest titled ‘Electronic Meetings,’ thereby recognizing electronic meetings as Al-Anon Groups.

“The Delegate, Past Delegate and Trustee, and Area Chair created two Task Force charges based on the questions in the WSO Guide that were presented at the first town hall meeting in June. Two Task Forces were then formed to explore the charges of how to welcome electronic groups into the VT area. A second town hall meeting was held with more open discussion.

“The Task Forces presented at the VT Fall 2021 Assembly. The assembly then voted Yes to accept electronic groups into Area 56 VT. The two Task Forces were disbanded and replaced by a new Task Force (TF) charged with writing recommended guidelines on how that acceptance would work.

“The TF gave reports on their work at the monthly Area meetings and held two more open town halls on the proposed guidelines. The feedback received helped the TF clarify the guidelines.

“In March 2022, the Area asked the TF to make changes to the proposed guidelines. The TF made them and prepared four motions to be voted at the VT 2022 Spring Assembly. We agreed to use the acronym PEG for “permanent electronic group” throughout the motions.

“Motion One specifies that a PEG will have a contact person, a CMA, like a face-to-face group and that person can live anywhere. A PEG does not need to be an English-speaking group; however, we recommend that either the CMA or GR be able to speak English. A new PEG will be listed on the website right away and added to the printed meeting list after it has been active for six months.

“Motion Two specifies that a PEG Group Representative live in either Vermont, one of the contiguous states, or the province of Quebec.

“Thank you for the invitation to share about my Area’s experience related to transforming electronic meetings.”

The Illinois North Delegate then reported, “The Guide for Transforming Electronic Meetings was distributed to our members as part of my 2021 WSC report to our May Assembly. A shortened version with the questions to be addressed by geographic areas was sent to AWSC members. In July an Electronic Meetings Thought Force was created. Seven diverse members volunteered. Our Chairperson provided the charge: ‘To determine if NIAFG will accept electronic meetings as part of our Area.’ A progress report was given at our September Assembly.

“All Thought Force members answered the KBDM questions. We consolidated our responses to distribute to member groups. A consensus was reached on a recommendation: ‘To accept permanent electronic AFGs as part of our Area structure and create a Task Force to determine the procedure necessary to implement this charge.’ A PowerPoint presentation seeking approval of the recommendation was made at our November AWSC meeting. All members decided to bring the recommendation for group vote to our January Assembly.

“The KBDM analysis and recommendation was published in our monthly newsletter, posted on our Area website, and emailed to our members. Each communication asked for questions to be submitted about the proposal. All questions asked were answered and distributed by email and on our Assembly webpage. By a vote of 78-4-4, the recommendation was approved by our GRs. Our Chairperson encouraged members to volunteer for the Task Force and set a new charge: ‘To determine the procedure necessary to incorporate electronic AFGs into our Area.’

“Before our March AWSC, the Task Force created a District survey regarding experience with electronic meetings at the Group and District level. All 21 of our Districts responded with their answers and comments. The Task Force is working on a process to recommend to our July AWSC, and then to the September Assembly.

“Some Area considerations were:

- The number of registered groups and volunteers is decreasing.
- Assembly attendance increased with virtual access.
- Technology increases our ability to reach new members and share information.
- Electronic meetings increase diversity in our fellowship.
- Health risks and access to transportation are not concerns for electronic attendees.
- Many members experienced EMs due to the “Temporarily Meeting Electronically” status.
- If groups that are temporarily meeting electronically do not return to meeting face-to-face, NIAFG could lose these members.
- A structure already existed for conducting EMs since March of 2020.
- Strategic Plan barrier-free access is accomplished by offering virtual meetings.
- Tradition One and Concept Four are supported by allowing EMs to participate.
- Fear of change need not prevent us from using 21st century technology.

“What worked well during our progress was using a collaborative process to arrive at a unanimous consensus, encouraging feedback and responding to member questions, and keeping members aware by using all communication methods to foster informed decision making.”

### **What’s Ahead?**

The Executive Director continued, “As we prepare to look ahead, this stands as a great opportunity to thank every Conference member, the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, WSO Staff, and WSC Areas for your efforts this last year. I think we all deserve a round of applause in appreciation of our progress!

“Of course, as everyone in this session has shared, there remains plenty of work ahead for our Conference members as well as the international structures following this 2022 WSC.

“The Global Electronic Area is now a paneled Area, part of the World Service Conference. Its trusted servants have plenty of work ahead. One project among their many projects is creating Area procedures to permit electronic groups within their Area to join a geographic Area. (Page 162 of the Handbook provides a brief explanation of how groups from Areas which have a contiguous boundary with another Area ‘may...choose to participate in the second Area and give up participation in the first Area...’)

“The international structures need to finalize their plans, gain their Conference and Board approval, and create processes for supporting electronic groups. Once this is done, they can work with the WSO to arrange the transfer of interested groups from the GE Area to their international structures.

“And WSC Structure geographic Areas need to continue their conversations and make decisions about including electronic groups in their Area service structure. Once their decisions are made, Areas need to inform the WSO so we can identify which Areas are ready to include these groups.”

### **WSO Tech & Process Work Ahead**

The Director explained the work ahead for the WSO: “In the meantime, at the WSO, we will continue with what we recognize to be a multi-year project to upgrade our technology to support the many various iterations of AI-Anon Family Groups which exist today and those yet to be defined in the future.

“The largest component of work we must undertake is the redesign of the Online Group Records (OGR) application, which is used frequently by Area Group Records Coordinators across the WSC Structure. In order for Areas to effectively manage electronic groups along with the physical groups using OGR, the application needs a redesign. Given the magnitude of the change, we are also going to take the opportunity to complete a necessary technology platform upgrade as well. As we move down this path, we can envision asking some AGRCs to join a task force charged with identifying what works and what’s missing from the current technology and process.

“Another goal of the process, albeit perhaps one to be tackled a bit later, is the simplification of group forms from 36 to far fewer. Vital to making an informed decision on the topic will be understanding the frequency with which Areas are continuing to use paper versions of these forms. The benefit of simplification is great to our trilingual fellowship. Twenty-four of those forms are French and Spanish translations of the English versions. Simplification would allow us to reduce the current burden on the WSO Translation Team so they can focus instead on translation of service tools, guidelines, and Conference Approved Literature, which offer more direct benefits to the fellowship. Another element of the simplification process, we hope, will be the ability to allow data entered by members to flow directly to the Area for review and approval, rather than for reentry as occurs today.

“Well, clearly there is much to do! Staff is currently designing Phase Two. As soon as we know the scope, we’ll let the Areas know. The timeline will follow that. Our intention is to establish very clear goals for each phase and to deliver incremental improvements more frequently, if possible, rather than waiting longer to deliver the ultimate solution.

“On behalf of WSO Staff, thank you for your patience and the opportunity to walk this journey with you.”

## Conference members had the following questions/ comments:

- I am so awed by the new Global Electronic Area today, but there are still some concerns in my Area. I would like to be able to go back and say that the WSO is supportive of electronic groups and realize that they will be with us into the future. That would help me take something back to my Area.

*Yes, the Board and Staff do want the Areas to be supportive of electronic groups, but we do not want to tell these entities/Areas/Districts that they have to accept electronic groups. We do feel that electronic groups are the future. We want Areas to welcome all groups, but it takes time. We do not want to force a solution on any Area. It is up to the autonomy of the Area to decide if they want to accept electronic groups and the process for doing that.*

- We have electronic groups that would like to join our Area as soon as the Group Records application is finalized at the WSO. These groups would like to go directly into the Area. Do they have to join the Global Electronic Area first?

*WSO knows many electronic groups were temporarily holding off registering until their geographic Area goes through the process of admitting electronic groups. As soon as your Area has made this decision, let the WSO know so our Staff will know when these groups ask to register as part of your service structure.*

- We are going to hold off until after the pandemic and then go back to making a decision at that time. Do we have to notify WSO about anything?

*The WSO only needs to know if your Area has a process in place, otherwise nothing is needed. We ask that the Delegate emails AFG Records (AFGRecords@al-anon.org) to inform the WSO that your Area does accept electronic groups and that your Area has a process in place.*

- My question is about Group Records: how will we be listing hybrid meetings? What will it look like, and what will we be calling them?

*We realize groups could hold one meeting with a physical location that offers a virtual component as well. This combination is what is being referred to as a 'hybrid' meeting. We call these groups Al-Anon Family Groups. Listing all the information for these meetings is one of the activities the WSO is working on this coming year. Currently, we list the virtual component in the 'location note' for the physical meeting. We are evaluating how we can allow the Area Group Records Coordinator (AGRC) to enter the virtual information for the meeting in separate fields, so someone could find both the physical and virtual locations when searching.*

- There have been some groups that are concerned about the Global Electronic Area. If their group is virtual now, they do not want people from all over the place—they want local members. They also want the person to have gone to one physical meeting before they can serve at the group level. Their thinking is, "I don't want to be global. I want to be local." What do I tell these people?

*We must remember we are here for the person who is suffering. All groups are welcoming to those who come. There may be groups that choose to meet electronically and want to attract local participants. Those are the groups we would expect, once the Area tells us, "Yes, we will accept electronic groups," are the groups we would register with your Area. Your Area then would need to tell us what District these groups will go into. If a physical group meeting temporarily online wants to become an electronic group attached to your Area, they just need to wait until your Area establishes the process. When they submit their change to become an electronic group as part of your Area, they won't need to change their number, name, or re-register. If a group is part of the Global Electronic Area now and wants to come to your Area, they need to speak to the Global Electronic Area and your Area to confirm both Areas are agreeable to the change in accordance with the Area process as described in the "World Service Handbook" section of the Service Manual.*

- A handful of groups that will remain face-to-face may want to add meetings that will meet virtually on different days. How will that work?

*Historically and currently an Al-Anon group has only had one location. If a group wants to add a second meeting at an electronic location separate from the physical meeting, whether at the same time or a different time, that qualifies as another location. This topic has been referred to the Policy Committee for consideration.*

- How do we maintain the principles of the program with so many electronic groups? There is outside literature being shared, they are making changes in the Steps, they open with the Seventh Step prayer, etc. What are we going to do about that?

*You know, that is a good question. It is one we hear about with our face-to-face meetings too. The reality is, we all have to take the responsibility and step forward and explain what Al-Anon is and what it is not. We need to remind groups that if they choose to do something different, they can, but they cannot use the Al-Anon name if they do so. We need to continue to share with them the value of using the Service Manual as a resource. Members now are less afraid to say something, and they are educating and getting education. The more we can share about the Traditions and how they keep the groups unified, the more it will work out. It will be work, but it will be up to all of us to do our share.*

- Will this work the other way around? We have been concentrating on groups going from the Global Electronic Area to a geographic Area. Both Areas have to say yes. But, what if one of our geographic groups wants to move into the Global Electronic Area? Is the new Area ready to have this discussion?

*The process is exactly the same both ways. The group goes to the Area they want to move to, and they need to talk to the Area they want to leave. The two Areas have the discussion, and if they agree then the WSO will move the group to the proper Area. Either way, the WSO needs to be notified. The Area Officers for the Global Electronic Area understand creating this process is one of the priorities to address for the Area.*

- You mentioned the temporary electronic meetings. How long will the temporary status be in place?

*Because we are aware both the WSO and Areas are still working on the technical and process changes necessary to support electronic groups being part of the geographic Areas, the WSO is not going to require any changes for these groups as of now. If an Area were to decide it will not allow electronic groups, then that would be the time when we would need to determine how to proceed with those groups.*

- With the online groups, many people are coming in now who do not live within the Area. What if someone from another Area wants to be the GR? Who pays for that person to attend the Assembly if the Assembly is held in person, etc.?

*This was one of the questions raised at Conference last year, and it will be very important for geographic Areas to decide how they wish to handle these circumstances when putting together procedures. It is entirely within your Area's autonomy, as far as the Area/Districts/groups in your Area, on how to handle financial issues.*

## MEGA ISSUE: WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES?

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (non-member)

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications

### Background:

Since its inception in 2018, members of the Board of Trustees have facilitated the “Mega Issue” discussion at the World Service Conference. This discussion typically requires several sessions on the Conference agenda. Each session builds on the previous and requires additional work each day after Conference finishes. After much consideration, the Board members agreed they would benefit from fully participating in the 2022 Mega Issue conversation. Consequently, the Board spent time defining what feedback they were seeking from the Conference and delegated facilitation of the 2022 Mega Issue discussion to selected World Service Office Staff trained and experienced in facilitation.

At the 2021 WSC, the Board presented the 2021 Mega Issue topic: “*In what ways can we encourage and support members to share their skills and talents to fulfill the needs of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. as members of the Board of Trustees?*” The topic being brought forward to this Conference reflects the Board’s response to address one specific barrier heard frequently during that conversation: lack of member insight into what skills are needed to serve on the Board.

The Concept Eleven descriptive text in the Twelve Concepts of Service section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) under the paragraph on the Nominating Committee states, “This Committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committees are filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability and industry.” The lack of résumés limits the Board’s ability to fulfil its obligation.

### Context:

For the last several years, the Board has received fewer Regional Trustee (RT) and Trustee at Large (TAL) résumés than hoped: in 2019 there were six RT and nine TAL; in 2020 there were five RT and nine TAL; in 2021 there were six RT and five TAL. Particularly, the number of TAL résumés received has decreased over the last few years.

When the AFG, Inc. Board does not have a full composition, this limits the perspectives it has available for the job of planning for Al-Anon’s future. The Board believes adding a skills-based approach to the nominating process will help inform qualified candidates and attract them to submit their résumés. Through this approach, the Board hopes that AFG, Inc. will see fewer vacancies in the future.

Since the 2021 WSC Mega Issue conversation, the Board has evaluated and developed ideas for addressing the concerns raised, particularly the “lack of member insight into what skills are needed to serve on the Board.”

One result was the identification of the specific leadership, business, and organizational skills. In addition to having a strong program and service experience, member applicants need to successfully contribute as a Trustee who could form the foundation of a skills-based approach for filling vacancies.

The Board envisions that this skills-based approach, including an annually-updated listing of the skills needed on the Board, will help inform qualified candidates and attract them to submit their résumés. Skills would be posted on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org), incorporated into the Trustee résumés, and will form part of the nomination scoring process. Through this approach, the Board hopes that AFG, Inc. will see fewer vacancies in the future.

### Relevance/Purpose:

A simple way to recap the purpose of this Conference session is for us to provide the Board’s answers to the following three questions.

1. Why are we having this conversation? Because the 2021 WSC Mega Issue discussion revealed that many members are unsure of what skills the Board is seeking in Trustee candidates.
2. Why are we having this conversation with *you*? Because, as Delegates, you are the voice of the fellowship.
3. Why are we having this conversation with *you now*? Because the Board is actively considering changes to address these information shortfalls and wants Conference feedback on its plans.

Perhaps this sounds like a lot of change! Most of us have experienced change activating our fears. Through our program, we also have learned the value of facing our fears as a whole. In our personal recovery, we learn that speaking about our fears out loud can sometimes help reduce their intensity. We believe the same can be true when facing fears related to broader concerns.

The WSO Staff then presented a skit designed to express some of the fears and concerns members may have about the whole Trustee résumé process.

Conference members were asked to come forward to express anything new or different they had heard or felt. Members were asked to keep their sharing very brief, and to think of it like a micro-sharing. No explanations were necessary pertaining to thoughts or feelings; this was just a moment to freely express an emotion.

## Conference members shared some of their feelings and emotions:

- I am so grateful for the Trustee who calls me. I can contact him if necessary and get answers, or he helps me find the answers I need. I did not think the Trustees were approachable, but I have come to realize they are just like us.
- I am impressed!
- I love what I saw; it addressed some of the fears I have heard from our Area. There seems to be a lot of turnover, and this helps to inform the members what is involved.
- I am really interested in this. In the years I have attended Area business meetings, there have been no conversations that I know of about becoming a Trustee.
- There are more than 1,200 meetings in my Area, and I was elected Delegate unopposed.
- Easily the biggest challenge is getting people to step up to service. I feel at one with the Board of Trustees. It is the same challenge we have in the Area.
- I am curious to learn more about what the Board of Trustees does so I can take the information back and share it.
- I am hopeful and inspired!
- I am excited and confused at the same time.
- We, as Al-Anon members, are damaged by alcoholism; the clearer you can be regarding what skills you need, the more résumés you will receive.

Staff members hosted breakout sessions to assist with table discussions. Each table was charged with answering the following three questions to gather the feedback needed by the Board:

- Do you believe providing a skills-based description for the Trustee role, with corresponding skills-based criteria on the Trustee résumé, will address the specific barrier identified at the 2021 Conference? Why or why not?
- What are the pros and cons the fellowship might have in taking a skills-based approach to help identify qualified Trustee candidates?
- When your Area needs volunteers with specific skills, how does it go about finding a member with, or helping interested members to develop, those skills?

After the table discussions concluded, each reporter shared their table results in the breakout room.

A compilation of the reports will be given to the Board of Trustees to review and proceed into the future. The Conference Chairperson thanked the Mega Issue presenters and all the breakout session participants.

## OPEN POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Marianne B., Trustee, Policy Chairperson

An Open Policy Committee meeting was held during the Conference so that Delegate members could observe the Committee in action. For some, witnessing the Open Policy Committee Meeting will resonate long after the Conference is over. All non-Policy Committee members attended the Open Policy Committee Meeting with no voice or vote.

At the January 2022 Policy Committee meeting, the Committee brainstormed ideas for a discussion topic and agreed on “Choosing a Group’s Name.” The Policy Committee had not held a detailed discussion on this subject prior to Conference.

## Background

Al-Anon’s “Choosing a Group’s Name” Policy in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v1 states:

Having an appropriate group name is very important because it is included in local and online meeting directories and may be a potential member’s first impression of Al-Anon. The group’s name should be inviting to all and reflect Al-Anon principles. A group’s name should not imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, agency, religious group, rehabilitation facility, or other outside enterprise even if the name is associated with its location—e.g., “the \_\_\_Church AFG” or “the\_\_\_ Hospital AFG.”

To help avoid confusion with other entities, it is suggested that groups spell out their full name and include the letters “AFG” for Al-Anon Family Group.

The WSO will review proposed group names for adherence to Al-Anon principles. (See “Considerations When Starting Either an Al-Anon or Alateen Group”: “Naming the Group” in the “Groups at Work” section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

When it comes to naming a group, Staff has observed a recent trend related to groups identifying themselves with specific participant focus, and including that focus in their suggested group name. While Al-Anon does have groups whose group name has a specific participant focus such as Women, Men, LGBTQIA+, Adult Children, or People of Color, the recent trend has significantly expanded to sometimes suggesting either an affiliation or a non-Al-Anon related focus.

Implementation of this Policy is clarified on page 28, in the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*, which states:

An Al-Anon or Alateen group’s name reflects the spirit of Al-Anon’s primary purpose of welcoming and giving comfort to families and friends of alcoholics and often appears on websites and local meetings lists...When choosing a group name, care is taken to avoid the appearance of affiliation and/or endorsement of other organizations, other Twelve Step programs, religious beliefs, and meeting facilities.

... Since nicknames or attempts at humorous names could confuse potential members and prevent them from attending the meeting, it is suggested they not be used in the group name.

... All Al-Anon groups are registered with the letters AFG (for Al-Anon Family Group) to ensure members’ anonymity.

## Discussion Question

“Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work,” page 28 in the *Service Manual*:

In the spirit of unity, the WSO reviews new group names and may ask a group to choose another name if it is not in keeping with Al-Anon/Alateen principles.



## What principles found in Al-Anon Traditions can the Policy Committee provide the Staff to help the membership understand what types of group names are appropriate?

### Policy Committee members had the following comments:

- Tradition Four speaks to freedom with responsibility.
  - I think of the principle of anonymity. Everyone comes to Al-Anon on an equal playing field—we are all affected by someone's drinking. Some group names seem to be offering a different way for people to relate outside of our common bond of having been affected by alcoholism. I am considering how a newcomer feels when seeing a group name. Is it welcoming? Anonymity goes beyond a person's name. It means providing an equal and safe space for all to share.
  - When I think of some of these names, I know we are a program of attraction. I may be attracted to meetings with similar interests, but I benefit from being a part of a group that offers a diversity of experience, strength, and hope. Familiarity would be comfortable but would not push me to reach out of my comfort zone and find something from those who are different from me. It has happened that other Twelve Step groups were not sustainable because they remained too homogenous and lacked diversity. My story does not become my future; it is what I have experienced in my past. My group can take me beyond this by sharing their different experiences. Group names can attract only members with similar experiences and backgrounds.
  - Tradition Three and Tradition Ten: no affiliation and no opinion on outside issues. How do you find the balance between allowing people to relate immediately and not having outside affiliations? I think that group names with a focus can serve a purpose, but it is important to keep in mind our singleness of purpose.
  - The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) reviews group names when necessary. Tradition Four is a helpful resource that we use in our responses to group name requests that can impact Al-Anon as whole.
  - Group names are listed on public meeting listings and can be a newcomer's first impression of Al-Anon. Some of the group names risk having newcomers feel unwelcome and not included. We need to stay focused on our common welfare.
  - I appreciate cleverness and being unique, however, if a name could be interpreted as though Al-Anon is affiliated with an outside group, Tradition Six is the Legacy to reference when replying to the submitted group name.
  - For newcomers, groups are a form of public outreach. If a group name is not a reflection of the purpose of Al-Anon, there is a disconnect. Early on, many groups used the name of the church where they held meetings. I am concerned that members are naming groups based on the type of people who are currently attending the meeting, which risks isolating newcomers.
  - Tradition Three: "the only requirement for membership." What we have is a common problem.
  - Traditions Three and Five. The people who attend Al-Anon meetings will change over time. It is important to keep our groups healthy.
  - In my District, we have a skit that starts with a room full of people. By the end of the skit, everyone is in his/her own separate meeting.
- In my experience, meetings that have a focus (i.e., parents, veterans, etc.) are not always inclusive. We can come closer to kindness and compassion by not using group names as a filter.
- Today, newcomers can look for meetings online. I was reactionary as a newcomer, and I would have been turned off or given up after seeing too many group names with a focus. There are reasons why the WSO as a clearinghouse does what it does. Attraction rather than promotion goes hand-in-hand with public controversy. If some of the group names with a focus were published in a newspaper, they could cause public controversy.
  - Tradition Twelve: principles above personality. Anonymity means that we are all equals. Anything that denies that goes against Al-Anon's spiritual principles. I see the different focuses as personalities.
  - I have mixed emotions about this topic. According to *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), this has been a topic of Policy discussion since the 1970s. When I first came to Al-Anon, I did not look like or have similar experiences to most members, but I stayed because I related to the feelings shared. In time, and through the Fourth Step, I began to realize that I'm gay. I felt very vulnerable and unsafe at that time, so I sought out gay-friendly meetings. They helped me feel safer as I began to accept myself and slowly be more open with others. Al-Anon is intended to be very inclusive, but not all groups or members are as welcoming as they think they are. We can eliminate all identifying elements of group names to make sure no one feels left out, but for those who never felt they belonged anywhere, it can seem like further proof they don't.
  - Tradition Three. As a 16-year-old, first coming to Al-Anon, I felt terminally different. I felt that I needed to separate myself and be among those who were similar to me in age. Al-Anon is Al-Anon. I was not treated as a 16-year-old kid, I was treated as someone who had been affected by alcoholism. I am concerned about the group names because I want all newcomers to feel welcome and that groups are a reflection of our spiritual principles.
  - When I first started, group names weren't important. If I had an option to go to a men's group, I probably would have taken it, and I would have missed out on so much learning and growing. I am amazed at the number of men who are entering the Al-Anon program. Typically, men must work at expressing their feelings more than women.
  - This is what Lois and Anne were doing; they were writing letters to groups. I think about the Al-Anon Declaration. When I came to Al-Anon, I loved an alcoholic, and that is how I identified myself. I can appreciate all the levels of diversity in our fellowship, but I believe inclusivity is important.
  - Group names can be how we find our place when we begin in Al-Anon. The point of the group name "Al-Anon for Gays and Lesbians" was to ensure that gays and lesbians felt welcome, not to exclude others from feeling welcome. I trust that the WSO Staff will work through this topic.
- Following the discussion, the Policy Chairperson asked if the Committee members felt there should be any other action taken at this time on the topic. Hearing none, the Chairperson stated that all thoughts and comments made would be passed on to the Staff for their consideration and guidance. She then closed the meeting by inviting all attendees to join in saying the Al-Anon Declaration.

## POLICY DISCUSSION

### PUBLIC OUTREACH POLICY IN RELATION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Jean L., Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

#### Background:

Social media can be an important venue to carry Al-Anon's message to those who still suffer. A challenge can occur when there are not clear and defined roles about who may create, tailor, or share Al-Anon social media public outreach messages in these forums. The current section in the *2018-2022 Service Manual (24/27)* version two (2) on page 125-126 has been referenced for this purpose, but has been found to be lacking in the desired clarity to answer these questions. It was felt that a review of this section would benefit the fellowship as well as WSO Staff. In May 2021, a Task Force was created and given the following charge:

#### Charge:

Review the "Social Networking Media" and "Social Networking—Individual Members/ Groups/Service Arms" paragraphs of the "Members Continually Broaden the Way They Carry the Message by Using New and Innovative Forms of Communication" portion on pages 125-126 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* version two (2). Suggest a revision to clarify what individuals, groups, and service arms each may do in relation to creating and/or tailoring social media for public outreach, explaining which Tradition, Concept or spiritual principle may be applicable and why.

It was important to realize that the Task Force members were charged with reviewing only the "Social Networking Media" and "Social Networking—Individual Members/Groups/Service Arms" and that these two sections are part of the larger section of "Members Continually Broaden the Way They Carry the Message by Using New and Innovative Forms of Communication." Task Force members were reminded to please keep this in mind as they reviewed the proposed text.

#### Recommendations:

Some of the important changes made included:

Changed the titling from "Social Networking Media" to "Social Media" to more accurately reflect the broader term not tied to just networking.

Divided the section into the WSO, Areas/Districts/AISs, GSOs/ National Structures, groups, and individual members, and clarified what role each can play in sharing social media.

Following the session, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the revised Social Media Policy wording. See Motion #7, page 68.

## SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

While the incoming panel of Delegates attended the Orientation Meeting for New WSC Members, the Panel 60 and Panel 61 Delegates met to fulfill separate charges from the Conference Leadership Team (CLT). The CLT charged Panel 60 Delegates with creating a five-minute presentation to share helpful hints, Delegate responsibilities, and/or tips for giving a Delegate's report, and Panel 61 Delegates with creating a five-minute presentation to share where they are on their Delegate journey.

Both Panels delivered a special presentation to the Conference, briefly sharing some special thoughts they had as they served and attended the WSC.

### Panel 60 Delegates shared their hints and tips on being a Delegate:

#### Tips:

- "Keep It Simple."
- Use a Service Sponsor.
- Be a member.
- Invite your Higher Power to join you.
- Create a new email for yourself.
- Breathe!
- Laugh!
- Share your personal stories with each other so you get to know each other.
- Share information with each other.
- Be yourself!

#### Responsibility:

- You are the link between the Area and the WSO.
- Know your Area's perspective, but remember you are here for Al-Anon as a whole.
- Prepare and give a report to your Area AWSC and the Assemblies.
- Be familiar with the *Service Manual*.
- Participate at Conference.
- Check and respond to your emails regularly!
- Communicate and participate in the Regional Trustee (RT) process.
- Notify the WSO of Past Delegates' passing.

#### Delegate's Report Tips:

- Know your audience, include them, make it fun!
- Flag items in your notes during Conference to help you with your report.
- "Keep It Simple"; don't overshare.
- Focus on the topics that apply to your Area.
- Make your report available to your members.
- Use all of the information on AFG Connects.

### Panel 61 Delegates, utilizing as few words as possible, shared their WSC experiences. They are not the newest panel, nor are they the last panel; they are in the middle!

- Abundance.
- Less anxious.
- More informed on how the WSC functions.
- Mistakes make me teachable.
- More confidence, still questioning.
- Being in person gives me the validation I needed to report to my Area!
- Learned to take my place with others.
- Build my confidence, trust in me and my Higher Power.

- Anxiously serene.
- More confident.
- Embrace my Higher Power's place for me.
- Learning to understand our voting app.
- I have the strength and wisdom for each day.
- I am a definition of progress.
- Excited, reality, anticipation—embrace my emotions.
- I am exactly where my Higher Power wants me to be!
- Living the principles of the Concepts
- Honored to participate and grateful to be of service and humbled by those who have come before me.
- Practice progress, teamwork, self-love, giving and receiving love, and spontaneity.
- Happy to be on this journey and be here each and every day.
- We are in the Sweet Spot!

## TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

### Task Force: Encourage Service Participation

Tammy M., Panel 60, Louisiana, Task Force Chairperson

From Al-Anon's beginning to the present, a common theme in Al-Anon worldwide is involving members in service. We hear various reasons why members feel they can't do service. As we have evolved as a fellowship over time, members appear to be increasingly resistant to serving and asking others to serve.

The World Service Conference (WSC) has frequently addressed this concern in various forms for many years. In 2020, the Thought Force: Identifying Ways to Look at Service in Relation to Roles, Terms, and Possible Roadblocks created a PowerPoint presentation that identified some possible changes and ideas to improve this situation. The Thought Force members were charged with identifying aspects of our service and organizational structure, including length of service positions and workload, that may be barriers to our members' willingness, commitment, and ability to serve.



From that Thought Force, our Task Force was given this charge: to develop an action plan for one or more of the following ideas that Areas, Districts, or groups can use to encourage service participation. Those ideas included:

1. Creating a service inventory to focus on service needs and opportunities.
2. Breaking down service positions into smaller responsibilities (shared leadership).
3. Creating teams to assist District or Area Coordinators.

4. Using technology to save time and expand the ability for members to participate in new service positions.

This Task Force selected “Service Inventory” to focus on service needs and opportunities and “Use of Technology” to save time and expand members’ ability to participate in new service positions.

A Knowledge-Based Decision-Making exercise provided clarity on the direction for the Task Force. The descriptive text of Concept Four, “Participation is the key to harmony,” states, “Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class. This is perhaps the main reason we have struggled to achieve participation at every level. The Right of Participation encourages us who serve Al-Anon to accept the necessary disciplines that our various tasks require. It assures us that we are truly the ‘trusted servants’ described in Al-Anon’s Tradition Two” (2022-2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* v1 [P-24/27], page 190). One tool to help in accepting the “necessary disciplines” could be a service inventory.

### Service inventory to focus on service needs and opportunities

The Task Force presented a PowerPoint that helped describe how a service inventory could assist an Area with a process to review service-related questions with members, groups, Districts, Areas, and AIS/LDCs. The members section of the inventory can be used for personal reflection and discussion with a Service Sponsor or personal Sponsor.

There are many reasons why members choose to get involved in service work. The service inventory encourages members to reflect on their personal motivations to be involved in service and aims to highlight potential benefits of participating in service to those who are not yet involved in service.

Service can be an opportunity to express gratitude for the benefits members have received from Al-Anon/Alateen or to “pay it forward” as a means of paying it back. Many members serve to help sustain the Al-Anon/Alateen program into the future. Service can lead to personal growth, new skills, increased knowledge of Al-Anon/Alateen, and/or increased awareness of how to apply the principles of Al-Anon/Alateen.

### Use of technology to save time and expand the ability for members to participate in new service positions.

The second focus of the Task Force’s charge was technology. Many groups, Districts, Areas, and even the World Service Conference have embraced technology. New technologies, both software and hardware, are constantly being introduced to the market that enable us to reach more members faster, further, and easier than ever before. Many platforms have been developed and/or improved to help with virtual meetings. Additionally, new and improved electronics are helping to improve ease of use, quality audio and video capabilities, and cost competitiveness.

As new technology is embraced by groups, Districts, and Areas, new service positions may be created to help. These may include, but not be limited to, Technology Coordinator, Audio/Video Specialist, Electronic Voting Specialist, etc. Incorporating current and emerging technology may lead to new, younger membership.

Individuals, groups, Districts, and Areas are encouraged to be willing to change when employing innovative technologies. The service inventory will show us that we are never alone when participating in service; there is always someone willing to help.

Following the presentation, the Task Force presented the Conference members with a handout entitled “My Service Inventory/My Service Journey” to take back to their Areas.

Multiple members thanked the Task Force for their work and the handout.

### Thought Force: Diversity Today

Emily D-C., Panel 60, New York South, Thought Force Chairperson

The Thought Force began their presentation by welcoming Conference members to their press conference on Diversity Today.

The Thought Force Chairperson gave some brief comments about the state of diversity from their findings, using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process and several suggested sources by the Board of Trustees.

The charge for the Thought Force was: Conduct a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process among the members of the Thought Force to determine what is currently known about this topic and what remains unknown.

The resources the Thought Force utilized to glean information were:

- 2018 Membership Survey
- 2012 WSC Diversity PowerPoint
- 2010, 2011, 2012, 2018 World Service Conference Summaries
- *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31)
- Bias Inventory from the 2018 World Service Conference Presentation

Our Al-Anon Declaration says, “When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—Let It Begin with Me.”

Many discussions and presentations on the topic of diversity in Al-Anon have taken place over the years. We have introduced professional speakers to the WSC throughout our history. Diversity, and our understanding of what diversity means today, is evolving. There seems to be a real struggle attracting a more diverse population to our fellowship.

For the purposes of this presentation, the Thought Force used the Oxford Online Dictionary’s definition of “diversity”: “a range of many people or things that are very different from each other. Diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing their individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (among others). Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing.”

The Chairperson then comically asked the Conference to “please refrain from using flash photography and hold questions until the end” as the Thought Force proceeded.

A mock press conference was then held, with reporters from the radio station KBDM, the *Daily Reader* newspaper, the TV station WSC, and the radio station ODAT. They asked various questions about the topic of about diversity, such as:

- How do we welcome newcomers to meetings?
- Will looking at our own biases help us to be more welcoming to newcomers from diverse populations?
- How do we identify blind spots in ourselves, our groups, and our service structure?
- Are members afraid of change? Am I afraid of change? Am I afraid my group will change?

- How representative of our membership is the survey?
- How would communication through the links of service increase survey participation?
- Are there cultures or ethnic groups that do not seek help from outside sources such as Al-Anon?
- Since alcohol abuse and drug addiction increased during the pandemic, has our membership increased accordingly?
- When are we diverting ourselves from our primary spiritual aim? (Tradition Five)
- When are Al-Anon members crossing the line from attraction to promotion as we try to reach out to other communities that may not want Al-Anon?
- When focusing on “outreach,” are we falling into the trap of trying to have homogenous meetings where everyone is “like us”?
- How do these questions bring to light our own biases?

Various “researchers” brought forth information they had obtained from the previous list of resources. They tried to answer the “reporters” questions as clearly and thoughtfully as possible. These answers included:

- The family disease of alcoholism does not discriminate.
- Page 221 in *Paths to Recovery* states: “Alcoholism affects many people in many different ways, but we all belong.”
- There is diversity within diversity. In addition to more obvious visible differences, people may identify with different cultures or demographics that aren’t visible, such as sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, religion, etc.
- Fear of differences, as in culture, gender, language, or religion, can be obstacles to being welcoming to our members who want help and hope. When we get to know people, we can lose some biases. Fear of change is common in our membership.
- The organization’s Mission is to help families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier-free meetings.
- As noted in our Mission statement, we strive to be inclusive, yet, according to our membership surveys, the demographics have not changed substantially since our founding.
- Recent statistics show that 28 percent of responders initially heard about Al-Anon from mental health professionals, and, of that number, 84 percent came to a meeting because of the referral. Also, an increasing number of members are coming to our meetings because of the drug addiction of a friend or family member.
- According to news sources, alcohol abuse and drug addiction increased during the pandemic.
- Our fellowship allows for a God of our understanding, which makes us inclusive of members of any or no faith.
- Change begins with us, as individuals and as groups.
- Wanting to include everyone and respecting our differences reflects our spiritual principles.
- When we apply the spiritual principles of the program—unity, respect, willingness, participation, open-mindedness, compassion, anonymity, and understanding—we see what we have in common: the family disease of alcoholism.

The Thought Force Chairperson closed the press conference by saying, “Thank you for joining us today for this important discussion on diversity in Al-Anon. We encourage you to keep this conversation going in your Areas, by exploring how best to engage, collaborate, and partner with diverse communities that are attracted to the hope and healing Al-Anon has to offer.”

### Conference members were invited to ask questions and/or make comments.

- I know I have a lot of biases. Is there a list of all the different biases?

*There is a bias inventory you can take, but maybe a personal or group inventory would be of help. The list of materials the Thought Force used, including an inventory, is in the resources we listed.*

- Thanks to the Thought Force. I have discussed this topic many times over the years. The question that always seems to come back about diversity in our fellowship comes down to numbers. The last time I saw the numbers from our membership survey, numbers are limited in regard to Black, Hispanic, and other ethnic groups. When I enter my meetings, it is very obvious that we still lack diversity. If the numbers continue to be that low, what are we missing?
- These are tough questions to answer. I have not seen members be exclusionary, but I know people who have experienced it. It is a problem, as Al-Anon is also beneficial for younger people or men. It is a cultural issue, I believe. I am an old white guy; our Steps are profoundly Protestant. There really is no way to change this. The fellowship is 71 years old, but it is clear that younger members do not see the same appeal as I might.
- Like our Declaration says, “Let It Begin with Me.” This has been talked about for many years—that is all, just talked about. Maybe in the wording we need to change it to make sure it says everyone is welcome. I don’t see many people like me. People come in and they need to know they are welcomed. At least say “Welcome”; that doesn’t always happen. It begins with me and you.
- I have been around for a while, and we have been talking about this topic for a very long time. Back in the ’90s in meetings in Toledo, we had a lot of diversity. Over the years that has disappeared. Words are very important. Instead talking about diversity and separation, we should be talking about inclusivity to those who otherwise might be marginalized. We might need to change our wording to change our thinking.
- Thank you. I think a lot of this comes down to, how do we attract diversity, and how do we make it welcoming to stay? How do we welcome people, and do we treat everyone equally? Is everyone in your group treated the same? When the meeting ends, do we ask everyone to join us for coffee, or do we leave someone out because they are not like us?
- Since last Conference, I took this on. I didn’t think I was biased, but I found I am. Even though Hawaii is only seven percent white, all my meetings are only white people. Why? What I have been told is that people of other ethnic groups do not appreciate panels of white people telling them what to do, as if we think they need us to tell them what to do. We need to make sure that any service panel we have is diverse in its contents.

- Thank you. I am very conscious of my unconscious bias. Coming to work at the WSO, I have found it is the most diverse Staff I have ever worked with. When looking at data results from the 2021 survey, it confirmed some of what my groups look like. The reality is that the survey represents people who answered the survey. Of those who replied, 90 percent identified as white, while ten percent could be put as other. We need to hear the voices of the “others.” We need to encourage those voices to fill out the survey so we can see them.

### Thought Force: Maintaining a Sustainable Future Using Abundant Thinking

Bob C., Panel 60, South Carolina, Thought Force Chairperson

The Thought Force began the presentation by setting the scene that originates in the “Abundant Table Café.”

Conference members were asked to join the Thought Force members as they took a lunch break during a Fall Assembly.

Conversation revolved around the issue of money and the expense of several items on the menu. Two members decide that it might be best to share in the expense of an item, and thus both would be able to enjoy the meal. “It is kind of like our fellowship and how we envision our future. We need to be generous and share if we want Al-Anon to thrive,” was a comment made.

This comment brought about more conversation on how we all need to contribute to the wellbeing of our Al-Anon program. Members are encouraged to remember that Al-Anon is a program of recovery, and the WSO functions as a business to provide services to members. Because of this, the WSO needs funds to operate. Funds come from members in the form of literature sales and contributions, and the Quarterly Appeal to Members letter shows how all the funds are distributed.

As the lunch proceeded, another member shared her frustration and confusion when it came to money talk. When looking at the Area’s budget, she discovered there was a lot of money in reserve in her Area. As the conversation went on, it was determined that we often forget that this disease wants us to focus on what we lack. It can trigger deep emotions, and even shame, not to mention cultural considerations.

Concept Twelve and Warranty One explain it perfectly: “In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions: that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.”

Without our service structure and fellowship, Al-Anon would die. We support the WSO and the WSO supports us.

The members around the table then shared all the things the WSO has been doing to spread the message of hope. Members can make online contributions on the Al-Anon website and on the new *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, and purchase literature at local LDCs and on the website. Books can also now be ordered in all three languages in the online store.

Those in attendance at the lunch break were also reminded that this all takes money to work. Our contributions express our own unique way of giving. No single monetary gift, regardless of amount, is more important than another. Our Seventh Tradition of self-support helps us understand the idea of providing for ourselves, from the group level all the way to the WSO. Our membership is the actual source of its funds.

As the lunch group began to finish up, several members shared some important facts they had learned over the break:

- We must always think abundantly. We get back so much more than we give.
- Trust, faith, gratitude, and serenity are our rewards. Contributions are just another form of passing unconditional love forward to people and friends we haven't even met yet.
- By using the spiritual principle of thoughtful consideration, we excel, and the structure and purpose of Al-Anon stays strong. That way, we can keep carrying the message.
- The sky's the limit when we think abundantly.

As our skit members went back to their Assembly, Conference members were asked to “place their order” of experience, strength, and hope by answering these questions:

- What does the WSO do for you?
- And what can you do for the WSO?

### Conference members were invited to ask questions and/or make comments:

- You mentioned budgets. Do you have more information about budgets? How does the group figure out to establish a budget?

*We had to create an expense sheet so we knew how much money we actually had, and then it was easier to establish a budget. This works for Districts and the Area.*

- I attend an electronic group and have been donating to WSO. We also have a Group Treasurer now. Now that the Global Electronic Area is set up as an Area, does the WSO have plans to give more information to the groups on how to make donations to the WSO?

*Currently, electronic groups—and actually any other group—can contribute on al-anon.org, whether the group is electronic or physical. The Electronic Area is currently setting up their process, but it is not done yet.*

- Was the charge only to look at the barriers for Al-Anon, or did discussion also include Alateen?

*We did not talk about Alateen specifically, we thought of the fellowship as a whole—Al-Anon and Alateen together.*

- Topics of money come up all the time as we are self-supporting. The message is getting out there. We are finding members who are donating a little more. We are breaking the \$1 routine by throwing \$5 in the basket first. I will be bringing back to the

Area what is needed for the WSO. Some groups can contribute more. People are coming around.

- There is guidance related to the group, and a guideline for groups, Districts, etc. What about LDCs? Did the Thought Force discuss those?

*We did talk about that quite a bit. The LDCs, as you know, have had a tough time over the last two years. It was stressed to us that it would be great if the LDCs would purchase cases of literature, and then individuals could purchase small orders from the LDCs.*

- Our guidelines are great resources, especially the Reserve Fund (G-41) guideline. It includes some very simple steps on how to set up a budget.



- What I did was I took a piece a paper and documented what our meeting actually spends—rent, purchasing literature, sending our Group Representative to Assembly, supporting service arms, etc. Then, we averaged out what it cost each member. Many members have no idea how much it really costs to hold a meeting.

After the three Task and Thought Force presentations, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members where they would like to go from here. Following the conclusion of comments, the Chairperson of the Board thanked the Conference members for their feedback and noted that the Board of Trustees will discuss in July.

## BEING OF SERVICE TO AFG, INC.

### Marianne B., Trustee

When the van pulled into the parking lot at the World Service Office this past December, I had butterflies in my stomach. I was not nervous; I was incredibly excited. To be back in person at the WSO meant that I would be able to lovingly connect with our wonderful Staff. In fact, only the day before, when I arrived at the Norfolk airport, I nearly bowled over the members of the Finance and Executive Committees when we greeted each other with tears and hugs. Approaching the office lobby, I felt the same way. Words cannot express the magnitude of joy, gratitude, and privilege I felt for the opportunity to be able to return to the WSO; I felt like I was coming home.

When I first began traveling to Virginia for the quarterly Board meetings, it was July of 2019. At that time, I had no way of knowing that within six months, I would not be able to visit the WSO again for another two years. Initially, I was excited to stay home and work remotely; Higher Power had a fantastic plan! I had traveled a great deal for my professional work and serving as Trustee; working from home seemed perfect. As the months rolled on, however, I was surprised to experience a sadness and a loss at not being able to participate in person. While remote work offered some advantages, for me, nothing compares to being together physically, emotionally, and spiritually. To give and receive hugs, to spend extended time listening to one another, or to share a laugh offered loving intimacy with the Staff and the Volunteers that I had really missed.

As if reuniting with Staff after two long years was not enough, since it was the month of December, I was privileged to be immersed in all the beauty of holiday decorations created by our talented Staff. The office was transformed into a festive, engaging, and fun display of holiday cheer. Before traveling back home, along with the other WSO Volunteers, I was invited to attend the annual holiday party. To be able to participate in the abundance of love and joy that emanated from the Staff in this relaxed, celebratory gathering was an incredible privilege for me. I will always remember these moments at the WSO and will forever be grateful to have had this amazing opportunity to serve in person as a WSO Volunteer.

### Jeri W., Trustee

My Trustee journey began in May of 2020. Sitting around the Conference Room table was going to be so exciting. I would get to spend time with the people who interviewed me a few months before. When the reading materials started coming in, I felt like a newcomer to Al-Anon once again. So much to learn, and the uncomfortable feeling that I did not know enough to ask the right questions. Then the perceived obstacle of being *remote*...no chance to have casual conversations after the meetings, no sharing a hotel room with my Mentor to find out more about her, and no coffee meetings after the meetings. This was going to be a challenge!

What I have discovered with time and experience is that I feel fortunate today that my journey began remotely. It was not what I wanted, but what my Higher Power gave me graciously. I walked into a virtual world to do the work of AFG, Inc. with the guidance and assistance from those who came before me and with me. I will never be the same.

Initially, my negative thinking got in my way. But then that changed. When the technology was not working as expected, we laughed and kept on task. Our wonderful WSO Staff were able to find the solutions. With the respect and courtesy shown through our discussions, Trustees were comfortable in giving a minority opinion, which on several occasions changed our thinking as a Board. Our focus was evident in everything I observed and heard. Being remote did not hinder that process. It enhanced it because we were so unified in getting our work done well and efficiently. I experienced true leadership, as stated in Concept Nine. What a gift to be a part of.

But the most spiritual part of my Trustee *virtual* journey caught me by surprise. It was a process and I do trust the process. What is it? I would define it as the love and bond we all have for one another while looking only at each other's faces on a computer screen. The responsibilities are many, the decisions can be difficult, there are different points of view, yet we have all come together for one purpose. It is evident each time we close our meetings. It is a reminder that our collective Higher Powers oversee Al-Anon. And that is the gift the *virtual Al-Anon world* has given me.

### Cindy M., Trustee

Shortly after I was elected as a Trustee, one of my assignments was to join the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG). In reviewing the Work Group's report to the 2020 Conference, it was noted that as of February 25, 2020, there were 296 electronic meetings—180 phone meetings and 116 online meetings. As the pandemic continued, those numbers kept growing. Each time we met, Sue P. would report on the number of electronic meetings, and by the 2021 Conference there were more than 400 electronic meetings, and now more than 700!

I learned that the WSO had been supporting the electronic meetings by hosting annual CMA phone calls since 2015, and that the AFG Connects community was set up in January of 2019. The CMA calls were discussing the same issues face-to-face groups were having—resolving conflicts, sponsorship, service, safety, and updating meeting information. I came into the ongoing discussion of how to give electronic meetings the same representation as face-to-face groups.

After many discussions using KBDM, we refined a proposal to take to the Board, who voted to send it to the Conference for their input and approval. By talking to each other and reasoning things out, a four-part plan was established.

1. Electronic meetings were acknowledged as AFGs, a new Area was created, and groups began electing GRs.
2. The WSO began a project to update the database in order to accommodate electronic groups.
3. General Service Offices were asked to discuss whether they would want to allow electronic groups in their structure, as, up to this time, all electronic meetings were registered via the WSO.
4. Areas were asked to do the same—discuss and decide whether they would allow electronic groups to register in their Area.

The other thing I did was to start attending online meetings, in addition to the temporary online meetings that the pandemic created! I attended meetings in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, and I was invited to a permanent online Zoom meeting started by

some of my Arizona friends. We set up a Venmo account to receive Seventh Tradition contributions, we gift *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) to newcomers, and we now have a newcomers' meeting 30 minutes before the regular meeting.

I am honored to be part of this exciting time and look forward to "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding" as we welcome the new Area's Delegate to the World Service Conference! This truly is history in the making!

## DELEGATES (PANEL 60)

### Linette L., Alaska

My recovery journey did not include becoming a Delegate. Prior to becoming an Alternate Delegate, I felt I had performed an abundant amount of Al-Anon service. I was ready to limit my time at Al-Anon business meetings. I had decided to complete my term as an Area Coordinator and limit my volunteering. During the next Area Assembly, the opposite happened. I ended up with another Area service position (Alternate Delegate). Hmm, that was not what I wanted. I was filled with resentment and one bad attitude. Our previous Alternate Delegate had been filled with gratitude and joy at the opportunity.

Then came the pandemic. In 2020, during the World Service Conference (WSC), I listened to other Delegates share how wonderful they felt to be in their position. What was wrong with me? Even though I was overwhelmed by an abundance of emails and the hours on WebEx, I listened and learned and saw over 100 "spirit hands" waving at me. I felt my bad attitude improve a little.

A year later, during the 2021 WSC, I cast my vote to allow electronic meetings to become groups. My attitude improved a little more. I have always felt change in Al-Anon moves too slow. The pandemic has moved our recovery into more technologies. With this change, we are witnessing our AFGs adapt. I will cast a vote to admit the newly formed Global Electronic Area into the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. I am part of the WSC Structure that made progress to bring about representation for hundreds or maybe thousands of members who have not had representation. This change will help to unify our AFGs. My attitude is improving.

An abundant amount of work is needed to keep AFGs afloat and united. I have seen the effort of members included in our WSC Structure in keeping our fellowship unified in this difficult time. The opposite of abundance is limited. I may not always think in terms of abundance. When I do, my recovery from this disease will be heightened and not limited. Working as a Delegate, I came to a greater understanding of our WSC Structure. If I had limited my time in Al-Anon service, I would not have that understanding. Without a CEO our WSC Structure lives on and adapts to keep our AFGs afloat and united.

### DeLynn H., Arkansas

Walking into my first meeting years ago, I didn't go because of an epiphany that alcoholism had affected me; I went because a friend, who had only been going for a few weeks, invited me. After a recent divorce, I knew my tendency to isolate. I had promised myself that, if I was invited to do something that wasn't illegal or immoral, I would do it. The Godincidence was the invitation to an Al-Anon meeting. In that meeting, I heard things I needed to heal from the effects of the disease of alcoholism. I went to six meetings, because I'm a good rule follower. By then, I was convinced this group was for me. That meeting is still my home group.

I found abundance in Al-Anon through so many people who loved and valued me, not my relationships or what I could do for them. My value was through my existence, the mere fact that I was present in this world. I discovered a big God who loved and valued me in the same way. Abundance didn't mean I always had a lot of money or things, which sometimes can mean an abundance of worries and distractions, but that I would always have exactly what I needed, physically, mentally, and spiritually, exactly when I needed it. The resulting confidence and contentment I developed was through practice and experience asking God (the easy part) and safe people (the hard part) to provide what I needed, not what I wanted, and trusting things would work out.

My home group emphasized service, and still does. The people I saw who had the type of recovery I wanted were all involved in service outside the group. I concluded that service was a key to maintaining the healthy thoughts and attitudes I wanted to have. Through service, I learned singleness of purpose developed from using the principles of the program to respectfully express and listen to varying viewpoints. Disagreement resulted in unity focused on a primary purpose, not division. The foundation of trust that comes from presuming goodwill when there are differences in perspective results in a foundation of love for one another. Learning about varying interpretations of the Legacies can expand my understanding, rather than create dissension. Because of this abundance, unity, and understanding, I will still "Keep Coming Back" to these (not illegal or immoral) rooms.

### Marcia M., Connecticut

"How did I get here?!" It still amazes me that I am standing here about to complete my third and final year as Delegate. I never thought when I first entered the rooms of Al-Anon that this was even a remote possibility for me. I had a perception of what a Delegate would be, and it was not me. I thought I was not serious or knowledgeable enough to be Delegate. I guess Higher Power had other ideas for me!

I came into Al-Anon with a mission to "get the secret decoder ring" that would have all the answers to my problems. Instead, I was told to "keep coming back" and to "take care of myself." I did not like these answers, and I continued my quest for the decoder ring. It was strongly suggested to me to get involved with service as a way to enhance my Al-Anon recovery. I often heard, "You can't grow if you say no!" I was gently pushed into service at the group level. I thought for sure that with doing this service the longtime members would drop their guard and hand the decoder ring to me. Unfortunately, that never happened.

I moved from service in the group, to the District, and ultimately to service in the Area. I was excited to start my new journey as a Delegate in 2020 and was looking forward to "the WSC experience." Little did I know when I became Delegate that there would be a worldwide pandemic that would force us to conduct Al-Anon business differently.

As a member of Panel 60, "Making History," my panel mates and I have experienced a lot of "firsts." Our first World Service Conference (WSC) was an abbreviated virtual/hybrid WSC, and our second WSC was again virtual and lasted a full week. I know that I am hoping that we are meeting in person for my final year. Since the pandemic, my Panel 60 friends have been meeting via Zoom every month as a way to talk to and support each other in our role as Delegates. I feel that the upside of this pandemic is that I have gotten to know my friends on Panel 60 so much more than if we had only met once a year. I believe that this year's theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding," is the epitome of the experience I have had working with my Panel 60 friends and the WSO!



## Joellyn P., Illinois South

When I came into Al-Anon, abundance and unity were not a part of my vocabulary. I didn't even recognize that understanding was not something I experienced in my family. I began experiencing understanding coming into Al-Anon. Rarely had I experienced anyone listening to me with their entire body. My Higher Power influenced me to step up for service work, first as a Group Representative (GR). I did not like the District meetings and did not understand at all what was happening. I was glad when my service time as a GR was over. I never went to an Area Assembly meeting as a GR, not understanding the links of service. I became a member of a new home group and was asked to be a GR again. I remember saying, "I'm willing, but I don't want to." I'm so glad that Al-Anon taught me to be willing and that my Higher Power was working through Al-Anon members. When I made this decision, I began to grow more abundantly in my program.

I had a few friends in Al-Anon who invited me to the Area Assembly meeting. While there, a *Forum/Literature* Coordinator position came open, and my friend whispered in my ear, "You'd be good at that." I volunteered, and I was off with my first Area position. I began to experience the links of service!

I was encouraged to volunteer as an Area Delegate, and I couldn't identify a reason why I shouldn't. I haven't always wanted to do the work as a Delegate and have fallen short. I've been inspired to work on my selfishness, feelings of inadequacy, and participation by watching the wonderful Panel 60 members in addition to every Al-Anon member who selflessly gives of themselves to carry the message of Al-Anon to families and friends of alcoholics. When I shared my first Delegate report with the Illinois South Area Assembly and spoke about the members coming from all over the US (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada to ensure that Al-Anon continues for families and friends of alcoholics, I got choked up and had tears in my eyes. That's a big deal for me because I struggle with crying. My Higher Power knows how to gently push me forward to enhance my recovery with the abundance of growth I've experienced, unity I've practiced, and understanding of the importance of service to grow in this program.

## Katy P., Iowa

Serving as the Delegate during a pandemic has been challenging. I've had to think big, growing my connection with an abundant, loving Higher Power to help me stay grounded and somewhat serene during what can still be a bumpy time. During the shutdown, I was forced to stop working. I learned that not only is my business practice my financial anchor, it is also a place of spiritual, emotional, and mental pabulum. The deep grief and depression I felt reminded me of living in the darkest time of alcoholism, and I was afraid of succumbing to that lower power, fear.

Action creates change. To keep moving forward, I logged into daily meetings; walked and talked with my Higher Power, my Sponsor, and my friends; hugged my family; camped; and gardened. "One Day at a Time," I have emerged with a greater feeling of trust and awareness of my Higher Power at work in my life and in the world.

It seems that our Higher Power has been planting seeds, preparing our members for this time. Like many, I wasn't interested in a virtual reality until I found myself clinging to it like a lifeline. I now appreciate the push the pandemic provided me to grow my understanding of the power of technology as a tool for connecting. I am now an advocate for implementing new applications and ideas that enhance my Area's recovery and keep us unified with each other and with the world as it is today. I was reminded to focus on the Traditions

as guides to maintaining unity in an Area that held widely differing practices in response to the pandemic. Calling on a loving Higher Power, focusing on our primary purpose, and honoring principles above personalities has allowed me to focus on our similarities and stay in the heart center when it might be easier to lapse into seeing us vs. them.

Educating my Area about the incorporation of electronic groups into the Service Structure has provided me hours of food for thought, keeping me busy while I am getting better. It's been an exciting year in which thinking big, looking for similarities, and keeping an open mind have been key in changing my disappointment at the way life unfolded during this term to being incredibly grateful for the gifts I have gained by being open to new ideas and tools that enhance my recovery.

## Tammy M., Louisiana

"Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding." I learned early on in recovery to look up the meaning of words. "Enhancing": Latin, meaning "to elevate, heighten, increase, or improve." "Abundance": Latin, meaning "overflowing, being intricately connected to." "Unity": Latin, meaning "oneness, as a whole." "Understanding": the ability of comprehension, the ability to make experience intelligible by applying concepts.

In March 2020, I had just finished with my first South Central Regional Delegates Meeting as Delegate for Louisiana, and I was flying back home when the world as I knew it shut down due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID, an outside issue that affected Al-Anon as a whole. I felt such fear and confusion that I did the only thing I knew to do: pray and turn to the tools of the program. I had to learn to lean into the discomfort of not knowing how things would turn out and be present in the moment, as the Spirit would have me be. Learning to give more abundantly by really listening for understanding, listening for wisdom, and studying so that I can be united with the spiritual principle of the Al-Anon program.

As the Spirit stretched me more, out of my comfort zone, where there once was fear, doubt, and vulnerability, now understanding and reasoning things out became very important. Listening with an open mind and heart gives me courage to learn and to be in harmony, be effective and consistent in this ever-changing climate. I am not alone. It takes courage to live a life of abundance and not fear, it takes courage to have unity in myself, and it takes courage to know that the God of my understanding is still here in Al-Anon, as I and Al-Anon grow as a whole. "...Conference cannot be without...the spiritual power that flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish" people (*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27]). As I give abundantly, with unity and understanding, so does the program of Al-Anon.

What have I learned? Just breathe, listen to understanding and unity will be achieved that comes forth from the Spirit, and my life and Al-Anon as a whole will be truly enhanced.

## Rae L., Maine

I was introduced to Al-Anon when my brother was entering an in-patient recovery program. I was asked to be his "concerned person" to participate in group meetings. As part of the program, Al-Anon members held an introductory meeting for the families. I attended a couple of meetings, but my brother left the area after discharge, and I, of course, didn't really need Al-Anon.

Fast forward many years and I found myself crazy with anxiety, worry, and the need to "fix" everything to "help" my son with his alcoholism. After saying his significant other needs Al-Anon, one

day I had an epiphany—I was the one who needed help. My life had become one of constant worry and obsession with his situation and the effects on my grandchildren.

I was unable to speak or read without crying for months. I felt at home with people who understood my pain. I felt loved and accepted and found hope in the meetings. At first my “hope” was for my son. After a while, I realized that the hope I needed was for myself!

I realized that I am an adult child of an alcoholic. There was no drinking in my childhood home, but the “isms” and my mother’s need to control had an effect on my character development. I became overly responsible—and I mean for *everything*. I felt guilty when anything went wrong. Al-Anon has relieved the self-imposed burdens I carried and helped me find fun and laughter again.

Service has been a lifesaver for me—being group treasurer, literature person, and then Group Representative (GR) gave me things to think about to replace the worry and anxiety over my son and grandchildren. I learned to respect others for their ideas even if different from mine, and to delegate and let go of the process others use for the task at hand. I also learned what true humility and love are thanks to Al-Anon. My Higher Power has become my constant companion and friend.

I had not planned to stand for Delegate in 2019, but at our election Assembly I found myself standing when our Area Chair asked who was willing to serve. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve during this time. My understanding of and appreciation for the Al-Anon program has grown exponentially. It is my way of life to live the Legacies and practice the principles of the program daily.

### **Lori H., Missouri**

When I first was being led toward service by my Higher Power, I was scared and full of doubt, but curious. Whether it was speaker meetings, potlucks, or workshops, I always would come home with a feeling of excitement and an abundance of good feelings inside and out. I was experiencing being unified in a fellowship when people came together to experience recovery. As I was tapped by my Higher Power to participate more and more in Area service, I understood the power of unity in the program and the presence of a Greater Being in my service life in Al-Anon.

When I reflect on my journey to Delegate, through personal recovery and service, the spiritual connection I have with my Higher Power is undeniable. Experiencing the World Service Conference has enhanced my recovery on a level that leaves me contented. As I have witnessed all of us Delegates coming together with the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the World Service Office (WSO) Staff, I have gained a greater understanding of our fellowship. The experience of being Delegate has been life changing for me. I am grateful to the WSO, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Committee who invest their time to ensure that our fellowship outreach never ceases.

As I was standing for Delegate, I heard other Delegates in my Regional Delegates’ meeting, and also in my Area, tell me to “be my own Delegate.” I understand better today, in my third year of the panel, what that means. What I bring to service is myself—all of my experiences, all of my friendships, all of my defects. When I come together with a group of Delegates in my panel, we focus on the worldwide fellowship and getting to be a part of the World Service Conference group conscience. The experience as a Delegate has truly enhanced my recovery in wanting to share the understanding with others.

Every time I have participated in a Board meeting, every World Service Conference, every panel meeting, every committee meeting,

I have grown in understanding how the World Service Office makes a difference in our lives as Al-Anon members. I am forever grateful for my experience as Delegate and look forward to sharing my experience with anyone who is curious.

### **Margaret R., Nebraska**

Wow, this is my last year. When I first came to Al-Anon, I had no idea what to expect or that being a Delegate was even possible. I was blessed to be in a group that not only encouraged service, but three months into the program, I was put in charge of the literature table. For this I am grateful.

When I attended my first Regional Service Seminar in Regina, Saskatchewan, I was hooked. Listening to the people from New York at the time and seeing for myself how this program worked, everything I had been learning that first year fell into place.

My recovery has led me in many directions, and my Higher Power has been there guiding me all the way. In Al-Anon, I know I am not alone, and there is so much support there to help me succeed. Through my recovery, I have learned that no matter what position I have held, the need for abundance of experience, strength and hope only helps to provide unity to find solutions to any problems brought forth. Through that process of sharing experience, strength, and hope comes clearer understanding of solutions which I would not have thought of. It also allows me to listen to other voices and give more thought for a solution.

I am so blessed to have a program that has given me the opportunities to learn how to live a happier life, have God in my life, who guides me each day, and have so many healthier relationships. I would not have the life I do today without all of you, God, and the willingness to change the way I think. I am so very grateful for Al-Anon and all of you.

I would like to thank the Panel 60 Delegates for being such a wonderful group of people, who have taught me a lot. I am grateful for the panels before us and have nothing but best wishes for the panels following us. They are in for something special and exciting.

I humbly say thank you to the WSO, Staff, Panel 60, and my Area to be able to participate in this program.

God bless and have courage to carry on.

### **Robin P., Nevada**

How did I get here? The very first time Al-Anon touched my life, I was 17 years old. I walked into a crowded room and all these “older” women were laughing and smiling. I was an angry teenager who didn’t think she had anything to smile about. I didn’t stay after that initial time in Al-Anon, but I returned some years later when it was made abundantly clear I was living with an active alcoholic. The thing is, I knew exactly where to go for help, and many of those same members were sitting in the room when I returned to Al-Anon—those same members who helped that 17-year-old girl. I remember feeling like I could take a breath for the first time in a while. I’m home.

I connected with those members and new ones, too. I always remember my spouse and I would attend our weekly meetings, and I thought what a perfect little program couple we were, until we weren’t, and I found myself divorced and alone. But I wasn’t alone. Those same members carried me, loved me, supported me, and reminded me that I will get through this, and I did just that. Service became part of my life. I felt united with others, especially being involved in service. They understood me as I was still learning to understand me.

I held several service positions. I'll never forget the day I was voted in as the Delegate of Nevada. I couldn't believe I stood to begin with and that the members had enough confidence in me to represent our Area at this level. A few months later, our world changed drastically and so did I. I went into deep isolation; it's an old pattern I have, and it's very dark there. I lost touch with my Area—at least that's how it felt. I went right back to being angry, irritable, disconnected, and it resulted in feeling discontent. I was lost all over again.

I always remember in our Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing my favorite words: “there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.” I hang on to those words with every fiber of my being. I'm still pulling myself from isolation, and that's okay. Al-Anon has taught me that I'm really never alone, and I get to treat myself with gentleness always and forever, no matter what.

### **Noah P., New Hampshire**

I was tricked into going to my first Alateen meeting by my loving stepmother and my Higher Power, as they knew I wouldn't have gone on my own to my first meeting. My first real challenge in my personal recovery was when the last Alateen meeting closed in my Area, and I was forced to transition earlier than I had hoped into Al-Anon. My Higher Power was once again showing His will for me. If it wasn't for the loving Al-Anon members who welcomed me with open arms and plenty of hugs and candy, I would not be where I am today. They showed me through their abundance, unity, and understanding that I was more than welcome to attend their meeting, and over time, I learned that not only was I welcomed, but I belonged. Regardless of my age or who the problem drinkers in my life were, we were all part of the same Al-Anon family.

When I reflect back on my recovery and my humble beginning, it is very easy for me to see how my recovery has been affected by this year's Conference theme of “Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding,” especially these last three years as Delegate. Yet again my Higher Power was ready to show His will. With my Al-Anon family there to guide me, I was able to navigate my way through a pandemic, attend the first-ever hybrid World Service Conference (WSC), and then first-ever virtual Conference. With the loving and understanding of my New Hampshire Al-Anon family by my side to support me and show me that although there may only be one Delegate representing my Area, I never felt as if I was doing it alone.

In closing, I want to convey the best I can my immense gratitude to my past Alateen Group Sponsors, my personal and service Sponsors, and to my fellow new Al-Anon members a heartfelt thank you for showing me through your own abundance, unity, and understanding how to be the best trusted servant I can be. I believe I am a direct reflection of those who come before me and those who have shared a little bit of themselves with me along the way in order to foster my own growth in recovery. I would not be here today without all of you. I am so full of gratitude and forever changed. Thank you for being part of my journey of recovery.

### **Clara C., New Mexico/El Paso**

When I first came to Al-Anon, I was a bundle of fears. My experience as a member of a family affected by alcoholism had taught me to regret the past, fear the future, and suffer in the present. My life was filled with scarcity. Scarcity of money, of attention from my alcoholic, of time for my children. My first service jobs in my home group taught me that there was always an abundance of coffee for the coffeepot! Because we supported ourselves by our own

contributions, there was always an abundance of money in the treasury for our group's needs, to contribute to the various service arms, and to pass on the message. My Al-Anon friends and Sponsor had an abundance of time and love for me.

In my home, there was division: between spouses, between parents and children, and between siblings. District-level service taught me that there was strength in unity. My home group came together with other Spanish-speaking groups to form the first Spanish-language District in the New Mexico/El Paso Area. Other Districts welcomed us and contributed generously to buying translation equipment so that our whole Area could be unified in bilingual Assemblies. I was accustomed to indifference. All our family members were indifferent to each other's needs. In Area-level service, I encountered understanding. More experienced members understood the anxiety I felt at stretching beyond my comfort zone to take on ever more demanding service positions. They were always available with useful suggestions, emotional support, and a helping hand.

It was some of our wonderful past Delegates who first suggested that I stand for Area Delegate. Without their encouragement, I would never have thought that I would be capable of serving this fellowship that I love so much at the Conference level. Now, as I finish the third year of this panel, which has seen so much upheaval and has challenged us all to use our strengths to deal with a worldwide pandemic, I reflect on how much I have learned. I am proud and grateful to have the opportunity to serve in Al-Anon's largest group conscience, and to enhance my recovery through abundance, unity, and understanding.

### **Emily D-C., New York South**

When I first came to Al-Anon, my life was the opposite of abundance, unity, and understanding. My marriage had fallen apart, I wasn't self-supporting, and I didn't know how I'd gotten myself into this mess.

The seeds of my problems were planted early in life. If you shook my family tree, nuts and alcoholics fell out, as one of our pamphlets says. I thought I could escape the effects of growing up in an alcoholic family, but the same feelings of deprivation, disunity, and lack of understanding followed me into adulthood. Circular thinking was driving me nuts, and the glass wall that protected me also kept you away.

I felt so ashamed walking into my first Al-Anon meeting and admitting defeat.

For 25 years, I attended meetings and did service at the group level. In my work life, I was helping people affected by alcoholism, and I guarded my Al-Anon anonymity like Fort Knox. When clients showed up at meetings, I squirmed. Running into them at Assemblies would have been mortifying, because then they'd know I needed this program, too.

My idea was to do service beyond the group level once I retired. But Higher Power had other plans. In a Steps, Traditions, and Concepts meeting, our literature chipped away at my invisible walls, week after week. There we read about the joy of service, of loving relationships with Sponsors and friends, and of the growth service provides.

In 2014, Higher Power finally gave me the nudge I needed, and my service journey began. Starting as Group Representative (GR), other positions followed—Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), District Representative (DR), Alternate Delegate, and Delegate. In 2020, a Panel 59 Delegate congratulated me on this new adventure, calling it “an amazing journey in recovery, service, and spiritual growth.” And it *has* been.

Some ways I've grown:

- By focusing on my service responsibilities, I'm less sensitive to hurts and slights. And my protective glass wall is coming down so I can listen better, and let you in.
- In times of conflict, when I see myself in you, my understanding and compassion for both of us grows.
- Most importantly, in starting the day asking Higher Power to guide me in the next right action, I'm amazed at the abundance of inspiration, direction, and grace that follows.

Taking this journey of recovery through service is transforming my life into one of abundance, unity, and understanding. And I'm so grateful.

### **Catherine J., Newfoundland/Labrador**

"Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding." My first thought is, "Well. That's a mouthful!" But for me, my recovery needed a better understanding of my situation first. I think recovery only comes when we begin to really know ourselves...who we are and how we fit into the plan of a Power greater than ourselves.

Before Al-Anon, what I wanted to understand was how to get this alcoholic in my life to see the need for sobriety. I had no concept of my own recovery needs, but with Al-Anon I began to understand that alcoholism was a disease, not just a simple choice. With that knowledge and understanding came growth in abundance. In my Al-Anon group, I saw a unity of purpose that was so much bigger than what I saw at home. Being involved in service to the fellowship really opened my eyes to that unity. The Traditions weren't just something read at meetings; these were lived maxims for a worldwide fellowship. Later, I learned how they could be applied in my personal life, leading to a more united and peaceful home, and so my recovery and that of my family was enhanced.

Involvement in service to the fellowship shows the abundance of energy, caring, and enthusiasm that is still there, although sometimes hidden. Coming together, united around a common purpose—the health of Al-Anon in the Area—has enhanced *our* recovery, helped us move beyond *my* recovery. We all have an abundance of gifts given to us by a Higher Power, gifts to be shared with others. There is an abundance of love, serenity, and wisdom in all of us that is meant to be shared with those who suffer, and it is through that sharing that my growth comes.

When I first started to write this, I was focused on *my* recovery, then I began to realize it is bigger than that. *Our* recovery is the recovery of Al-Anon as a whole. I know we all think that what is happening is just happening to us, and then I read of Districts with few groups, like mine; no Group Representatives (or Alternates), like mine; no District Representative, like mine. Then I realize that to recover we need to think abundantly, to be united in Al-Anon's purpose, and to understand the part each one of us plays in that recovery...a dedication to "Let It Begin with Me."

### **Bill H., Ontario North**

"Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding." How little I would have understood any of those terms when I walked through the doors of my first Al-Anon meeting. All I knew then was that I was in pain, and a friend told me that Al-Anon might be able to help. That person was right, and I will always be grateful for their message.

My introduction to service came two months after my first meeting, when our Group Representative (GR) asked the group if anyone

wanted to attend an upcoming District meeting. I had no idea what a District meeting was, but along with some other group members I said yes! In those days, I lived in a small town and attending the District meeting involved a three-hour drive each way. I had no idea what was going on at the meeting, but I liked the people and the energy and feeling a "part of." I believe that trip planted the seed of service for me. When I later moved to a larger community, I soon volunteered for service positions in my new group and District. In the beginning, there were few men in my Al-Anon District, and I will always be grateful to the women who encouraged my attendance and participation.

Being of service has always been a central part of my recovery since those early years. Service has always brought to me a feeling of belonging and unity. I have learned new skills, gained confidence and self-esteem, and learned more about healthy relationships through service. I have learned to keep an open mind to differing opinions. I have seen the majority change our minds after listening to the minority opinion who had insight that the majority had missed. I have seen Knowledge-Based Decision-Making promote unity even for difficult decisions. I have learned that, for myself, attending meetings and participating in service is not enough for continued personal growth. I also need to continue to actively study the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts with my Sponsor or study group for continued personal growth.

I truly believe that Al-Anon saved me from the self-destructive path I was on. I will forever be grateful to those who kept the doors open for me as a newcomer, and I am grateful now for the opportunity to play a part in keeping the doors open for the next newcomer.

### **Maria V., Puerto Rico**

Today I want to share with you about the 2022 Conference theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding."

When I am going to share, I try to divide the topic into parts, and I look over the meaning, so it makes it easier for me to understand what I am going to share and analyze it better.

Abundance: a large amount of something.

Unity: property that things have, of not being able to be divided or fragmented without being altered or destroyed.

Understanding: faculty of the human being or facility to perceive things and have a clear idea of them.

I was recently in a wonderful meeting where there were these three components, which made me think a lot about it.

There I could see the importance that unity has in the first Tradition, and that stands out in this theme.

Unity is an important part for a group to progress. If it does not remain united in thought and action with the principles of the program, it will be divided, fragmented, and it will be destroyed.

A group that works together, that studies and works in depth with the Traditions and the program: they have more understanding and can analyze things, and in some or most cases reach an informed group conscience based on their knowledge.

These elements have made it from being a small group of two people, and, "One Day at a Time" and little by little, it has been growing. And with growth, prosperity will come, turning it into a group of recovered members committed to Al-Anon.

By telling you this story, I have told you the story of my home group, where Mary (me) has found the understanding of the program and applied it to my life.

I have learned the importance of unity and received the abundance of love and happiness based on the principles of the program.

I have discovered this wonderful Al-Anon family and with all of this together I continue to keep recovering every day from the effects of the family disease of alcoholism. Thank you all for allowing me to share and continue serving.

### **Joy F., Saskatchewan**

When I started my term as Delegate, there were so many unknowns, and fear crept in on a regular basis. I was told by a past Delegate that God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies those called. She reassured me and encouraged me to "Let Go and Let God."

"One Day at a Time," I took on my new role. In those early months I spent time to just "Listen and Learn." I started to understand the extent of my position as a conduit, a channel through which I could share information from the World Service Office, and also where I could bring the voice of Area 89 to the World Service Conference.

When the world turned upside down in March of 2020, I really needed to "Keep an Open Mind." I reminded myself to "Keep It Simple" as we planned our first virtual Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meeting. Soon we were planning virtual Assemblies too! It was all about "Progress Not Perfection" as we navigated so much uncharted territory.

My first and second World Service Conferences were virtual, and I had to remind myself regularly, "Easy Does It," Joy.

In this third year of my term, I have been working hard to assist the Saskatchewan Area with the business of transforming electronic meetings into AFGs. This was challenging, and I reminded myself, "Let It Begin with Me." I had to "Keep It Simple" and just do "First Things First." We held several town halls for open discussions and then conducted a group conscience. These were not simple conversations, and as we reasoned things out, I felt so proud. Area 89 was truly courageous as we walked through this process together.

There really are no words that capture how I have grown these past three years. My heart overflows with gratitude. Thank you, Al-Anon, for an abundance of love and support, the unity I experienced among my fellow Panel 60 Delegates, and a new understanding of this simple yet powerful program.

### **Bob C., South Carolina**

What an appropriate theme for our 2022 World Service Conference: "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding." Abundant by its very nature! Just thinking about it enhances our recovery. My recovery, however, takes more than thinking, especially considering my best thinking got me here. What I needed was not only a new way of thinking, but a better way of living.

In *Courage to Change* (B-16) on my birthday reading, the quote says, "The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." Fortunately, I was introduced to our Third Legacy, service, early in my recovery. Members of my home group asked me to join them on an upcoming Saturday at a "District meeting." I was excited about going because I needed to get out of the house! I soon found out that a District meeting was more than a ride in the beautiful state of South Carolina and a great covered dish lunch. I was handed what has become an indispensable tool for enhancing my recovery, the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

Even though I have read the *Service Manual* cover to cover, every time I open this very spiritual book, I learn new things. For me, this is where the abundance lives. There always seems to be a nuance, an interpretation, a policy, a practice, or a Concept that I have either forgotten, overlooked, or never knew. What a deep well this is that is

always flowing. As I sit here still writing on the submission date for this special privilege, it occurs to me that I have not been procrastinating, I just haven't finished yet! I have been asking my Higher Power for help, trusting the process.

This morning I started with my usual practices: prayer, meditation, and reading my daily reader. I feel a profound sense of unity with my fellow Panel 60 Delegates and the Al-Anon/Alateen membership, many of whom are engaging in the same practices. And here it is, right in front of me on the page in Today's Reminder. "There are so many ways in which I can improve the quality of my life. Instead of fretting about what I can't have or can't do, I'll take action to create something positive in my life today" (*Courage to Change*, page 38).

### **Sue R., South Dakota**

When I began my position as Delegate in 2019, I never imagined what an uplifting, inspiring, and gratifying experience it would be. We have faced many challenges at all service levels these past three years, but we have risen to each one and carried on the legacy of Al-Anon to the best of our ability through them all.

Personally, this year's Conference theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding," fits with my own recovery. Through my many years of service, as well as throughout my three years as Delegate, I have been shown an abundance of love from everyone from the World Service Office (WSO) Staff to my fellow Delegates, South Dakota's Area World Service Committee (AWSC) members, DRs, GRs, and fellow group members. I was able to truly see unity and understanding in action during committee meetings, at Conference when agenda items were discussed, during WSC breakout sessions, meetings with my fellow Panel 60 Delegates, and during AWSC meetings, Assemblies, District meetings, and even in my group meetings. Uniting for the good of the fellowship and listening with understanding has always been the goal, and I saw this demonstrated in the respect that was given to each person who shared their understanding, opinions, and their experiences.

I have faced several personal challenges this past year. The perseverance, faith, and love for the program that I have gained through both my service experiences and my personal recovery journey have made it possible for me to walk through these challenges stronger and hopeful for my future. It is because of all of us that Al-Anon continues and will be here for our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. For that, and for all of you, I will be forever grateful.

### **Heather M., Utah**

When I think about the theme "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding," I think of the Alateen program and its importance to Al-Anon. After an Alateen meeting, or even after a conversation with an Alateen member, I find that I look at Al-Anon and my own program from a different viewpoint. Right after being elected Delegate, I assumed that my time as Delegate would be the "thing" that I find the most inspiring. I love being Delegate, but I find that I am most inspired when I am serving as an Alateen Group Sponsor. After each Alateen meeting I return home and tell my husband that he should become an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) so that he can feel how I feel after an Alateen meeting—full of hope and peace and happiness. I always leave an Al-Anon meeting glad that I went, but when I leave an Alateen meeting, I want to shout to the rooftops to anyone who will listen, "Alateen is amazing, everyone should want to be an AMIAS!"

Alateen members have a way of viewing and accepting the disease of alcoholism that I sometimes marvel at. I struggled to see

alcoholism as a disease and therefore judged the alcoholics in my life, but I have witnessed Alateens accept that concept with little question. I once asked an Alateen member why they had long conversations with their obviously inebriated parent. The answer I received shocked me: “My dad is in there somewhere.” It was something I had never considered. Every time I attend an Alateen meeting, I learn something. In this case, for me, it is compassion for the alcoholic and respect for children of alcoholics. The Alateen member knew their dad was sick and did not blame him for his disease.

As an Alateen Group Sponsor I get to listen to kids share their experience, strength, and hope, and I can always relate to what they share. I feel a strong sense of unity at Alateen meetings. We are all part of Al-Anon. We all have similar challenges, and we all learn and use the same Al-Anon tools. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to be an Alateen Group Sponsor. As Delegate during COVID, I have continued to attend Alateen. The meeting has had its challenges, but the Alateens keep coming. I continue to be inspired by the unity and understanding that exists in Alateen.

### **Sharon B., Wyoming**

After being afflicted, saddened, angered, martyred, and “over it” during 20 years of marriage to an adult child of an alcoholic who did not drink problematically, my Higher Power revealed Al-Anon to me through a physician. I had shared my pain with no one except my Higher Power but felt safe to share at Al-Anon meetings, to use the phone list, and to begin healing my relationship with my partner, who embraced Al-Anon shortly thereafter. Gradually I learned that I was responsible for my happiness, that an abundance of choices was available, that my Higher Power could be trusted, and that I could live my life and not merely endure it. Alcoholism had affected every single aspect of my being in some negative manner, and Al-Anon changed me to the core for the better.

Encouragement from an Al-Anon friend prompted me to attend my first A.A. conference with Al-Anon participation only a brief time into my recovery. An A.A. speaker gave me what I took home from that conference: “Wow, if his program can help him like that, then mine can help me.” My Higher Power has abundantly blessed me with service adventures. Out of curiosity, and because of my Group Representative’s (GR) enthusiasm about them, I began attending District meetings. Various service positions took me regularly to four Area functions per year for many years. Service at all levels provided me with an understanding of our fellowship far beyond the life-giving tools I gained in my home group, and a grasp of the oneness of our fellowship.

I had no intention of standing for Delegate at our 2019 Election Assembly as our Chairperson asked that all qualified attendees stand. For two rounds, all of us sat down, unwilling to serve. As we all stood a third time and the Chair prayed aloud for someone to be willing, my Higher Power nudged me. To my surprise, I remained standing! Fortunately, my experience with service has taught me that help is always available in Al-Anon, and that my Higher Power would not give me something I could not handle. (After all, this certainly was not my idea!) Oh, what a ride it has been! I am now looking forward to my first in-person Conference and a visit to Stepping Stones. Through my Higher Power, my recovery has been enhanced with an abundance of service opportunities, as well as an understanding of our fellowship and its unity of purpose.

## **OPENING SPEAKER**

Terry F., At-Large Executive Committee member

I’m a very grateful member of our worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon that includes Alateen. I am currently serving on the Executive Committee, and I’m a past Trustee at Large and a past Delegate.

I feel very honored and humbled to have been asked to share with you as the opening Conference speaker. There were times in my life when I did not know I had a voice. And there were other times that when I did use my voice, I did not do so appropriately. I am also very grateful to be able to share with you in person, rather than over a computer. I love to see all your faces. And being here in person is so much more fun!

I will begin by saying that I have been given many things by being privileged to have served on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee for the past eight years. I have acquired more grey hairs, a few more pounds, and more frequent flier miles! I have also been given the gifts of a greater relationship with my Higher Power, myself, and others; more gratitude, humor, courage, wisdom, honesty, and creativity; enhanced perspective, accountability, self-worth, dignity, and integrity; trust in the process; and greater awareness of spiritual abundance.

My story begins with being born in Virginia. When I was three, my mother left my biological father due to domestic violence, and moved herself, my sister, and me to Iowa to be close to family. When I was six, my mom married my stepfather, who was the first person I came to understand later to be an alcoholic. There was lots of drinking, chaos, inconsistency, fear, yelling and hitting by all of us, moves, people in and out of the house. My parents were also on the carnival circuit for a time. The Department of Children and Families was almost involved twice. And on a few occasions, our water and/or power were turned off.

My Al-Anon Family Groups story began in 1981 when my parents joined A.A. and Al-Anon. I was 15, and my dad hit his bottom at that time, which included drinking, trying to steal a car to go to work, a gun, and jail. My parents then joined A.A. and Al-Anon.

At that time, my mother asked me if I wanted to join Alateen, and I said “yes.” Not because I wanted to, but because I decided long ago to become a liar. I told lies to protect myself and get out of trouble. However, early on, I also became a watcher. I watched what happened when others rocked the boat and decided it was bad. So my lying often was about telling you what you wanted to hear, and people would be calmer, and eventually I’d get mine (attention, time, validation, praise, inclusion). I’ve come to know that this lying was “people-pleasing.”

Though I came into recovery to please my family, members seemed to understand, accept, and include me, so I stayed. With the help of Al-Anon, A.A., and Alateen, things got better at home. I got a little more assertive, and my grades improved. There was better community within the family due to membership in the programs. I learned a little about service, so I got involved, partially because at that time I didn’t know how to say “no.” I went to my first Assembly based on a lie of wanting to go when asked, but I got hooked based on new knowledge of this worldwide fellowship, and because I was welcomed, encouraged, included, and invited to participate.

However, it is my belief that, had my focus stayed on my dad being the reason for being part of Al-Anon Family Groups, after transitioning into Al-Anon, I would not have stayed. I hit my spiritual bottom after being in Al-Anon.

I’ve heard speakers share that alcoholism is a disease of perceptions,

a disease of attitudes, and a disease of relationships. My perception is that I'm right, that the way I see things is the right and only way. My attitude is that those in my life should treat me a certain way because I'm right, or else. You can imagine how my perceptions and attitudes affected my relationships!

When I was almost 19, I began a relationship with a young man, and my focus moved to him, though I kept attending meetings. He showed some interest in me and paid attention to me, so I forced solutions. Right away I went about trying to get him into recovery for my sake! I had seen at Assemblies this nice couples' recovery picture and I wanted it. I'd go to meetings and people would say, "you can't change him," "focus on yourself," "detach," "take care of yourself," "get a Sponsor," "work the Steps," "pray," "you're powerless." I developed the "yes but" syndrome, and I became more angry, more controlling, more judgmental, more self-righteous. I'd go to a meeting for an hour and go home and rant and rave. I yelled and screamed and hit to try to get him to behave. And the underlying message was, "so I can have what I want."

We had talked about getting married. However, after almost four years of my behavior, he got tired of it. One major promise I'd extracted from him early on was that he would not be with anyone else while with me, because he'd told me he had been unfaithful in other relationships. But he didn't know how to communicate, and I was a bully. So he found someone easier to deal with.

Then the relationship was over, and I wanted to die. I pictured stabbing myself to death with a knife, but knew it would make a huge mess, and didn't want a family member to have to clean it up. I also worried about what you all would think of me if I killed myself, so I didn't do it.

If I couldn't kill myself, what could I do? It was then that I hit my spiritual bottom, finally. Sobbing, I asked for God to help me for the first time, without conditions. And I felt my Higher Power, and I finally knew and could see that He had been trying to help me... with the people in Al-Anon who had tried to help and had listened to me endlessly, and who over and over tried to tell me to let go and work the Steps.

On page 49 in *As We Understood...* (B-11), it states, "Throughout the Al-Anon literature runs the message, 'We tried it this way and it worked for us.' I had to decide whether I wanted to try it the way it worked or continue on my own way, which wasn't working. This was the first freedom I encountered, the freedom of choice."

That experience was true for me. I soon chose a Sponsor who was upfront and tough, which I had by then accepted I needed. She was focused on the solution, Steps, Traditions, Concepts, being involved, tools. She said she would be honored to sponsor me, but only if I also did service. Though tough, she taught me unconditional love. No matter what I shared with her, at the end she'd always say, "I love you, honey." And I came to believe...that I was lovable and capable of loving.

We learn in Al-Anon that alcoholism is a family disease. The alcoholic drinks and is consumed by the disease, the family obsesses and is consumed by the disease as well. That was certainly true for me. By working the Steps and getting honest about my disease, I saw that I lived in extremes. On the one hand, I felt ashamed, guilty, insecure, almost stuttering at times, didn't open my mouth, didn't know my own thoughts or feelings. I also watched and waited to be seen, like a big, black cat a family member had many years ago named "Bear." When Bear was petted, he would drool. I can relate...just pay attention to me and I'll drool for you!

On the other hand, I could be rageful, controlling, angry, fearful, worried, anxious, judgmental, self-righteous, self-centered, selfish,

suicidal, and homicidal. One incident I often share is that I got enraged with my sister one time as a teenager and chased her with a knife. When I was almost to her, I had one of those moments of clarity we read and hear about, and I saw that I could kill her, and it stopped me...I can happily report, however, that, due to Al-Anon, none of you had to worry about me with the cutlery tonight!

I started off talking about gifts. On June 5th in *Courage to Change* (B-16), the quote at the bottom reads: "God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame."

First, I was given the gift of desperation, which led to the gift of choice, which led to sponsorship, and Conference Approved Literature, and the Twelve Steps. And with the Steps came faith in a Higher Power, and hope, and service. And with the gift of service came the gift of inclusion and belonging, and the understanding of Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship through participation, and a greater understanding of the value of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts, including the five Warranties. I am so grateful I was given this choice to take this journey!

Today, because of Al-Anon, I truly believe and trust in a Higher Power, and know He wants only good for me and gives me what I need. I have a better understanding and acceptance of who I am. I have made amends and am blessed to have healing within my family relationships. For the last six years, I have had a partner in my life whom I love and who often makes me laugh. He also tells me almost daily that he loves and respects me. And I have a profession and a business that fits who I have become. In part of its name are the words "Abundant Solutions," which came to me one night when thinking about many of my Al-Anon experiences.

In the summer of 2020, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Though my prognosis is excellent, I did have to have the tumor removed, and have daily radiation for several weeks. Being on the Executive Committee requires meeting monthly. Due to the pandemic and WSO Volunteers not traveling, I was able to continue serving on the Executive Committee, where I might have otherwise felt I needed to resign. My Higher Power used that time, and I was given what I needed.

I want to share a change in my perspective that was given to me also as a gift of growth through Al-Anon. When I was four, I had a traumatic brain injury that made me have some permanent physical challenges. Because I looked different, and because of surgeries, the way some people treated me, and believing others who had told me I was stupid, I felt a lot of shame about who I was, my intelligence, my appearance. What I came to know is that there are miracles to all parts of our journey...You see, when I had my accident, my family was told I wouldn't live through the night. And then, a few days later, they were told I might live, but I'd never regain consciousness. And then a few days after that, they were told that I might regain consciousness, but I'd never walk again. I am so blessed! Do I wish the accident hadn't happened? At times...but I can tell you I've learned so much about myself, my Higher Power, other people, and relationships, in a very unique way. And I've been told often by members of the Executive Committee, when I was on the Board, and as a Delegate, that they like the way my brain works, value my critical thinking and appreciate when I speak, and that I speak! Who knew I'd ever be here? I couldn't have imagined it. But my Higher Power did!

This year's Conference theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding," also has great meaning to me as I reflect on my time as an Executive Committee member, Board member, and Delegate. It's hard to believe this Conference is my 11th World Service Conference!

During my time as a World Service Conference member as Delegate, Trustee, and Executive Committee member, so many amazing things have happened at the Conference: Hearing about diversity and inclusion of potential members; the vote to end the trial of property ownership; the beginning of TEAM Events; visits to the WSO and Stepping Stones; the presentation on AFG, Inc., the Organization & AFG, the Fellowship; Al-Anon's 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> World Service Conferences, and Al-Anon's 60<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, and 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays; the beginning of what is now "Road Trip!"; the introduction of a new Director of Finance & Operations to the Conference; the introduction of the interim Executive Director and then our current Executive Director to the Conference; the first time contributions topped \$2,000,000 as a special appeal was clearly heard, understood, and met by the fellowship; all the wonderful international representatives who have attended and shared; participation in the 2015 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation; participation in the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention; all the presentations of new literature; Concepts text revisions for clarity, as well as edits to the Policy Digest that were passed; the ending of TEAM Events to make room for something new; the announcement about the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* beginning; the decision to allow electronic meetings to become groups that meet electronically, and now to vote whether to admit a new Area into the World Service Conference Structure! And those are only some of wonderful things that have happened!

When I was a Delegate, I loved coming to the World Service Conference for the first time! Conference is where I first heard about "abundant thinking" and "spiritual abundance." It's where I first heard that I was getting to participate in a conversation that had been going on for many years. Due to the pandemic, no matter if you are a first-year, second-year, or third-year Delegate, it is, for most of you, your first face-to-face WSC. My hope is that you all enjoy it! And that you hear and feel your Higher Power in the discussions we have and the decisions that are made. Trust that you are here because you are supposed to be. And know that you are taking part in these discussions, at this time, with the collective wisdom of this Conference. Have a wonderful week! Laugh, learn, listen, eat, share, grow! Trust the process. Enjoy the journey! Thank you.

## SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

### Clara C., Panel 60, New Mexico/El Paso

"I hate myself for loving you," say the words of a rock song. That was how I felt before I was introduced to Al-Anon. I thought that the alcoholic in my home was a terrible person, and to love him made me pitiful and disgusting. By the time I arrived at my first meeting, my self-esteem was almost non-existent. What sort of person continued to stay in that type of relationship, and subjected three children to living in a chaotic household?

In Al-Anon I learned that alcoholism is a disease, and that I am sick, too. It is not wrong to love an alcoholic, no more than it is to love a person with diabetes or cancer. I began to learn those little nuggets of wisdom which are called the slogans. I learned the Serenity Prayer, and to recite it silently to myself when angry words would only have worsened a tense situation.

When I first looked for a meeting, there was no English-speaking meeting near my home. Although my Spanish was not very good at the time, I was just desperate enough to give it a try. I asked the lovely ladies of that group to be patient with me, and to correct my errors. Boy, did they! I mention this because speaking English became an important factor in my service story.

As I worked through the Twelve Steps, I learned that, although I could not change the alcoholic, there were many changes I could make in myself, which would make my life easier and fuller. I began to take my own tentative steps into the world of recovery.

Before Al-Anon, I had no real friends, only acquaintances with whom I exchanged endless complaints about our lot in life. The members of my home group extended the hand of true friendship. By observing how trust in a Higher Power of their own *understanding* helped them to navigate crises in their lives, I gained the confidence to trust my own Higher Power with my problems.

I never had a dramatic spiritual enlightenment experience. Instead, I gradually began to see that I am a child of that Higher Power, no more and no less than any other person. I came to believe that we are all put on this Earth to love and serve one another. One of the ways I can do that is to pass the Al-Anon message whenever and however I can.

As I continued working the Steps, I acquired a Sponsor. I have heard it said that, to find a Sponsor, one should look for the kind of person one wants to be. I was then a mass of fears, so I asked a person whose courage I admired. To my surprise, she said yes! She had been through many of the crises that I most feared. Although I am no longer her Sponsee, I will always be grateful to that brave lady.

I once confided to my Sponsor that I had dreams of going to college and becoming a healthcare professional. I didn't see how those dreams could come true. I had married and become a mother shortly after graduating from high school. "If I started school right now," I said plaintively, "I would be 42 years old by the time I earned my degree!"

"Well," she said after a minute's thought, "If you don't go back to school, in four years you'll be 42, and no degree!"

That gave me the courage to start school, and at age 42, I graduated as Academic Marshal of the School of Healthcare.

Service has been a very important part of my recovery. Like most Al-Anons, I began by arranging chairs and making coffee in my home group. Soon, I was asked to share at an A.A. convention with Al-Anon participation. What a challenge! What could I say to all these people who surely had more wisdom and experience than I did? My Higher Power knows what I did say to them. I surely don't remember!

A year or two later, we were visited by members from other groups in my hometown. They proposed to form an Intergroup. At that time, my home group was not active in any District, but since I spoke English, I was elected our representative to this Intergroup.

By 2006, there were several Spanish-speaking groups in our town, and we petitioned the Area to form a District. I became a Group Representative, again because my ability to speak English made it easy to understand the business conducted at Assembly. For the same reason, I started to interpret, and became one of the first Translation Co-Chairs when New Mexico/El Paso established that service position. This important decision made by our Assembly enabled many more members of our diverse community to fully participate in Area business. I also served as a District Representative and Newsletter Editor. Participation in Public Outreach became a great joy! In Area service I found *unity*.

During this time, my alcoholic relatives entered recovery, relapsed, entered again, and relapsed again. Service became my salvation. If I could encourage and understand those relatives only by leaving them in the gentle care of the God of their understanding, I could certainly welcome and give comfort to other family members of alcoholics.



The other trusted servants that I met at Assembly and other Area activities have become dear friends. Some years ago, some of them began to urge me to stand for Delegate. By then, my self-esteem had increased to the point that I felt that I could do a good job of representing New Mexico/El Paso. The only reason I wanted to wait was that I felt I needed to retire from my job in order to have the time that the Area deserved for me to devote to the task. Accordingly, I retired at the end of 2018 and stood for Delegate in November of 2019, ready for my big trip to Virginia!

Of course, you all know what happened in the spring of 2020. A pandemic changed our in-person World Service Conference to an abbreviated virtual one. The following year was a lengthier virtual version. Although I have not met my fellow Delegates face to face, I have made dear friendships, and feel that I have done my little bit to help Al-Anon to become truly a worldwide fellowship.

I have come a long way from that woman who hated herself for who she loved. In Al-Anon I have found an *abundance* of friends who have shared with me the joy they have in life.

As I like to say to my fellow members in New Mexico/El Paso, *gracias por su confianza en darme el honor de permitirme servirles como su Delegada*. Thank you for honoring me with your trust and permitting me to serve as your Delegate.

### **Katy P., Panel 60, Iowa**

I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you at the 62nd World Service Conference. It is fantastic to be together physically!

When the 2020 physical Conference was canceled, I was falling into a deep spiral of depression, the likes of which I hadn't felt for 25 years. My office doors were shuttered by our governor's proclamation and, unable to work, I felt adrift. My District began gathering on Zoom in very short order and I logged into meetings daily, sometimes twice a day. Taking advantage of my open schedule and the number of meetings that were popping up online, I was able to translate that feeling I get of "plugging in" to my Higher Power in online meetings. My world instantly got bigger and hope took hold.

The effects of this pandemic mirror alcoholism, and I began to see how I could use all of the same tools to help me cope. I had to use the Fourth- and Tenth-Step tools of self-assessment to see my part. Instead of pouring out bottles, I was sterilizing surfaces; instead of obsessing about the alcoholic, I zeroed in on other people's behavior, ensuring they were masking up, washing hands. Fear was at the heart of all of my emotions, coloring my decisions, and I was heading towards a familiar place of catatonia. My head was spinning so fast that my body couldn't keep up, and I was slooowing down, trying to think my way out of this situation. Thank God I had a lifeline called Al-Anon to give me good orderly direction. Get up, take a shower, eat something healthy, walk, tune into a Zoom meeting. Hug my family. Go outside—even better, take my Zoom room outside. Connect with the Area Officers. Get busy thinking about how we are going to have our business meetings on Zoom....When I got busy, I got better. Thank you, Al-Anon Family Groups, for giving me of all things electronic groups to think about doing this pandemic. It's given me something to focus on other than fear, and as a result, both I and my Area have flourished.

The pandemic revealed that there are more members like me, people who have grown up in Alateen and continued through Al-Anon. Family recovery from alcoholism is increasingly more multi-generational. Having the Twelve Steps to live by is a fantastic model for a positive, loving family construct, and one I am sharing with my son. Growing up, I experienced many of the Adverse Childhood Experiences that the 2021 survey discusses. Alateen provided me a

refuge from the chaos that I experienced at home. Yelling, hitting, and leaving were normal ways to resolve disagreements. While I don't practice these coping mechanisms today, there can be an undercurrent of chaos about me when I'm stressed that continues to smooth out over time. The longer I am around, the less trouble I seem to create.

My parents met at college in the mid-60s. Suicidal from a young age, alcoholism wasn't my dad's first diagnosis, but it was the illness that created the most damage in his world. My father had a very hard time grasping the concept of alcoholism as a disease and that a Higher Power was the solution. My early life was spent visiting him in numerous treatment centers or at the VA where he was drying out. By the time I was four, my mom had been introduced to Al-Anon. She and my dad had been married for six years and had moved to Georgia where I was born. Another treatment brought hope for change, and they moved back to Iowa to be close to family.

The same story continued over and over again: fights escalating, boundaries getting pushed aside, new lines being drawn and crossed. More treatment was sought. This was in the '70s and early '80s, and the families were now being included in the treatment program. My mom was pushed to continue with Al-Anon and the kids were encouraged to go to Alateen. My sister and I went with my mom several nights a week. My mom got involved with service right away, but life did not change at our home for several years. Instead of the peace and serenity sobriety could offer, my dad was maudlin and angry. My mom was enthusiastically embracing her new recovery family and was often gone on service adventures. After several attempts at piecing their marriage back together, my mom divorced my dad. This was a big loss for me. My sister and I stayed with our dad in our family home. He was sober, and that provided some stability, yet I was unanchored without my mom. She did her best to keep us connected, including picking us up weekly to attend Alateen meetings. I remember dreading it, preferring the numbness of TV to having to sit in the circle and talk about how I was feeling. I was feeling angry, scared, lonely, hurt, bereft. Looking at those feelings hurt, but it also helped make them more manageable. I always left my meetings feeling better. That's an idea I've shared with my son when he would prefer to play video games instead of going to his Alateen meeting.

My sister's alcoholism skyrocketed, and at 16 she entered a young people's treatment program. Her treatment revealed sexual abuse by a neighbor. My mom asked me if this had happened to me and, rather than face the truth, I minimized the effects this time in my life had on me. (*"It wasn't that bad. It could have been worse. If I pretend it didn't happen, it will all go away."*) Sometimes I still respond to life this way. Service has given me opportunities to stay emotionally present in the face of challenges.

My mom married my stepdad, who was a Big Book-thumper, with a big presence and a booming voice. We had a new parent who had boundaries. My sister didn't last long in this new family dynamic and ran away, effectively choosing a life of alcoholism to one of recovery. There were times when both my sister and dad scoffed at the A.A. program, calling it a cult, yet each went back multiple times to try to find the peace it offers. This anti-A.A. sentiment was hard to navigate as a young person. I wanted my dad's approval, yet I felt so much better in recovery rooms where people were happy. Our Alateen groups were thriving thanks to our dependable Alateen Group Sponsors and parent support. We traveled to multi-state Alateen Conferences and felt the power of unconditional love. Alateens are authentic and speak from the heart. I developed a deep sense of safety and trust that has carried over with me into my Al-Anon meetings. It's a feeling that can be described as feeling at home, which is a huge gift for

someone whose home was damaged by alcoholism. For a few years I attended both Al-Anon and Alateen meetings which allowed me to transition fully into Al-Anon with relative ease.

Several of my Alateen friends and I went to the same college. Attending meetings together kept me in the rooms for a time, until I abandoned both Al-Anon and college to focus on a relationship. My obsession with this person was immediate and grew to be overwhelming. As college students do, I grew long dreadlocks, hitchhiked around the United States, immersed myself in the music scene and even lived in a tipi for a while. What could have been a magical time was instead shrouded in fear and rage and attempts at controlling a person who didn't want to be tied down. I knew from my earlier experiences in Al-Anon and Alateen that I could feel better, and that feeling became a beacon of hope for me. I re-enrolled in college and found an Al-Anon meeting on campus. I didn't catch the recovery fire, but kept attending consistently. When I was ready to make a major change and leave my long-term relationship, I called my mom. She embodies the hand of Al-Anon and is a lifeline of recovery for many. I was 26, very depressed, and my life was unmanageable. I grabbed the hand of a Sponsor and began the slow climb out of a very dark time. My Sponsor and I served as a Group Representatives together. Our friendship grew as we attended District meetings and traveled to Assemblies. She continues to be my Sponsor today and is one of the most important people in my life. She is the first person I called when my dad eventually passed away and when my son was born. Her example of love, laughter and friendship has changed my life. She lives in Arizona now, and another benefit of the pandemic has been to be in online meetings with her.

It didn't take long for me to latch on to a new relationship that began in sobriety and ended in alcohol and narcotics, with all things darkness thrown in. My part in the disease of alcoholism had reached an all-new low. After a lot of moving in and out, endless tears, and a growing sense of shame, I surrendered one more time in July of 2000. At the heart of that spiritual experience of letting go was the A.A. International in Minneapolis. My Sponsor and a group of friends immersed ourselves in the excitement and enormity of that gathering. The collective love that I felt there filled up some of the gaps in my heart, and I surrendered to the deep healing that begins in Steps One through Three. There was no place to go but up. I could see that I was at the heart of all of my troubles, and that a loving Higher Power was restoring me from a person who felt unworthy to one who, today, knows that I am enough. My Higher Power is at the heart of all areas of my life today.

Not long after that moment of surrender, I met and married my husband, who will celebrate 42 years of sobriety this summer. We were blessed by a baby boy who came to us through adoption. Our circle of recovery taught us to widen our sense of family, and it has been easy to have a loving and open relationship with our son's biological family. Our son is now 15 and has been attending Alateen since he was eight. We consciously invite our Higher Power into our home by praying together in the mornings. My husband is older than I am and recently retired. Our age difference has not always been easy, but staying active in our respective programs has kept our marriage happy and strong for over 20 years.

I struggled for many years to fit myself into the mold of the office culture. I clung to the "Just for Today" bookmark as a reminder to live in the day. I was trying to turn this area of my life over, but

couldn't seem to surrender. In an effort to change the things I could, I started meditating on a regular basis, and this practice changed me. I began to feel much more present within each day, and my connection with my Higher Power grew stronger. When I was least expecting it, the light came on for me, and I was pointed in the direction of my true career. I went back to school and have continued to work in a healing field for many years. I am so grateful to love what I do and to be able to call on my Higher Power throughout my day.

Throughout all of my time in Al-Anon, I've committed myself on some level to being in service. Many of the roles I've taken on have been at the suggestion of my Sponsor, and more often my mom, who, as a past Panel 48 Delegate, has been a strong example of service for me. While my Sponsor might give me kind nudges, my mother is less inclined to take no for an answer. My mom was the first one to let me know when it was my turn to stand for District Representative (DR). My initial response was a loud "NO." In my District, the DR is expected to visit all of the groups and sit on multiple committees and boards. It's a large undertaking. It took me a while to hear my Higher Power's voice, but eventually I heard the yes and have not looked back. Serving at the District level was empowering. I learned to trust my Higher Power's creative guidance and to realize that service is *spiritual*. Serving at the Area as Alternate Delegate and now Delegate has helped me hone my technical skills. My policy acumen has grown and I've become a "word junkie."

In hindsight, I can see how our collective Higher Power has been at work, preparing Conference members and Al-Anon members alike for the virtual explosion that mushroomed out of the pandemic. I want to thank the WSO Staff and Volunteers for using the principles of recovery to bring us through this challenging time. Thank you for having the forethought to edit and revise the budget, to minimize where possible, and now to set expectations of growth and abundance, always keeping Al-Anon Family Groups' primary purpose in mind. The unity of Al-Anon is enhanced by your example of grace and courtesy in your responses to our questions. We've all grown in our understanding of the challenges we are faced with as we incorporate a non-geographic Area into our Structure. We are emerging from this pandemic in a stronger, ever-widening circle. It's been so much fun (in hindsight) being in the middle of this change. I can't wait to see where the guidance of our loving Higher Power, working through the collective vision of our members, takes us. I close with love, gratitude, and appreciation for each of you. Thank you!

## CLOSING SESSION

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Nancy S., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Board opened the Closing Session by saying, “I am so grateful to have been able to participate in this 2022 World Service Conference. There are not enough words to describe how amazing it has been to be able to be part of this first face-to-face Conference in two years! I have come to fully realize how much I have missed all the things we can’t do when we are meeting virtually, such as share hugs, share a meal together, share real conversations with each other, share laughs, and connect with each other on a heart level. I don’t know how it is possible, but I feel completely exhausted and totally energized all at the same time!

“I am humbled to be part of the Conference where we made the truly pioneering decision to welcome the Global Electronic Area into the World Service Conference Structure. I believe this decision will change Al-Anon Family Groups in ways that we probably have not even thought of yet. I can’t wait to see what comes next! I think that Lois and Anne would be truly amazed at how far Al-Anon Family Groups have come since the two of them opened the Clearing House in 1951.

“I will carry many memories of this Conference with me for a long time. I want to share two of those memories with you. First, I had no idea how emotional it would be for me when Ozzie returned to the General Session room after we passed the motion to welcome the Global Electronic Area into the World Service Conference Structure (WSC). There was so much Al-Anon love in the room as we welcomed Ozzie as the first Delegate for the Global Electronic Area with a standing ovation. Tears of joy ran down my face as I thought about how much work had gone into making that moment a reality and tears of gratitude for my Higher Power allowing me to be there. The second memory is from when we arrived at Stepping Stones. As we got off the bus, there was a gentleman there who welcomed us with words that I will never forget. He said that Lois left everything exactly the way she had it because she knew that one day YOU would come to visit. I felt like he was speaking specifically to me. Once again, tears of joy and gratitude streamed down my face, and I was grateful to my Higher Power for putting me in that place at that time.

“For some of you, this will be your last World Service Conference as a Delegate, WSO Volunteer, or WSO Staff member. You have left your mark on my heart. I want to extend a big thank you to all Conference members for being the dedicated hands that work tirelessly to ensure that Al-Anon will continue to be here to fulfill our primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics.

“The spiritual principles in our Conference theme, ‘Enhancing Our Recovery Through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding,’ were evident throughout the Conference. As you return to your Area and share the information you received at Conference with your members, I hope that you can do so with all the love, joy, and enthusiasm that Conference members used to share the information with you. Thank you all for making this the best Conference ever for me!”

The Conference Chairperson shared her closing thoughts: “It has been a distinct pleasure to chair this amazing 2022 World Service Conference. We have had a full week of meetings, fellowship, learning, growing, and remembering how to gather in community and in person. We have truly embraced the Conference theme of ‘Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding.’

I have felt the abundant presence and guidance of our collective Higher Power as we navigated some interesting, challenging, and deeply spiritual conversations. I have been on the Board of Trustees since 2020, and all our meetings up to now have been held electronically. What a tremendous gift of unity to see all of you in 3-D, and to experience the connection that I have missed attending meetings online. My first Conference was in 2021, and while it was a powerful experience, there is a breadth and depth of understanding I gained from meeting in person that cannot be conveyed through a computer. I felt a spiritual connection with the members of that Conference, but there’s a different level of unity and understanding when we gather in person to reason things out with someone else. I feel it takes more effort to tap into our collective Higher Power when we aren’t physically in the same room—almost like the connection is buffering, like internet connections may sometimes do.

“Now, after all our interactions this week, I feel a more tangible connection with you, my Al-Anon family. We may not have the same story or even speak the same native language, but we have all found connection and recovery through this special program. Speaking of family, I am overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to chair the Conference where we set another place at the table for our new Global Electronic Area Delegate. In the spirit of our Legacies, we are continuing the work that the Al-Anon pioneers started when they created a place for families and friends of alcoholics to find help and hope. Walking around the grounds of Stepping Stones this week on a beautiful spring day, I felt a lot of hope, both for the present and future of Al-Anon worldwide.

“My Higher Power speaks to me through your voices, and over and over this week, I heard what I needed to hear: ‘You’re right where you are supposed to be’; ‘God doesn’t call the prepared, God prepares those who are called’; ‘Time takes time’; ‘God has your back.’ I hope you also heard what you needed to. There were a lot of moments this week that couldn’t have taken place if we had met electronically and couldn’t have been planned by the Conference Leadership Team. God was and is in charge. And God is good—all the time.

“I have heard that how we say goodbye says a lot about who we are. So, I want to take this time to say it was truly an honor and a pleasure to chair this Conference. I am grateful for all the conversations, support, and love that we have shared, and I want you to know I have been blessed by all of you.

“Before I tap the gavel to close this Conference, I want to share a few of the lessons I have learned from having “the script”:

“Look up and look ahead regularly. But don’t read too far ahead—you may not be able to plan the outcome all the time.

“Be flexible and have fun. This is a privilege—not everyone in Al-Anon will get to experience this.

“Remember to breathe in and out. Words are important, but pauses are sometimes more important.

“Ask for help. There will be changes and challenges, and ‘Together We Can Make It.’”

With a tap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson brought the 2022 World Service Conference to a close.

That evening, the Conference Chairperson opened the Closing Dinner with the Serenity Prayer. Following dinner, outgoing Panel 60 Delegates, as well as outgoing members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, received a certificate of appreciation for their service to Al-Anon Family Groups. The Spiritual Speakers,

chosen by the previous year's Conference—Clara C., Panel 60, New Mexico/El Paso, and Katy P., Panel 60, Iowa—then shared their stories. (See pages 55-57.)

At the end of their talks, members and their guests made a circle around the perimeter of the room and closed with the Al-Anon Declaration.

## STEPPING STONES VISIT

Prior to the trip to Stepping Stones, the Panel 62, Global Electronic Area Delegate “set the stage” for the visit by sharing the following historical background and “preview” of what Conference members would see.

Stepping Stones is Lois and Bill's cozy Dutch Colonial threebed-room home, which was built in 1920 as a summer cottage. It sits in the middle of rolling, wooded country, with its barnlike gambrel roof and cinderblock studio. The air is sweet with blooming forsythia; it almost smells as if bread is baking inside, but no one has lived here since Lois died at age 97 in 1988.

The six buildings on the eightacre Stepping Stones homestead are intact and unified. Among the highlights:

### Inside:

- A large living room dominated by a stone fireplace and walllength French doors.
- A collection of antiques, glassware, china, photographs, printed materials and Lois and Bill's musical instruments, including Bill's cello and Lois' piano.
- A winding staircase leading to the secondfloor library, which has been preserved as Lois left it when she died in 1988. Lois's desk is in the home's upstairs library.

The house is as Lois left it: wall lengths of books stacked five shelves high, scores of personal collections, a gallery of photos and framed proclamations by dignitaries ranging from Pope Paul VI to President Eisenhower.



### Outside:

- The garden and its surroundings include antique roses and fruit trees. Bushes and trees grace the hillside.
- The two-car garage is now a Welcome Center, which has an orientation display, restrooms, and a gift shop. Much of the archival material previously stored in a small hallway is now on display, and the Center is a place to more appropriately welcome visitors.

Stepping Stones is an important site for Al-Anon and is designated as a State and National Historic Landmark.

The following day, Conference members rode to Stepping Stones on pre-assigned buses. For many members, visiting Stepping Stones is much more than just a sentimental journey; it is like a “spiritual homecoming.” Stepping Stones is an invaluable link from Al-Anon's past to our present and future.

# 2022 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

## **MOTION #1 – (84 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 0 voids) – CARRIED**

To admit the Non-Panel Global Electronic Area to the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure, whereby the Area's elected Delegate will serve as a voting member of the 2022 WSC as a member of Panel 62.

## **MOTION #2 – (86 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 voids) – CARRIED**

That the following persons be seated at the 2022 World Service Conference.

### **With voice, but no vote:**

**Niketa Williams**

Director of Finance & Operations

Non-Anon Member

**Scot P.**

Associate Director—Brand Communications Al-Anon Member

### **With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) business, but no vote:**

Elizabeth (Liz) D. Chairperson, ECRPM

Al-Anon Member

## **MOTION #3 – (85 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 1 void) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2021 Audited Financial Report

## **MOTION #4 – (86 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 voids) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2022 Finance Committee Report

## **MOTION #5 – (80 yes, 5 no, 0 abstentions, 2 voids) – CARRIED**

To amend the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter as identified in the track changes document as amended and posted to the WSC Members at 7:00 pm on April 29, 2022.

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

### **Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter**

As amended by the ~~2009~~ 2022 WSC

#### **Introduction**

The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter is a body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The provisions of the document are not legal, but traditional, since the Conference is not incorporated. This charter is an informal agreement between all Al-Anon and its World Service Office (WSO). Certain countries of the world, for language or geographic considerations, have established or may desire to establish their own General Service Office and national conference. This World Service Conference is now the senior conference.

#### **Charter**

##### **I. Purpose**

- a. To be the guardian of both Al-Anon's world services and its Twelve Traditions;
- b. To be a service body, not a government.

## **2. Composition**

- a. Delegates from States states, provincial provinces, and territorial territories within Delegates from the United States (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada and from non-geographically based Areas (WSC Structure) together with WSO members, the last including the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Executive Committee, and voting members of the WSO Administrative Staff, the three groups that comprise the Policy Committee;
- b. Representatives from other countries, when these countries as well as the Conference may be ready for their participation;
- c. Representatives from non-panel Areas within the WSC Structure. United States and Canada;

## **3. Relation to Al-Anon**

- a. The Conference acts for Al-Anon in the perpetuation and guidance of its WSO services.
- b. The Conference is a vehicle by which Al-Anon can express its views on policy and note deviations from Traditions.
- c. Delegates are free to vote as their conscience dictates and not necessarily as instructed by their Areas.
- d. No changes are to be made in the Al-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text), or the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups.
- e. Wording in the Charter may be changed by the vote of three-quarters of the Conference members; however, the protections afforded the Al-Anon and Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service, and the General Warranties in item 3-d may not be taken away or lessened by Conference vote.

## **4. Relation to the World Service Office**

- a. Two-thirds vote of Conference members in attendance is binding upon trustees and any related corporate service.
- b. The above does not affect legal obligations of the WSO in conducting business.
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., three-quarters of all members registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the WSO if or when it is deemed essential and may request the resignation of the whole Board and nominate a new slate of Trustees. For this purpose only, the number of WSO members voting shall be limited to one-quarter of the total Conference vote.

## **5. State and Provincial Assemblies: Purpose of**

- a. In each Area within the WSC Structure, Assemblies convene at least every three years and as often in between as is deemed necessary for the purpose of electing District

Representatives (if not elected in their own districts), Assembly officers, a Delegate to the WSC, and an Alternate.

- b. Assemblies are concerned primarily with world service affairs of Al-Anon.

## 6. Assemblies: Composition of

- a. In each state (including Puerto Rico), ~~and~~ province, territory, and non-geographically based grouping, elected representatives of all Al-Anon groups desiring participation meet together ~~in a central location~~.
- b. ~~States and provinces~~ Areas within the WSC Structure with large Al-Anon populations may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional delegate to the Conference, as provided for in the “World Service Handbook” for Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

## 7. Assemblies: Preferred Method of Election

- a. District Representatives are elected from Group Representatives by ~~written~~ confidential ballot.
- b. Delegates are chosen from District Representatives by a two-thirds ~~written~~ confidential ballot or by lot.
- c. Alternates are elected at the same time and for the same term of office.
- d. It is strongly advised that the term of office of the Chairperson, other Assembly officers and District Representatives follow the same pattern.

## 8. Panels and Delegates’ Terms of Office

A third of the Delegates, called a panel, are elected every three years for a three-year term. The election of each of the three panels is held on each of three consecutive years. This staggered election and tenure of office is provided so that a Conference shall always include a panel of Delegates with two years’ experience. (This method was adopted because some A.A.s found that their two-year plan resulted in too fast a turnover and the valuable experience of two-year Delegates was lost to the Conference.)

## 9. Conference Meetings

The Conference meets annually. In grave emergency, special meetings may be called. Conference members may also be asked by the WSO to render advisory opinions at any time by mail or telephone poll.

## 10. Board of Trustees: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities

- a. The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is composed of qualified members of Al-Anon groups. The Board elects its own successors, with nominees subject to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof.
- b. The Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, which is guardian of Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions. Subject to e, below, the Board has responsibility to determine policy and manage the business affairs of the WSO. It may appoint suitable committees and elect members to its Executive Committee.
- c. If any subsidiary services are later formed, the Board of Trustees will be primarily responsible for their policy and financial integrity.

- d. The By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and any amendments thereto are subject to recall by the Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members. All By-Law amendments will be presented to the first Conference to be held after their adoption by the Board of Trustees.

- e. Except in great emergency the Board of Trustees ought never take action liable to affect Al-Anon as a whole greatly without consulting the Conference. However, it is understood that the Board shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference.

## 11. Conference Procedure

- a. The Conference hears financial and policy reports of the Board of Trustees and WSO services.
- b. Delegates and WSO members take under advisement all matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass suitable motions for the direction of the Board of Trustees and the WSO.
- c. The Conference may recommend action respecting serious deviation from Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts of Service.
- d. The Conference may adopt procedures and elect any needed officers by a method of its choosing.
- e. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the members registered at the Conference.
- f. At the close of each yearly session, the Conference will send a full report of its proceedings to all World Service Conference members, past WSC members and Area World Service Committees (Area officers, Coordinators and District Representatives).

## 12. General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions: that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members; that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

**Note:** The term Al-Anon includes Alateen. Therefore, the above Charter applies to all registered groups, including Alateen.

### **MOTION #6 – (86 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 voids) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2021 Annual Report.

### **MOTION #7 – (86 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 voids) – CARRIED**

To amend the “Social Networking” section on page 127 of the “Public Outreach” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v1 as amended to reflect World Service Conference members’ feedback.

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

## **The Internet**

The internet is a global computer network that is in the public domain. Service arms are encouraged to post WSO public service announcements on the internet or to create links to the WSO website. In keeping with our Legacies, Al-Anon members guard with care their own and others' anonymity and avoid any actions or behaviors that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name. (See "~~Social Networking--Individual Members/Groups/Service Arms~~ Media" entries below. Service guidelines are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org.)

## **Social Networking Media**

Social networking media can be an important venue for carrying the message of Al-Anon as it fulfills its primary purpose of reaching millions those who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship. Given social media's global reach, members serving Al-Anon Family Groups are encouraged to understand their unique responsibilities to adhere to our Legacies when using this medium.

## **Social Networking Media—WSO**

The World Service Conference (WSC) has granted the WSO sole responsibility for creating public outreach messages beyond the local level for creating public outreach messages with national and international reach. The WSO, in carrying out its responsibility, will continually look for new ways to do so, using the capabilities of social networking media and emerging technologies while adhering to Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

## **Social Networking Media—Areas, Districts, AISs/ Intergroups**

Service arms (Areas, Districts, AISs/Intergroups) can create blogs, profiles, or social media pages for public outreach relevant to the membership they serve, recognizing the need to adhere to Concept Ten by avoiding conflict with the service authority granted to the WSO by the WSC. Service arms can create and post content consistent with Al-Anon's spiritual principles and Legacies except when to do so would violate copyright law. Only Al-Anon service arms are given permission to use the Al-Anon and Alateen trademark names and logos for social media purposes. (See also "Copyrights" and "Symbols/Logos.")

## **Social Media—General Service Offices (GSOs) & National Structures**

GSOs and national structures can create blogs, profiles, or social media pages for public outreach relevant to the membership they serve, recognizing the need to ensure consistency with public outreach messages created by the WSO.

## **Social Media—Groups**

In keeping with Tradition Five, the purpose of an Al-Anon Family Group is to help the families and friends of alcoholics. Groups do not create social media pages. Groups are encouraged to support service arms' public outreach efforts.

## **Social Networking Media—Individual Members/ Groups/Service Arms**

Blogs, profiles, social networks, or other forms of social media are appropriate for public outreach. To carry the message as described in Step Twelve, members are welcome to share social media posts from the WSO and Al-Anon service arms for public outreach. Members maintain the principle of anonymity, never revealing their

membership, and do not appear to speak for Al-Anon as a whole. They avoid actions, behaviors, or commentary that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy, or harm Al-Anon's name, and or distort its public outreach message. The names "Al-Anon" and "Alateen" are trademark names and may not be used as usernames, logos, or identifying characteristics on profiles, blogs, or in titles of social media pages. Only Al-Anon service arms may use the Al-Anon logo. (See also "Anonymity."—"Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials": "Symbols/Logos") In order to adhere to the spiritual principles described in Tradition Twelve, individual members do not create Al-Anon/Alateen social media pages.

## **Social Networking—WSO**

The WSO, in carrying out its responsibility for creating public outreach messages beyond the local level, will continually look for new ways to do so, using the capabilities of social networking and emerging technologies, while adhering to Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

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# 2021 WORLD SERVICE OFFICE



Al-Anon Family Groups  
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics



# GREETINGS & THANKS



Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)  
Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)  
Vali F., Executive Director

Each year, thanks to generous contributions from our members globally, the Staff and Volunteers at Al-Anon's World Service Office (WSO) are privileged to continue the work started by our co-founders Lois and Anne over seventy years ago. This year our work felt somewhat more similar to that of our cofounders, as WSO Staff diligently prepared to refine systems and processes to support the more than eight hundred meetings of Al-Anon members who gather together electronically and whose meetings were recognized by the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC) as Al-Anon Family Groups. Volunteer and Staff non-panel Area Task Force members offered their support to the trusted servants who are pioneering in their own right as they held elections for Group Representatives and a Temporary Chairperson charged with hosting the first Assembly for this new non-panel Area—no easy task when considering the non-panel Area has no Districts yet represents over six hundred groups. What an incredible moment in Al-Anon history. What an honor to serve the worldwide fellowship during this time.

Meanwhile, the Board of Trustees continued its own evolution, streamlining its agenda to allow the Trustees to concentrate on more strategic conversations and activities. In 2021, the Board recognized the opportunity to acknowledge the delegated authority provided its Committees when they were assigned specific responsibilities, eliminating Board conversations about accomplished tasks and focusing instead on broadly discussing critical and timely decisions. The Board spent many hours participating in generative conversations about current trends affecting the fellowship. The Board, Executive Committee members and Staff participated in thought provoking discussions related to refreshing the Strategic Plan Objectives and Strategies to address potential impacts.

Staff underwent several significant changes, bringing onboard a new Director of Programs and redefining the former Public Outreach Professionals position into Community Relations to increase our attractiveness to professionals not only in the medical field but across disciplines such as the recovery and education fields. How exciting to be embarking upon this new era of programs and public outreach activities and perspectives. We offer enormous gratitude to those Staff at the WSO who have provided the foundations upon which we are growing and expanding. We look forward to honoring them in 2022 and beyond.

# WHO WE ARE: MISSION, ENVISIONED FUTURE, AND GOALS



## MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.



## ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.



## GOALS (2022-2024)

### Goal: Members

AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

### Goal: Public

Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.

### Goal: Organization

AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



# OUR INTENTIONS



## Strategic Plan

A new Strategic Plan for AFG, Inc. was developed in 2018. WSO Volunteers and Staff committed to ensuring the Strategic Plan was more than a list of activities to complete, becoming instead the means to achieve the envisioned future of AFG, Inc. With it, the WSO established a long-term vision that could be realized over time by executing a series of relatively short-term actions. Strategic planning in 2018 led to Strategic Plan initiatives (Strategies) for Staff execution in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

## 2021 Strategies Update

Staff Strategic Leadership Team

In October 2020, the Board of Trustees approved the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) recommended Strategies for 2021—subject to Preliminary Budget approval. The 2021 Strategies, which included carryover Strategies from 2020, were:

### Goal: Members

- Evaluate Alateen enthusiasm for, and the feasibility and safety of, hosting Alateen meetings electronically
- Upgrade and launch new WSO online store technology to improve member usability and provide trilingual access to CAL (see WSO Online Store Upgrade)
- Deliver ongoing *Mobile App* Premium Content reflecting subscribers' feedback and develop a process for sustained delivery
- Update and translate WSO Guidelines to ensure consistent access to current practices across all three languages supported by the WSC Structure

### Goal: Public

- Develop targeted LinkedIn campaigns to raise professional awareness as to the availability of Al-Anon Family Groups (see LinkedIn Communications Strategy)
- Pilot a format for providing Public Outreach meetings on wheels to reach professionals and governmental agencies virtually

### Goal: Organization

- Increase international representation within our global structure and Conference by identifying opportunities for the Board of Trustees to remove barriers for countries with national service structures to attend the World Service Conference
- Evaluate options for expanding international structures' ability to sell and purchase CAL between structures while continuing to protect AFG, Inc.'s copyright

Staff was grateful to have completed the Online Store carryover Strategy in 2021, while accomplishing large Operations projects, including hosting the (virtual) 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner and finalizing updates to the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). 2021 Strategies' outcomes are detailed within the Our Work section of the Annual Report.

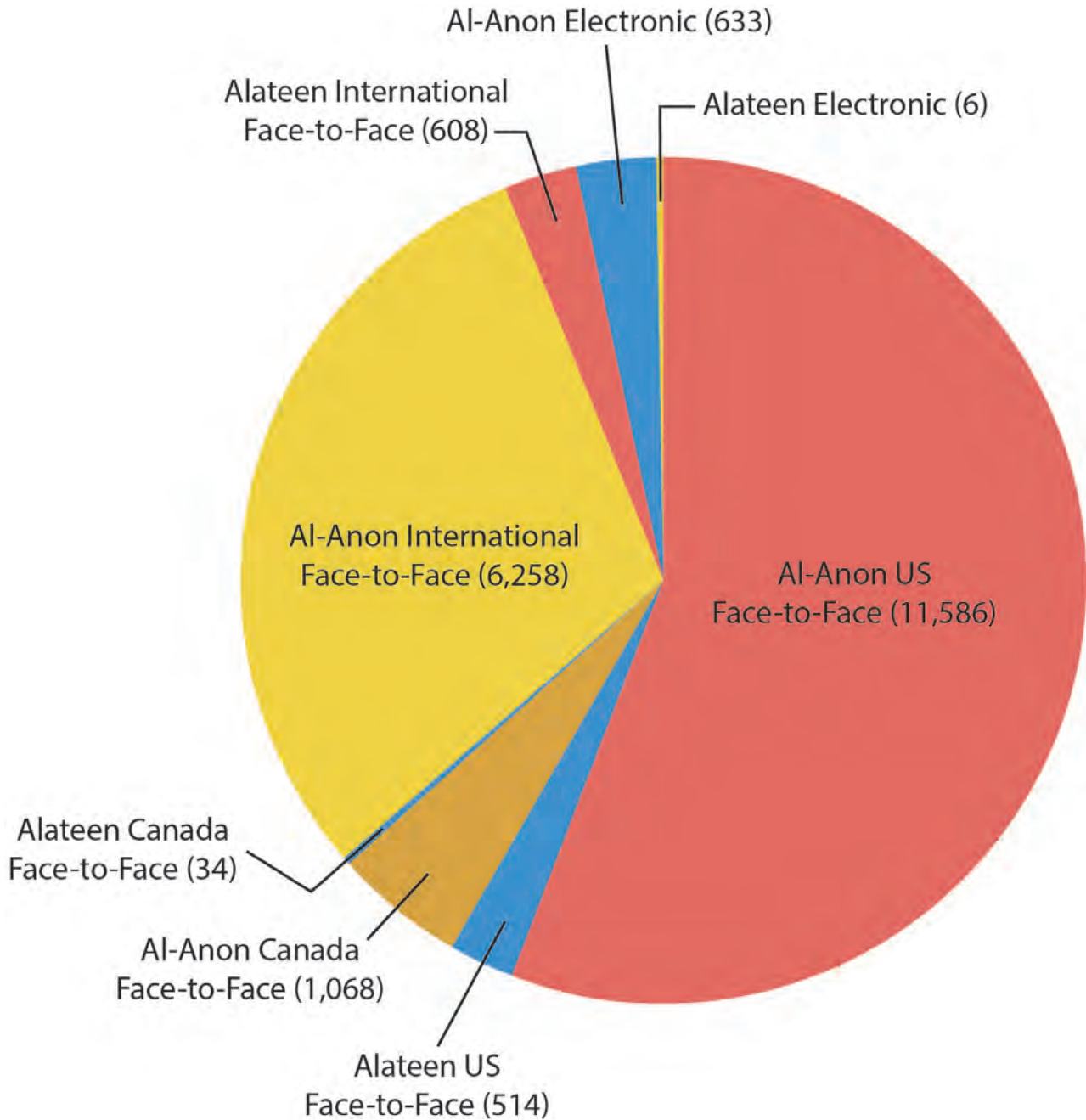
SLT met with the Executive Committee in its Board-delegated role of Strategic Plan execution oversight to review and gain approval for changes to the Strategies as well as to answer questions related to weekly status updates. One deferral was requested and approved—the Goal: Public Strategy related to Public Outreach meetings on wheels was deferred pending the onboarding of a fulltime Associate Director—Community Relations. The SLT members also meet quarterly with the Board of Trustees to provide updates on Strategies and progress the 2022 Strategies planning.

# OUR IMPACT

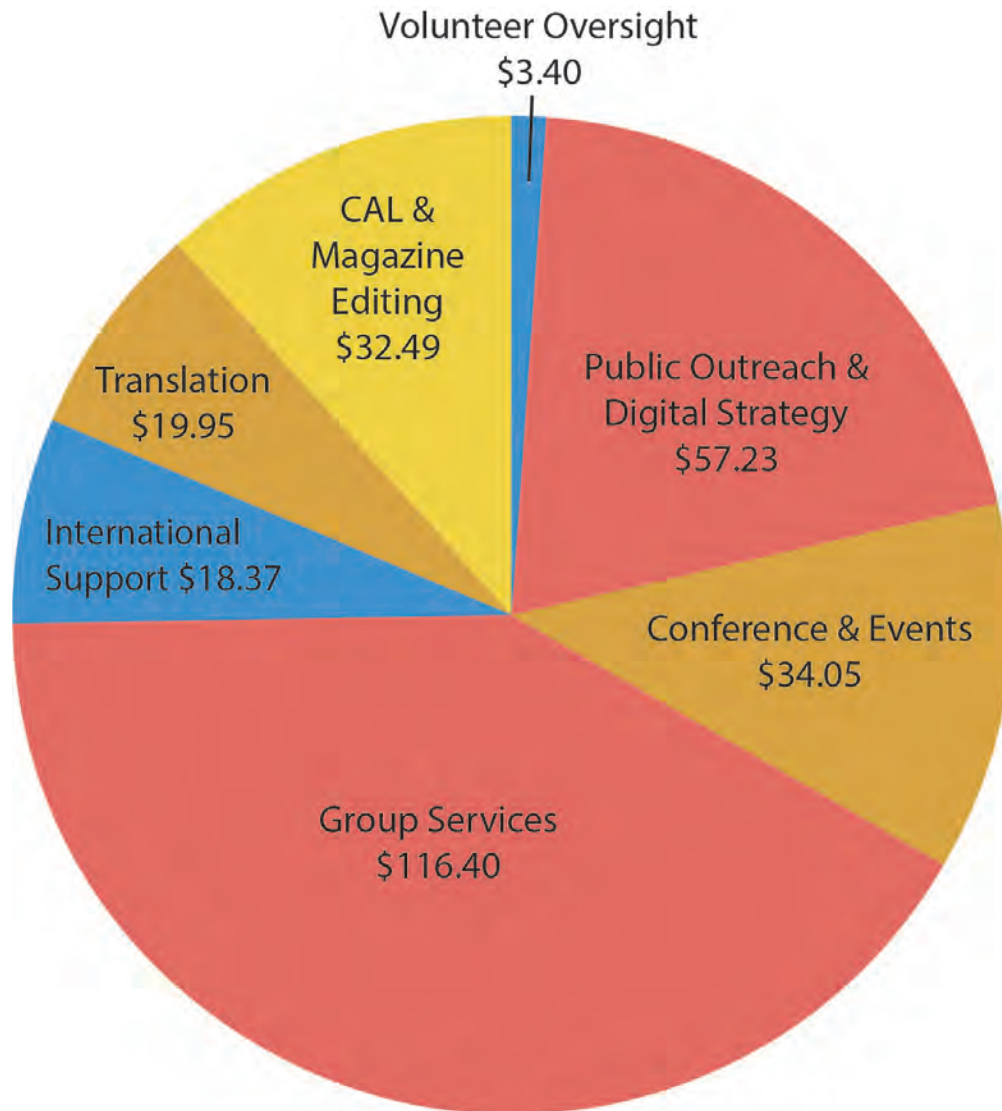


## 2021 Global Al-Anon Family Groups' Statistics

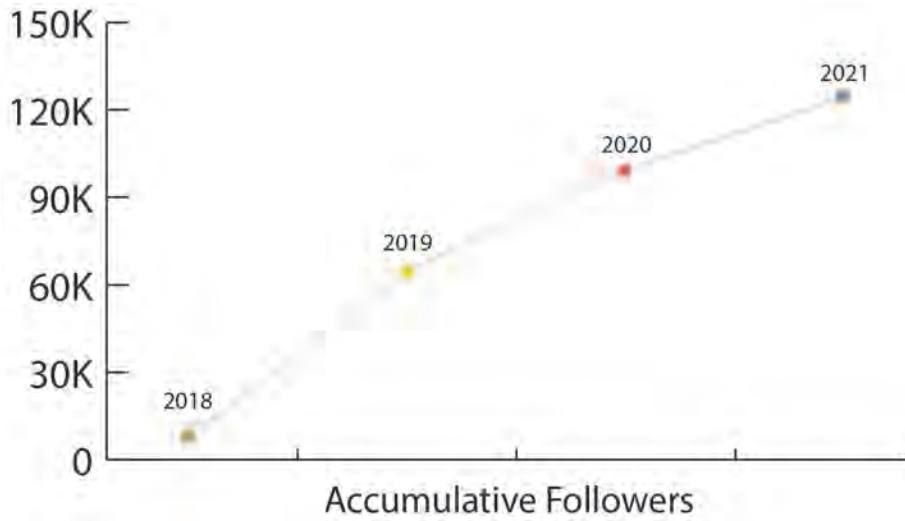
### Total Al-Anon and Alateen Groups Worldwide (20,707)



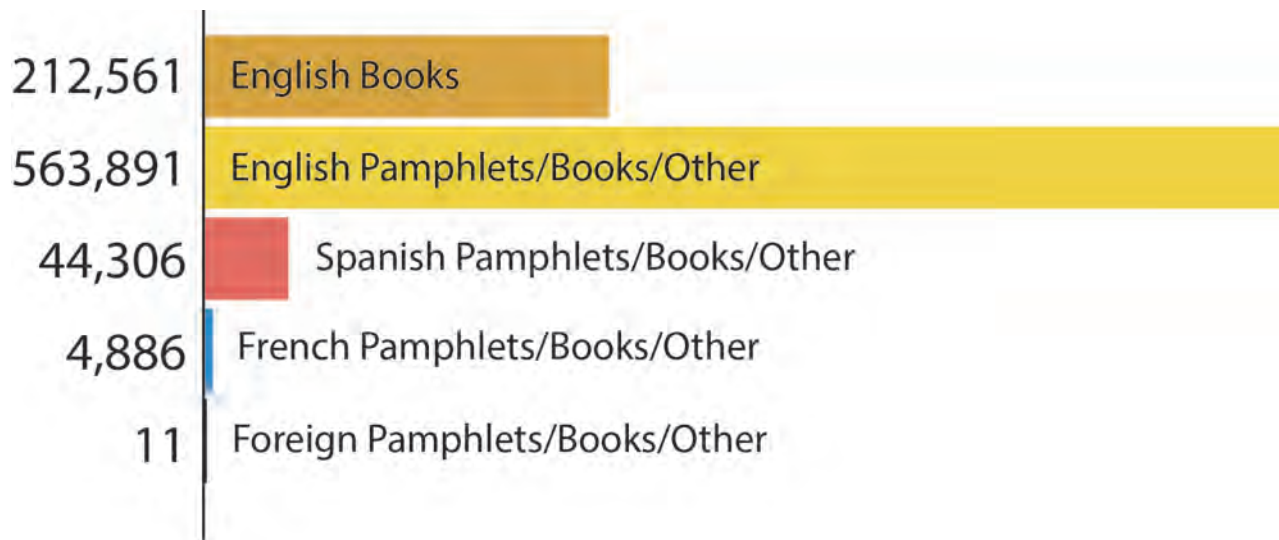
## Cost of Services Per Group \$281.88



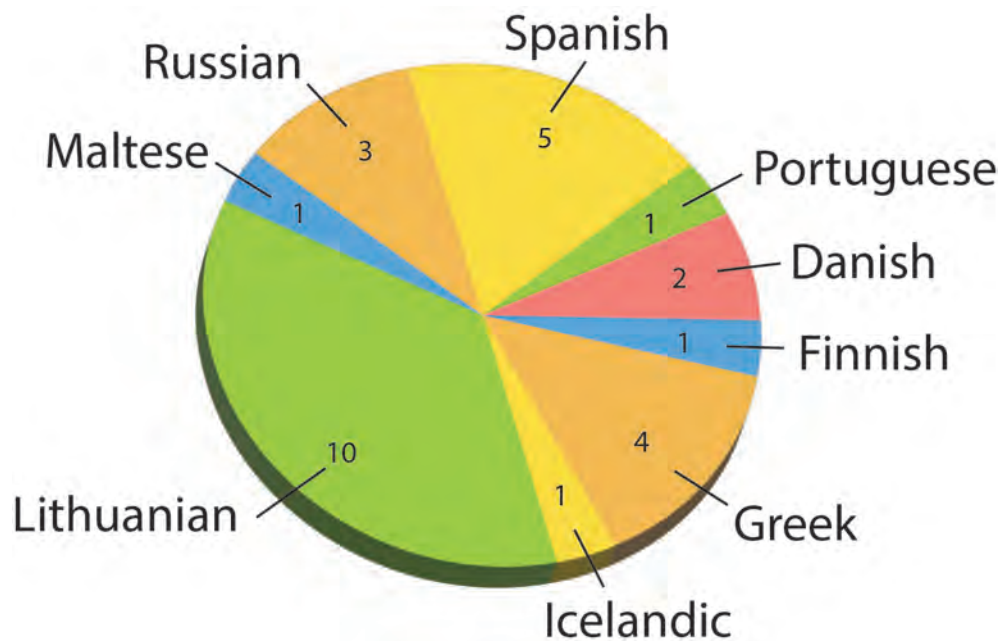
# Digital Communications Connections



## Conference Approved Literature Volume



## Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally





# Translation Overview

## Routine publications and Board of Trustees communications

- *Le lien*, a French-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues a year with an average of 7,500 translated words per issue)



- *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, a Spanish-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues a year with an average of 7,500 translated words per issue)
- *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto* (one or twice monthly)
- Chairperson of the Board letter and Policy, Finance and CLT Committee updates (quarterly)
- 2021 Highlights from the WSC (once yearly)
- 2020 Annual Report (once yearly; over 20,000 translated words)
- Appeal letter to members (quarterly)

## Special projects

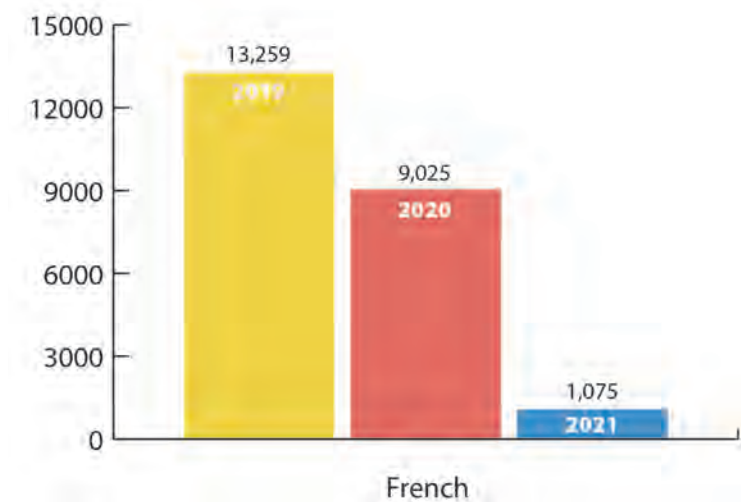
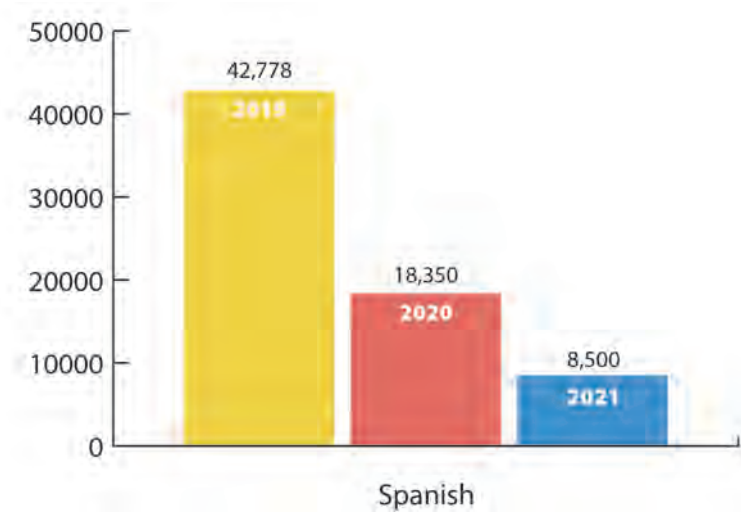
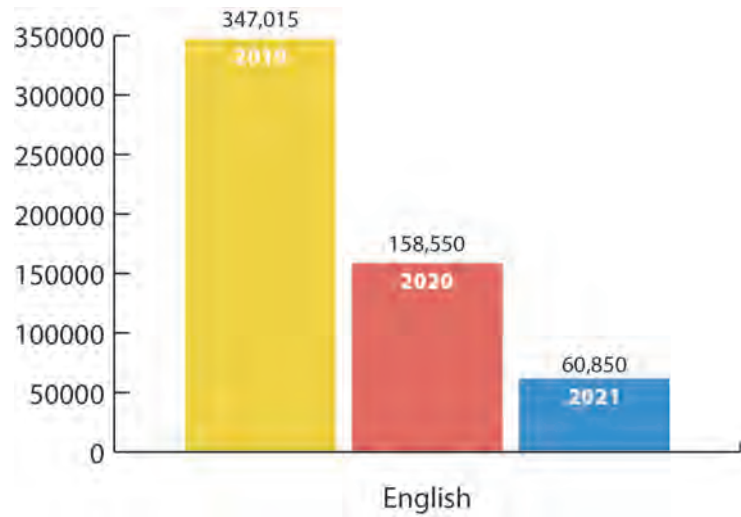
- 2021 Membership Survey
- Online Store – Framing, content update, FAQs, return policy, phrases and commands for users, rotating banner page content (front-page carousel)
- Member Blog – Web page content, framing text, monthly discussion theme
- Al-Anon’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Letter to registrants, website landing page, announcements, scripts of sharings from invited speakers
- 2022-2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* updates
- Albuquerque 2023 Al-Anon International Convention trailer script
- Al-Anon Guidelines – Several outdated guidelines have been updated in French and Spanish



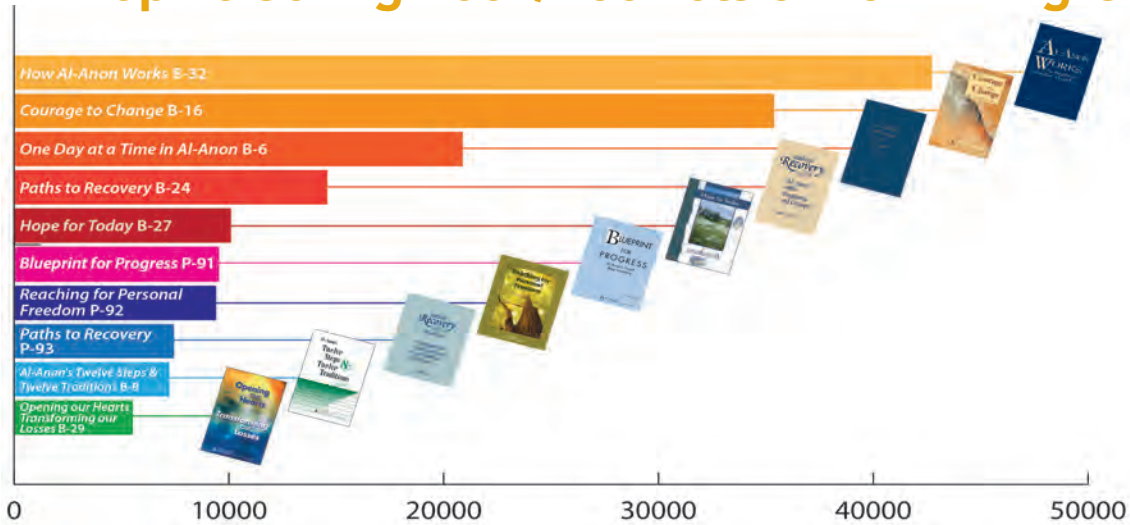
## Other items

- Group Services – Welcome email for new face-to-face Al-Anon groups; new Al-Anon groups with physical location (registration form and instructions); Annual Update flyer; CMA welcome letter for Al-Anon Family Groups meeting electronically; Al-Anon and Alateen meetings web page content
- Website and Digital Communications – Content update of various website pages; *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* chat feature; Alateen chat migration to the *Mobile App* web page
- *Welcome, Newcomer!* (eSK-10/eFK-10)

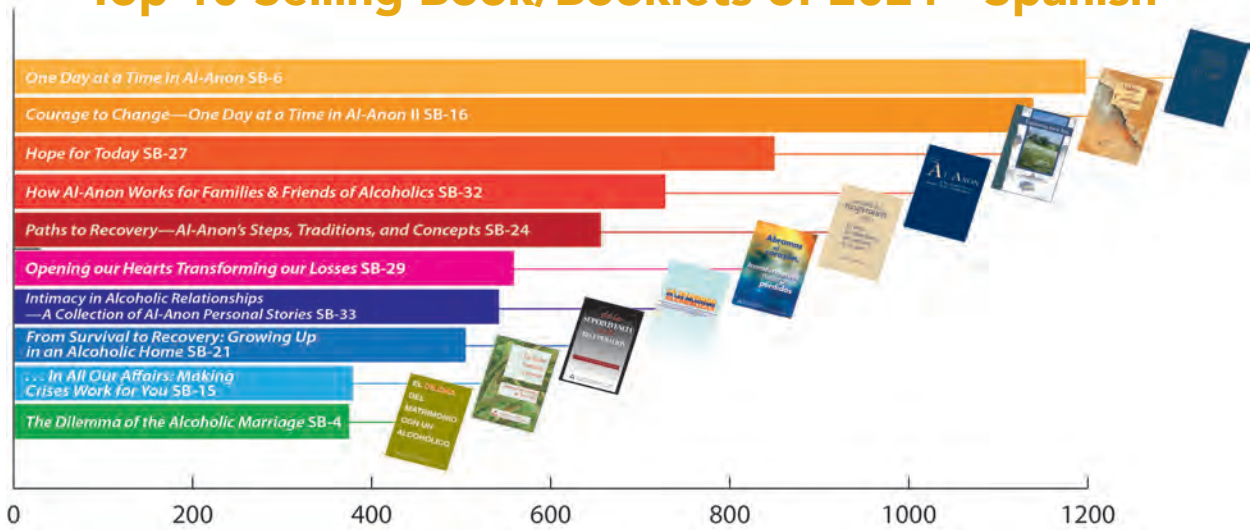
## Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



## Top 10 Selling Book/Booklets of 2021 - English



## Top 10 Selling Book/Booklets of 2021 - Spanish



## Top 10 Selling Book/Booklets of 2021 - French



# OUR WORK



## Goal: Members

### AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

From its origin in 1951, the purpose of the Clearing House has been to achieve greater unity across the growing and evolving fellowship, which periodically requires talking to each other and reasoning things out together through inevitable disagreements. 2021 saw the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff continue this tradition as they found new ways to support trusted servants within the WSC Structure as they shared experience, strength, and hope, navigated challenges related to Alateen which surfaced during the recertification process, and supported the newly recognized electronic groups in their historic undertaking of creating a new Area to represent the 600-plus groups. Each activity served to support the fellowship as it strives to provide safe, universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism across the globe.

## Serve Members, Meetings, and Groups

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Coordinator (Non-member)

Christa A., Senior Group Services Specialist

Bob H., Webmaster

## Al-Anon Members and Group Communication

Group Services communications with the fellowship continued to center on providing guidance to groups in the following ways:

- As parts of the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure were re-opening, groups were challenged in their group conscience discussions regarding how to continue meeting. Group Services Staff shared the experiences of other groups with members in meetings that had temporarily migrated to online platforms and were considering hybrid options. Many groups were not able to meet successfully in a hybrid manner. Members were encouraged to engage in broader discussions at the District and Area level and consistently apply the Al-Anon principles when attempting to resume face-to-face meetings. Members whose groups made the decision to continue meeting electronically were encouraged to register as an Al-Anon Family Group that meets electronically, so newcomers would know where to find help in active, supported electronic groups.
- As a result of the 2021 WSC decision to recognize Al-Anon meetings using electronic platforms as Al-Anon Family Groups, World Service Office (WSO) Staff shared resources and references in the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* version two (2) related to group roles and responsibilities via the Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community. The number of registered electronic groups grows daily. As of year-end, there are 639 registered electronic groups supporting 1,009 meetings on 16 different platforms.

- Members and trusted servants submitted many questions seeking clarity on how an electronic group could become connected to a geographic Area within the WSC Structure. Answers await decisions of geographically based Areas within the WSC Structure which are holding group conscience discussions regarding this and related questions, and the work of the WSO which is updating the group database and Online Group Records Application to support both groups meeting physically and electronically. Through the discussions, WSO Staff has learned that many members are interested in this concept because their groups, which were temporarily meeting online during the pandemic, have split over meeting location/format, with some group members meeting in a physical location while others are meeting online at the same time. The two groups are no longer meeting together. In their clearinghouse role, Group Services Staff has shared guidance regarding engaging in a group conscience discussion, abiding by the group conscience, and utilizing the links of service for support.

Between April and July, the new Group Services Specialist, Anne P., conducted a three-month study of Group Services email and telephone communications. The purpose was to determine how the three-person Group Services Team could become more efficient and timelier with its communication. The study of 871 calls and emails revealed that 50 percent were related to group concerns, 26 percent to individual concerns, 14 percent to newcomers, and nine percent to others such as professionals, parents, or alcoholics seeking information about Al-Anon Family Groups. This limited study prompted the Group Services Team to create some stock responses around frequently asked questions in order to provide consistent, timely responses to members.

Staff continue to track the *Welcome, We're Glad You're Here!* email, available to newcomers to Al-Anon Family Groups through [al-anon.org/welcome](http://al-anon.org/welcome). More than 11,000 welcome emails have been sent since January 1, 2021, and more than 18,000 since their inception in March 2020.

### **Mobile App**

In 2021, a significant improvement to the newsfeed feature was introduced to the *Al-Anon Family Group Mobile App (Mobile App)*. At its inception, the newsfeed was designed to only contain posts from friends, which served existing members who knew a large number of members. However, the experience for new members joining the app was negative, as they experienced a blank newsfeed until they connected with friends. This improvement provided a default setting which shared posts with everyone in the newsfeed, while also offering a configuration option which allowed members to control who could see their posts. Immediately newcomers experienced “the warmth we have in our hearts” for them as they were greeted and received answers to their questions.

Since its launch in August 2020, the Mobile App has averaged over 1,000 new registrations every week, going from 25,000 in the first week of January to over 75,000 at the end of December 2021.

### **2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual**

The *Service Manual*, which consists of four separate books, has been revised to include Staff changes to “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work,” World Service Conference (WSC) approved updates to the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” and the “World Service Handbook,” and housekeeping changes to the “Twelve Concepts of Service” section. The Service Manual is currently being translated in anticipation of a Spring 2022 online posting in all three languages.

Staff were informed that printing would be delayed to later than anticipated in 2022 due to supply chain issues occurring throughout the printing industry.

Staff enlisted the assistance of four past Delegates, whose experience using the Service Manual in their service roles was an ideal source of expertise, to serve on the Task Force: Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Index. The Task Force was charged with reviewing the index for any gaps, instances of too much detail, and lack of consistency. The members of the Task Force completed the charge, and their work was incorporated into the indexing of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*.

### **Area Group Records Coordinators**

The AFG Records Team continued its efforts to engage with Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) by refining its process to include live web conferences with participant-driven agendas. In comparison to the New Trusted Servant Welcome & Orientation and the Rotation of Service web conferences, which have a standard agenda from year to year, this innovative approach has served as an opportunity for AGRCs to inform the WSO about the immediate issues they needed to discuss or understand.

During the July and August calls, 39 AGRCs and two WSO Staff participated. The AGRCs shared they were experiencing an unprecedented volume of changes due to the fluidity of meetings and meeting locations in 2021. The WSO is grateful for the dedication of these trusted servants—demonstrated by the concerns they expressed, their hard work, and their interest in upcoming changes, such as the registration of groups meeting electronically. The WSO plans to continue inviting AGRCs to submit agenda items for web conferences to be held in 2022.

### **Member Blog in French & Spanish**

To provide the same level of service to all members, WSO Staff rolled out the Member Blog on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) in Spanish and French. The Member Blog provides a place where members can share on the monthly topic or any of the Three Legacies. In the first year, the Member Blog garnered 65 Spanish and 13 French sharings, an exciting increase over the zero received in previous years.

### **Al-Anon Family Groups Meeting Electronically**

Following the 2021 WSC motion recognizing permanent electronic Al-Anon meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups, a new project kicked off at the WSO to manage the four tracks of efforts described to Conference members at the WSC:

- Non-Panel Area Formation
- WSO Technology Upgrade (see One System: Groups Meeting Electronically and Physically)
- Geographic Area Support
- International Structure Support

### **Non-Panel Area Formation**

Group Services continued to hold business meetings with the members serving as Current Mailing Address (CMAs) for phone and online meetings to prepare the meetings for changes related to the 2021 WSC motion. Staff utilized the Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community to share resources. CMAs were encouraged to bring updates about forming an Area service structure to their meetings. With the WSO expected to transition out of the trusted servant role of linking groups meeting electronically with the WSC after the non-panel Area's Officer

election Assembly in January 2022, the last CMA business meeting hosted by Group Services Staff was held on November 20, 2021 with 87 CMAs in attendance.

To support the non-panel Area in its efforts of electing Group Representatives (GRs), forming an Area, electing a Delegate and Area Officers, and petitioning for acceptance into the WSC as a new Area, the WSO formed a Non-Panel Area Task Force (TF). The TF consisted of WSO Staff familiar with the history, a WSO Volunteer who had served the last geographic Area to join the WSC, and CMA members who had been active in CMA meetings. The TF was charged with assisting the Current Mailing Address members for electronic groups to elect a Temporary Area Chairperson. This individual is charged with facilitating the Non-panel Area Assembly in January 2022. The TF and WSO Tech Team will provide experience, strength, hope, and logistics support to the Assembly. The sole agenda item for the Assembly will be election of the Area Officers.

An immediate need for the non-panel Area was the ability to submit GR information for their newly recognized groups. Multiple WSO teams coordinated to create a process to accept GR details in English, Spanish, and French. All registered electronic group CMAs were contacted in December 2021 to submit their GR information. This information, if received by January 14, 2022, will serve as the roster of members eligible to vote in the first Non-panel Area election of a Delegate and Area Officers. As of this year-end, more than 60 members have submitted their GR information. What a genuinely exciting time for Al-Anon Family Groups!

### **Impression – Forming the Non-Geographic Area**

**Kathi M., Member of the Board of Trustees**

In 1986, I was attending meetings in Anchorage, Alaska. The question was asked: Does Alaska want to become part of the WSC? I didn't even know what the WSC was, but boy did I learn quickly. I became a Group Representative (GR) and attended the Interim Assembly where that question was asked of the GRs gathered there. At that time, Alaska GRs voted to become a part of the World Service Conference. We petitioned the WSC to join and sent our first Delegate in 1987.

Three years later, I attended the WSC as Alaska's second Delegate. My life and program were changed by that experience—I truly felt a part of the worldwide fellowship.

Fast forward 34 years and I get to be a part of the Task Force (TF) supporting the formation of a non-geographic Area. In 1987 and 1990, we had no idea of the possibilities that lay ahead. I am so grateful to be a part of this TF and to be able to share my experience, strength, and hope from Alaska, while realizing that as much as I have grown in this fellowship, the fellowship itself has grown tremendously.

And once again, I feel my life and program are being changed by this experience. I am truly in awe that we have come this far and have embraced the world physically and virtually.

### **Geographic Area Support**

At the 2021 WSC, geographic Areas were informed that many electronic groups had expressed a desire to attract a local rather than a global audience. These groups were initially all recognized as part of the non-panel Area with its non-geographic, global focus. Geographic Areas were encouraged at the 2021 WSC to begin discussions as to whether and how they would

accept electronic groups seeking to be part of their local geographic service structure. The goal for these Areas was to gain clarity by the 2022 WSC as to whether and how they would accept these groups. Staff was available to offer support and answer geographic Area questions. In the meantime, the Associate Director—Conference took the opportunity to identify WSC Charter changes required to align with the revised Handbook and Policy approved in 2021. These changes will be brought to the 2022 WSC for consideration and approval.

### **International Structure Support**

The WSO serves as a resource to the international community. Following the 2021 WSC, WSO Staff shared information and guidance with General Service Offices (GSOs) around the world regarding the decision to recognize electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups. Similar to Areas in the WSC, GSOs have the autonomy to decide whether to register Al-Anon Family Groups meeting via electronic platforms and have them become a part of a local, geographic structure. The WSO is aware of many international structures that are interested in doing so and has had a web conference with one structure whose Work Group had specific questions about policy, implementation, and financial considerations. It was a learning experience for both structures and the WSO remains available to meet with other GSOs to discuss these topics.

### **Improving Search for Groups Meeting Electronically**

Several improvements were made to the Electronic Meeting search on al-anon.org, including the addition of a search box where members and newcomers can search by group name, meeting day, or meeting platform. Meeting day and time details were separated and Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) was added, which created the opportunity to display meetings in chronological order regardless of the originating time zone. Phone meetings were incorporated and a “Click to Call” function added to allow one-touch connection into a phone meeting. By year end, all groups meeting electronically could be searched through one web page.

## **Alateen Members, Groups, and Trusted Servants**

### **Area Alateen Coordinators**

Area Alateen Coordinators shared many resources and enthusiasm, along with experience, strength, and hope in their AFG Connects community in 2021. In addition, they started to meet among themselves to support each other as they navigated service in the midst of the pandemic. One of the main challenges with Alateen groups temporarily meeting online as a result of the pandemic is that the Alateen Group Sponsors are tasked with verifying that participants are physically located in the Area where the group meets.

In 2021, four Areas (Iowa, South Carolina, Montana, Texas East) submitted changes to the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) that were found to be in substantial compliance. Ten areas (Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota South, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia) submitted updated ASBRs that are still being reviewed.

Area trusted servants were reminded that any changes to Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements need to be reviewed and approved by WSO prior to being implemented in their Areas.



### Area Alateen Recertification

The Group Services and AFG Records Teams collaborated to create a coordinated communication plan to support Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPP) and Alateen Coordinators during the Annual Alateen Recertification. The communication plan included frequent outreach, training opportunities, and check-ins. These efforts occurred throughout the open window which includes recertification of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and Alateen group verifications.

Eleven Areas did not meet the June 15 deadline and lost the ability to use the Alateen name in connection with any groups or events with Alateen participation. Group Services is working closely with these Areas to review and approve their updated Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in order to resume their Alateen programs. To date, two of the Areas are now fully certified, six are under review, and three are pending submission of updated ASBRs.

### New WSO Staff and Volunteers Alateen Certification Process

In 2020, WSO Staff recommended, and the Board approved, the creation of a certification program for those serving Alateen on behalf of the World Service Office (WSO). All WSO Volunteers, as well as voting and non-voting members of the WSO Administrative Staff and WSO Staff whose roles involve guiding Areas within the WSC Structure as it relates to Alateen (specifically members of the Group Services Team), are required to attend the training. This year the Associate Director—Group Services completed the first WSO Staff and Volunteers Alateen Certification training at the July 2021 Board of Trustees meeting and all participants completed the Virginia government training on mandatory reporting.

### Alateen Electronic Meetings Trial

As part of the Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility Strategy, the WSO began a pilot project to host the Alateen Chat meetings on the Mobile App. These meetings have been met with consistent and growing attendance. A full year of Alateen meetings in the *Mobile App* was celebrated in December 2021. Alateen meetings in the Mobile App are conducted differently than Al-Anon meetings for safety reasons. Mobile App Alateen meetings require use of the waiting room, and cameras must be on at all times throughout the meeting. The meeting opens only once the assigned host has logged in.



The certified AMIAs supporting the Mobile App Alateen meetings were provided with live training sessions and direct support from WSO Staff for the first quarter of 2021. The Alateen Group Sponsors requested that regular web conference calls be held for further support. The WSO Group Services Staff held meetings with these Sponsors in February, March, April, June, and September. These discussions led to the creation of an AFG Connects community where the AMIAs who support these meetings could share their experiences. This community benefits the AMIAs as well as the WSO Staff involved in the Strategy project. The Alateen *Mobile App* community on AFG Connects was opened on August 2, 2021.

To better support the pilot, the WSO expanded the *Mobile App* features to include a “test meeting” feature. This feature offers a safe training environment in which Area Alateen Coordinators can encourage certified AMIAs to serve Alateen meetings in the Mobile App.

### **AI-Anon Information Services**

A review of AIS AFG Connects community participation revealed that only 40 percent of the active AISs were using the platform. AI-Anon Information Services (AISs) serve many vital functions, including displaying current local AI-Anon meeting information, and the Group Services Staff believed AIS engagement in this community might help encourage mutual support and increase the accuracy of meeting data. In an effort to increase engagement, Group Services reached out to the AISs inviting their participation on AFG Connects. Staff used the community to encourage AIS Liaisons and office managers to connect with District Representatives and Area Group Records Coordinators to obtain current meeting information. Staff shared experience, strength, and hope that processing meeting updates submitted directly by group members, rather than those processed through the Area process, can lead to inaccurate meeting data being displayed.

Further review of the 250 registered AISs and AIS/LDCs in the WSC Structure revealed that 28 were in “No Mail” status, leaving them disconnected from the WSO. Staff recognized that mail may have been returned due to office closures from the pandemic, so they contacted each AIS and AIS/LDC by phone or email to confirm the status of operations. The effort yielded a significant improvement, with only 12 remaining in “No Mail” status as of the year-end. Group Services Staff plan to complete a formal AIS and AIS/LDC Annual Update in 2022.

### **Inmate Correspondence Service**

The Inmate Correspondence Service (ICS) continues to receive robust interest from members interested in being contacted, but virtually no interest from inmates requesting correspondence. Group Services continues to receive many requests from inmates for free Conference Approved Literature to be sent to them as well as to family members. These requests are forwarded to local Area Public Outreach coordinators for follow up.

## Facilitate Conference, Convention, and Fellowship Visits

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Chris Baker, Meeting & Travel Planner (Non-member)

Yadi McCoy, Event Logistics & Training Specialist (Non-member)

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

Rosie M., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (Trustee)

Nancy S., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (Trustee)

Jean L., Chairperson of Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect (Trustee)

### The World Service Conference

The 2021 WSC was held virtually following the Board of Trustees' decision in October 2020 not to meet in person due to continuing travel and meeting restrictions related to the pandemic. The decision provided the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) ample time to exemplify the WSC theme, "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance," by preparing a full, dynamic, online agenda for the 90 voting members and other attendees. During the weeklong business meeting, WSC members also enjoyed a virtual "Hospitality Room" to visit during breaks!

An unexpected benefit of the virtual WSC was record-breaking attendance by 12 international structure General Service Office (GSO) representatives who added their experience, strength, and hope to each day.

Members of the 61<sup>st</sup> WSC made history by passing motions welcoming permanent electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups, updating the Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps, and including interpretation services (French and Spanish) as part of the WSC Budget. These motions clearly reflect the Board's Mission Statement: "Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences."

Although the 2021 WSC was scheduled to be held in New York with a trip to Stepping Stones—the home of our cofounder Lois W. and A.A.'s cofounder Bill W. in Katonah—during the week, Conference members "visited" Stepping Stones virtually from their homes!

WSC members were invited to share "what you are 'taking away' from Conference." One WSC attendee shared, ". . . Although virtual, I could feel the energy, love, and commitment of all to assuring that Al-Anon and Alateen groups will continue to be present for those searching for hope and help due to the effect alcohol is having on a loved one. . . ."

As a result of the CLT's quest for additional ways to engage Delegates, three Panel 60 Delegates accepted invitations to participate on the 2022 WSC Mentor/Mentee Pairing Task Force.

### Impression – Our First, Full Scope Virtual Conference

Katie W., Panel 59 Delegate

Conference unofficially kicked off with the "Sharing Area Highlights" session, where the Delegates get together and spend some time getting to know one another before the work of Conference begins. I was a Sharing Area Highlights Co-Chair, and we spent months planning the session, including rehearsing all of the technical aspects ahead of time...and guess what?

Everything that could go wrong technically, did. Sometimes due diligence and planning are not enough to guarantee the type of success we *think* we are after. But what we ended up with was a heartfelt dialogue between the Delegates, and I unwittingly discovered what it's like to walk a mile in the shoes of other Delegates. It was not the result our committee was looking for, but it was exactly the experience the Delegates needed.

We learned about the unique circumstances each person was facing in having to attend Conference remotely. I personally had to leave home to spend a week in a room above someone else's garage so I would have privacy and Wi-Fi—two things I didn't have at home. It became abundantly clear that each person was sacrificing something, and we were all bending and flexing in new ways because we believe in the value of the WSC and our places in it. What a way to begin. The only thing that could have made it better would have been having our 12 international representatives join us in person, as they were a huge part of the 2021 WSC, too.

### **Impression – Providing Trilingual Conference Interpretation**

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

I was a new Trustee at my very first Board meeting in July 2018 when the CLT brought a recommendation to the Board to offer professional interpretation for French- and Spanish-speaking Delegates at the WSC. After a thorough discussion, and seeking guidance from our collective Higher Powers, the Board passed a motion to approve a special project funded from the Reserve Fund to provide oral interpretation for a three-year trial starting with the 2019 WSC. It felt like a bold move, and it made me realize that Board members were serious about supporting the Strategic Plan's Envisioned Future of barrier-free access to the program and information.

The 2021 WSC was the last year of the three-year trial period. Before the Board could make a decision about continuing interpretation at the WSC, Delegate feedback was needed. The Board brought forward a discussion at the 2021 WSC about continuing interpretation and how to fund the cost. Following the discussion, the 2021 Conference members passed a motion to include interpretation as part of the WSC and to allocate the cost as part of the Equalized Expense amount for Delegates. I was overjoyed to see that the vision the Board and the CLT had for a trilingual Conference was going to be a reality! It was humbling to see Conference members putting the 2021 Conference theme, "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance," into action.

### **Impression – Fulfilling WSC Responsibilities to Guard AI-Anon's World Services through Policy Discussions and Decisions**

Marianne B., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)

One of the many highlights for me as a Volunteer on the Board of Trustees has been serving on the Policy Committee. "Be prepared for conversations at Policy that are detailed, thoughtful, interesting, and often long" was the counsel my Board Mentor gave me when I was approaching my first Policy Committee meeting back in July 2019. She was absolutely right! Since the Policy Committee's responsibility is to ensure that all policies are in line with AI-Anon's Traditions and spiritual principles, the process of considerate, in-depth discussions takes time and patience. Oftentimes, I need to ask my Higher Power to help me slow down during Policy discussions and pay closer attention to what's being shared, what the implications might be, and whether recommendations are in line with our Traditions and Concepts. There is a lot to consider!

Approaching Policy discussions now, I look forward to gaining new perspectives and insights. With such a vibrant group consisting of both Trustees, Executive Committee members and the Conference members of the World Service Office (WSO) administrative Staff, there is always something new for me to learn. Different viewpoints are presented, contemplated, and discussed when considering any recommendations for change. I especially appreciate and value the unique perspectives and the plethora of experiences that the WSO Staff always bring to these conversations.

The 2021 WSC was both an exciting and challenging year as Policy Task Forces recommended changes to the Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps as well as to the Bequests and Announcing Events portions of the Policy Digest, and the approval of the proposed process for completing interim housekeeping changes to the Policy Digest. As we all invited our Higher Powers into these discussions, which were held virtually, I felt the spiritual tenets of our program well at work.

- The Alateen Preamble presentation raised many thought-provoking questions. After additional time was added to the WSC agenda and all viewpoints were considered, the motion to approve the changes was passed.
- The Announcing Events discussion highlighted some considerations that had yet to emerge in previous Policy discussions. Considering the questions posed by WSC members, the Task Force Chair asked to withdraw the motion and have the Policy Committee reevaluate this portion of the Policy Digest.
- The Bequests and Interim Housekeeping Actions Task Forces presented their motions, the changes were discussed, and their recommendations were approved by the WSC. Our spiritual principles of respect, trust, participation, humility, and loving consideration were truly embodied at this year's WSC.

The challenges of meeting virtually, while still ongoing, did not diminish the hard work, perseverance, and integrity put forward by the Policy Task Forces, as well as all 2021 WSC members. Over this past year, working with such thoughtful and committed members has been an honor and privilege for me. I wish everyone could have this incredible experience!

### **Supporting the WSC Structure and Trusted Servants**

Seeking to expand its commitment to providing “barrier-free access to the program, information, and meetings,” the Board decided in April 2021 to pilot a web conference format for delivering the Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter and accompanying three updates from the Chairpersons of the Finance Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Conference Leadership Team (COB Letter). The goal of the trial was to increase the speed with which the COB Letter was made available to the Delegates in all three languages. Three COB Letter Presentation web conference events were held in May, August, and November. Each presentation was followed by breakout sessions in which Trustees and their assigned Delegates met for questions and answers. Based on Delegate request, the presentations during the trial were interpreted into French.

The Chairperson and Co-Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) along with the Associate Director—Conference held a second “Session with the Delegates.” This session explored the variety of sources through which the Conference agenda is derived. The format included a Q&A segment for Delegates to ask questions about the material presented. In

support of the Strategic Plan Goal: Organization, current Conference members have access to this recorded session (and future sessions) within the WSC Members AFG Connects community, thereby “increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.”

### **World Service Office 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

This fun-filled, historical, and first-time virtual event took place on Saturday, July 10, 2021. The exciting celebration was enjoyed through web conference by approximately 430 members out of 1,000 total registrants from 33 countries. To expand the opportunity for participation, registrants were encouraged to host group gatherings to view the celebration.

The WSO welcomed two representatives from Alcoholics Anonymous and two long-time Al-Anon speakers who shared their personal stories with the audience. The program also featured a parade of waving flags representing each of the countries where Al-Anon has a presence and a time-in-program countdown through which members from around the world celebrated recovery milestones via chat.

For those who were unable to attend this event, recordings of the speakers were shared on the *Mobile App* throughout the remainder of the year at prescheduled times and dates designed to accommodate global attendance. The celebration was a wonderful and memorable event for all involved!

### **Impression – Celebrating World Service Office History**

Jeri W., Member of the Board of Trustees

I remember the excitement when it was announced that the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was going to be virtual. My first reaction was that more members could share in the festivities, and they did!

After hearing the two Al-Anon speakers, I had a grateful heart for what they brought to Al-Anon and Alateen in the early days of our program. They shared about their vulnerabilities and willingness to take risks. They talked about meetings, sponsorship, service, and Alateen. I related to one of the speaker’s experiences with our cofounder Lois W.—a reminder that we can never be too old to try something different. The other speaker continues to be an active member after 59 years. Their dedication inspires me.

What really made me feel a part of the worldwide fellowship was the last part of the celebration. Through the magic of technology, I was able to experience in what year each Area became a part of the World Service Conference (WSC). Countries outside the WSC Structure were included as well. Incorporated within the presentation, I was able to see when each piece of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) was presented to the fellowship.

As if that wasn’t enough celebrating, the coordinators took it up a notch. Each member was able to include his or her recovery birthday in the chat feature when the appropriate year was displayed. I came away with the feeling of “abundance.” Today we have the luxury of many available meetings, a vast library of Conference Approved Literature, and members who are eager to participate in service.

## **2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation**

The 2023 International Convention Project Team formed in 2021. This Team is responsible for the planning and execution of Al-Anon's International Convention with A.A. participation being held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Team includes many WSO Staff and, for the first time, a convention management firm—the same firm which has and continues to guide the many successful Alcoholics Anonymous International Conventions over the years. WSO Staff and the Board are grateful for the firm's assistance.

One of the team's first assignments was to develop a theme which reflected both the sentiment being heard in the fellowship and WSO hopes for the Convention for recommendation to the Board at its January Board meeting. After idea generation and reflection, the team landed on the theme:



The spiritual tone of the theme has energized the team's efforts to reimagine the program and re-envision how we connect with communities within the fellowship to create experiences unique and relevant to all who attend.

During their November site visit, five team members had the opportunity to walk the halls of the Albuquerque Convention Center and connected Civic Plaza; visit attractions like the historic downtown with its five co-located museums; and experience the gentle, kind hospitality of the hotels contracted for the event. The visit fueled the team's commitment to reimagining ways to celebrate recovery June 29 – July 2, 2023!

All are looking forward to sharing designs for new events and ideas to revamp, enhance, and update our quinquennial gathering, as well as to showcase our Convention site, which is located on the Historic Route 66.

## **Fellowship Visits within the WSC Structure**

### **Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect**

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect presents an opportunity for members to engage directly with the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee. Members gain a deeper understanding of how the Board and WSO work on behalf of Al-Anon worldwide. Once again, the Ohio Area was willing to host Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect 2021, and unfortunately, for the second year in a row, we were forced to cancel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fingers crossed for an in-person meeting in 2022. After this next Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, the trial period (2020 through 2022) will end. The Road Trip! Work Group will present recommendations about the future of this event at the January 2022 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

## **Participating in Area Events**

WSO Staff and Volunteers participated in Assemblies, Conventions, Workshops, and Alateen training sessions using virtual and hybrid platforms. A few even attended in person. For most events, Staff and Volunteers were asked to provide a personal share and facilitate either a question-and-answer session or a workshop. Having overcome the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic in 2020, trusted servants across the WSC Structure created the opportunity for Staff to attend 28 events this year!

WSO Staff and Volunteers appreciate all the work undertaken by the Areas to host virtual and hybrid events. While all have thoroughly enjoyed these virtual experiences, Staff and Volunteers are looking forward to 2022 in hopes we can attend more in-person events again.

## **Impression – Visiting the Fellowship both Virtually and Face-to-Face**

Diane B., Member of the Board of Trustees

As a new Trustee, I was looking forward to visiting the fellowship when assigned by the Chairperson of the Board. I expected conversations over coffee and an abundance of hugs. Unfortunately, that was not to happen in 2021. The pandemic was still a threat and restrictions were still in place.

My first virtual meeting was the South Central Regional Delegates Meeting in March 2021. Louisiana hosted their inaugural virtual meeting with the help of an amazing tech team. I had no experience speaking on Zoom or with the silence of the virtual audience. The smiles and warmth in the members' faces made up for the lack of audible feedback of an in-person presentation.

The next invitations were from Missouri and Oklahoma, and since they were both held as hybrid events, I attended in person. With the support of amazing tech teams, I had the best of both worlds. I could see participants virtually and in person, as well as hear some of their reactions.

I discovered that there may be a difference in the way we share our message, but there is no difference in the experience of sharing. Each visit was full of love and kindness. We may clap our hands in person, and we may wave our hands in virtual mode. We may not hug as much, but our smiles express our joy. I am grateful that the love of the fellowship cannot be silenced. Our chosen Higher Power always shows us the way to share our experience, strength, and hope.



## Produce and Distribute Literature

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Camille Peters, Associate Director—Shipping & Customer Service (Non-member)

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

Colette Norman, Translation Manager (Non-member)

Carol C., Magazine Editor

Hannah Brown, Copy Editor (Non-member)

Emma Pacchiana, Copy Editor (Non-member)

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## Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

Throughout 2021, the WSO Staff and the 15 members of the Literature Committee received over 20 requests for the development of new pieces of literature or the revision of existing pieces. The Committee brought three motions to the 2021 World Service Conference, two of which had been delayed due to the abbreviated 2020 Conference. All three motions carried, and work on each project has begun. In addition, the Committee completed its work on the NEW DAILY READER (working title) and began discussing the possibility of recommending an in-depth piece about sponsorship to the Conference. More details about specific projects follow below.

Developing new material is only one way in which Al-Anon literature helps families and friends of alcoholics. Drawing attention to the incredible resource in recovery that is already available in existing literature is also essential. In addition to the monthly “CAL Corner” department in *The Forum*, several newsletter and magazine notices put the focus on our literature throughout the year, including items on where to read more about topics like Al-Anon history, acceptance, growing up with alcoholism, and self-care. The September “Inside Al-Anon Family Groups” article in *The Forum* celebrated 60 years of Conference Approved Literature, and the magazine also began a new department titled, “CAL on ...” featuring memorable quotations on specific topics like maturity and gratitude.

The Area Literature Coordinators are another way in which literature news and information is carried to the fellowship. Updates are regularly posted on the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects, where Coordinators can also converse with each other. In October, the Literature Coordinator web conference call resumed with 30 Coordinators attending.

For members’ convenience, the WSO once again provided 20 quotations for service arms to use in fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. This service has reduced work for trusted servants as well as WSO Staff.

## New Daily Reader (WORKING TITLE)

As 2021 began, the final draft of the NEW DAILY READER (working title) was well underway, incorporating much input from the Literature Committee’s initial review. Once the Committee approved the manuscript, the book continued through the Process for Developing Conference Approved Literature, including review by a Policy Review Task Force and the Executive Director. Next, the Titling Committee recommended a name: *A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences*. The title was also approved by the Policy Review Task Force.

The book is currently undergoing design and translation, with plans for it to be introduced at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

### **Impression – The Policy Review**

Marianne B., Chairperson of Policy Committee (Trustee)

When the 2014 World Service Conference gave conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship, I was serving as a Group Representative. I remember being so excited about the prospect of another daily reader! So, imagine how thrilled I was to learn that serving as Policy Chairperson in 2021 on the Board of Trustees, I would be graced to review the draft of this new piece of CAL. I was so excited! The Writer/Editor, Literature Committee, Director of Programs, and the WSO Copy Editor had already reviewed the manuscript, so I did not need to focus on style and proofing. Instead, along with other members on the Policy Review Task Force, our role was to ensure the writings were congruent with our Traditions and policies.

To complete the review in a timely manner, I decided to set aside a half hour every morning for six weeks. Each morning, I would begin my day by inviting my Higher Power to join me as I tried to thoughtfully read one sharing at a time, pausing between readings to silently thank the anonymous member who had so lovingly taken the time to participate. The members' words and stories touched my heart and brought comfort and serenity to my day. Of all the wonderful ways I have been touched by serving as a Trustee, this was one of my greatest pleasures. I am honored and humbled to have been able to serve on this review task force. What a joy!

### **Alateen Preamble**

In keeping with the 2021 Conference Motion #5 "to approve the revised Alateen Preamble" (see pages 41-42 of the *2021 Conference Summary* [P-46]), Staff made note of all Conference Approved Literature that includes the Alateen Preamble. Each piece will be updated when it is reprinted. At this point, only one pamphlet, *Moving On! From Alateen to Al-Anon* (P-59), includes the revised Preamble.

### **Alateen Just for Tonight Bookmark**

The 2021 Conference carried Motion #4 to "give conceptual approval to develop an Alateen 'Just for Tonight' Bookmark" (see page 37 of the *2021 Conference Summary* [P-46]). It delegated WSO Staff and the Literature Committee responsibility to organize the project.

To seek Alateen sharings, the Committee created a writing guideline and Staff built a web page where Alateen members can submit sharings online. Notices about the project were posted to Alateen Coordinators and other trusted servants on AFG Connects, and the guideline was included in the *In the Loop* and *Alateen Talk* newsletters.

### **Impression – Encouraging Alateen Participation in CAL**

Terry R., Delegate member of the Literature Committee

As part of our work on the Literature Committee, we gave input on the writing request for sharings for the new "Just for Tonight" Alateen Bookmark. Since I was giving a workshop at our Kansas Alateen Round Up, a weekend camp for our Area Alateen members, I decided to have a writing workshop to seek sharings for this bookmark. First, I passed around the original *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81) and had each teen read one of the sentences. We discussed whether

they liked it. Then I explained that we had voted approval to develop one of these bookmarks just for Alateen, and we needed their sharings. The kids were excited about having one just for them.

When given paper and pen, some went to work right away, writing one to three bullet points for the new bookmark. Some thought about it and took their time. A few needed more encouragement—assurance that whatever they wrote was okay. Since we had a wide age span, we had some fairly sophisticated writings and some that were simply endearing! After everyone had finished, I asked for volunteers to read theirs. Several of the teens read what they had written, and we all clapped and complimented them on their sharings. I promised them that I would send in all the sharings and thanked them for giving input into Alateen literature. My impression was they all felt a sense of pride that they were able to contribute.

### **New Introductions to ODAT & Dilemma**

The 2021 World Service Conference also carried Motions #12 and #15, giving conceptual approval to the Literature Committee's recommendations for new introductions to be added to *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6, B-14) and *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) that would place the books in historical perspective. (See pages 37-39 of the 2021 Conference Summary [P-46] for more details.)

Following that, it delegated the Committee to carry out the projects. The introduction to the ODAT has been completed and approved by the Literature Committee, the Policy Review Task Force, and the Executive Director. It will be included in the next printing of the book. The *Dilemma's* introduction is in development.

### **Impression – Putting Our Literature into Context**

Mark M., At Large member of the Literature Committee

Our first assignment as a Committee, after the 2021 Conference, was to develop new introductions to be added to *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) and *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4). The Committee's recommendations to the Conference had been made in response to members' concerns that those venerable publications might, by virtue of their longevity, have become out-of-step and out-of-tone with the times.

As we drafted proposed language, it provided me an occasion for reflection on the role of our literature generally, and the specific histories of those early publications. The introductions, intended to provide some fresh historical context, had the additional effect of bringing me back to the origins of Al-Anon—to thoughts of those early, founding members who together charted a course forward that I would largely follow many years later.

Rather than fostering an idea that our foundational books might have become outdated or obsolete, I found reaffirmance of the Al-Anon principles that had informed them. I was struck anew by the permanence of a problem so rooted in human nature that it brings us all here, over all these years, and by the continued vitality of a solution so rooted in communal human spirit. A new introduction can be an acknowledgement of new ways of thinking about the challenges we face and about the people alcohol continues to impact, connecting us through work alive in progress and growth, rather than severing us from our past.

### **Welcome, Newcomer! (eK-10)**

In mid-2021, the WSO introduced a newly reformatted and streamlined *Welcome, Newcomer!* (eK-10) in electronic format that is available for purchase through e-book vendors. Rather than a series of back-to-back pamphlets like the current printed version, the e-booklet includes carefully selected excerpts from a rich array of Conference Approved Literature. It is specifically designed to guide newcomers in understanding the Al-Anon program and learning about alcoholism.

### **Literature Supply Chain Challenges**

The printing industry is facing significant challenges that have impacted WSO production schedules. Diminished production capacity has been caused by the closures of paper mills, enhanced cleaning closing manufacturing areas, supply chain problems, material shortages, labor shortages, and shipping delays.

The combination of these things has caused normal production times of literature to increase from 10-12 weeks to as many as 26 weeks. Durations may continue to climb. Flexibility is key in navigating through this challenging time. WSO Staff is working closely with suppliers to replenish literature and has updated ordering procedures to accommodate the delays.

### **Recovery Magazines—*The Forum, Le lien, Al-Anon y Alateen en acción***

*The Forum* continues to provide help to the families and friends of alcoholics as the monthly magazine of Al-Anon Family Groups. *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazines are the bimonthly French and Spanish versions, using translated excerpts from *The Forum*. The magazines feature sharings from members in a variety of relationships with alcoholics and are meant to provide recovery in meetings and between meetings. The Production Team designs *The Forum* from the manuscript they receive from the Magazine Editor each month. The Designer uses stock photography as well as member photos. The content drives the design, with the cover story often setting the theme.

Each month, At-Large members of the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) evaluate 50 member-submitted sharings. The Committee also meets quarterly via web conferencing to discuss the status of the magazine and address any concerns readers may have. In 2021, FEAC members voted to expand the “Instant Meeting” topics, which previously focused on the Step corresponding to the month, to include slogans, the Twelve Concepts, and other tools of Al-Anon recovery. The FEAC also voted for, and the Board of Trustees approved, a revision of *The Forum* Statement of Purpose.

Another milestone this year was the first-ever web conference call for *Forum* Coordinators. Twenty-three participants from throughout the U.S. and Canada joined the call and shared experience, strength, and hope on getting *The Forum* to members and encouraging submission of member sharings.

To address the timeliness of Legacy sharings for our French- and Spanish-speaking members, the beautifully updated French and Spanish magazines have also been “caught up” to *The Forum*, so that the “Our Three Legacies” department now corresponds to the month of publication across all three magazines. This adjustment allows all members and groups to use the magazines to study the Legacy of the month.

## **Impression – Reading the Monthly Sharings**

Maryon K., Chairperson of the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (At Large Member)

I felt honored to be invited to be part of the FEAC and humbled when asked to serve as Chairperson of such a dedicated committee. FEAC members work independently from several points across the U.S. and Canada, staying connected through the magic of technology and a minimum number of meetings. Our purpose is to read and grade each *Forum* submission on how it reflects Al-Anon's Legacies, how writers work their program, and/or how a sharing inspires us personally.

Together FEAC collaborated with the WSO during the unprecedented difficulties of a global pandemic and the transition period prior to the hiring of our new Magazine Editor in March 2021. As a committee, we are inspired by the guidance and leadership we've experienced from everyone at the WSO involved in the production of *The Forum*. Reviewing sharings from members is a privilege, providing us with unparalleled reassurance and hope. Thank you, Al-Anon!

## **Guidelines**

In 2021, in support of one of our Strategic plan initiatives, the World Service Office started a process to update all Al-Anon guidelines. Our goal was to make updates available to the fellowship so English-, Spanish-, and French-speaking members would be able to use current and updated service tools in the language of their choice at the same time.

In order to achieve this goal, we decided to use a phased approach by first tackling guidelines requiring minimal changes in all three languages. This project has been a huge collaborative effort requiring the participation of all WSO Departments.

We have also updated the Guidelines page on [al-anon.org](https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/manuals-and-guidelines/guidelines/) to allow for easy access to all the guidelines and to include the addition of search capability so members can more easily find the guidelines most relevant to their needs. Guidelines are available online, and can be downloaded for free on <https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/manuals-and-guidelines/guidelines/>.

## **Alateen Talk**

Two issues of the quarterly publication *Alateen Talk*, Spring and Summer 2020, were produced in 2021. Conversations are underway as the current version of *Alateen Talk* is reviewed. Considerations include how welcoming, inviting, relevant, and purposeful it is in its current form. No changes are currently proposed; Group Services continues to work through the backlog to fulfill subscriptions as options are explored.

## **Goal: Public**

**Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.**

Despite travel and meeting restrictions imposed by the pandemic that continued throughout most of 2021, the WSO continued its efforts to honor the intent of the 1966 Policy statement, which encouraged a proactive approach to public outreach: "Al-Anon is cooperating when it works with others, rather than alone." The WSO evaluated and considered the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan in redefining the former Public Outreach—Professionals positions as Community Relations and began to realize the benefits of the redefinition within months of hiring. Many

new opportunities for connecting and sharing Al-Anon’s message of hope are anticipated in 2022 as the result. The Chairperson of the Board and Executive Director did their part to cooperate with other Twelve Step programs by attending the Alcoholics Anonymous Day of Sharing held virtually in early December. Through these and other efforts described in this section, AFG, Inc. continued to expand recognition of Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected by the family disease of alcoholism.

## Attract New Members

Scot P, Associate Director—Brand Communications

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Mona Dougherty, Senior Communications Specialist (Non-member)

Beth Rodriguez, Senior Social Media Specialist (Non-member)

Rory Mulford, Data Analyst (Non-member)

## Public Outreach

### Public Service Announcements

Historically, the World Service Office (WSO) national Public Outreach message focused on the “problem” because then-current wisdom suggested this message would resonate with potential newcomers. The focus was on helping them to identify with the pain and suffering and see Al-Anon as an option. This year we launched a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) focused on the *Benefits of Al-Anon Recovery*. Quotes by Al-Anon members from the 2018 Membership Survey were used to share our message of hope by highlighting benefits of recovery through our program.

Supporting outreach efforts, the WSO ran tests from February to April for attracting potential newcomers to view the Al-Anon PSA using ads delivered through the Digital Direct program on CBS websites and a waiting room television program. As a result of the Digital Direct program, users were attracted to start playing the Al-Anon PSA 205,000 times. Fifty-four percent of those who began the PSA viewed it through to the end. The Waiting Room campaign was played nearly 62,000 times in 57 doctor’s offices and eight screens in three hospitals reaching an estimated 385,000 people. Both programs were successful at increasing awareness of the Al-Anon program.

WSO Staff recognize these programs can be more effective when coordinated at a District or Area level where ads can be displayed based on a person’s location. In 2021, the WSO did receive a request from an Area interested in these programs and facilitated an introduction between the Area and the vendor.

### Impression – Shifting Our Perspective, Shifting Our Message

Nancy S., Member of the Board of Trustees

One of my favorite parts in the *Al-Anon Service Manual* is the reading titled “Help and Hope” (page 25). This phrase is repeated several times in our literature and program resources, and I am grateful for that because I believe the greatest gift I have received, and can offer to families and friends of alcoholics, is hope. When I came to Al-Anon, my life felt the way the old “crying house” bookmark looked. I didn’t need to hear more about the problem, because I knew what the problem was: I felt helpless and hopeless because nothing was changing at my crying house. I needed help and hope to keep moving forward, and I found that in Al-Anon. I was so

glad when the “squiggly road sign” bookmark came out because I could better identify with that representation of the confusion caused by alcoholism, and compare the guidance and directions I found in Al-Anon to a roadmap to a more serene life.

When the new PSA was revealed at the 2021 WSC, I was filled with hope from the messaging. Instead of focusing on the problem, the new PSA offers help and hope to anyone suffering from the effects of another person’s alcoholism. It’s a subtle shift, but an important one in our goal of reaching members of the public who are not yet aware of the benefits of Al-Anon. In my experience, I have found that offering hope is far more attractive to a newcomer than comparing problems caused by another’s alcoholism.

### **Public Outreach Service Tools**

In March, we announced our new Public Outreach (PO) posters. The Al-Anon outreach posters feature the silhouettes of people inside a bottle with the text reading “Not Everyone Trapped by Alcohol is an Alcoholic – Families and friends are suffering too.” The Alateen outreach posters feature various teens, including one with four boys of differing ethnic backgrounds and two featuring a Caucasian girl. The Alateen posters feature text that says “1 in 4 children is affected by someone’s drinking. You are not alone.” These posters were created to address the demand for posters in the fellowship.

In June, the PO Committee discussed how to identify simple PO projects for groups and Districts to undertake. The Committee developed an idea for creating a method for members to submit their PO project ideas to the WSO, have them reviewed by the PO Committee, and then share them with other members looking to carry the message. The recommendation was presented to the Executive Committee at its November 2021 meeting and received strong support. WSO Staff were delegated responsibility for building the process and tools necessary to collect, review, and disseminate the PO ideas.

### **Public Outreach Coordinators**

WSO Staff committed to hosting two conference calls each year with the Area Public Outreach Coordinators. The goal of these conversations is to offer these trusted servants an opportunity to share their experience, strength, and hope with one another and to foster relationships with WSO Staff, thus reducing barriers to the interchange of information as outlined in the Strategic Plan. One topic discussed was the need for Public Outreach pieces generated at the Area, District and AIS level to be submitted to the WSO for approval. The “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” confirms that the WSO is responsible for the national and international Public Outreach messaging, while the Areas are responsible for the local messaging, and that Areas are approved to create one public outreach publication each year within their area of service. The discussion confirmed Area PO Coordinators serve a vital role in ensuring the Area process for approving PO pieces is followed and for generating enthusiasm for member distribution. PO Coordinators were reminded about the opportunity to contact the WSO for assistance or when changes to published WSO posters are considered.

### **Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism – AFG’s Year-Round Public Outreach Magazine**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, members have struggled to distribute *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines due to lockdowns, office closures, and other restrictions. AFA has been available as a free download on al-anon.org since 2018. Prior to the pandemic, the average number of downloads was 36 per month. Since the start of the pandemic, downloads

have increased. In 2020, the average more than tripled to 115 per month and then more than doubled again in 2021 to 235 per month.

### **Social Media Restructuring**

In 2021, constrained Staff resources led the WSO to evaluate the efficacy of the Al-Anon and Alateen Public Outreach message across the 14 social media platforms then supported. Staff research identified that:

- Alateen pages were not attracting young followers. The demographics nearly exactly matched those of the WSO Al-Anon pages. Staff concluded that maintaining both Al-Anon and Alateen pages was creating little positive impact and doubling Staff workload.
- Sharing the same content on Twitter and Facebook was creating little engagement as Twitter is designed for more timely content. Staff concluded that this practice was doubling Staff workload, with little to no return. Tweets with timely content were engaged at a much higher rate.

Based on these results, the WSO decided to

- Eliminate all Alateen social media pages in favor of incorporating Alateen content on its Al-Anon pages.
- Reduce the amount of original content each month, thus decreasing workload, while continuing with daily posts by automatically reposting popular posts from the past.
- Post only timely content on Twitter, such as Al-Anon events or other noteworthy announcements.

### **YouTube Channel Revamping**

As Al-Anon seeks to attract younger members to the fellowship, the WSO is exploring the use of video. YouTube has had content for many years and Staff reviewed the content and created playlists to better organize the videos. Playlists include interviews of professionals, interviews of members, Al-Anon Public Service Announcements, as well as public outreach video clips. As a means of attracting increased viewers to its Al-Anon channel, the WSO held a YouTube “Premiere Watch Party” to unveil the new PSAs in all three languages (Spanish, French and English) simultaneously.

## **Community Relations**

### **Networking with Professionals**

The WSO Public Outreach Staff position was open for the majority of the year in light of 2021 budget considerations. As a result, networking opportunities with professionals were responsive rather than planned, managed primarily through email correspondence. During the last quarter of the year, the new Associate Director—Community Relations was hired, and she began making preliminary plans and building reconnection opportunities with the professional community for 2022.

### **LinkedIn Communications Strategy**

Outreach to professionals in 2021 shifted from its historical focus on printed materials and newsletters to utilizing the professional social platform LinkedIn. Staff maintained an active presence on LinkedIn, posting articles written by healthcare professionals, video interviews of professionals, and other content geared toward encouraging professionals to recommend their clients and patients to Al-Anon. Additionally, one 2021 Strategy included launching a trial



LinkedIn campaign to increase professional community awareness. After only four-and-a-half months, the campaign has generated very positive results, reaching 432,915 mental health professionals.

### **Membership & Longitudinal Surveys**

The triannual Membership Survey was conducted this summer with over 18,000 surveys submitted. Staff is continuing to conduct the analysis and is expecting to publish the report in January 2022. As part of the Membership Survey, members were asked if they would like to opt in for future surveys. This was the first step toward conducting the Longitudinal Study approved by the Board of Trustees and the Conference in 2021. Members who responded positively will be contacted to confirm their interest in participating in the Longitudinal Study.

This new study will survey the same group of members over the next five years, gathering their answers to ten simple questions from the Membership survey to measure the impact of Al-Anon participation over the course of the study. The Longitudinal Study was created following suggestions from the professional community as to how Al-Anon could provide evidence-based data to the community regarding the effectiveness of our program given the Al-Anon principle of anonymity.

### **Impression – Providing Professionals the Tools They Need**

Jack S., Chairperson of the Public Outreach Committee (At Large Member)

What if we could definitively tell professionals that being active in Al-Anon over a period of time will help their clients feel better? That our program, our fellowship, our Steps and Traditions and Concepts, our literature, our meetings, our members, our service, will help them have a better life? I know that Al-Anon has given me a much better life. It's given me serenity. It's changed my life in so many ways. My Higher Power and my Sponsor and meetings and service have made me a better person. I know that's true for me. But is it true in general for all active Al-Anon members?

That's what we hope to be able to show using the Longitudinal Study. We all hope to see a correlation between active Al-Anon participation and a better life. That would be so exciting! With this study we hope to be able to show proof of Al-Anon's effectiveness in a scientific way that professionals will understand and trust.

### **Protect Al-Anon's Name**

Vali F., Executive Director

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Anne P., Group Services & Legal Specialist

Kia Cabbler, Legal Assistant (Non-member)

### **Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet**

Submissions of trademark and copyright protection violations on the internet continued to flow into the WSO throughout the year. Due to the pandemic, many individuals and members turned to the internet to continue their efforts to share our message as well as to connect group members meeting virtually. Many members unknowingly violated Al-Anon's trademark and copyright by posting pamphlets or screenshots of Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Staff worked diligently to contact these members and groups. Thankfully, most members responded positively and acted quickly to correct any violations.

When the full-time Legal Assistant left the WSO, the decision was made to call on the professional experience of an existing employee who is an Al-Anon member to address trademark and copyright matters moving forward. The WSO has since been very fortunate to have the opportunity to ensure simultaneous application of both Al-Anon's spiritual principles and knowledge of the law to reported violations. As a result, Staff expanded their approach to include cooperative messaging when situations warranted.

Thoughtful consideration was applied early in the year regarding how best to address the implied trademark and copyright permissions provided to groups historically, given the formal WSO recognition of groups meeting electronically as Al-Anon Family Groups. The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) members—who meet regularly to discuss and align on application of Al-Anon Policy in different circumstances which arise as part of WSO work—considered how physical groups were asked to handle copyright historically. They discussed what process the WSO could create that would allow for a consistent approach to copyright for both groups meeting physically and electronically while also formalizing the agreement between AFG, Inc. and the groups related to copyright protection. The result was the decision to incorporate copyright agreements into the group registration and update forms and processes. A team was assembled to update the forms, and these will begin to roll out in 2022.

### **International Copyright Protection and Accessibility**

The WSO's current policies regarding reprints and translations of Conference Approved Literature were based on the Twelve Traditions and legal advice regarding international copyright received at the time policies were written. As the world has "gotten smaller;" members have become more mobile, and service arms have come to rely on sales of CAL, in addition to group and member contributions, for financial support, the WSO has felt the need to reexamine its legal and Traditional options in an attempt to address some of the challenges the current policies present to international service arms, particularly General Service Offices (GSOs).

Staff started by consulting legal counsel regarding current international copyright law. Through those conversations, the WSO recognized different options could be evaluated that might better support international structures while continuing to protect the AFG, Inc. copyright. In 2021, Staff designed two pilot projects to test how sales of CAL between two service structures could work and how reprint permission could be granted between GSOs. WSO Staff are overseeing the projects, already in progress, and will make recommendations to the AFG, Inc. Board of Trustees regarding the results once the pilots are complete in 2022.

### **International Trademarks**

The project to register or re-register the Al-Anon trademarked name and logo in countries around the world has been underway since 2018. Registration has been completed in most countries, with only one remaining outstanding at year end: Iran. Late in the year, Staff learned this trademark is once again making progress toward registration, having stalled significantly during the pandemic. Most trademarks need to be renewed every ten years and require evidence of usage. Staff will work with international structures to ensure they are aware of the requirements as we move forward to renewal dates.

## Goal: Organization

### AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.

Restrictions imposed by the pandemic globally in 2021 provided the WSO and international structures many virtual opportunities to collaborate, particularly through Zonal meetings, increasing global access to knowledge, resources, and the program. New Staff roles were developed, and employees were supported in exploring opportunities to grow into new positions which increased membership access to knowledge at the WSO. New technology options were evaluated and utilized to increase Spanish- and French-speaking member access to knowledge and resources at key meetings.

## Increase Global Availability

Vali F., Executive Director

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

Kathi M., Co-Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

## Global Fellowship Support

The WSO provides support to Al-Anon evolving and national service structures around the world. The term “structure” refers to the organization of services separate from those things necessary to have groups. Groups themselves need very little in order to have a meeting, but large numbers of groups need certain kinds of support, such as consistent literature, a public outreach policy, and someone to respond to requests for help and information about how to start or conduct Al-Anon meetings.

In countries where there is a local Al-Anon service board that provides limited services or supports a limited geographic region of a country, the country is said to have an evolving service structure. When services expand and meet the needs of the whole country, this is called a national service structure. This type of structure can include many service arms, such as Districts, Areas, Intergroups, and an annual conference of Delegates. A General Service Office (GSO) is often established after a country develops a national service structure. The GSO is a service arm of the structure.

## Russia Begins Trial as General Service Office

As Al-Anon has grown around the world, offices similar to the WSO have been established by local members to provide similar services. In Russia, a Structure has evolved over the last 30 years to provide all the services of a GSO, including acting as a clearinghouse for member inquiries; translating, publishing and distributing CAL; publishing a periodic newsletter for Al-Anon groups in the Structure; accumulating Al-Anon experience; registering and publishing a directory of groups; adapting WSO Guidelines to fit local customs and practices and creating and publishing original Guidelines that meet the needs of local members and service arms; and establishing service boards, committees, and an annual conference of delegates.

As is the usual practice, when the request to register a Russia GSO was submitted in 2021, it was reviewed by the International Coordination Committee (ICC) before being submitted to the Board of Trustees. The Board approved the request in October.

## **Impression – Welcoming Russia as a GSO**

Kathi M., Co-Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

In my first year as Trustee, I am grateful to have served as the Co-Chair for the ICC. One of our responsibilities is to help other countries form their own service structures. What an exciting experience to be part of the ICC and the Board of Trustees when Russia requested to register a GSO.

This was not my first experience hearing about Russia's journey. In 1992, I had just moved to California after serving as Alaska's Delegate when the WSO began hearing from members in Russia asking for help. The members in Russia (still the USSR at that time) were not able to print any literature in their language. *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) was published in Russian by the WSO. Al-Anon groups in the US and Canada were given the opportunity to buy the book and have the WSO mail it to Russia. What an amazing response to this need. I remember hearing about it in many meetings and getting to participate in this effort to share our program.

In 1995 the program "To Russia with Love" was started, encouraging groups, Districts or Areas to adopt a Russian group. Again, the outpouring of love was amazing, and I felt proud to be a part of that outreach.

Now, 29 years later, Russia's Structure is being recognized as a GSO. It fills my heart to see our Twelfth Step in action—we are truly carrying the message.

## **Evolving Structure Updates**

These achievements are some of the highlights from evolving Al-Anon structures around the world:

- Bulgaria has requested permission to translate and print CAL
- Greece has been meeting regularly with WSO Staff and is actively translating and printing CAL again
- Groups in Israel are forming an intergroup office with support from WSO Staff
- Kazakhstan established its first service structure
- Lithuania in the process of completing its first translations of CAL
- *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) was printed in Maltese, this structure's first translation

## **International Structure Events**

This year there were three Zonal Meetings that took place via web conference and were attended by representatives of Al-Anon international service arms, both General Service Offices and evolving structures. The mission of the Zonal Meetings is to improve cooperation between structures to support growth of Al-Anon and Alateen in gatherings of geographically and linguistically similar structures. The WSO is always invited to participate because of its role in supporting Al-Anon and Alateen around the world, particularly evolving structures.

## **European Zonal Meeting**

The European Zonal Meeting was held via web conference from September 3-5, 2021. It was attended by 14 General Service Offices, four evolving service structures, and two representatives of the WSO. Topics of discussion included Alateen, strategies for communication with the WSO, the new policy recognizing electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups, Public Outreach, and balancing spiritual and legal considerations when selling CAL. Ukraine will host the meeting in 2023.

## **Impression – Attending the European Zonal Meeting**

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

From September 3 to 5, I attended the European Zonal Meeting via web conference. It was the first time this event was being held in a virtual format. For me, the meeting time zone was seven hours earlier than mine, so I was starting the meetings on Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 a.m. The excitement of being able to connect with members just like me from around Europe made the time adjustment easier.

In our first session, each person gave an introduction that included a short personal background and something about the structure. Participants consisted of large General Service Offices (GSOs) and small evolving structures such as Estonia, which has three groups. I was amazed by the commitment and enthusiasm of these members to learn from each other.

One highlight for me was hearing how structures adapted and grew during COVID-19. Ideas about structures using technology to continue to have meetings, share information, and do public outreach helped fuel my own enthusiasm.

The most meaningful sharing for me was from a Russian Delegate who shared the struggles of members trying to obtain literature. She spoke of members purchasing literature with their own money and risking not being reimbursed, and of members hauling literature over many miles just to get it in members' hands. I can forget how easy it is for me to purchase literature any time I want. It is not this way in a lot of the world.

I am grateful for this opportunity and my new appreciation for this "worldwide fellowship."

## **Ibero-American Zonal Meeting**

The Ibero-American Zonal Meeting met virtually October 22-24, 2021. It was hosted by Perú and attended by 14 GSOs and three evolving structures. Two representatives of the WSO attended with voice and the new Director of Programs attended without voice, in an observational capacity. The agenda included three primary topics: CAL, communication, and preparations for the next Zonal meeting. The next host structure is Argentina.

## **Central American Zonal Meeting**

The Central American Zonal Meeting met via web conference December 3-5, 2021. It was hosted by Costa Rica and attended by two other GSOs and four evolving structures, including first-time participation by members from the Dominican Republic. Between presentations of each structure's service profile, there was a talk from a Delegate called "Spirituality is a Matter of Service" and another from a second Delegate called "Sponsoring our Structures for the Continued Growth of Al-Anon." The WSO's presentation included three topics: communication, Alateen, and highlights from the 2021 WSC.

## Facilitate Access to Our History

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus

Joe T., Archivist

Yadi McCoy, Event Logistics & Training Specialist (Non-member)

### Streaming WSO History

This year, Staff explored opportunities for streamlining and expanding access to WSO history in response to requests from a few groups to rent the historical films *Lois's Story* (AV-1) and *Lois W. & the Pioneers* (AV-24). Utilizing tools introduced to the WSO to support member and professional video efforts, the Digital Communications Team, in collaboration with the Archivist and Customer Service Team, created a process for renting and viewing these pieces of our history via an online streaming platform. This novel approach provides an opportunity for members, groups, or links of service to understand our past without the complexity of renting, shipping, and returning media. The historical films are published on al-anon.org, under Archives. <https://al-anon.org/for-members/wso/archives/historical-films-stream/>

## Recruit, Grow, and Retain Staff

Vali E., Executive Director

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

Mary Davis, Accounting Manager (Non-member)

Catherine Thomas, Human Resources Generalist (Non-member)

In 2021, WSO Staff turnover was 11 percent<sup>1</sup>, which represents a decrease from 2020. Nonprofit organizations historically have a higher turnover than for-profit organizations, and survey predictions for 2021 suggested nonprofit turnover would increase in 2021 which made the 89 percent retention statistic all the more encouraging. Credit for this positive trend falls firstly to the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for developing and implementing the WSO Values, which include Core and Aspirational Values, as part of the revised Performance Evaluation Process (PEP). The new PEP rolled out in the first quarter and has been well received. Key changes included a shift away from competencies assessment toward employee achievement and demonstration of WSO Values and goals, an increase in frequency of PEP conversations between supervisors and employees from annually to quarterly, and a transition from individual-focused to team-focused performance as the benchmark for merit increases.

Given the pandemic and resulting financial constraints of 2020, the WSO began 2021 with fewer Staff than has occurred in many years. Despite the shortages, Staff continued to ensure WSO work was completed. Thankfully, as the year progressed, given the fellowship's enormous generosity, we were able to fill positions, some open for more than a year, including Magazine Editor, Shipping Clerk, Group Services Specialist, and Copy Editor. One vitally important hiring in 2021 was the new Director of Programs—a process which occurred over five months to ensure adequate time for both the applicants and Staff to familiarize themselves with each other. The posting also yielded a successful candidate for the new Associate Director—Community Relations position.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The turnover percentage starting in 2020 is not comparable to previous years' calculations as the WSO Human Resources Staff members applied an industry-standard calculation method beginning this year.

Although not necessarily visible in job titles, the Directors' Team continued our policy of evaluating needed skills each time a position opens to ensure Staff seeking to grow receive opportunities to pursue advancement. Several Staff members transferred positions within the organization this year, which resulted in the hiring of a new Customer Service Representative. Since opportunities for advancement are recognized as another key to retention, the Directors' Team will continue this approach as we move into 2022.

Engagement also generates increased employee satisfaction and so, in addition to the Sunshine Club which is responsible for expressing congratulations and condolences and creating fun events for participants, this year the Human Resources Generalist held a fun "lunch and learn" and crafted an employee engagement newsletter to help Staff connect and relax during this busy year.

Of course, a vital part of retention involves compensation, and this year the Compensation Committee solicited requests for proposal and conducted a Compensation Study to evaluate how our Staff were compensated compared with the market. Thankfully, the report confirmed WSO practices as being consistent overall with market standards and the WSO Staff Compensation Philosophy.

## **Manage Operations**

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Karen Wolff, Software Engineer (Non-member)

Michael Rodriguez, Building & Office Manager (Non-member)

Yadi McCoy, Event Logistics & Training Specialist (Non-member)

## **Improved Effectiveness with Technology**

### **WSO Online Store Upgrade**

An exciting development this year was the launch of the WSO's new, modern Online Store [ecom.al-anon.org](http://ecom.al-anon.org) with improved navigation and search capabilities. WSO Staff members from every Department collaborated in designing, developing, testing, and launching the new Store in a project which spanned from 2020 into 2021. The site, featuring bright, eye-catching photos and a design consistent with [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org), allows the fellowship to purchase CAL, contribute to the WSO, and subscribe to *The Forum*.

The new Store represents a significant step forward in the WSO efforts to better meet the needs of our trilingual fellowship. The Store allows Spanish- and French-speaking members to purchase literature in their language directly on the Online Store for the first time.

### **One System: Groups Meeting Electronically and Physically**

One result of the 2021 WSC motion to recognize permanent electronic Al-Anon meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups was the need for the WSO to consolidate data across all groups, whether they meet electronically or physically, into one system and process. The consolidation was necessary to allow Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) across both geographic and non-geographic Areas to process changes. Prior to commencing this effort, the team recognized the need to step back and identify optimal group processes, forms, and data to create consistency and efficiency for AGRCs and WSO Staff.

Phase One of this process, which involved significant structural changes to the underlying association management database (iMIS) in which the WSO stores group data, was completed on time. Work on the Online Group Records (OGR) application, through which AGRCs enter group registrations and updates, will carry over into the new year. Both these efforts were fundamental to ensuring the system provided the necessary flexibility to support evolution if or as groups evolve, e.g., registering long-term hybrid meetings or supporting new group service roles. Given the magnitude of these changes, Staff anticipate that electronic group registrations and updates will need to be handled by the WSO beyond the April WSC timeframe.

### **OneDrive & SharePoint**

The WSO discovered new opportunities to share information and collaborate amongst and between Staff and WSO Volunteers. For example, the Finance Committee uses OneDrive to review and provide suggestions on the Treasurer's Quarterly Appeal Letter to individuals and, as a result, has dramatically reduced the time spent in meetings. Staff began exploring in 2021 how to utilize SharePoint to reduce time spent searching for the latest copy of shared project documents.

To better understand capabilities and how the technology can support the WSO's many project teams, Staff set up the 2023 International Convention project using SharePoint. This SharePoint site will be utilized by Staff, WSO Volunteers, and the third-party convention management firm as planning kicks into high gear in 2022.

### **Web Conference Technology: Interpretation**

Technology served to support WSO goals for expanding trilingual support across as many conversations as possible, either with WSC members or international structures. This year the WSO utilized two different web conferencing solutions to empower non-English speaking members, most often Spanish-speaking members, to participate in important WSO business meetings. Technology supported the real-time chat translation for Spanish-speaking members attending the historic December meeting for all Current Mailing Address members (CMAs) to elect a Temporary Chairperson for the non-panel Area. Separately, a second web conferencing solution supported simultaneous, two-channel Spanish- and English-language interpretation for both the Ibero- and Central American Zonal meetings. WSO Staff participation in both these meetings was only possible because of the availability of this interpretation.

The Events Logistics & Training Specialist spent many hours working with the host committees for both meetings to empower them to be fully self-supporting in hosting these meetings using the web conference technology. These are exciting times.

### **Balancing Technology with Security**

With technology, regrettably, comes the potential for cybersecurity risks. Thankfully, the WSO is supported in its security efforts by a third-party vendor. In December, the vendor began offering training webinars on avoiding cyber risks, such as phishing. These were attended by both WSO Staff and Volunteers. Additionally, the WSO implemented multifactor authentication to improve security of its digital assets.



## **WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety**

In order to ensure the safety of employees and Volunteers—who visited the WSO for the first time since the start of the pandemic in December—Staff continued to observe the COVID-19 operational safety measures implemented in 2020. The WSO remained closed to the general public, with office tours suspended until pandemic conditions allow. Access to the premises continues to be restricted to employees and essential contractors. As an added precaution, Staff installed a contactless water fountain to minimize potential for virus transmission—the water fountain also helped with WSO recycling efforts.

Staff utilized remote meeting capabilities extensively throughout the year in order to practice social distancing as well as follow all federal and local precautionary standards. Monthly Staff meetings were conducted in a hybrid format, with some Staff members attending in person and others joining from their offices. Larger meetings, such as the Staff Management Team meeting, were held completely virtually to ensure equal-quality access to all participants. At year end, Staff purchased cost-effective hybrid meeting equipment to improve the quality of hybrid meetings. Staff implemented the technology for the first time to support the hybrid December Executive Committee meeting.

Staff revised the WSO Fire and Safety Plan and distributed an electronic version to every employee. To ensure access in case of emergency, the Plan was also posted at various locations throughout the office. Ongoing annual inspections of fire and security equipment were completed as required by the city, and several fire extinguishers were purchased to replace the ones that no longer met requirements. An additional security camera was installed to improve coverage of the property.

# OUR FINANCIALS

## Manage Our Budget & Financials

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Mary Davis, Accounting Manager (Non-member)

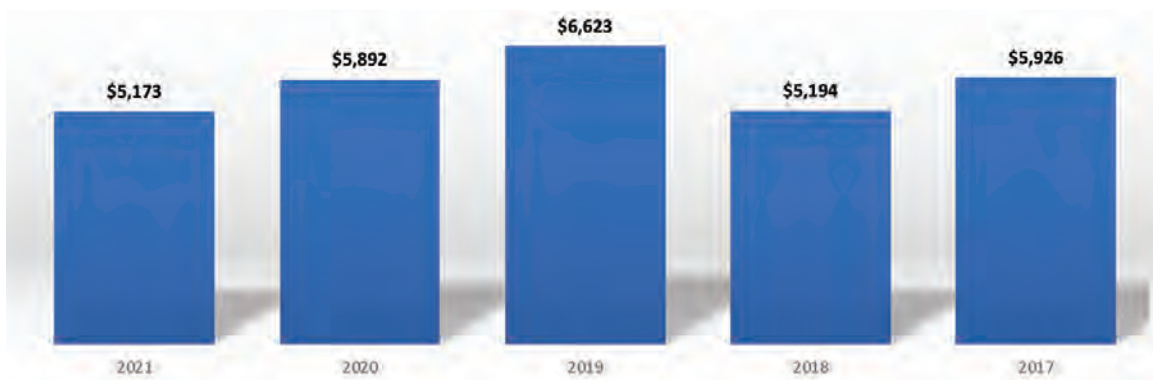
Cindy M., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)

As parts of the world began to reopen, the WSO continued to experience the impact of the pandemic on our overall revenue. We budgeted for a return to normal operations in the second half of the year, but challenges remained. Our literature sales continued to be impacted. While some Literature Distributions Centers reopened, many were still not operating at full capacity. Even though we experienced a 3% increase in literature sales compared to 2020, literature sales remained 36% below historical levels. As a result of our member's enormous generosity, contributions continue to exceed literature sales and provide support for continuing services. Member contributions totaled \$2,623,242, which accounted for 50% of WSO revenue in 2021. Positive market conditions increased our investments held in the Reserve Fund allowing the WSO to maintain an ample reserve.

As a result, the WSO was able to provide essential services and complete the redesign of the Online Store allowing Spanish and French-speaking members to purchase literature in their language directly through the store for the first time. This technology also improved the ease with which members can make contributions using the online store. Consistent with our principle of self-support, the WSO did reduce expenses, particularly through the reduction in Board and Executive Committee travel and Staff training, to meet the challenge created by the pandemic.

Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. More than 68% of total expenses go directly towards achieving the Mission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provide customer service support and financial support to maintain operations.

## Five Year Revenue Trend (in thousands)

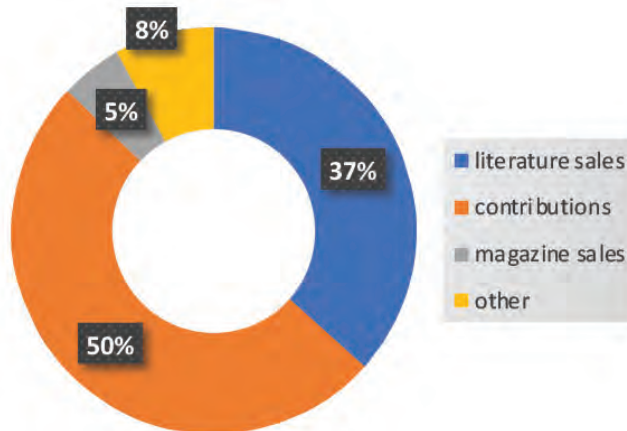


Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. for fiscal year 2021 may be obtained online at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org).

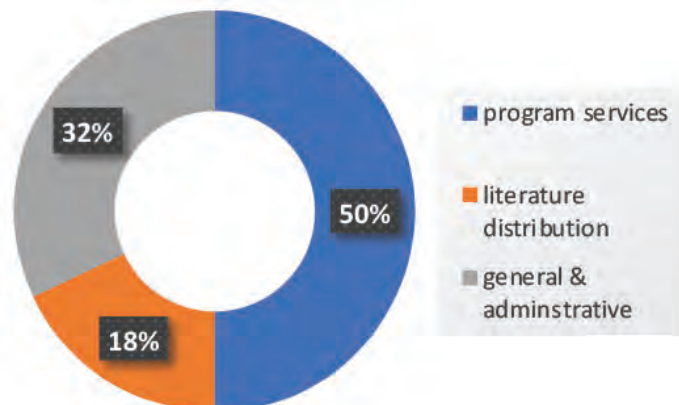
## Financial Highlights

Statements of Financial Position	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Total Assets</b> (in thousands)	<b>\$13,783</b>	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833	\$10,513
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b> Total liabilities	\$1,497	\$1,333	\$1,531	\$1,387	\$1,867
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$12,286	\$10,500	\$9,529	\$8,446	\$8,646
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$13,783</b>	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833	\$10,513
Operating revenue (in thousands)	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Literature sales, net	\$1,906	\$1,847	\$2,914	\$3,194	\$2,771
Contributions	\$2,623	\$3,295	\$2,187	\$1,953	\$1,973
Magazine sales	\$283	\$292	\$275	\$258	\$264
Other income, net	\$406	\$458	\$1,247	\$(211)	\$918
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>\$5,173</b>	\$5,892	\$6,623	\$5,194	\$5,926
Operating expenses (in thousands)	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Program services	\$2,601	\$2,484	\$2,865	\$2,731	\$2,830
Literature distribution	\$922	\$866	\$839	\$860	\$822
General & administrative	\$1,726	\$1,571	\$1,837	\$1,804	\$1,172
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>\$5,249</b>	\$4,921	\$5,541	\$5,395	\$4,824

### Operating Revenue



### Functional Expenses



# OUR PLANS

## AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

Marianne B., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Group (Trustee)

While the board safeguards the organization's strategic direction by considering internal and external challenges and opportunities as well as mission, values, and major goals for the future, the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) assists the Board of Trustees with this important responsibility. The EFWG, a Work Group of the Board, guides the Board in focusing on the future by planning and presenting discussions and questions that engage Board members in visionary discussions. The Board of Trustees has an obligation to be forward-looking, to be aware of the consequences of its actions, not only in today's world, but also in anticipation of future changes that may affect our fellowship. This strategic way of thinking supports the Board in meeting one of the goals of Concept Nine. With a focus on foresight, the Work Group stimulates strategic thinking.

In 2021, the EFWG prepared topics for the Board to reflect upon and discuss:

- As a member of the Board of Trustees, what does the duty of foresight mean?
- What actions will assist the Board in becoming more strategic leaders?
- What barriers limit the Board's ability to become visionary leaders?
- How can we continue to develop Board leadership skills?
- How can we link Board development to the strategic plan?
- What steps can we take to ensure our board committee structure works well on the board's behalf?

It has been an exciting year for the EFWG! The Work Group looks forward to continued discussions on developing additional strategies to further promote efficient, effective visionary leadership skills.

## Strategic Plan Refresh

The Strategic Plan consists of AI-Anon's Core Purpose, Mission Statement, and Core Values. The Envisioned Future statement comprises forward-thinking visions of AI-Anon's future. To realize the vision described in the Envisioned Future statement, Goals and Objectives are developed. The Board and Staff each play distinct roles in the Strategic Plan process: the Board is responsible for safeguarding the strategic direction of the organization and the Staff is responsible for determining how to accomplish the plan, including formulation of action plans (Strategies) to accomplish the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. The Board is responsible for the "what" and the Staff is responsible for the "how."

When the Board developed the current Strategic Plan, it projected a three-to-five-year timeframe for achievement of the Goals and a two-to-three-year timeframe for the Objectives. Three years have flown by since the Strategic Plan was implemented in 2018, so the time had arrived to revisit the Goals and Objectives. At the July 2021 Board meeting, Trustees, Executive

Committee members, and the SLT worked together, with the help of an outside consultant, to review and update the Strategic Plan. Due to the comprehensive, in-depth, and thoughtful process that creating this revision entailed, the work will continue into 2022.

### **Impression – Strategic Plan Refresh**

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

The July revisit of our current Strategic Plan began with a process that helped the participants look deeper into our future—projecting needs of the fellowship and the world around us while keeping the primary purpose of our fellowship, “helping families and friends of alcoholics,” in the forefront.

With the support of the outside consultant, the Board, Staff and At Large members of the Executive Committee defined significant trends impacting our fellowship over the next three years, what makes Al-Anon Family Groups successful, how AFG, Inc. offers the highest value to our members, and how our program could become the instrumental resource in our communities. Results of the 2020 Competitive Analysis were referenced in helping us identify our strengths and weaknesses along with our reimagining of possibilities. The consultant offered suggestions for changes in Strategic Plan terminology and process which the Board adopted at its October 2021 Board meeting.

During the follow-up conversation, the Board discussed new goals (referred to as Domains) and Goal Statements along with the Strategic Objectives related to each Goal. These Strategic Plan elements support Staff in their efforts defining and carrying out Strategies and action plans. The Board will review the refreshed Strategic Plan, including an example of Strategies for one Domain which could be accomplished across multiple years, during our January 2022 Board meeting.

### **2022 Approved Strategies**

The process for developing Strategies occurs over the course of the entire year, beginning with the Board of Trustees’ prioritization of Strategic Plan Objectives at the January 2021 Board meeting. Based on that prioritization process, Staff began creating Strategies to effectuate the Plan in 2021. At the July 2021 Board meeting, Staff presented 14 Strategies for the Trustees to consider and select.

At the October 2021 Board meeting, SLT presented their 2022 Strategy recommendations to the Board of Trustees. For each recommended Strategy, Staff provided details as to:

- Anticipated outcomes—How implementing the Strategy progresses the Strategic Plan Goal and Objective(s)
- Staff capacity—Estimated Staff and/or Volunteer resources required to implement the Strategy
- Implementation timeframe—Timeline for implementing the Strategy
- Ongoing commitment—Whether the Strategy requires ongoing Staff or financial commitment (for example, the *Mobile App* requires ongoing investment and resources)

Board members approved SLT moving forward with the following 2022 Strategies:

• **Goal: Public—**

- ◆ Examine the opportunity for an Al-Anon member of the WSO Staff to speak in a professional capacity representing the WSO at professional events
- ◆ Create animations/cartoons from existing newcomer content for distribution through appropriate social media platforms

• **Goal: Members**

- ◆ Investigate and recommend systems that allow the WSO to take additional electronic forms of payments
- ◆ Increase Staff efficiency by improving WSO communications regarding what members need to know about contributing through bequests and wills

In addition to these new Strategies, Staff confirmed four Strategies would also carry over into 2022, with scopes revised to reflect the progress and accomplishments of 2021:

• **Goal: Members—**

- ◆ Define recommendations for safely hosting Alateen meetings electronically
- ◆ Finalize the process for sustainably delivering attractive, ongoing *Mobile App* Premium Content
- ◆ Update and translate WSO Guidelines to ensure consistent access to current practices across all three languages supported by the WSC Structure

• **Goal: Organization—**

- ◆ Conduct pilots to expand GSOs' ability to sell and purchase CAL between structures while continuing to protect AFG, Inc.'s copyright

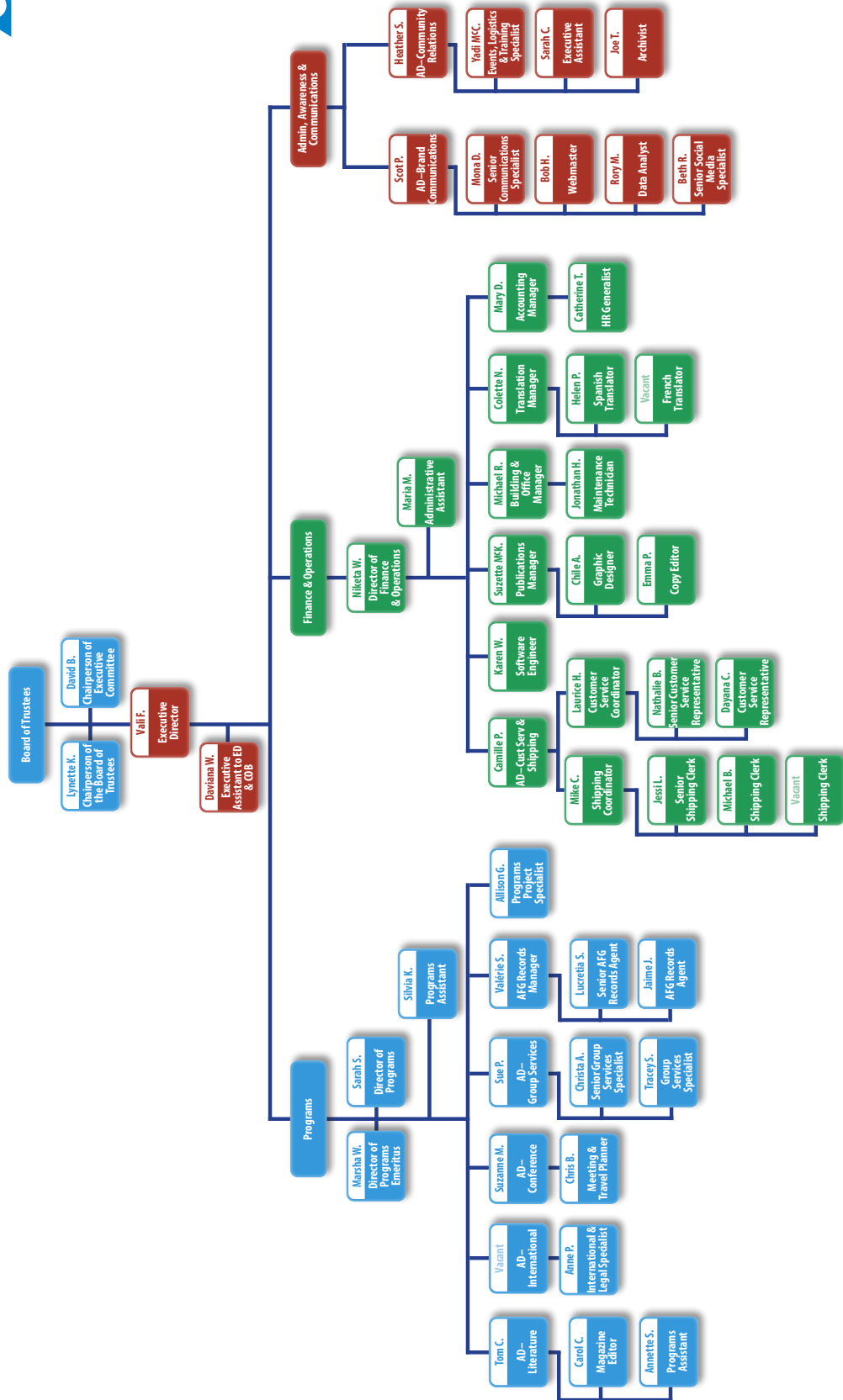
WSO work in 2022 will also include a number of prioritized operations projects:

- 2023 International Convention planning
- 2022 International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM) planning and hosting
- WSO technology development required to merge electronic and physical group data and enable Areas to be fully self-supporting to completing group registrations and updates regardless of meeting format
- New Daily Reader translation and design
- First Longitudinal Study execution

These projects run concurrently with the Strategies and are incorporated into the strategic planning process as they often require a significant commitment of WSO resources.

# APPENDICES

World Service Office Organization Chart - May, 2022



Confidential - Property of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

## Board of Trustees Motions

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

### The Board, in its legal, financial or oversight capacities, acted:

- to accept the 2020 Annual Report to the WSC as presented.
- to approve the World Service Handbook changes regarding Al-Anon Family Groups that meet electronically and the World Service non-geographic areas.
- to approve the 2021 World Service Conference Agenda Topics as presented.
- to accept AFG, Inc. Nominating Committee Process for Electing Board Officers & Executive Committee Members as amended.
- to accept the Nominating Committee Guideline as presented.
- to maintain the Reserve Fund as is because it does not exceed one year's operating expense.
- to approve the Attributes of Leadership as amended.
- to approve the Attributes of Commitment as presented.
- to approve the BYLAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC. as amended.
- to recommend to the World Service Conference the seating of the following non-voting participants at the 2021 World Service Conference:
- to approve on a trial basis, through November 2021, a meeting with Delegates via web conference to present the COB Letter in a virtual format. Interpretation to be provided when needed.
- to approve the Retirement Plan Committee charter.
- to disband the Pension Committee effective immediately.
- to approve the revised 2021 Budget as presented.
- to approve reducing WSC Thought Force presentations from 45 to 30 minutes (to include a 10-minute presentation and a 20-minute discussion) and reducing WSC Task Force presentations from 60 to 45 minutes (to include a 15-minute presentation and a 30-minute discussion).
- to approve reducing Conference Week to four days effective 2023 on a three-year trial basis.
- to postpone the in-person gathering for 2021 Road Trip! in order to fulfill our fiduciary responsibility to ensure the well-being and safety of our members in light of the current CDC guidelines for large gatherings.
- for the 2022 Board meetings to be held virtually January 2022 and face-to-face April 2022 (WSC), July 2022, and October 2022 (Road Trip!).
- to not proceed with having a virtual 2021 Road Trip event.



## Executive Committee Motions

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

### The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee, presented to, and approved by the Board of Trustees:

- to support Staff recommendations to proceed in alignment with the attorney's recommendation regarding Today's Hope website and app and that the WSO Legal Assistant continue to monitor the situation and send periodic cease and desist requests and updates to the Executive Committee as warranted.
- to change the deadline for submission of At-Large Committee resumés to February 15 each year rather than January 1, expand the communication of resumé outreach to Area Chairs and respective Area Coordinators, and separate that communication from the Trustee solicitation.
- to approve the revised content for the *Welcome, Newcomer!* (eK-10) as presented.
- to add "Reviews this Committee's Guideline annually" to all Guidelines as a housekeeping action.
- to accept the recommended At-Large Committee solicitation and term life cycle.
- to allow view-only access to the Public Outreach Coordinators Community of AFG Connects to the At-Large members of the Public Outreach Committee.

# 2022 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Trustees at Large

Don B. Nancy S. Jeri W.  
Lynette K. Kathi M. Tony S.

### Regional Trustees

Cindy M., US Southwest Diane B., US South Central  
Jean L., US North Central Marianne B., US Northeast  
Debbie P., Canada Central

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Debbie G., Chairperson  
Vali F., Executive Director  
Lynette K., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)  
Cindy M., Treasurer  
Marianne B., Policy Chairperson  
David B., Member at Large  
Terry F., Member at Large  
Marsha W., Staff member

## NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Liz D., Executive Committee for Real Property Management  
Chairperson\*\*

## WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Vali F., Executive Director  
Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations\*  
Sarah S., Director of Programs  
Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus  
Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations  
Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications\*\*  
Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services  
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference  
Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

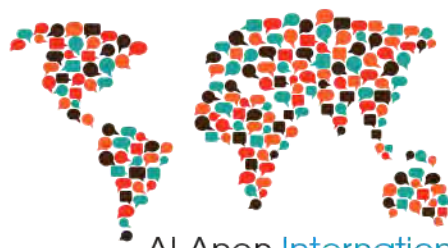
\*Non-member, non-voting

\*\*Non-voting

## AREA DELEGATES

Laura M., Alabama/  
Northwest Florida  
Linette L., Alaska  
Diane G., Alberta/  
Northwest Territories  
Gene T., Arizona  
DeLynn H., Arkansas  
Owen H., British  
Columbia/Yukon  
John McG., California  
North  
Tim P., California South  
Kari O., Colorado  
Marcia M., Connecticut  
Matt W., Delaware  
Ozzie A., Global Electronic  
Area  
Evelyn T., Florida North  
Diane B., Florida South  
Char G.F., Georgia  
Penni S., Hawaii  
Lori M., Idaho  
Gregg R., Illinois North  
Joellyn P., Illinois South  
Maureen H., Indiana  
Katy P., Iowa  
Terry R., Kansas  
Linda C., Kentucky  
Tammy M., Louisiana  
Rae L., Maine  
Tara M., Maritime  
Provinces  
Phil B., Maryland/District  
of Columbia  
Jane P., Massachusetts  
Kristine G., Michigan  
Linda H., Minnesota North  
Kit S., Minnesota South  
Leigh R., Mississippi  
Lori H., Missouri  
Pamela C., Montana  
Margaret R., Nebraska  
Robin P., Nevada  
Noah P., New Hampshire  
Katie O'C., New Jersey  
Clara C., New Mexico/El  
Paso  
Kathi D., New York North  
Emily D-C., New York  
South  
Aileen W-M., North  
Carolina/Bermuda  
Steve B., North Dakota  
Ann F., Ohio  
Samantha M., Oklahoma,  
Immediate Past Delegate  
Bill H., Ontario North  
Gwen D., Ontario South  
Joanne C., Oregon  
Lori F., Pennsylvania  
Maria V., Puerto Rico  
Johanne S., Quebec East  
Hélène A., Quebec West  
Cindy B., Rhode Island  
Joy F., Saskatchewan  
Bob C., South Carolina  
Sue R., South Dakota  
Karla K., Tennessee  
Mattie T., Texas East  
Peggy D., Texas West  
Heather M., Utah  
Laura A., Vermont  
Stacy L., Virginia  
Katharine R., Washington  
Elliott B., West Virginia  
Joanne F., Wisconsin  
and the Upper Peninsula  
of Michigan, Alternate  
Delegate  
Donna W., Wyoming,  
Alternate Delegate





Al-Anon International

General Services Meeting • October 2022 - London, UK