

2023 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SUMMARY



LOVE, LAUGH, AND GROW TOGETHER
AIMER, RIRE ET GRANDIR ENSEMBLE
AMAR, REÍR Y CRECER JUNTOS

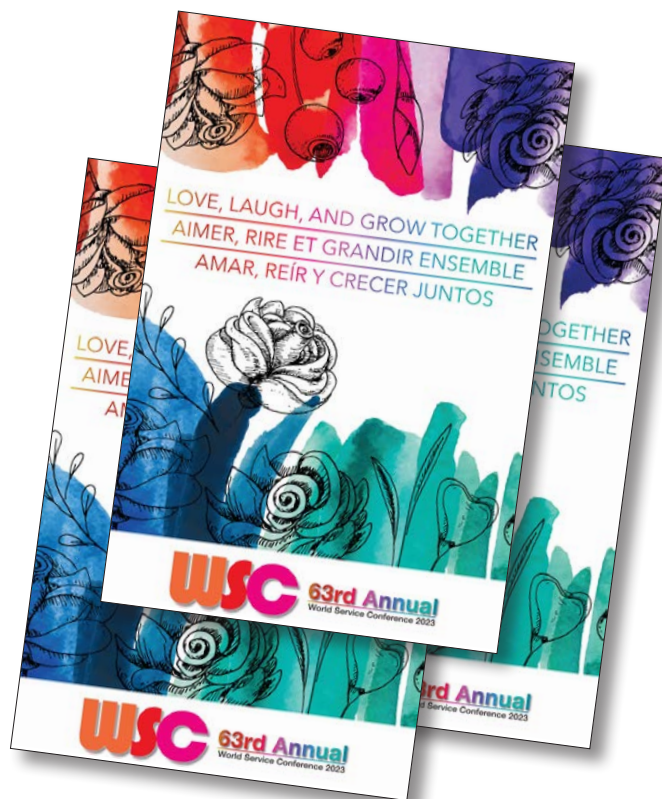


WSC 63rd Annual
World Service Conference 2023

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2023 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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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 in the Members section. Remember, you can enlarge the text by using the zoom button.

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PRE-CONFERENCE

2023 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 61 (2021-2023)	Panel 62 (2022-2024)	Panel 63 (2023-2025)
Conference Committee on Trustees	John McG., Chair, CA(N)	Pamela C., Chair Elect, MT Gene T., AZ Linda H., MN(N) Owen H., BC/YK	Carol G., ME GW W., LA Renaë B., SD
Literature Committee	Lori F., PA Gregg R., IL(N) Terry R., KS	Katharine R., WA Marti P., AR	Dave B., UT
Public Outreach Committee	Hélène A., QC(W) Linda C., KY Penni S., HI	Stacy L., VA	Darcy A., ND Mari J., AK Marilyn McC., NF/LAB Sue K., MO
Task Force Personal and Service Sponsorship	Diane B., FL(S) Mattie T., TX(E)	Jane P., MA, Chair Joanne F., WIUPMI Laura M., ALNWFL	Cheryl S., ID Liz S., NV Mary C., SK
Task Force Revitalizing Alateen		Joanne C., OR, Chair Aileen W-M., NC/BDA Laura A., VT	Debbie C., ON(N) Elaine M., CT Pat G., NY(S) Rocio N., NM/EP
Thought Force Eliminating Regional Trustees	Tim P., CA(S)	Katie O'C., NJ, Chair Diane G., AB/NWT	Barbara O'D., SC Becky V., IA Kate M., NH

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 believe the key to my attracting Al-Anon members into service positions is to share with them my experience that Al-Anon service beyond the group is profoundly spiritual. The more spiritual our Conference experience is, the more our Delegates' Reports will inspire our members to put Al-Anon's core principles into action through service.
- When I hear the word, "tone," I think of music. A person can play one note, but it would be hard to determine the tone. Two notes together offer a better idea of the tone. But play three notes together as a chord, and then you have the essence. So, it is by practicing the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts that the spirit is moved to a better tone.
- I will humbly ask my Higher Power to guide me through the days of Conference, always remembering to place principles before personalities and presuming goodwill. My gratitude overflows for the opportunity to participate in this World Service Conference.
- With my Higher Power by my side, I will bring my love, my serenity, and my participation. I will have an open mind and trust in the process.

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.

- It has been a source of great satisfaction and joy to be able to see the Concepts in action! I have experienced, and know I will again experience at this Conference, the unity that comes with working with the Board and the Staff to improve, enhance, and advance our services to worldwide Al-Anon.
- I will participate in all discussions and votes, keeping the spiritual principles found in the Twelve Traditions in mind, especially unity and self-support. I will listen intently for guidance from the fellowship regarding existing WSO services, new services being requested, and possible services that can be eliminated in support of my fiduciary responsibility to the organization.
- The word "guidance" stood out for me. It reminded me of Concept Nine and "good personal leadership." In order for me to "provide guidance" to the Board of Trustees and the World

Service Office, I need to remember to practice listening to all sides of an issue before sharing and be willing to keep an open mind.

- I love holding things, ideas, discussions up to the light of the Twelve Traditions. I will keep our Traditions close to my heart and mind and lend God my voice and thoughts, as I, with gratitude, participate in this beautiful 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.

- As a new Delegate, I will do my best to learn, participate, and articulate this important goal. During these four days, I promise to practice self-care, patience with myself and others, and respect for others.
- As Delegate, I need to be responsible to a fellowship that encompasses a diverse membership that requires respect, realism, vision, balance, and spirituality as we discuss and vote on the issues that face Al-Anon as a whole.
- As a new Delegate, I need to practice "Listen and Learn" in order to articulate the importance of the Conference and the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure to the fellowship, and to have an open mind throughout the Conference.
- I chose Goal 3 because as a new Delegate, this is the goal that presents the greatest challenge to me: to fully understand and actively participate in the purpose of the Conference, to learn how all parts of the Structure function in relation to one another, and to be able to clearly articulate the discussions that took place and how decisions were made.
- My goal is to learn how to articulate the discussions and decisions that are shared, appreciate all the wealth of knowledge that is in the room, and to remember that this is a worldwide fellowship and my Higher Power will be with me all the way!

Sharing Area Highlights

Maureen H., Panel 61, Indiana
Kristine G., Panel 61, Michigan
Karla K., Panel 61, Tennessee

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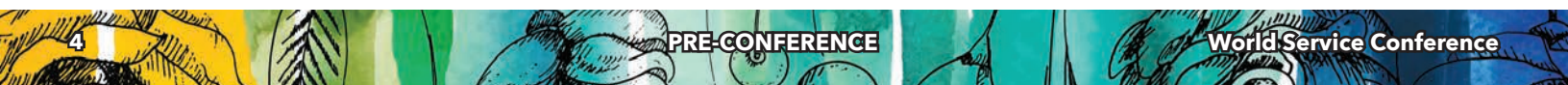
Prior to the opening of the 2023 World Service Conference (WSC), Delegates held a session to share Area experiences, strengths, and challenges. All other Conference members—WSO Volunteers (Trustees and Executive Committee members) and WSO Staff—were invited to attend as guests with no voice.

Before the Conference, the Sharing Area Highlights Co-Chairs compiled Delegates' written reports on successes and challenges.

The Sharing Area Highlights Co-Chairperson opened the meeting by inviting the attendees to participate in an icebreaker. She explained that each attendee had been given a penny. Each participant should look at the date and share a memorable event that happened in that specific year. It might be a year with a specific recovery memory, or a year before recovery.

Some comments included:

- 2011—I was a mother of teenaged children, and I got busy in service by getting in the car and traveling to service events.
- 2021—I was Alternate Delegate and thrown into serving for our Delegate by attending the WSC virtually.
- 2007—This was a year of breakdowns, lost jobs, and my husband relapsing. I was a GR trying to use the Traditions in my life.



- 2005—I had been in Al-Anon for four years and was using the slogans to hang on as alcoholism was very active at that time.
- 2016—I was a DR at the time and able to visit all of the groups in our District. This was a growing time for me and hopefully helpful to others.

After completing the icebreaker, Delegates were given a sheet of paper containing questions addressing the following topics:

- Archives
- Area Seventh Tradition/WSO Contributions
- Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) and Revitalization of Alateen
- Hybrid Area Meetings and Service Positions/Technology Needs
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Processes
- Vacant Area Positions and Declining Area Participation

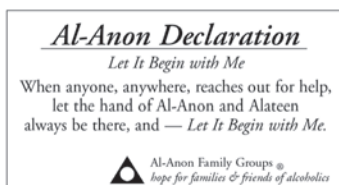
Members were invited to share, in a few sentences, how their Area addresses each of these important topics. Some comments included:

- Our Area is still struggling with the ASBR as our Area had to start our safety and behavioral process all over again.
- In reviewing our ASBR, we discovered that our requirements had not been updated since 2006, so we are spending time, working closely with the WSO, to update our guidelines and get things straightened out. It is important to keep our kids safe in today's world.
- We changed our recertification date to earlier than required by the WSO so we can always be on time.
- We created a task force dealing with DEI.
- We have decided to do an Area inventory regarding diversity and possibly develop a Diversity Coordinator service position.
- Our Area received a lot of money, and we are going to utilize those funds to do more public outreach. Hopefully this will increase our meeting attendance.
- We have started having more orientation meetings in working with our service positions. This also includes holding some of the sessions in Spanish, as we have more Spanish-speaking members becoming involved in service.
- We have been working with our Spanish-speaking groups, as they tend to not be as interested as other groups in virtual meetings.
- Our Archivist attended educational seminars to learn how to actually take care of our archives. We hope to utilize this information to share with others so we can rotate members into the Archives Coordinator position.
- I believe the Archivist should be someone who has a passion for our history, not just someone who wants to have a "title" or "position."
- Our archives have been stored in boxes in someone's basement. We need to seek ways to make our history more important to our membership.

Members were encouraged to continue to think about these questions and possibly use them in their Areas as talking points.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and shared that serving on the Sharing Area Highlights team was an interesting experience.

The meeting closed with the Al-Anon Declaration.



Opening Luncheon

Ann Marie Z., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

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Prior to the official opening of the World Service Conference, the Conference members and support Staff attended an Opening Luncheon.

The Conference Co-Chairperson welcomed attendees by reading the 2023 Conference theme, "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together," in English, French, and Spanish.

Following lunch, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to "pin" the new Panel 63 Delegates and any other first-time Conference Members.

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, was the opening speaker. Her talk can be found on page 53.

The Conference CoChairperson closed the luncheon with the Al-Anon Declaration.

GENERAL SESSIONS

Conference Theme and Opening Remarks

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

What a wonderfully simple and uncomplicated focus we have as the theme for this, the 2023 World Service Conference of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Greetings, and welcome to the continuation of the now 63-year-long conversation.

I am a member of the Board of Trustees, and I have the honour of being the Chairperson of this year's World Service Conference.

Together, over the next four days, we have the opportunity to gather here as the largest group conscience of Al-Anon Family Groups.

What a privilege it is to stand before you and with you to be witness to our collective Higher Power in action, all of us connected with the same passion, affection, and "Love" for our Al-Anon program.

We all have the same purpose, as stated in Tradition Five, "to help families of alcoholics," and in our Charter, "to be the guardian of both Al-Anon's world services and its Twelve Traditions."

Before Al-Anon, there often wasn't a lot to "Laugh" about in my life, and, honestly, I know now I was just surviving, trying to get by as best I could. I was unable to understand what it would take for me to "Grow" as a person. I was trying hard but was truly only treading water. I didn't know how to do anything differently; I was doing the best with what I had. I was consumed by so much fear and despair I couldn't imagine anything could be different.



"Together" with the help and support of a nurturing relationship with a Power greater than myself and the tools of our Al-Anon program, I have come to recognize and appreciate that there is a different way to live life.

I have come to understand I am not alone. Al-Anon is a place where no one needs to be alone!

I am excited and filled with anticipation to be witnessing you, our Al-Anon leaders, and I marvel at how the spiritual principles of our Legacies will be applied over the next few days. Embracing courage,

kindness, vision, open-mindedness, mutual respect, cooperation, collaboration, and a willingness to explore all possibilities, we will share together in our conversations. The Concepts will come to life as we navigate through discussions and topics that are meant to help Al-Anon Family Groups grow and become stronger and more expansive.

I wonder if any of you today are feeling unsure or unclear about why you are here. "How did this happen? What have I got to offer?" Have you asked yourself if you really belong, if you are qualified? I know at times I have those questions and doubts, and I don't always understand the "whys," but I have to come to trust that each of us is right where we belong. I am reminded of a quote from our daily reader, *Hope for Today* (B-27), on the April 10 page:

"God doesn't call the qualified. God qualifies those who are called."

I might suggest that you are here because you are willing; you are here because you belong. Collectively, in our various roles, we are each here with personal responsibility and delegated authority to act on behalf of Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole. We are here to serve, to be the voices of, and be representatives of Al-Anon Family Groups.

I have used the word "you," however, I believe the true strength of Al-Anon is in the "we": the "we" of those that came before us and the future "we" of the potential and future members of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Now, as I tap this gavel, I am honoured to officially open the 63rd World Service Conference of Al-Anon Family Groups.

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. I have the honor and privilege of welcoming all of you to the 63rd World Service Conference. The 2023 Conference theme, "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together" will be our guide as we conduct the business of this year's Conference.

To get some inspiration when I wrote this welcome, I read some of the *Conference Summaries* from past World Service Conferences. Reading the *Summaries* from the first several Conferences gave me a sense of how far we have come. At the first Conference in 1961, in attendance were the 12 Delegates on Panel One, eight members of the Board of Directors, 17 members of the Advisory Board, seven representatives from Areas that were not part of Panel One, and a few observers. At this Conference we have 68 Delegates from Panels 61, 62, and 63; 14 members of the Board of Trustees; three At Large members of the Executive Committee; eight World Service Office Staff members; the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM); the *Conference Summary* and audio recorders; an International Representative; and the interpreters.

Reading the early *Conference Summaries* also gave me a sense of how things have not changed that much. At the 1961 World Service Conference, the Conference members heard reports from various committees such as the Literature Committee, the Policy Committee, the Public Information Committee, the Budget Committee, and

a report on Alateen. Some of the other topics on the agenda were how to fund the next year's Conference, how to ensure an adequate and regular income for Headquarters, and how Delegates can make reports and serve their Areas. Some of those agenda items and reports will be on the agenda at this Conference.

As we begin this 63rd World Service Conference, let's invite our collective Higher Power to be present with us so we can make the best decisions possible to ensure the future of Al-Anon Family Groups. It is my hope that as we "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together," we will leave this Conference with a sense that we are part of a worldwide organization and that we are all working towards the same purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics.

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

TWELVE TRADITIONS

- 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
- 2 For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
- 3 The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
- 4 Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
- 5 Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
- 6 Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 7 Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8 Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9 Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10 The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

© Al-Anon Family Groups

Introductions (Roll Call)

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

As a way of introducing Conference members to each other, the Chairperson asked each attendee to stand and introduce themselves by stating their name, their service role or position, and, if they wished, the name of their home group. This introduction served as the official roll call for the 2023 WSC.



Concept Six and the Conference Agenda

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Leadership Team Chairperson
 Ann Marie Z., Trustee, Conference Leadership Team Co-Chairperson
 Suzanne M., Associate Director - Conference
 Diane G., Panel 62, Alberta/Northwest Territories

This Task Force was formed after the Conference Leadership Team reviewed the evaluations from the 2022 World Service Conference members.

The Conference Leadership Team recognized the need to provide additional clarity to all Conference members regarding several aspects of the Conference that would assist Conference members to prepare for, understand, and effectively participate in the Conference.

The Task Force's charge included:

- Highlighting the principles of Concept Six.
- Discussing who attends Conference and in what role.
- Discussing a typical Conference schedule.
- Discussing the duty of the Board: "Trustees have authority under law to manage the business of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc."
- Considering the importance of every Conference member reading Conference material and preparing for discussions, coming to the Conference prepared and informed.
- Clarifying that every WSC (World Service Conference) member has equal but different roles and responsibilities.

Members of the Task Force shared in presenting the session.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Traditional authority and
 Legal responsibility
 Allow for efficiency.

Brief history of the Twelve Concepts of Service

"... the Concepts are the Twelve Steps and Traditions expanded to the business level. They give us the shared experience of those who came before us, who had learned how to practice Al-Anon principles in business affairs . . ." (*The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?* [P-57], page 3.)

The eighth WSC unanimously approved the project to adapt A.A.'s Twelve Concepts of Service for Al-Anon in 1968. Lois said, "These Concepts would help guide the interrelationship of all service functions to assure that they would be as democratic and efficient

as possible” (*Many Voices, One Journey*, [B-31], page 140). She also said that “Al-Anon’s future may depend on how clearly and firmly these Concepts outline the fundamentals on which our service structure is based” (*Many Voices, One Journey* [B-31], page 148). After multiple reviews and suggestions by the Delegates over two years, the Concepts were unanimously approved at the tenth WSC in April 1970.

“The distinction between legal responsibility and traditional authority is embedded in the Twelve Concepts of Service, which now define the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and of the World Service Conference.” (*Many Voices, One Journey* [B-31], page 77)

The focus of this presentation is **Concept Six: The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees**. To understand this Concept, it helps to see the pathway that leads us here. In Concept One, groups have ultimate responsibility and authority, and in Concept Two, we learn they have delegated their administrative and operational authority to the Conference. Then, in Concept Six, we learn that the Conference delegates specific authority to the Trustees.

Acknowledging the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees means that the Conference depends on the Trustees to guide and oversee the business of our fellowship throughout the year. “The members of the World Service Conference (WSC), . . . cannot in a one-week annual meeting begin to become involved in the administrative duties of the World Service Office (WSO) or services worldwide” (*Paths to Recovery* [B-24], page 284). Our primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics can be fulfilled due to this method of delegation and assignment of responsibility.

Because the Conference entrusts the administrative authority to the corporate body of the Trustees, they are expected to spearhead the formulation of Al-Anon policy and are accountable for its proper execution and making sure the fellowship doesn’t get derailed (*The Concepts—Al-Anon’s Best-Kept Secret?* [P-57], page 14-15). In Concept Six, the Trustees are made active guardians of our Twelve Traditions and are charged with upholding and applying these principles.

Key principles in Concept Six:

From 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v2

Trust – page 71 – “Members need access to all the information about the issue, they need clarity in what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they trust each other’s motives and capabilities.”

Authority – page 188 – “If all authority were to be assigned to one group and virtually all responsibility to another, we would seriously handicap efficiency of operation and real harmony.”

Freedom – page 193 – “For several important reasons, the Trustees must have freedom to act. Next to the WSC, Al-Anon’s Board of Trustees should be our most influential group of world servants. We have to consider carefully the kind and degree of authority, responsibility, leadership, and legal status the Trustees must possess in order to function effectively in the years to come.”

Equality – page 220 – Warranty Two: That no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members. “It really means that we in Al-Anon do not want or need absolute human authority in any form.”

Participation – page 216 – “We are protected from too much authority by participation, by the Right of Appeal, and by our WSC Charter.”

Respect – page 207 – “We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a harmonious working balance.”

Goodwill – page 126 – “The concept of goodwill is simply maintaining our positive relationships and reputation as we work with others.”

From How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (B-22, B-32)

Listening – page 97 – “Al-Anon’s slogan, ‘Listen and Learn,’ reminds us that if we have the self-discipline to be quiet and pay attention to others’ words, we can learn a tremendous amount about ourselves and our world.”

From One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6)

Open-Mindedness – page 97 – “For my own good I will go to Al-Anon meetings with an open mind, ready to receive and accept new ideas.”

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

The business and the fellowship in unity
Provide strength and wisdom harmoniously
Balancing purpose and integrity
Effectively, fairly, and efficiently.



Concept Six—Key Principles:

- Trust
- Authority
- Freedom
- Equality
- Participation
- Respect
- Goodwill
- Listening
- Open-mindedness

Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship	Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization
	<p>The purpose of this presentation is to give you some information about our history and how Al-Anon Family Groups and the World Service Office came to be. We will explain the relationship and differences of Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization. Additionally, when we finish our visit with you, we hope you will have gained a better understanding of how you, as a member of an Al-Anon Family Group, are connected to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and its world services.</p>
<p>BACKGROUND: The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous. In A.A.'s pioneering days from 1935 to 1941, close relatives of recovering alcoholics realized that to solve their personal problems, they needed to apply the same principles that helped alcoholics with their recovery.</p> <p>By 1948, a number of family groups had applied to the A.A. General Service Office for listing in the A.A. Directory, and scores of relatives of alcoholics asked them for help. But as we know, A.A. was designed to aid alcoholics only.</p> <p>In 1951, two wives, Lois W. and Anne B., formed a Clearing House Committee to get in touch with these 87 inquirers and to coordinate, unify, and serve them; 56 groups responded. As a result of questionnaires, the name Al-Anon Family Groups was chosen. The name is simply a derivative of the first syllables of "Alcoholics Anonymous."</p>	
	<p>BACKGROUND: Soon, the movement came to public attention. New groups and individuals in the US and abroad wrote to the Clearing House about their problems. By 1954, a small paid Staff became necessary.</p> <p>In 1954, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., incorporated and was granted tax-exempt status in 1956 as a non-profit organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code.</p> <p>Tax-exempt status was similarly granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. in 1999 under paragraph 149(1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.</p> <p>We file tax returns annually in both countries, and those returns are available for your information on our website.</p> <p>As with any corporation, a Board of Trustees was appointed. Originally, the Board was made up of close friends of Lois who resided in the New York City area.</p> <p>NOTES: The WSO: Files a 990 annually. Has about 47 employees, including the Executive Director. Has a Board of Trustees with 18 Volunteer members plus the Executive Director, who is a sustaining member and serves as the Board Secretary. The members of the BOT are the directors of the corporation.</p>
<p>There is a distinction between Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship,</p>	
	<p>and me, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization.</p> <p>So, with this background of how we came to be, we will explain further.</p>

Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship	Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization
I am the traditional arm.	
	I am the legal arm.
While I continued to meet in rooms around the world, it was not until 1961 that Al-Anon's largest group conscience was created—the World Service Conference. And in 1970, the World Service Conference approved the Twelve Concepts of Service, which outline the spiritual principles that bind together Al-Anon the fellowship...	
	and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters., Inc. Being the legal arm, I am responsible for protecting our logo, our copyright, and our name.
Since I am the traditional entity, I provide for meetings and a service structure that will ensure that our meetings have what they need to support our members.	
	I conduct the business of Al-Anon.
I provide the support for individual members and their recovery on a daily basis.	
	My governance document is the Bylaws for the Corporation. The Bylaws of the Corporation appear periodically in the <i>World Service Conference Summaries</i> (P-46). The Corporation Bylaws are amendable only by the Board of Trustees.
My governance document is the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter. It can be found in the <i>Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual</i> (P-24/27). The Charter can only be amended by the World Service Conference.	
	Even though legal requirements put responsibility for the organization of Al-Anon in the hands of the Board of Trustees, Lois and the pioneers always sought to share leadership with the fellowship of Al-Anon and to seek as broad a group conscience as possible. Therefore, I acknowledge the World Service Conference as the ultimate traditional authority. I recognize that, through the authority of the Conference Charter, 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.
While I am the Traditional and informal entity for the fellowship, I recognize that the Board of Trustees is the chief service arm of the Conference and has the legal authority to serve the fellowship and to act as it deems appropriate.	
	I serve and preserve the organization. Protection of our name, logo and copyright is my responsibility. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly and is responsible for the oversight of the organization. We have delegated full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to an Executive Committee that meets monthly. This is noted in Concept Eight. The Board of Trustees delegates to the ECRPM the oversight and management of the real property owned by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship	Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization
<p>Al-Anon Family Groups meet every day, in many places all over the world. Anyone can start a group.</p> <p>Concept One places the ultimate responsibility for world services in the hands of the Al-Anon groups. This is why it is important for a group to have a Group Representative (GR). GRs are linked by group conscience to the World Service Conference.</p> <p>We, the Al-Anon groups, have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to the World Service Conference and its service arms. I further know that the right of decision that we give to our elected representatives makes effective leadership possible. For something that is supposed to be unorganized, we sure have some organization.</p>	
	<p>The roles, responsibilities, and relationship between the Conference and the Board are explained in the Conference Charter and in Concepts Six and Seven. These spiritual principles are based on our other two Legacies, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions.</p> <p>In accordance with Concept Ten, I ensure that double-headed management is avoided through carefully defined authority and service responsibility.</p>
<p>I get it. When there is business to be conducted, other service entities can elect to be organized too. But it is the groups that do not organize. I do not exist in the eyes of the law.</p>	
	<p>I do exist in the law and am legally responsible for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.</p>

Who Attends Conference and in What Role?

In the descriptive text of Concept Four, we find our suggested guide as to who participates and why. The Delegates, who meet only once a year, are concerned primarily about policies, plans, and actions to take effect in the future. The WSO Staff and Volunteers, because of their daily work and regularly scheduled meetings, are the individuals who have more first-hand information on aspects of Al-Anon business related to the present. These groups of individuals bring different knowledge and perspectives on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. Thus, the Conference has access to spiritual guidance found through the collective wisdom of all Conference participants.

These individuals, despite their different service roles, share two common traits while at Conference:

1. They listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
2. They vote on these matters.



Delegates:

Besides listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, Delegates bring the viewpoint of their Areas to matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. 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 the Area with world Al-Anon. They are the trusted servants of Al-Anon as a whole. Read more about the Delegates in Concepts Two and Three as well as in the “World Service Handbook.”

World Service Delegates are **representatives** of their Areas and worldwide Al-Anon and not just **representatives for** their Areas.

WSO Volunteers, our Board of Trustees:

Besides listening, participating, 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, protects Al-Anon principles from distortion and dilution, and acts as 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. Read more about the Board of Trustees in Concept Seven.

WSO Volunteers, our Executive Committee:

Members of the Executive Committee also listen, participate, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They are entrusted with oversight of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This authority is granted to the Executive Committee by the Board of Trustees in order that the Executive Committee can provide oversight on daily affairs at the World Service Office. Delegates might know the Executive Committee best as the body that reviews presentations prior to Conference, but that is just a small part of the Committee’s responsibilities delegated to them by the Board of Trustees. Read more about the Executive Committee in Concept Eight.

Voting WSO Staff Members, our Service Workers:

Voting WSO Staff members also listen, participate, 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. They serve the fellowship in a variety of ways, all of which members have seen listed on the back of the Appeal letters. Voting WSO Staff not only support the world leadership of the Trustees, but they share world leadership with the Trustees. Read more about the Voting WSO Staff in Concept Eleven.

The Conference is also attended by other individuals without voice or vote who have distinct roles and assist the overall efficient running of the Conference. Some of these non-Conference members have knowledge and information that will assist the Conference with discussions and decisions. Examples of these are the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) and our WSO Director of Finance & Operations. As necessary, these people can be allowed by Conference motion to have a voice limited to the experience/information of their role. Others attend with designated tasks like interpreters and Conference recorders without voice or vote.

If there is international representation at the Conference, these members do have a voice but no vote.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Proper preparation is somewhat heady
But keeps Conference on the steady
It helps serve us all when everyone is ready.

Importance of being prepared for Conference

Attending Conference requires thoughtful preparation. By informing ourselves of the topics and issues in advance of Conference, we experience a sense of connection. We demonstrate respect for others, and we are able to better listen and learn. We position ourselves to participate in body, mind, and spirit. We're ready to serve emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally.

Physical preparation may include organizing a notebook, a binder, or an electronic folder system according to one's personal preference. It may also include a plan to take a walk, eat a snack, have a little quiet time to center oneself, or attend an optional Al-Anon meeting.

Preparing a flexible filing system that is organized and based on the Conference agenda allows some flexibility to shift easily from one topic to another. Flexibility is especially useful in the event that the agenda is changed during Conference. Confidence is improved when we know where things are and how to access information.

Emotional balance is available to us when we've read the materials sent to us before and during Conference. A sense of belonging gives us comfort and serenity as we begin Conference as well as throughout the event. We are better able to follow discussions. We have a feeling of unity. When we've taken time to reflect on the materials, we are comfortable when others raise differing opinions from our own. We accept new information with open minds and hearts. We feel connected; we are practicing respect.

Spiritual insights come to many people in times of quiet contemplation, prayer, or meditation. Knowing the topics and becoming informed on the issues being addressed allows us time to access the quiet voice within. Perhaps we'll discover a thought, a feeling, or an idea that sheds light on a part of us we hadn't initially seen. As we change, so does our perception of the topics, issues,

people, and processes. Spiritual preparation affords us the personal integrity to remain open, trust others, and perhaps let go of an old way of thinking.

When participants at Conference are prepared, many are able to entertain thoughtful reflections on the issues or perhaps ask relevant questions phrased in harmony with our Conference procedures. Many find it easier to support the group conscience when we are prepared even if our own point of view wasn't adopted. Preparation leads us to think well of ourselves, and we experience the equality of all Conference members.

Typical Conference Agenda & Planning

To achieve the tasks that are presented at Conference, an agenda is needed to keep us all on track. From the *Service Manual* (P-24/27), page 164: "The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon."

Many of us have participated in the Area World Service Committee in our Area. We have experienced the agenda planning with AWSC. Authority delegated by the GRs gives the Area Chairperson the authority to build the Assembly Agenda. There may also be items carried forward from a previous meeting to be included. The Agenda is a very fluid document that changes as issues arise.

The Conference Agenda is very similar to that of your Assembly Agenda. Some of the planning for the next Agenda begins shortly after the Conference ends. There are, of course, specific items that will appear on the agenda each Conference. These fulfill the legal requirements of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. Examples: Annual Report, Audit, and Finance Committee Report.

The delegation from the Board of Trustees to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) is to prepare and organize the WSC Agenda. The CLT consists of:

- Conference Chair
- Conference Co-Chair
- Associate Director – Conference
- Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
- Executive Director
- Director of Programs
- Training & Project Specialist (ex-officio, non-voting)

The Conference Leadership Team meets quarterly throughout the year, as well as when they deem necessary.

"The Conference agenda is derived from input through the Delegates, Conference Leadership Team (CLT), and the Board of Trustees. In addition, suggestions made to the CLT by any Conference member and the membership-at-large are carefully considered." International structures are also included as contributing parties to the agenda.

Some of these issues that will affect Al-Anon as a whole are brought forward to be considered on the agenda.

The *Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2, page 168, lists examples of items that could be on the agenda.

The Board of Trustees reviews the agenda items in January as presented by the CLT. Adjustments continue throughout February to April as necessary, and only with the approval of the Board of Trustees. Even when the agenda is shared with the Conference participants, changes can still occur.

Not everything brought forward can be dealt with in the limited days of the Conference. The decisions about what is added and what is not are difficult. The Conference Leadership Team has the responsibility to prepare a World Service Conference agenda that facilitates the active voice and effective group conscience of our fellowship.

There is time set aside for Conference members to interact and get to know one another. This is an opportunity to observe and understand how a diverse number of members can meet to express the group conscience of the AI-Anon fellowship.

In Summary

The spiritual principles of our Legacies, especially those contained in our Concepts, guide us as we gather at this World Service Conference. As we move forward with this year's WSC agenda, we hope we have refreshed for you the background, guiding principles, and individual responsibilities we have each been delegated with.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Concept Six is the practice of democracy
Concept Six offers manageability
Concept Six allows for volunteers to oversee
Concept Six preserves our integrity
To spread help and hope to every family.

Conference members had the following questions:

- I keep hearing the word “volunteers” when things are shared about service. Who are these volunteers? Are they Trustees, and are these terms really interchangeable?

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee members are all volunteers, with a capital V.

- Thanks for this presentation, especially the list of contributing folks to the Conference agenda. Other than Chosen Agenda items, what other ways do active Delegates have to contribute to the actual agenda of the Conference they are attending?

The CLT accepts ideas throughout the year from the Delegates and takes the ideas/suggestions into consideration. For example, this presentation came from the evaluations from last year. We do an evaluation every year, which is another way for the Delegates to submit a suggestion.

Conference Etiquette, Procedures, and Voting

Conference Leadership Team

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Chairperson
Ann Marie Z., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson
Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Vali F., Executive Director
Sarah S., Director of Programs
Suzanne M., Associate Director - Conference

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The Conference Chairperson started the session by stating that the Conference procedures outlined in the Conference Procedures document are the framework by which the *Conference* functions and may differ from the procedures used in the Areas.

Before reviewing the Conference Procedures document, members were asked to review the Conference Etiquette slides which had been posted on AFG Connects. Conference members participated in an activity to help review the etiquette principles. Here are three of those items:

No clapping, cheering, or booing when opinions are shared. *This demonstrates mutual respect and creates an atmosphere of harmony.*



- **No miscellaneous distractions.** *This shows discipline and respect for the service commitments of those who have prepared for Conference.*
- **Practice spiritual principles and presume goodwill.** *By practicing humility, harmony, and unity, we can reach our ideals.*

Following the Etiquette activity, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) reviewed the five key components of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM):

- 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 it exists, has been heard, and those with a minority opinion, as with all others, choose to vote according to 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.

Seating Motion

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was approval of a motion brought by the Conference Leadership Team (CLT). It dealt with seating certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference (e.g., a Representative from another structure and Staff members who attended).

The following persons were seated.

With voice, but no vote:

Niketa Williams

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

Britt M.

International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon Member

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

Liz D.

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to facilitating the DEI Workshop on Friday, April 21, 2023, but no vote:

Debby Irving

Conference Consultant, Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff members be seated to observe at the 2023 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Friday, April 21, 2023

Camille Peters

Associate Director – Customer Service & Shipping, Non-Al-Anon Member

Silvia K.

Programs Assistant, Al-Anon Member

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Rory Mulford

Senior Data Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member

Beth Rodriguez

Digital Communications Coordinator, Non-Al-Anon Member

Colette Norman

Translation Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Christa A.

Senior Group Services Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Tracey S.

Group Services Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Anne P.

International & Legal Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Valérie Stump

AFG Records Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #1, page 61)

Approvals

2022 Auditor's Report

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

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The Director of Finance & Operations began by introducing herself to the new Conference members and commenting, "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. 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 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.

What Is an Audit?

We have an independent organization come to our location. FORVIS, 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, 2022. 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.

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 nine months of operating expenses. The Board objective is to have 12 months of operating reserves.

Functional Expenses

These are activities that fulfill the purpose of our mission. These expenses support Program Services such as Group Services, Group Records, Community Awareness, Outreach to Professionals, Conference, International Services, and Digital Strategies.

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.

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 several new footnotes in 2022 related to the new lease standard.

Summary

Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- It sounds like we have four different portfolios that you work with. Why four?

Actually, it was three at the end of 2022. Currently, we only have two investment firms. We are comfortable with the diversity of having two so that everything is not all in one firm.

- Why did we hire a new investment manager in 2022?

We had been working with a firm in New York, and we decided to bring on a third firm in Virginia Beach. The change had nothing to do with the investment firm's capabilities.

- When reporting the investment losses under revenue, I understand it has to be reported, and we see the revenue from all literature and contributions, but the losses from the investment may make members uneasy. It is such a big item, and so much less than the last couple of years. I do not have so much of a concern about the investments, but why are we reporting it where we do?

It is necessary for full transparency, and it is required to be entered where it is. It cannot be buried. The reality is, the loss happened, just like every other organization has had a loss. The year before, we had great investments, but 2022 was less profitable.

- I was wondering about the change in accounting principles for leases that came in 2016. Why did we wait until 2022 to add these to our audit?

Due to the pandemic, the implementation was delayed for a couple of years. It was not to our advantage to do this any sooner.

- Do we know the balance of the Reserve Fund?

As of December 31, 2022, it was \$6,314,781.

- Did we experience the net gain from 2021 to 2022? Did we actually lose money or just lose some of the gains?

We lost some of the gains but not all of them.

A motion to approve the 2022 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #2 on page 61.

2023 FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
<u>Revenues</u>		
Literature Sales	3,504,970	2,725,035
Less cost of goods sold	(736,040)	(625,189)
Contributions	2,532,900	3,337,919
Magazine Sales	235,000	247,368
Subscription Income	48,000	48,174
Investment Income	50,000	(89,844)
Fund Transfers	225,600	-
Other - currency adjustment		(83,899)
Total cash revenue	\$ 5,860,430	\$ 5,559,564
Noncash contributions		\$ 125,939
Total Revenue	\$ 5,860,430	\$ 5,685,503
<u>Expenses</u>		
Salaries	3,297,810	3,224,387
Benefits	514,320	469,362
Payroll Taxes	248,400	259,062
Occupancy	285,690	258,624
Packing & Shipping	(45,000)	(57,680)
Postage	173,430	158,620
Telephone	53,800	53,212
Stationary & Supplies	39,620	40,611
Technology	322,630	288,648
HR/Training/Consulting	53,060	48,859
Repairs	19,080	14,171
Travel & Meetings	168,900	155,993
Conference Costs	128,630	113,002
Professional fees	93,000	85,387
Printing	132,420	124,003
Canadian Office	2,030	1,897
General services meeting	-	47,395
PSA Campaign	91,980	87,810
Bank and Credit Card fees	111,000	108,610
Miscellaneous	14,630	16,934
Retiree Health benefits	65,000	19,427
Depreciation	90,000	85,712
Total cash expenses	\$ 5,860,430	\$ 5,604,046
Noncash expenses		\$ 125,939
Total Expenses	\$ 5,860,430	\$ 5,729,985
Net increase (decrease) from Operations	\$ -	\$ (44,482)

2023 Finance Committee Report

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

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

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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. Since the Policy Chairperson also attends the Executive Committee meetings, this helps save money on travel expenses.

The Finance Committee's statement of purpose reads, "The primary function of this Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program. This Committee conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditures. It scrutinizes the annual budgets of estimated income and expenses submitted by the WSO and makes revisions when necessary. The Committee also sets literature pricing in a way that adequately supports the needs of the service structure." This is read at every Finance Committee meeting along with our Mission, Vision, and Goal Statements from our Strategic Plan.

The Treasurer went on to share, "The Director of Finance & Operations has provided the 2022 Audit Report, which included our 2022 financial statements. The fellowship once again stepped up after a Special Appeal was distributed. For three years in a row now, contributions have exceeded literature sales! With consistent contributions, the fellowship funds the WSO's ability to continue to provide worldwide services, so that 'when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help,' Al-Anon will be there. On behalf of the Finance Committee, please thank the fellowship for their continued, consistent contributions! May they continue without the need to send a Special Appeal!"

"So, now let's look at the budget process. This past fall, departments were asked to develop their budget based on what has changed. This is less time-consuming than a grassroots budget. Some considerations included that we are here in Virginia Beach for the WSC (which is cheaper than New York); we will not be holding an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM); there will be Zonal meetings; Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect will be held in California South; a new book will be released at the International Convention, which should increase literature sales; and we want to provide appropriate salaries for the WSO Staff. All of these factors went into creating the preliminary budget. This was presented to the Finance Committee at the December meeting."

She continued, "The Finance Committee reviewed and recommended the budget move forward to the Board of Trustees for approval at their January meeting. After the Board approved, it was sent to the Conference members to allow for questions prior to the Conference. We have answered your questions and are now ready to present to you, the WSC, for your review. If needed at midyear, the budget may be revised and presented again to the Finance Committee and the Board for approval."

The Treasurer concluded, "The Director of Finance & Operations will present the 2023 Budget for your consideration. Using this year's Conference theme, let's 'Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,' as we review our finances."

The purpose of this presentation is to provide you with an overview of our estimated revenues, expenses, and projects that the organization is working on this year. This will also aid in your report back to your Areas.

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 to the fellowship in all areas. We are presenting a budget that is balanced, which means our planned revenues match the planned expenses.

Budget templates were provided to all departments. Associate Directors were asked to submit a budget proposal for their department requesting resources for the next fiscal year. Those budget requests included financial information and details about how their department supports the overall Mission and Strategic Plan. The budget isn't just prepared by me; all of the stakeholders in the budget contribute. The Programs department has different areas that review their role in 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 as well as review and discussion. We formulate the budget internally, then present it to the Finance Committee for their review. We make any suggested changes prior to presenting it 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 in 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 of the budget, let's discuss different factors that impact our budget. There are often questions about what type of services the WSO provides to groups or how they are provided. In the WSC Structure report in 2022, there were currently 13,318 groups, but only 8,098 contributed, or 61 percent of the groups. That is an improvement over 2022, when 52 percent contributed. Still, 100 percent of those groups used some type of service from the WSO. 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* (P-24/27) 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 *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 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. Again, a great picture of this is in the Annual Report.

Back in 1952, the first Appeal 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 are still in the \$5 range. It now takes \$11.39 to pay for something that cost \$1 back in 1952.

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.

Efforts were made to ensure that we were only spending what we expect to bring in. We are anticipating strong literature sales from the new daily reader. Additionally, we have been making efforts to increase our inventory to keep our literature in stock. Those efforts have resulted in increased literature sales for the first quarter of 2023.



This slide shows the trend of revenues over the past years. We can see how heavily impacted we were by the pandemic. Investment income also plays a role in our overall revenues, but keep in mind we cannot spend the investment income in general operations. We experienced losses in 2022, which was mitigated by you all with the special appeal. Without the special appeal, the losses could have been larger. We are budgeting for increased revenues in 2023 through our literature sales.

So, with your 2023 operating budget in front of you, I am going to move through sections of the budget. The 2023 operating budget lists the 2023 preliminary budget, 2022 revised budget, and 2022 actual numbers. You can compare to 2022 for more information. We are projecting total estimated revenue of \$5,860,000, which is an increase over the prior year's budget and prior year actual.

Gross Literature sales for 2022 fell short only by \$4,400 when comparing budget to actual. Our goal for 2023 reflects continued improvements. We are projecting literature sales to be \$3,504,970. Historically, in the year of a new book release during a convention, we have experienced a large increase in literature revenue. We reviewed the data for the previous book releases to help in our estimate. In addition, the daily readers are our highest-selling books. Literature sales are still below historical levels. We are continuing to push and advertise for more literature to be purchased, as this is where we truly carry our message.

The 28 percent increase in literature sales is tied to the new book and continued improvements in literature sales. Literature sales to LDCs and AIS/LDCs combined increased 34 percent in 2022 over 2021. Overall literature sales have increased 14 percent.

Given that we had a special appeal in 2022, we are anticipating our contributions will go back to a normal level, such as that of 2021. We are still not budgeting for a return to pre-pandemic levels. Contributions are budgeted to reduce to \$2,532,900, which is consistent with 2021 contribution levels.

Even with the budgeted reduction in contributions, we should still continue to provide targeted messages to the fellowship about giving

and how much groups should contribute to reach the goal for the year. We did meet our contribution goal in 2021 and 2022. We plan to continue to provide “goals” for the groups. We are optimistic that we will reach our goal for 2023. Additionally, we want to improve the different methods of contributing through our Online Store and *Mobile App*.

Let's take a look at some of the projects for 2023. 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. We are continuing to make improvements to the *Mobile App*; it continues to increase its subscribers, so we want to make sure it is a pleasant experience. We continue to have meetings with international structures as we connect with structures and provide support. We are planning for the 2023 International Convention in Albuquerque, which is in two months.

As I mentioned, the expenses for 2023 are budgeted at \$5,860,430, which is consistent with planned revenues. The expenses are consistent with the 2022 budgeted amounts. As we review the expenses on the budget, we are not going to review each line item. Instead, I will cover some areas in operations that are impacting the budget.

Our 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.

Each year, we review salaries and ensure that they are in line with nonprofits our size and in Virginia Beach. We continue to work to be fully staffed during the year.

Building Occupancy relates to costs to maintain the building. There is a slight increase, as there are several projects planned this year. Expenses here also include depreciation on the building, insurance, and utilities. This budget is approved by the Executive Committee for Real Property Management. As a result of the increased mailings and postage costs, you will see an increase in postage as we work to send out updates. Stationery and supplies are slightly less than the prior year and reflect usage of envelopes and supplies.

Technology is increasing as we continue to improve our technology, the methods with which we communicate, and the safety of our networks. Additionally, we have budgeted for continued improvements to the *Mobile App*. HR/Training reflects compliance training for Staff. Lastly, professional fees are fees we pay the auditor and our legal counsel along with fees for professional interpretation. As we are working with the international community, this has become a great need.

Travel for Staff involves Zonal meetings, which occur every other year. The Associate Director – Community Relations will attend professional conferences to help connect with the professional community and ensure they have Al-Anon as a resource.

Volunteer travel will resume along with Road Trip! Virtual meetings are still taking place for Board and Committee meetings.

Let's look at the last section of expenses for the budget.

Printing costs—here we are talking about printing *The Forum*, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en accion*, and *Le lien* magazines along with the *Alateen Talk* newsletter. We have campaigns running over multiple years, and they will also run on digital TV, which plays the ads/TV you see in doctors' offices. Bank and credit card fees are a necessary business cost and fluctuate based on our revenues.

Miscellaneous costs are costs related to taxes and incidental office expenses. Our post-retirement health benefits, which have no

significant changes, are health benefit costs for our retirees. When comparing the budget to 2022 actuals it might appear that the cost jumped in 2023. However, we had some credits returned to us from a retiree's medical plan, which reduced the actual cost in 2022. The 2023 budget is reflective of normal costs for our retirees. Lastly, depreciation and amortization reflect changes related to the required depreciation of our assets and intangibles.

We are anticipating a balanced budget for 2023. We have estimated revenue to be \$5,860,430, which is higher than the 2022 actuals. We are budgeting expenses to be the same for a zero budget.

As I mentioned, this budget is presented as balanced. We are planning to achieve this through our literature sales for the new daily reader. We will continue to manage our expenses, always cutting costs where they are needed. The message is to continue with planned contributions throughout the year.

Conference members had the following questions and comments.

- In the past, we had a deficit budget, and now we have a balanced budget. I have been presenting the Strategic Plan and discussing what items were put on hold until the budget is balanced. We were told that things were on hold because we didn't want to get rid of any programs, but that these items on hold would get revisited. So, what Strategic Plan items will be coming back now that the budget is balanced?

The primary driver on services being placed on hold was resource constraints which were impacted by the deficit budget. There were some specific services we could not provide because we did not have the funds, and they are still on hold at this time. This is not from the financial perspective; the financial side is better, but we don't yet have the resources to resume all services.

- What was the percentage of revenue that came from the increase in the price of literature?

We initiated the increase in August of 2022. When we adjusted the July budget, we accounted for the increase, so it is hard to actually say. We also will not really be able to tell in 2023 because the new daily reader is going to increase literature sales, so the figure would be skewed.

- The line item "miscellaneous" seems rather high. Can you tell us what is included in that?

The miscellaneous line item is for incidentals, fees, taxes, filing tax returns, and various things around the office that don't have a specific line.

Following the presentation, a motion to approve the 2023 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #3, page 61.

2022 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 2022 and first three months of 2023.

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board

The Board of Trustees has a fiduciary duty to the organization, AFG, Inc., which includes the duties of care, loyalty, obedience, and foresight. As part of the duty of foresight, Board members have an obligation to be continuously looking toward the future. One way the Board executes the duty of foresight is through making long range plans and setting the organizational direction for AFG, Inc. 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.

I would like to share with you the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan.

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 accomplish the Goals. Each Strategic Objective is supported by Strategies, or "the how"—how we are going to accomplish the Strategic Objective.

At the January 2023 Board meeting, the Board approved the 2023 WSO Projects Landscape. Here are some of the projects and the corresponding Strategic Plan Goals that they support.

Supporting the Members Goal to connect and support friends and families of alcoholics:

- The 2023 Al-Anon International Convention
- Transforming Electronic Groups
- Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility
- Annual Updates for AFG Records

Supporting the Recovery and Service Tools Goal to develop and publish materials:

- Refine the ebook strategy to reflect international needs
- *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* refresh
- Collaborate to improve Conference Approved Literature globally

Supporting the Awareness Goal, which builds public and professional awareness:

- Developing the Community Relations Team
- Public Outreach Toolkit
- Second year of the Longitudinal Study

Supporting the Financial Sustainability Goal, which encourages member and organizational self-support:

- Improving the Online Store
- Yearly Audit

Supporting the Global Engagement Goal to meet the needs of the global landscape:

- Planning the World Service Conference
- 2024 IAGSM
- Regular Structure Meetings
- Zonal meetings
- Road Trip!

In the Strategic Planning process, the Board keeps in mind the desired balance between meeting our members' needs today and predicting the needs of the future. This is why the Board periodically reviews the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Objectives, and the projects. We want to make sure that AFG, Inc is moving in the right direction so that it will be available to continue our mission of helping the families and friends of alcoholics.

Lastly, I would like to clear up any confusion Delegates might have about which Trustee may be assigned to you. At the Annual Meeting, which takes place after the end of Conference, the Board will legally approve the Trustee nominees. After the approval, we will have new Trustees joining the Board. As a result, the Trustee Delegate assignments will change. The Trustee assigned to you will contact you within the first few weeks after Conference.

Vali F., Executive Director

I have the privilege of serving as Executive Director at the World Service Office (WSO).

The three months preceding the 2023 WSC have been extremely challenging times at the WSO. I described the most difficult as we paused yesterday for a moment of silence to acknowledge the enormous gap in participation Staff, Volunteers, and many Delegates are feeling at this year's Conference following the loss of our kindest of coworkers, the most helpful friend to all those serving Al-Anon Family Groups, our Meeting & Travel Planner, who was core to our WSC team, sharing genuine thoughtfulness with colleagues and volunteers alike, ensuring everyone's plans were settled, so we could arrive at Conference relaxed and ready to join this ongoing conversation.

During this same timeframe, our longtime, well-loved Archivist retired, and we experienced employee turnover and extended absences. All the while, Staff has been planning our ever improving, once-every-five year "quinquennial" 2023 Al-Anon International Convention. Quite frankly, it's been a lot, especially with our current staffing levels.

"Staff shortages" has been an Annual Report refrain for several years, and a Conference member recently asked when the WSO might become "fully staffed" again. The answer is complicated by both internal and external factors. Prior to the pandemic, the WSO employed 48 Staff members. Since that time, as you have heard in Committee reports, will hear in today's Annual Report Updates, and know from your own post-pandemic experience, much has changed:

- Members' expectations have grown. While the Directors' Team has responded by creating opportunities for employees to grow and evolve to serve these needs and our Mission, salaries have also increased.
- Staff turnover has continued, as is inevitable with any organization, in a job market where expectations are also high.

The net result is that our salary budget—which as you know is fully self-supported through member contributions and literature sales that remain relatively consistent year-over-year—now supports 46 positions rather than 48. As of this moment, we have three vacancies. I share this detail to help Conference members understand the context of any delayed responses members may experience and to request continued patience and consideration for Staff in their efforts.

Of course, there is much to celebrate during this timeframe. We have hired Tanya J., our new Associate Director – International. Jennifer U. has begun fulfilling her passion for the WSO Archives. We have reorganized to reduce Concept Ten double-headed management, creating a new Communications and Community Awareness Department led by Scot P. Several Staff promotions have also occurred to recognize Staff's ongoing hard work and commitment to the families and friends of alcoholics.

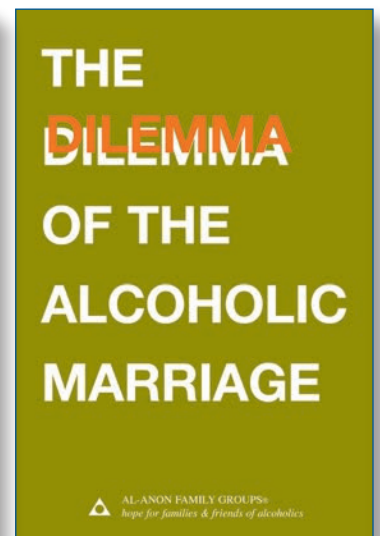
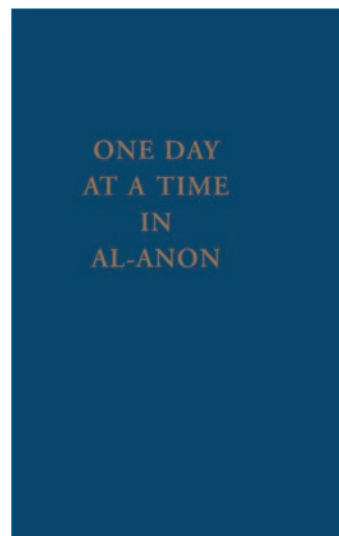
But wait, there's more. For that, I will turn it over to the WSO's amazing Conference Staff to share details.

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 16 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.



- The new forewords for *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) and *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) have been translated and published.
- The 2022 Strategic Plan was translated and posted on the website in Spanish and French.
- We are reviewing potential vendors to install a new voice over Internet phone system (VoIP), which will upgrade the current phone system and allow better functionality and flexibility. This will allow for remote work in the event the office needs to be closed for inclement weather.
- The team is searching for a Human Resource Generalist and is close to a hiring decision. We hired a new Maintenance Technician earlier this year.
- We continue to prepare for the 2023 International Convention. The design team is finalizing the new bookplate that will accompany the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34), when purchased at the Convention.
- As part of my role on the Audit Committee, we are reviewing audit firms and accepting RFPs as we are required to do every five years.

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; support members within the WSO Structure and trusted servants globally; and cultivate relationships with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Currently, I supervise the following teams: Conference, Group Services, International, Literature, and AFG Records. In the absence of an Associate Director – International, this year, I have supervised the Staff members on that team. I am ably supported by the Programs Assistant, who reports directly to me.

I have the privilege of offering the following updates on behalf of AFG Records:

- AFG Records is currently managing all Al-Anon electronic group registrations and changes, since the Area Group Records Coordinators have limited access to these groups through the Online Group Records application. Since the beginning of 2023, 176 Al-Anon electronic groups registered in geographic Areas. To date, 45 percent of the Areas (31 Areas) have agreed to support electronic groups.
- AFG Records led the development of a process to accommodate electronic group transfers between the geographic and non-geographic Areas. AFG Records has processed six requests since the forms were released.
- In reporting the annual count of international groups, we discovered we were erroneously counting meetings instead of groups. The correct number of groups is 9,126: 8,458 Al-Anon and 668 Alateen.

As the Director of Programs, I am a member of the Conference, Policy Committee, International Coordination Committee, the Conference Leadership Team, and currently serve as the Staff appointee to the Executive Committee. I also serve on all WSO Staff leadership teams.

In preparation for this five-minute update, I spent time pondering what I could report to you that wouldn't be included in the Associate Director's updates. Almost everything we participate in or facilitate is typically reported by an Associate Director for their team. However, in prayer and meditation, my Higher Power reminded me of a fundamental, yet deeply philosophical topic I invite the World Service Conference members to consider.

Before I share the topic, here is a bit of context. In my role, I am privileged to meet and have conversations with members all over the world. In these conversations, both domestic and international, I have observed many members who have minimal to no knowledge about the service structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship (links of service). For me, this prompts the question, "Is it a possibility that members are not participating in the service structure because they have never received the fundamental information that explains why the service structure is imperative to the longevity of Al-Anon Family Groups?" I remember, when I was new to Al-Anon service, my sponsor had a conversation with me about the importance of passing on clear and accurate information to those who would find the rooms after me. I remember her sharing these words: "As an Al-Anon member involved in Al-Anon service, you are charged with the responsibility of carrying our history for the many generations to come."

As we know, the first "A" is awareness. My hope today is to create awareness of the universal concern that members may not be passing on information from one generation from the next. My challenge to the World Service Conference members, when talking to members, is to listen with this awareness in mind. Do we have an opportunity to elevate the importance of "passing it on"?

The Programs Department appreciates the many invitations we are receiving to travel. Our Staff are willing and available to travel to your Area. It's always an honor and privilege to visit.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to carrying the message of hope to families and friends of alcoholics. I now turn it over to our amazing team of Programs Associate Directors, who ensure our members have the resources needed to carry the message of hope across the globe!

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness



As the Director of the newly created Communications & Community Awareness Department, I manage both the Digital Communications and Community Relations teams. Digital Communications manages 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. With the Literature team, we facilitate planning meetings for the annual communication calendar, which supports the email newsletters, recovery magazines, and some social media posts. The Community Relations Team is responsible for coordinating with professional communities.

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 the Directors' Team. I also serve on the core team of the International Convention and the Transforming Electronic Groups project.

Since the Department's formation is quite recent, my update focuses on Digital Communications team activity so far in 2023.

Development began to refresh the code on the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*. The *Mobile App* is now over two and a half years old, and some of the code is nearly four years old. This code refresh will not add any new features or change the way it looks; it will simply modernize the code, removing redundancies that could negatively impact the user experience. The *Mobile App* has over 145,000 registered members and 118 Al-Anon meetings taking place each week.

After a successful test of a new digital streaming PSA platform in 2022, we decided to continue with this online presence in 2023 to increase awareness. The new platform places our audio and video PSAs and static banners on various digital and streaming sites. To make the video PSA more impactful, we are modifying it to include a bar across the bottom, listing the toll-free meeting line and website address and persisting throughout the entire video, allowing even those who only see a portion of the video to have access to WSO contact information. We have established a strategy to adjust the monthly budget based on seasonality, with increased budgets between October and March and a baseline budget for the rest of the year.

Al-Anon.org had its millionth session on February 27, 2023, reaching this milestone eleven days earlier than in 2022 due to a very strong January, including a spike in traffic from a celebrity interview mentioning Al-Anon Family Groups.

Heather S., Associate Director – Community Relations

Most, if not all, my work at the World Service Office (WSO) is influenced by you and members of the Al-Anon fellowship. It is your reaching out to the clearinghouse through emails and phone calls that inspires our public outreach initiatives. Inquiring and reasoning things out with members helps WSO support how public outreach grows and moves forward.

During Conference, you will hear about how WSO has “all hands on deck” planning and implementing the 2023 International Convention (IC). In a way, IC has been the North Star guiding my community outreach efforts since I began my position less than two years ago.

Cooperating with professionals is one of the ways we continue to build public awareness of the Al-Anon program. The Community Relations team, in collaboration with the Digital Communications team, has implemented a plan to include professionals in IC. Taking a page from the 2018 International Convention, we revived the panel session of professionals and added a new element: a professional speaker at the Day of Connecting luncheon.

With input from the IC2023 Welcome Committee and other members, we received more than 30 recommendations for consideration. Having reviewed a variety of educators, recovery industry specialists, and community service workers—some friends of Al-Anon and other experts in their field—we are in the process of inviting some to participate. Rather than recording the panel session in its entirety, this year one-on-one camera interviews will be conducted with these professionals to publish on our website and social media pages. To remain relevant, previous panel questions are being refreshed by the Public Outreach Committee to include the

membership's perspective, and new questions are being developed based on the professional's area of expertise and knowledge of our program. Finally, we designed a complementary one-day program to welcome professionals and members of the media to observe IC.

Including professionals and the media in IC in these new and different ways is helping to shape how we build public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program moving forward. Building relationships takes time, and through this process we hope to sustain the links of service to creating professional connections that will inform and challenge members to carry the message. Again, thank you for doing your part to help make Al-Anon and Alateen available to those in need.

Sue P., Associate Director – Group Services

As the Associate Director – Group Services, I serve with two talented team members.

Our Senior Group Services Specialist oversees the Inmate Correspondence Service; supports Alateen, including the recertification process; leads the Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility and Alateen Talk “Reboot” projects; and coordinates service meetings held with Alateen Coordinators, AAPPs, and AMIAS supporting Alateen meetings in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*. This year, she is planning the Alateen program for the International Convention. Christa is also an ex-officio member of Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT), with voice but not vote.

Our Group Services Specialist, supports the AIS, AIS/LDC, and LDC Service communities where she successfully hosted the first informational session, which 64 trusted servants attended. She assists members with special needs and follows up on correspondence with members' service responsibilities, always in accordance with Al-Anon principles and policies. Tracey also supports the Transforming Electronic Groups and Alateen Group Feasibility projects and is an ex-officio member of SPIRiT, with voice but not vote.

I serve as primary contact for our Spanish-speaking members; lead the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements review process for certifying Areas and those updating their processes; and sit on the Staff Management Team and SPIRiT. I am also coordinating the Spanish International Convention, where we will be hosting the first-ever Spanish-language long-timers panel and an open Spanish Alateen meeting!

Some team highlights in 2023 include:

- The WSO Task Force to support the Global Electronic Area disbanded in March 2023, as the Officers were confident in their ability to create the necessary thought and task forces for their links of service. Despite the unexpected resignation of the Delegate, the Officers were able to carry on a principled process to ensure the GEA is represented through the election of an Alternate Delegate.
- Group Services supported our International Team during structure meetings centering around electronic groups, which has led us to a new appreciation of our worldwide fellowship. Nothing beats hearing the Serenity Prayer sung by a Swiss yodeler!

Our goal is to treat every interaction, member or not, with the warmth and understanding that characterizes the Al-Anon program. We are committed to fulfilling our primary responsibility of making sure that families and friends of alcoholics are able to find help in Al-Anon.



The Group Services team would like to thank you for the privilege of participating in this 63-year conversation.

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.

As with all of us at the WSO, I am involved, directly or indirectly, in some of the projects in the works that support the Board's Strategic Plan, one of which is the *Service Manual*. I am happy to report that after overcoming significant supply chain delays—due in large part to the return of tabs to this version—the 2022-2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* v2 is available in print in English, French, and Spanish!

Because I do have oversight of the full cyclical update process of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), I need to make amends for two very unfortunate typos in the English *Service Manual* that appear on page 13. The word “God” has been mistakenly italicized in Steps Three and Eleven. We have corrected the online version and have updated the master document for the next printing. The errors did not occur in the French or Spanish *Manuals*.

Another big project on the 2023 WSO Projects Landscape is our 2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation in Albuquerque this summer! Who is going? Who would like a little something to help remind you to share about this quinquennial opportunity with members in your Areas? We hope you enjoy the two gifts in your packet from the Albuquerque Visitors Bureau. There is still time to register for the Convention! Our first of three trailblazers recently accepted our invitation to speak at the Trailblazers Breakfast on Route 66!, and we finalized our plans for the WSC Homecoming. I am delighted with the venue! I hope you bought your ticket to join us for this very special experience at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.

Switching gears: some of the correspondence we receive is about redistricting. As stated in the “World Service Handbook” on page 141, District definitions are approved by the Area Assembly. Please share with the members in your Areas that redistricting is voted on by the Assembly—groups wishing to redistrict follow the process that the Area has in place.

Every December, we hear from Area Treasurers who have not seen the Equalized Expense information to submit their Area's payment. We use the email addresses that Areas provide to the WSO to correspond with members in service via AFG Connects. Every year, we post the Equalized Expense information to the Delegates and to the Area Treasurers. The Area Treasurers community provides easy access to the information and payment form.

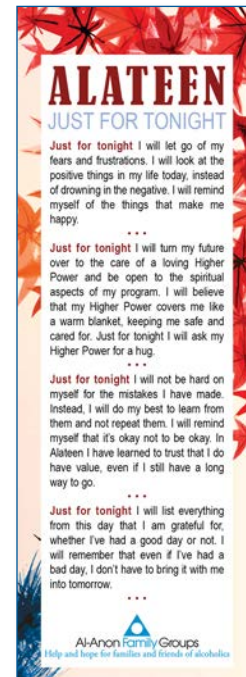
I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Al-Anon fellowship.

Tom C., Associate Director – Literature

As the Associate Director – Literature, I am the Staff Liaison to the Literature Committee, 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 Meeting. 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, 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:

Prior to the introduction of the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34), in English, French, and Spanish at this summer's International Convention, Literature Distribution Centers will be able to place advance orders via mail or fax so that by July 5, the book will be available from LDCs as well as from the Al-Anon Online Bookstore.



The text of the *Just for Tonight* Alateen bookmark has been approved and is currently undergoing translation and design, with hopes it will be ready later this year.

The Literature Committee has reviewed a first draft of a booklet of “gems” from *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4), which was given conceptual approval by the 2021 Conference. A second draft is currently in development.

In February, 34 Area Literature Coordinators throughout the Conference Structure participated in a web conferencing call, sharing how to best encourage the use of Conference Approved Literature. A similar call was held a week later for Area *Forum* Coordinators with 26 participants, many of whom were just starting in their position.

In March, the WSO again posted 20 quotations on the Announcements community of AFG Connects for use in 2024 service arm fundraising calendars.

Since December 2022, *The Forum* has gained 158 subscriptions. While subscription numbers vary somewhat from month to month, the year-over-year gain from March 2022 to March 2023 is 399 subscriptions, with the current total at 19,052—now nine percent below pre-pandemic levels, compared to 12 percent last year. We are making progress!

Guidelines for submitting photographs to *The Forum* were updated and posted to the Al-Anon website on March 20.

Tanya J., Associate Director – International

I am delighted to serve as your Associate Director – International. My primary responsibility, in concert with the international team, is to facilitate open lines of communication and provide support and guidance to our international trusted servants and service structures. There are currently 40 General Service Offices, 9 evolving structures, and local meeting contacts in over 70 other countries where Al-Anon has a presence. I joined the WSO on March 27, so I am still very much in the onboarding and orientation stages of my journey.

As Associate Director – International, I am a member of the Conference, the Policy Committee, and the International Coordination Committee. I also serve on SPIRiT, Staff Management Team, and the Strategic Leadership Team.

The international team includes the International and Legal Specialist, the Programs Project Specialist, the Programs Assistant; the Director of Programs, and me.

I have the privilege of offering the following updates on behalf of our team:

- To date in 2023, we have met with trusted servants from 31 international structures during what we call Regular Structure Meetings, including Mongolia, Iran, and Thailand for the first time!
- We have been meeting with each international structure up to four times a year; we're now shifting to meeting twice a year and scheduling up to six Town Hall Meetings on "hot topics" that provide an opportunity for trusted servants across our international community to share experience, strength, and hope with each other.
- Our team is exploring with the international structures in the Oceania region the idea of creating a fourth Zonal Meeting. The other Zonal Meetings represent RIASA (Ibero-America), which includes South America, Portugal & Spain; RECACSA (Central America/Caribbean); and Europe.
- The next International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), held every other year, will be in Virginia Beach in the fall of 2024.
- Our International and Legal Specialist is working with our legal counsel to register AFG, Inc. trademarks in Bulgaria, Cayman Islands, Latvia, and Mongolia. All trademarks are registered with AFG, Inc., and the WSO grants permission to the international structures to use the trademarks.
- The team has been encouraging some smaller countries without a GSO—such as the Dominican Republic, Greece, and Lithuania—to utilize AFG Connects to find meeting information and receive communication announcements from the WSO.
- Since the pandemic has eased, there has been a significant uptick in requests for translating and reprinting CAL, and the team now fields numerous requests weekly.

In my role, I am privileged and humbled to meet and have conversations with members of our worldwide fellowship. Thank you for carrying your messages of hope, and I look forward to getting to know and working alongside you "One Day at a Time."

Conference members had the following comments and questions:

- My Area does a lot of institutional service work, and our members are asking for the new daily reader in softcover. How many books would they need to purchase to support a softcover printing?

There is no specific number, something like that would have to go to the Finance Committee to determine the feasibility of producing the book in softcover. It is a bigger conversation as there is an actual process that would need to occur. Feel free to submit this question to the Finance Committee. We have not even sold the first copy yet so there are considerations we will need to evaluate.

- When will the Annual Report be available to the membership?
We will post it toward the end of June. After the Conference approves the Annual Report, we will translate it into French and Spanish before posting.
- I heard something regarding a book about gems. What is it?
It is called "Gems from Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage." It will be a booklet based on various gems taken from the book.
- How many people will be attending the International virtually?
We currently have 260 people registered. Spread the word!
- How would we, in Alaska, get the new book since our LDC has disbanded?

The book will be available through the online store at al-anon.org on July 3rd.

A motion to approve the 2022 Annual Report was made, seconded and carried. See Motion # 5, page 61. The complete report can be found on pages 65-112.

2023 Al-Anon International Convention Update

Vali F., Executive Director
Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

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The Executive Director began her report by asking, “Who’s ready to kick off our Friday with some Albuquerque 2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation dreaming?! Anyone here registered to attend in person?”



After a large show of hands, she continued, “That’s wonderful news! You can look forward to sharing the Convention with the 3,400 fellow members, including 160 Spanish-speaking members, who have already registered to attend in Albuquerque, along with still others yet to register. We know all will enjoy the spiritual and enthusiastic welcome that awaits us from the New Mexico/El Paso Welcome Committee volunteers.

“This year, the fun begins with a favorite activity ‘renewed’ from earlier Conventions, and continues with some new and exciting activities added to all the usual fun of fellowship and daytime sessions shared with fellow Al-Anon members.

“Back by popular demand, our friend Chris organized a small selection of local excursions to provide those interested in visiting local sites or enjoying the entire ‘big sky’ vista with fellow Al-Anon Convention attendees to do so. Each excursion must meet its minimum numbers in order to proceed, so be sure to invite your friends if you have your heart set on a certain adventure. So far, the hot air balloon excursion is the most popular amongst the fellowship!

“Each International Convention is the location for our WSC Homecoming event, and the team works hard to select a location that reflects the features of the local landscape or culture. So, we hope you’ll consider joining us on Wednesday, June 28th at the WSC Homecoming event being held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. This event celebrates member service to our worldwide fellowship through participation in the World Service Conference! It is open to past and current WSC members attending the Convention and offers an opportunity to experience the culture of the New Mexico indigenous people with a museum tour, a visit to the Indian Pueblo Store, and a Native Dance Group performance as we make new friends and reconnect with friends from our past.”

The Director of Communications & Community Awareness continued, “Yet another pre-Convention event takes place on Thursday, June 29th, and it’s our celebration of Al-Anon service through a reimagined Day of Connecting format. This year, everyone will start and end the day together in the beautiful Kiva Auditorium.

“Between these gatherings, members can choose to attend any of several service-related interactive presentations and workshops. Lunch will be served midday. Yes, that’s right, this year lunch for you and 1,400-plus of your fellow service junkies is included with the Day of Connecting ticket! And, while you’re enjoying dessert, we are excited to welcome a couple of Al-Anon friendly professionals who will share their experiences referring their clients to Al-Anon. How amazing does that sound!? Pretty fun? Well, that’s excellent news, because the Convention hasn’t even officially kicked off yet! And it certainly seems like everybody is in the mood for just that, because almost all those registered plan to attend the Thursday evening reunion of old and new friends! Which means ... that’s right! It’s time to party!”

He went on, “Attendees are invited to party the night away under the desert sky at the Party in the Plaza Thursday night. The Civic Plaza, built on two downtown blocks, will be the destination for music, food, and fun. A DJ will be spinning all the best dance music from over the decades to get you up out of your seats moving and grooving.

“If you prefer the cool of being inside, we’ll have some popular outdoor yard games set up to play in the Convention Hub with concession stands nearby. Or if you want something a little slower, we’ll also be playing four Al-Anon and A.A. films inside, complete with refreshments and popcorn for purchase.”

The Executive Director shared, “The 2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation will officially kick off Friday morning with the Language of Love Parade. This is the celebration of our worldwide fellowship as members represent their structure, country, or Area with colorful costumes and props. The Love Parade is always popular, so be on the lookout for the opening of registration in early May!

“After a brief break in the action to allow the audience to snap pictures and speakers to change costumes, we will open our first session of the Convention: the international-themed Big Meeting. What is different about this session? Well, we are expecting to be joined by members from all around the world who will be able to attend virtually!

“Our other two Big Meetings are scheduled to occur as usual—Saturday evening and Sunday morning—which will allow you some free time on Friday night to connect and enjoy fellowship because, after all, isn’t that why we attend?”

“Tickets for our reimagined Trailblazers Breakfast on Route 66! are available for participants who want to celebrate current and long-time pioneers in our program. Three speakers will share their journeys in English during this breakfast Saturday morning. A separate long-timers session is also scheduled for our Spanish-speaking attendees, including those attending virtually.”

The Director of Communications & Community Awareness continued, “For the first time ever, we are offering a virtual program which will stream English, Spanish, and French sessions with real-time system translation available in nine other languages. Virtual attendees will access the Convention program through the event app, either on a smart device or a computer browser. Through the marvels of technology, virtual attendees will experience the love and laughter being shared during all three Big Meetings and the experience, strength, and hope to be discovered in the six daytime sessions. The international community is gathering to host overnight

virtual Al-Anon meetings, providing for round-the-clock renewed recovery!

“In case that’s not enough, Al-Anon’s new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences* (B-34), will be available for sale for the first time ever at the International Convention for \$17 US. Just as our earlier daily readers reflected the times in which they were written, this new daily reader represents the personal experiences and the many voices of the Al-Anon fellowship today. A limited-edition book plate will accompany copies of the daily reader purchased onsite at the Convention.”

The Executive Director then continued, “Think after all that you might be excited for more? Thinking that five years might be too long to wait for such an energizing, renewing experience?!”

“Well, Vancouver, British Columbia will welcome A.A. members from around the world for the 2025 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation. This Convention will mark the 90th anniversary of the beginning of the A.A. fellowship’s founding. The International Convention will take place from July 3-6, 2025, at the Vancouver Convention Centre and BC Place Stadium.

“A.A. has again invited Al-Anon to host our own daytime program during their Convention. This Convention typically attracts as many Al-Anon members as does our own and includes Al-Anon sessions as well as attendance at the Big Meetings with 50,000 of your closest recovery friends! Our first site visit to Vancouver occurs in June. We cannot wait to begin providing you updates. In the meantime, be sure to mark your calendars!”

They finished by asking, “So, what do you think? Are you excited to join this gathering of new Al-Anon friends to gain new hope and renew your recovery?! We know we are.

”We are grateful to all of you for sharing this excitement in your home groups and with your Areas! A flyer was included in the Conference packet that can be distributed in groups and meetings. We’ll provide an electronic copy after the WSC.

As a reminder, the cutoff for the advanced price of \$200 is May 10! After that, registration goes up to \$225. We’ll see you in Albuquerque!”

International Coordination Committee

Kathi M., Trustee, ICC Chairperson
Diane B., Trustee, ICC Co-Chairperson
Debbie P., Trustee, IAGSM Delegate
Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board, IAGSM Delegate
Tanya J., Associate Director - International
Allison G., Programs Project Specialist
Sarah S., Director of Programs
Vali F., Executive Director
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As an advisory committee, the ICC makes recommendations to the Board about issues that affect Al-Anon worldwide, such as translation and reprint policies and visits to and communication with evolving structures. The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) is a major responsibility for us. We coordinate the IAGSM and participate 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 (WSC) Structure. We meet at least three times a year, but really much more than that. There are currently eight members of the ICC.

The ICC contains two IAGSM Delegates, one from the United States and one from Canada. The Committee contains a mix of Volunteers and Staff. Each has a voice, but we have different roles and responsibilities.

From time to time, the Board of Trustees authorizes Trustees and WSO Staff members to visit Al-Anon service arms around the world. The purpose of these visits is to encourage stability and support the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen. As a result of the pandemic, the WSO had less communication with international structures and did not have the opportunity to visit. Since ICC guidelines required its members to attend the IAGSM in London, the Board approved our visiting some nearby international structures. Combining these trips ensured we were prudent with our members’ contributions.

In order to maximize our investment in travel, we formed two teams: Team East and Team North. Both teams’ itineraries included structures in the beginning stages of forming an Al-Anon Information Service Office as well as fully established General Service Offices.

Team North - Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands

Norway

Our first meetings were with a small group of members: two prior Board members and five members from various Norwegian groups. One reason we visited Norway was because their General Service Office (GSO) has experienced many challenges the past several years. We listened as they shared about these challenges, including financial concerns and the lack of members willing to volunteer. We answered questions related to sponsorship, how to welcome newcomers to electronic meetings, getting members involved in service, ideas for public outreach, and workshops to help their members learn about the Twelve Concepts.

We asked the members present what sorts of services they would like to continue providing to Al-Anon members in Norway, since their GSO had disbanded. From the services they mentioned, such as providing literature, we suggested that forming an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) would fill the needs. They were grateful forming an AIS was an option for them, because they did not want to lose Al-Anon in Norway.

Later, we attended a meeting with Al-Anon members from across Norway. There were 25 people present in-person and 15 online. We shared our service experience and encouraged the use of Service Sponsors, a new concept to them. The discussion was introduced about Norway forming an AIS. As it unfolded, the members started to express hope and enthusiasm. They asked for volunteers who would be willing to help. Several members quickly raised their hands. It was inspiring. That meeting closed with the members being reenergized about Al-Anon in Norway and expressing their deep gratitude that members from the WSO had come to help.

Latvia

There were 30 or so Al-Anon members from across Latvia and two members from the Latvian A.A. Board of Trustees in attendance at our meeting. There was even a member from Belarus.

We started by answering questions sent to WSO prior to the meeting. These included how to form an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), requirements for starting Alateen, ideas for public outreach, cooperating with A.A., personal and service sponsorship, and the steps necessary to begin producing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in Latvia. The Latvian Al-Anon members have



no literature in their language and are just starting the process of translating CAL.

The COB was then asked to share her personal story. A non-member attending shared that the story had touched her in a way she had never experienced. The day then ended with the Serenity Prayer in Latvian, then Russian, then English.

Lithuani

We had three evening meetings in Vilnius. The first meeting was with members from each Al-Anon group in Lithuania. Someone from each group shared how many members attended the group and the group's struggles, and asked questions about CAL and sponsorship.

The next day we met with three core members. During this meeting we became aware of how much work Lithuanian Al-Anon members were doing supporting groups and translating CAL. On that basis, we encouraged them to become an AIS. We then answered their many questions on the process. That meeting reinforced why face-to-face meetings with our international structures are important. Language barriers on a web conference would have made it difficult for the Lithuanian members to convey all the details to us.

Our last gathering was an Al-Anon recovery meeting. The meeting was conducted in Lithuanian with interpretation. When the meeting ended, lots of hugs and much gratitude was shared over the gifts each attendee had received.

Netherlands

We traveled to the Netherlands because the Al-Anon service structure there had also been having challenges for several years. Our first meeting began with conversations about service, as the Netherlands is struggling to find members willing to serve at all levels. Discussion topics related to rotation of service, term limits for volunteers, accountability of members holding service positions, and handling disruptive members during business meetings.

We then answered some great questions regarding personal and service sponsorship and discussed the idea of a "country Sponsor"—reaching out to other countries for experience, strength, and hope. We shared on public outreach and the difference between attraction and promotion. We learned about challenges the Netherlands has with different translations of Al-Anon literature and differing opinions on which translation groups should use.

After we answered the remaining questions, several members expressed their gratitude for the visit and newfound enthusiasm for service. It was encouraging to see the many younger members participating in this meeting who have the skills and enthusiasm to help Al-Anon move forward in the Netherlands.

Team East - Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Switzerland

Turkey

Our first gathering was a recovery meeting. The meeting was held in Turkish with interpretation. The meeting showed us, once again, how much we are all the same no matter where we live and attend meetings.

We then met with the Turkey AIS members to answer prepared questions as well as questions from the floor. Some questions sounded similar to topics we hear at home: rotation of leadership, getting members involved in service, and how to keep newcomers coming back. We held an open forum on Tradition Six to answer with the audience had prepared to understand what it means to

cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous. This forum raised questions related to the unique culture in which Al-Anon Turkey operates. Through the audience questions and answers, we observed the great lengths these members are willing to go to for their recovery.

Bulgaria

We met in person with representatives from every single group in the country who each provided a report regarding their group. They were so excited to meet with us, some drove many hours to arrive in time to attend the 9:00 am meeting. The representatives had formed a service committee to organize the WSO visit and agenda. We answered their questions, which involved service, newcomers, and Alateen.

Later that day, we attended a Public Outreach program arranged by the service committee and shared our Al-Anon stories. The service committee invited over 100 professionals and media and we were excited to speak to members of both Al-Anon and A.A. as well as a local therapist.

Prior to arriving, the WSO was not aware of how well-organized the trusted servants of Bulgaria were, having created their own website, communication system, and connection with all the groups. Being in person, we were able to recognize that this informal service committee of trusted servants met all criteria for becoming an AIS, and the ICC members recommended they start the paperwork immediately. The excitement at this assessment was palpable.

Hungary

As with our other visits, we were grateful to begin with five-minute personal sharings and then hear how the members attending had found Al-Anon. We were surprised to learn how many had found Al-Anon through psychologist and rehab program recommendations. They shared that many treatment programs in Hungary make spouse attendance in Al-Anon mandatory.

Retaining members was a huge topic! We provided copies of *Groups at Work* (P-24) and talked about the importance of working the Steps, studying the Traditions, and ensuring the meeting format is welcoming and encouraging to newcomers. Other topics included addressing the challenge of trusted servants not fulfilling their responsibilities, using social media for public outreach, and starting Alateen. The Alateen discussion focused on legal responsibilities, whether the teens really wanted Alateen, and the electronic Alateen pilot meetings being facilitated by the WSO.

Over the two days, we met twice at the AIS. The second night, 20 members, including two newcomers, attended the meeting. It was lovely to recognize the opening and the Twelve Steps and Traditions as they were spoken in Hungarian.

Switzerland

First on our itinerary was the privilege of meeting for coffee with a pioneer of Al-Anon in Switzerland. She had met Lois at the A.A. Convention with Al-Anon Participation in 1970 and discussed German translation of CAL. This pioneer member and the other members who joined us discussed their experience obtaining Al-Anon literature in German. German-speaking Switzerland is one of several international structures reliant upon another structure for CAL, because historically the WSO was only able to offer translation rights to one country for each language.

Our next meeting was at the German-speaking Switzerland GSO. We sat together, member-to-member, to answer the questions they had posed such as seeking guidance on implementation and support of electronic groups, including how to practice the Seventh Tradition;

and addressing a member's concern about having the word, "God," in CAL. As we offered encouragement to the GSO members, we came to understand they were facing burnout due to limited participation in service. Over the course of the meeting, we noticed a significant transformation of spirit from desperation to hope.

France

A formal meeting with the Board of Trustees of the France GSO was scheduled, in part, to follow up on topics regarding international representation at the World Service Conference raised by France's Delegates to the 2018 and 2020 IAGSMs. The meeting included members of the GSO Board of Trustees, the incoming and outgoing IAGSM Delegates for France, ourselves, and a guest from Spain's GSO.

As we had anticipated, the complex nature of the France GSO trusted servants' questions required thoughtful dialogue and consideration. France's longevity and scope as a GSO, as well as their ongoing financial challenges, offered their trusted servants a different perspective on opportunities for mutual collaboration between all international service structures. Through our in-person discussions, we identified several potential opportunities for shared resources the ICC members agreed to pursue. As the meeting wrapped up, we were grateful once again for the opportunity to experience these face-to-face interactions, which had clearly overcome frustrations and misunderstandings.

Highlights of the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) is a biennial service meeting for structures outside of the World Service Conference Structure. Structures that can attend have a GSO or a national service structure registered with the WSO. The IAGSM is not a decision-making body.

The IAGSM is a service meeting providing an opportunity for service structures to come together and share experience to strengthen their structures. Since the IAGSM is an English-speaking meeting, the ICC strives to make certain Delegate presenters submit their presentations well in advance. This way all the Delegates can translate and discuss the topics with their service structures before attending the meeting, so they can be fully engaged.

Two members of the ICC serve as Delegates from our World Service Conference Structure—one for the US and one for Canada. They participate and engage in conversations and presentations that truly affect Al-Anon worldwide as a whole with other participants from around the globe.

The theme for the 2022 IAGSM held in London, England, was "Connecting Hearts and Minds around the World."

Throughout the IAGSM, Delegates shared both about how their autonomous GSOs or national service structures were managed and the direction and guidance they sought from the WSO. Delegates also shared their mutual passion for Al-Anon, its growth and vitality; and of the surprisingly similar struggles such as finding members willing to serve, how to grow Alateen, and adapting to challenges because of the pandemic.

Our journeys are not so different and our challenges are much the same all over the world. The IAGSM members' commitment to the Legacies was demonstrated despite language differences as they shared their difficulty in obtaining literature, outside influences threatening their ability to meet, and differences in culture. One constant was expressed throughout: the commitment to service and to carrying the message of Al-Anon and Alateen.

Zonal Meetings

Currently, Al-Anon worldwide has three Zonal meetings: the Ibero-American Zonal, or RIASA (Reunión Iberoamericana de Servicios de Al-Anon in Spanish); and the Central America and Caribbean Zonal, or RECACSA (Reunión Centroamericana y del Caribe de Servicios Generales de Al-Anon in Spanish), both of which are Spanish-speaking; and the European Zonal Meeting or EZM, which is English-speaking. Zonal meetings are somewhat similar to Regional Delegates' Meeting in the WSC Structure. The WSO attends Zonal Meetings as guests and is typically invited to present on a topic selected by the hosting committee.

An exciting Zonal Meeting development is that the Australia, India, Africa, and Asia-Pacific structures are exploring the possibility of forming an Oceania Zonal Meeting.

A hot topic during the 2021 Zonal Meetings was how to effectively communicate with the WSO, which is recognized as the senior service entity throughout the international communities because our structure is often the first to experience challenges or successes that international structures may later face or celebrate. This recognition also follows from the fact that the WSC is recognized in the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter as the senior conference for Al-Anon Family Groups.

Considering the Zonal Meeting feedback, the WSO reevaluated the Staff allocation to supporting the international communities and determined a team was needed to provide timely service. Today, the International Team is composed of five members who share full- or part-time leadership for executing its specific responsibilities: Director of Programs, Associate Director – International, Programs Project Specialist, International & Legal Specialist, and Program Assistant.

The team approach recognizes that supporting international structures involves a wide variety of knowledge, from legal to service experience and beyond, and that international structures' needs and questions are more far-reaching today than those of the past as these trusted servants wrestle with technology, electronic groups, new laws regarding minors and incorporation, and today's global economic conditions.

One tool the team has implemented to improve communication is hosting regularly scheduled web conference meetings with structures. The International Team currently meets with almost 50 structures on a semi-annual (or more frequent) rotation. For English, Spanish-, and French-speaking structures, the WSO offers simultaneous interpretation consistent with our responsibilities as a trilingual organization. The team has also conducted Regular Structure Meetings in other languages, including Bulgarian, Russian, Farsi, Portuguese, Flemish, Czech, Danish, German, Polish, Lithuanian, Slovakian, and many others. Members volunteer their time to translate, so the WSO and international structure trusted servants can communicate effectively.

Structures are asked to send their questions in advance. The Team often invites other Staff to participate to answer questions. Regular Structure Meetings are an officewide collaborative project.

International structures face many of the same challenges we experience here in the WSC Structure; however, we recognize we are privileged by our wealth of resources. An impactful takeaway from our international visits was that members across the globe love Al-Anon the way we do, and they are willing to go to any lengths to carry the message of hope despite having little to no literature or facing governmental restrictions, cultural biases, and challenging economic conditions.



An important tool we shared on our visits was the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), which, just like in our Areas, is an invaluable resource for structures and groups around the world. Within the *Service Manual*, the "Policy Digest" approved by the World Service Conference provides an operating framework for structures globally. This Policy unites all groups worldwide, so that no matter where a member attends a meeting, they experience Al-Anon. Each year, international structures are invited to attend the World Service Conference, which establishes Al-Anon Policy, with voice. Although they do not vote on Policy, they support it and make contributions to the WSO.

Following the ICC presentation, various WSC Delegates, acting as representatives of each IAGSM country, carried a flag and paraded to the front of the Conference room just as IAGSM Delegates had in London at the 2022 IAGSM. As each flag was posted, information about each country was shared with the Conference members.



Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

Heather S., Associate Director - Community Relations, Work Group Chairperson
 Diane B., Trustee
 Nancy S., Trustee

In October 2021, the Board transferred the responsibility for chairing this Work Group to Staff to be considerate of WSO Volunteer workload and to support year-over-year consistency. Consistency is particularly important now that Road Trip! is a permanent event!

The Work Group began the presentation with a skit explaining what Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect is and how the event benefits the fellowship.

Each year, members of the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee travel to a different Area to hold the Board Week. Then, at the end of the week, the Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event happens. This event, which is open to local and visiting members, explains what WSO Volunteers do. This year, 2023, marks the eighth Road Trip! The Board has been to Newfoundland, Alberta, Arkansas, Colorado, Texas, Washington, and Ohio! The 2023 Road Trip! event will be in California South on October 28, 2023. Registration opens in August. All members are welcome; however, there is limited space, so register early.

The 2023 WSC members were asked: "So, what Area would like to be the 2024 Road Trip! destination? Each event contains a full agenda about everything the Board, Executive Committee, and WSO do to support Al-Anon. And the Board members share a little bit about themselves as Al-Anon members. Come on! Who wants to party with the Board and Executive Committee?!"

Each WSC member was given an invitation to participate in the next Road Trip! Delegates were encouraged to ask their Area to put in a bid for 2024. The invitations include all that is needed to know about hosting a Road Trip! Event.

"Bids for 2024 are due by September 22, 2023. When deciding to submit a bid, please consider a city with an airport that supports the major airline carriers serving the US and Canada, and a full-service hotel with affordable airport transportation.

Also remember, the Road Trip! agenda and content are established by the Board and the hotel contract and registrations are managed by WSO Staff. One Area will be randomly selected to host Road Trip! from among all the qualified applications. Areas that have hosted Road Trip! consistently report renewed energy and commitment to service."

Conference members had the following questions:

- Where do you find the application?

In your packet there is a one-sided sheet, and it will also be posted on AFG Connects in the WSC Members and Area Chairs communities.

- My Area has submitted bids in the past, and I have begun to collect information from hotels in June, July, and August, recognizing it is for the following year. But Areas are not notified until February if they have been chosen—so, in November, December, and January, I keep getting requests from the hotels regarding the status of their bid. Can Areas be notified sooner that they are in the running? I have established relationships with these hotels through my work, and I am afraid it is affecting those relationships.

There is an RFP in the packet that should be submitted to hotels. As an Area, you are not responsible for staying in contact with those hotels; that responsibility comes back to the WSO. If you get questions from those hotels, ask them to call the WSO for further information.

- It says that in October 2023, the Board picks three sites. When I read this last year, I assumed we were one of the three potential sites. I did call the WSO and was told there was no information. Will the three finalist Areas actually hear back in October?

You did not misunderstand. The Board of Trustees pulls three Areas at the October meeting. At the January Board meeting, the Board picks one of the three. The decision is confirmed at the January Board meeting. Areas receive confirmation that we received the application, but Areas will not hear anything else unless their Area is chosen.

- Is there going to be a hybrid component to this event?

Not this year, but possibly next year or in the future.

- It feels like only the larger Areas get picked. Is that part of the criteria to get picked? Are we too small an Area to get picked?

The criteria are in the RFP. It includes the requirements for the meeting space, airport, and lodging. We also have a goal of having 100 members in attendance. As an Area, you would have to decide if you are big enough to host this event.

- Nashville is a great place and a good time, but this date would not work. Nashville does not have enough rooms to hold during this time of the year as many other things are happening. Could you please discuss how we could handle this?

You may have to plan for 2025; it will be held once again in October and this might give you enough time to find a location.

- This kind of sounds too good to be true; there is no cost to the Area? Let WSO do all the work, all we have to do is get 100 members to attend and you set the registration fee? I want to make sure I have this straight. We also have an October Assembly, could we hold this in conjunction with our Assembly? Otherwise, the Area would have to have events over two weekends.

The Board holds its October Board meeting at the venue during the week and holds the Road Trip on Saturday. All of this has been incorporated into the WSO's budget. It probably would not work to be held in conjunction with your Assembly, so yes, it probably would cover two weekends.

- We had a wonderful Road Trip in Ohio! It was wonderful to have the WSO plan it. But the Area does have some responsibility. The Area is responsible for getting people there! I do have a question about who pays for the hotel rooms of the participants?

The participants are responsible for all their own expenses.

- What are the Area responsibilities? What do we have to do?

Encourage the Area to spread the word about the event and engage your members. It is the Area's job to attract members to the event.

- I would just like to comment, surely Road Trip! could work on some virtual component, and that way, anyone, anywhere could attend Road Trip! Since there is a requirement for a certain sized airport, there may be many Areas that do not meet this requirement. It is not just the Global Electronic Area who might be missing out on this event.

We did change the requirement around the airport; please check that out the RFP. It now just needs to be serviced by the main airlines. This requirement has expanded since our first event.

Selection Of Trustees

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

John McG., Panel 61, California North

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Greetings, fellow members of Al-Anon's World Service Conference. As Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), it is an honor 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. More can be read about the CCT in Concept Eleven. Résumés for Trustee At-Large (TAL) and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office (WSO) by August 15 of each year. The CCT members review the résumés submitted, score each résumé based on skill sets, understanding of current needs of the Board, and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. The CCT members write comments related to our scoring decisions. When completed, the scoring sheets, and accompanying comments are sent to the CCT Chairperson. The CCT Chairperson reviews the comments and rankings submitted by each CCT member, anonymously compiles the material, and forwards the compilation of rankings and comments to the WSO in early October.

Concurrent with the CCT process, the Nominating Committee, composed of five Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board, and the Secretary of the Corporation (ex-officio, non-voting), meets during

the October Board meeting. Using the information submitted by the CCT and its knowledge about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for TAL and ECRPM. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates that the Nominating Committee has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided at the January Board meeting. In this way, the voice of the Delegates is heard throughout the entire process. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for 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 WSC.

Last August, the CCT members participated in a video conference meeting to review the process, scoring practices, paperwork, and timeline. Being a member of the CCT can feel isolating. Due to our principles of anonymity and the confidential nature of the information we receive, we are a Committee that does not communicate. We cannot bounce ideas around or ask one another's opinion on what is presented to us. For the most part, we work alone. Before scoring, we pray for guidance from our Higher Power trusting we will be given what we need to complete our work. I am reminded of the principle in the "Four Primary Ideas" which says, "In Al-Anon we find a Power greater than ourselves which can direct our lives into quiet, useful channels" (2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual [P-24/27]). While serving on the CCT the past two years, I felt my life being used in quiet, useful channels.

Last September, we received six TAL résumés and two résumés for ECRPM. The CCT was composed of nine members, with three from each of the three panels: 60, 61, and 62. This year the CCT processed all submitted résumés in September for TAL and ECRPM. I would like to thank the members of the CCT who were efficient in performing the work, allowing us to meet the required deadlines.

In the past, when Trustee affirmation voting came up, there was some confusion around the traditional voting process. Some felt that all current Delegates were to vet the applicants' résumés one more time. This is the delegated responsibility of the CCT and the Nominating Committee. By the time a name is put forward for nomination, you can rest assured the vetting process has been thorough.

I would like to thank the members of the CCT for all their work this year. You are "silent servants," ensuring that Al-Anon Family Groups has qualified candidates that can continue to serve and protect the longevity of our fellowship. Also, thank you to the Staff at the World Service Office for all your work in this process.

It is now my privilege to introduce the 2023 CCT Chair, Pam C., Panel 63, Montana, and the Chair Elect, Carol G., Panel 63, Maine.

Thank you for trusting me with the opportunity to serve the World Service Conference as your 2022 CCT Chair.

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmations

Jean L., Chairperson of Nominating Committee

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Prior to the Nominating Committee Chairperson's report, two Trustees presented a short skit about the affirmation process.

I have the honor of serving as the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. This moment, as you have seen in the presentation, has been in some cases a year in the making. It is important to not rush this process. As stated on page 210 of the 2022-2025 Service Manual, the purpose of this committee is to aid the Trustees in discharging



their prime obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee are filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry. This is not a task taken lightly.

But Nominating is only part of the story. The voice of the groups represented by the Delegates must be heard in the selection process of our nominees. Now, as you have heard, many Delegates have had a say in this process through their participation in CCT (Conference Committee on Trustees) and the RCTs (Regional Committees on Trustees), but today all the voices are heard. This is the balance we strive for in Concept Seven. The Conference has the right to affirm or not affirm the nominees for the Board of Trustees, as well as for the Board Officers, and the selection of members to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

I ask today as we go through this process that you invite your Higher Power to participate with you. For me, going through this process up to this point has been extremely spiritual. The first thing I had to do was set any personal agendas or feelings aside. I had to focus on the skills presented, the thoughts expressed, and the commitment to our program. Personally, I have found that sometimes it is just as hard to say yes as it is to say no. This is a case to practice principles such as integrity, honesty, and responsibility in all my affairs, as described in Step Twelve. What is best for our program and the functioning of our Board must take priority.

I believe that truly listening and trusting my Higher Power has led me to make the best decisions for Al-Anon. And I do believe that the other members of the Board, as well as the Delegate members who have been involved up to this point, have also trusted their Higher Powers as we proceeded. We have tried to present nominees who will exemplify the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry.

So, what do we ask of you? We ask you to seriously consider the nominations we bring forward. This is not a rubber-stamp process. We are not flawless, and you may have information that we have not received. If concerns are expressed, please remember Warranty Four, which reads that no Conference action is personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy. We must always remember to place “principles above personalities.”

So, let’s take a moment to invite our Higher Power to be with us as we begin this process.

During the affirmation process, Conference members were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments about all of the candidates. Any nominee present was 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 2023 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Jeri W., second three-year term
Jayme C., first three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Diane B., US South Central, second three-year term
Cindy M., US Southwest, second three-year term

Board Officers:

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board
Lynette K., Vice Chairperson
Ann Marie Z., Treasurer

The Board announced the Executive Committee appointments for 2023-2024:

David B., third one-year term, Chairperson
Carol M., second one-year term
Norm W., first one-year term
Sarah S., Director of Programs

The Board announced the appointment of Sandi C. as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management for 2023-2024.

World Service Conference Announcement (2024)

The dates selected for the 2024 World Service Conference are Thursday, April 18 through Sunday, April 21, 2024. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Wednesday, April 17 and depart on Monday, April 22. The Conference will be held at The Founders Inn and Spa in Virginia Beach.

In addition to taking into consideration religious holidays when selecting the dates, Staff will weigh the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, and meal costs when finalizing the site.

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 2024 Conference will be the second Conference of the three-year trial.

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.

DISCUSSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility

Sarah S., Director of Programs
Sue P., Associate Director - Group Services

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The Director of Programs, as Chair of this Strategy project, welcomed Conference members to the presentation on the continuation of their work. She noted that since the World Service Conference is being held in Virginia Beach, they were fortunate to be able to also welcome the other members of the Project Team as guests.

The Director started her presentation by stating, “Today, we will start by reviewing part of the presentation we shared with the 2022 World Service Conference. This part of the presentation identifies the origin of this conversation as well as what we worked to complete over the past year, which ultimately led to identification of the conceptual process we shared with you on AFG Connects to allow electronic Alateen meetings to become AI-Anon Family Groups.

“Last year at 2022 World Service Conference, we ended our train-themed presentation with a stop at a ‘refueling station.’ At this stop, we shared with you that we were going to explore many unanswered questions regarding the possibility of creating a process to accept electronic Alateen meetings as AI-Anon Family Groups. The Project Team has been hard at work the last year and we are ready to continue the next leg of our journey.”

As the presentation started, members were asked to think about the following:

- Physical Alateen meetings vs. electronic Alateen meetings—What are our current realities?
- What are the legal implications related to hosting electronic Alateen meetings safely?
- Are the minimum requirements from the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees sufficient for ensuring the safety of Alateens and AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service participating in electronic meetings?

“Within the WSC Structure, physical Alateen meetings are supported by processes created by Areas, guided by the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees, the Alateen policy, and local legal requirements. Each Area has its own process to train and certify AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and to determine how many certified AMIAS are required to be in attendance in order for the Alateen group to hold its meeting. These unique processes and requirements are captured in each Area’s Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements.

“The only electronic Alateen meetings in the WSC Structure are the six *AI-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* electronic Alateen meeting pilots. The *Mobile App* meetings are hosted by certified AMIAS from Areas in the World Service Conference Structure, and one meeting is hosted by Poland, which trains their AMIAS in accordance with the 2003 Alateen Motion and their local processes. Unlike with the physical meetings, WSO Staff provide training sessions and host quarterly meetings for the AMIAS supporting these meetings. The WSO also requires a minimum of two AMIAS be present to host the electronic Alateen meetings held on this platform, although three are recommended to ensure Alateen safety given the complexities of the *Mobile App* platform and navigation.”

The Director went on to explain, “As in its efforts to explore the question about current realities, the Project Team began its research into legal implications by reflecting on what we knew about our own WSC Structure.

“We knew from experience that laws related to minors vary significantly within our Structure. Not only do they vary between the three countries within the WSC Structure, but they even vary between jurisdictions within these countries. Our International & Legal Specialist consulted with AFG, Inc. legal counsel to understand WSO’s overall legal responsibility as it pertains to minors participating on electronic formats according to current legislation. We discovered that although the United States does not currently have a federal safety requirement for laws regarding interacting with minors on the internet, its Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (referred to as “COPPA”) establishes a minimum age limit of 13 years old for businesses engaging with minors through electronic media. Our counsel also alerted us that the United States Congress is currently proposing an update to the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act law that would increase the minimum age from 13 to 16 years.

“The convergence of insights gained from the Project Team’s first two explorations placed us in a good position to explore the third question from the refueling station, which is:

- Are the minimum requirements from the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees sufficient for ensuring the safety of Alateens and AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service participating in electronic meetings?

“In addition, the Team realized it was necessary to evaluate another question in parallel, as it relates directly to the feasibility of global acceptance of higher minimums:

- How stringent can the minimum requirements be to support Alateen safety while encouraging adoption?

“In order to do so, the Project Team requested help from you! We identified 20 Areas within the WSC Structure that had the most stringent requirements. We reached out to a subset of these Areas to gather additional information that may not have originally been provided in the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements review, such as required criminal background checks, mandated reporting, additional training, etc. Thank you to all Areas who answered the request and provided information.

“Thanks to your willingness to answer our calls for help and to share your experience, strength, hope, and feedback, the Project Team has now completed its first ‘good estimate’ of a vision for answering the Board of Trustees charge of making online platform(s) available for all Alateen members who wish to participate while ensuring the safety of Alateens and AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service.

The presentation concluded: “Today, we will answer some of the questions that are related to the conceptual process. Before we end this session, we will provide you with a link to a survey in the *Mobile App*. This is the same survey we asked the international structures to complete.

“The Project Team will review all the information we receive from an International Town Hall Meeting along with what we learn today from you as representatives of the WSC Structure. The Project Team will prepare a presentation that includes recommended suggestions and amendments to the Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. At the July Board meeting, we will share the presentation with the Board of Trustees and seek their guidance as to the next steps in the process. Once we have a clear direction, we will communicate with the WSC members and international structures about the next leg of the journey.

“On behalf of the Project Team, we appreciate you taking a journey with us through the Feasibility of Alateen Electronic Groups. The goal of this project was to make online platforms available for all Alateen members who wish to participate- while ensuring the safety of Alateen and AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service. Exploring the feasibility of Alateen Electronic Groups has afforded us the opportunity to work with our international partners and WSC Areas to ensure we collectively agree on a solution that could be supported by members globally. When this project began in 2021, we couldn't have projected that in a few short years we would be having a conversation about Alateen members having the possibility to attend electronic Alateen groups globally. But here we are in 2023, at the World Service Conference, asking for feedback about the feasibility of Alateen electronic groups. So, let's continue the journey, stop at necessary checkpoints to ensure we are on track, and, ultimately, we will reach our final destination.”

Conference members were given the opportunity for questions and feedback:

- Are Alateen groups within the World Service Conference Structure considered AI-Anon groups?

Yes, they are.

- I have some concerns about Alateen because of age requirements for AI-Anon meetings. We have young people who attend our young adult meetings. How do we as an Area (GEA) stay within the legal requirements of age?

That is a great question and one that we are going to have to look at as things expand and as we work with all geographic areas to make sure we are aware of our responsibilities. Let's continue the conversations!

- I am concerned about the level of functionality with conventions, etc. with all of the requirements. You mentioned conceivably having three AMAIS working with the groups? Is this something we should be doing?

We have thought about requiring three, but remember, the Area can incorporate as you want to, and increase that number to three instead of two if that works for you.

- You mentioned something about parental approval, but I do not remember what you said. In a global environment, are there repercussions in having minors participating in an international group? Can that be monitored?

With international structures, laws vary regarding working with minors. An international structure may have more stringent guidelines than the WSC Structure. Our conceptual process does not require parental permission, but international ones might. If a teen from an international structure attends a WSC Structure event, then we are taking on the legal responsibility; if an Alateen from the WSC Structure attends an international event, then the

Alateen will have to meet their requirements. In the conceptual design, each meeting will require an ID and an interview. Through that process, they will know who is attending and, more importantly, the group will be following the requirements.

Chosen Agenda Items

Fifty-seven Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) 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. Conference members discussed the two topics that had the most votes.

Topic:

This CAI is an open discussion on attracting members into service. What works? What doesn't work? What are the barriers to service participation?

Rationale:

It has become increasingly difficult to attract newer members into service positions. We know we are a fellowship of attraction rather than promotion. What are some methods to use to attract others into service? It is important because as our service positions go unfilled, those serving become overwhelmed with the amount of work required.

Comments:

- Personal contact and encouraging others to serve is important. We may have groups and Districts that are inactive, but we do have lots of new people in service and that came about due to one-on-one contact.
- I am concerned about fewer members having a Sponsor. My Sponsor got me into service. Without Sponsors, is service being shared?
- What encourages people is enthusiasm. We need enthusiasm, even at Conference. We need people to participate and have fun being of service. We need Service Sponsors. What isn't appealing is being "voluntold" to do something.
- What we have done as a committee is to share a Joy of Service workshop. We did this at one of the Districts that had trouble getting people to serve. We shared information from the WSO and some people who have served shared what they have done and how they enjoyed it. We want to continue to use this at the Area level.
- Little bits of success have occurred when we go to individuals and say, "You have been nominated to serve as [blank]. If elected, are you willing to serve?"
- I have watched A.A. and have seen how they do this well; they stress service to their fellows. We have a close relationship with A.A., we can watch how they do service. We need to connect service to recovery.
- We work the Traditions and Concepts and present workshops on service. We get members interested and help members who want to serve.
- At my Area, I asked everyone under 60 to stand. I told them that if they want AI-Anon around for their children, we need to be involved in service. I present fun workshops on service as I travel around the Area. One day my seat will be empty, and we will need those members under 60 to stand up and keep this program going.

- I shared last year’s presentation on members involved in service with my Area. I found a service skit on AFG Connects and adapted it to the time I had available. Everyone at Assembly loved it.
- When I think about change, I think about what attracted me to change: someone planted the seed of something that interested me. I accept that my responsibility is to *attract* members to service, not *get* them there. Is the attraction coming through me or not? We need to look inside ourselves.
- We do not have any vacant positions right now, but the reality is, our positions are getting more specialized so sometimes it is harder to find people. We put in some more procedures where we have a schedule for the first year, so members know the time obligation. We are also constantly talking about the positions, looking forward to the next election three years down the road. We are preparing members. We have Coordinators talk about their positions. We have a form to ask people what they are interested in. We will see if the new procedure works or not.
- Since I have been here, one of things I found is really important is to get involved in service. Service can be difficult sometimes, but let’s not talk about that. We need to keep it upbeat. I hear people talk about the difficulties, and that turns members off. We try to take people to service events; that helps get them interested. People in my home group came because we brought them. I had friends who brought me to service and that is why I am here.
- Recruit people into service before elections. We try to have the current person be the Service Sponsor of those coming into the position as a resource, not telling how to do the job but helping people find their own way of doing the position. Recruit early, before elections.
- At our Spring Assembly right before elections, we have a process similar to “speed dating.” It is an hour and a half where Officers and Coordinators share about their positions. We divide into groups and move around when the bell rings. The current person shares for two minutes about their service position and encourages members to stand. Then we ring the bell, and they go to the next station. We have a form to show people how much service they have already actually done. They realize that they are already serving.
- We held a Zoom meeting for a “dark District” to show how much more there was to Al-Anon than just their small group.
- We had a job fair type session at our Election Assembly that I called, “Two minutes to shine the light on your position.”
- We don’t have a whole panel change at one time—we don’t move five people in and five people out, we rotate so service people have different terms, and this helps.
- There is a lack of participation from groups. We don’t have diversity—people of color or people with disabilities, etc. If people don’t see themselves represented, they may not stand for service. I try to engage with people because a lot of people only want to serve at the group level.
- People will step up if they actually know what is needed. We have fellowship activities so people who are intimidated by service see others doing the job. This lets them see the real people who are in service. When people participate in fellowship events, it is easier to say yes and get involved.
- We try to decrease the fear when people say they can’t commit to a whole term by allowing them to commit to a shorter term, and we adjust the term. It seems like 80 percent of the time, people fulfill the full term because they were able to do it their own way. We took away their fear by taking it slow.
- This is not a new topic; we have been talking about this for a long time, and we even have a booklet, “When I Got Busy, I Got Better” (P-78). What is new is that we just have gone through a pandemic that affected our groups. For two years, we didn’t see people doing service. Our Area is coming back to life. The new GRs are now seeing how this works. They see what a panel of officers looks like.
- If you review past *Conference Summaries*, you will see that we have talked about this for many years. We have a Policy that can be a barrier to service. Why do we still have a Policy that creates a barrier?
- Guilt people does not work because sometimes people step in but cannot do the job, which makes it more difficult. I thought I had to be perfect, but I learned that I am a human *being* not a human *doing*, and I try to share that.
- Some positions can be tag-teamed or shared. Having a conversation about holding a service position together can open up an opportunity—two people getting to know each other and doing a job with enthusiasm.
- One of the tools that helps is using the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) and “Groups at Work.” We use both in my home group. Hopefully members will learn more about Al-Anon’s structure by using these resources.
- I called a member two weeks ago and said that I would like them to stand for Delegate. Elections are a year and half away! I could hear them fall off the chair. Then they shared all the “what ifs?” I said I was calling now so they would have time to consult with their Higher Power and Sponsor and have time to dispel some fears.
- Enthusiasm is good, but we must serve with respect without judging and criticism. We grow ourselves and help others grow in service.

Topic:

How can we better tap into our wealth of experience with our Past Delegates at the Area and Conference level?

Rationale:

We have a wealth of Al-Anon knowledge, history, lore, and love that we have not yet found a way to cycle back into our service structure. The gap between Conference service and the opportunity to apply to be a Trustee is the most precious time to have our past Delegates in service in both our Area and Conference. Can we create both Area Coordinator and Conference Level Committee positions and assignments for our past Delegates?

Comments:

- We have an officer position called Immediate Past Delegate. That position is there to help support the current Delegate. I welcome the opportunity to have some sort of position as past Delegate and to still be involved.
- At our Area Assembly, our past Delegates are supported with a stipend, just like other AWSC members. Currently, one of the past Delegates is serving as Convention Coordinator and Area Secretary. We encourage them to stand for positions after they are Delegates.
- We have a line item that supports the past Delegates, and they also serve as primary members of our Policy Committee. They are encouraged to remain engaged in the Area.
- Past Delegates are part of our Area right now; one is an Area Coordinator; one works with Area Convention committee. They have been past Secretaries. Past Delegates also serve on

a committee that we refer to when discussing or working on important topics. We rely on them to help us with important decisions.

- In our Area, we encourage our past Delegates to serve on committees or become an Area Coordinator, but there are some who say that the past Delegates are taking away positions that could be filled with new people. But we don't get anyone to stand, so are they actually taking away a position?
- Our past Delegates are very active in our Area and we have a line item for them on our budget. We make them feel they are really a part of the Area. We have active past Delegates all the way back to Panel 25. We have put together a PowerPoint that has pictures taken from our archives of past Delegates as a way for us to celebrate them. They are welcome to stand for any position they want. When there is need, they are there. They helped me decide I wanted to be of service.
- We love our past Delegates. We have six, as we just lost one. Past Delegates have shared about the service structure with new members. We use them for the Policy Committee. We reimburse them for their service. We use their experience to enhance our Area and help new people.
- Our By-Laws and Policy say the immediate past Delegate steps into the role of AAPP. The past Delegates have taken it upon themselves to be on the Policy and Procedure Committee because when we changed things, we needed their input. I will be AAPP next year.
- We utilize our past Delegates in many different ways. In the past at our Assemblies, we have had a workshop called "Ask It Basket." We ask the past Delegate some questions we might have and have them answer the questions. They serve on the AIS board, serve on the Guidelines Committee, they are very involved in Assembly training with new GRs.
- Our past Delegates are very active. The immediate past Delegates work in the breakout committees. We utilize their experience, strength, and hope. As a soon-to-be past Delegate, I have a lot to offer at the Area level.
- In our Area, the past Delegate is no longer an officer but serves with the officers. A past Delegate cannot stand for Trustee for at least two years. Instead of having the two-year period, maybe we could have positions to keep us motivated.
- When I read the question, I envisioned a pool of past Delegates with résumés that would be submitted to the Board who could be available to be on various committees. This might help lighten the load.
- We have nine active past Delegates. They are very active at AWSC, and they get to focus on their passion and service. They get to do what they love to do. Previous Delegates have said, "My goal is to become a past Delegate!"
- This conversation makes me think of the Regional Delegates Meetings with past Delegates and new Delegates learning together. I love that we want to continue this conversation.
- My experience has been that the Delegate groomed me from the group level. She always offered to take members to Assemblies, she reminded me of any open positions, and she shared all she knew. She encouraged me to be a great Delegate someday.
- We invite our past Delegates to the Area meetings. There are no official positions for them although they help with elections. Our Area has a Board of Directors. We are discussing who can be on the Board, and we hope our past Delegates and past Trustees will serve on this board.

- There were current GRs who were past Delegates who encouraged me, which was helpful. Conference members, regardless of their position, should stay engaged.
- One thing we do is pay for all the expenses of all our past Delegates, such as their expenses to Assemblies, etc. We do not get a lot of past Delegates to come even though we pay their expenses.
- We included in our guideline that our past Delegates present a Coordinator Workshop to help Coordinators understand the AWSC, such as how to do a budget item, how to do the job, and how to make reports.

Copyright & Trademark

Vali F., Executive Director

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WSO Staff shared a new Copyright & Trademark Protection presentation created in response to the growing number of copyright and trademark violations—particularly on websites, social media platforms, and other digital media—being reported by members globally. Staff designed the presentation to support Conference members in sharing the important message about what constitutes copyright and trademark violations, so each AI-Anon member can inform their groups and events on how to avoid this unintentional harm to AI-Anon as a whole.

The presentation included insight into *what* defines copyright, *why* its protection is important, and *how* the WSO is striving to exercise due diligence to ensure AI-Anon's copyright preservation. The presentation also explained AI-Anon trademarks, which include the AI-Anon and Alateen logos and names, who within the fellowship have permission to use them, and how and when they can be used.

The WSO Staff member concluded the presentation by saying, "The descriptive text of Concept Twelve, Warranty Four states:

'It has been said, "AI-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience—all except the AI-Anon name itself." Our principles can be applied in any situation. We do not wish to monopolize them. We simply request that the public use of the AI-Anon name be avoided by those who wish to avail themselves of AI-Anon techniques and ideas. In case the AI-Anon name should be misapplied, it would of course be the duty of our World Service Conference to press for the discontinuance of such a practice—avoiding, however, public quarreling about the matter.'

"We appreciate your willingness today to increase your understanding of how AI-Anon can protect its trademark, name, and copyrighted materials, and we look forward to hearing how you have shared this message with your groups and local service arms."

Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- Thank you! I understand about distributing handouts and flyers, but what about the Steps and Traditions? Are they under our copyright? I know some groups that type up the Steps and Traditions either to make it easier when members do not have books or when they want to change some of the words. Are they breaking copyright?

The Steps are under the A.A. copyright. A.A. has given us permission to use the Steps. It depends if the Steps are used on websites; if so, they usually have to ask for permission.

- I missed the comment about the trademark. It is okay to use the triangle and the circle?

Yes, it is okay to use the triangle and circle. Members cannot insert anything into the symbol; that is violating the trademark. The original logo, accompanied by the words "Approved by World Service Conference Al-Anon Family Groups," identifies Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

- How do we protect our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts? I get into debates with regards to gender-specific language.

The Steps, Traditions, and Concepts cannot be changed without the consent of three-quarters of the groups around the world.

- Thank you for this presentation. I am thinking of all the conferences and conventions that put things in the middle of the triangle and circle. This made me realize that every time we have gone through the food line, the caterers have misused our logo on their signs.

Good catch! That is a violation, and we ourselves did not see it until we got here. If we had known before that they were going to do that, we would have changed it.

- What do we do when we find a violation on social media? So far, speaking to the person has not changed anything.

Send those to the WSO. Make sure you give us the web address, specific page, and all other necessary information for us to find it. We are powerless over other folks, but we can approach them with the idea that maybe they don't know what they don't know. We can help them understand how to protect our copyright and trademark. We do not accuse, but we try to instruct. We are encouraged by the number of members who do want to do the right thing.

- When we started our Area website, we were given reprint permission for the Steps and Traditions for one year. Is that still the procedure?

It is no longer just one year; we are giving permission now for all the time the website is available.

- Can we make copies from "Groups at Work" (P-24) to use? Is that a violation? What about *Paths to Recovery* (B-24)?

If you are using the copies within the group to support the group, you can. As an example, if you decide you want to copy the questions for discussion, you can, but at the end of the meeting, you must ask members to return all the copies to you to be destroyed, otherwise you are in violation. If members take the copies home, it is a violation. The other option is to buy copies of "Groups at Work" to use at the meeting. You also could send an email with the link to the Service Manual (P-24/27) which is posted online and free to use or download.

- Thank you. I have probably innocently posted the logo without the statement at the bottom: "Help and hope for families of alcoholics." I did notice, though, that the statement at the bottom is a little different in different places.

If you are speaking about the tag line, that is not copyrighted or trademarked so if it is different that does not violate anything.

- I have a question about jewelry that is made with the symbol. I do a lot of craft work and have used the triangle and circle; is that copyrighted or not?

If you are going to sell jewelry or crafts that use the logo, we want you to ask for permission. Usually we grant it, and we want to

support you, but do ask! We know most people are not out to harm Al-Anon.

Within the fellowship, we know that a love gift or fundraiser item may possibly have the logo displayed. You do not need to police this. Our focus is on working to protect our name at the public level.

- Thank you. Last year after the social media discussion, there was a group that did have a page with the Al-Anon symbol and they decided to change their name, but they continue to do it. They are still a closed Facebook page, but they post the meeting directories. Is that okay?

Websites that are posting meetings as a source of information are okay because they are doing this as a service. We try to talk to everyone about their page and ask them to change their name to not be Al-Anon, but those posting meetings for information are within the law since it is a service. Yes, they have changed their name so they can do that.

- Thank you again. You can find stuff on TikTok with individuals reading our literature and talking about their membership. I am trying to explain to my daughter about anonymity.

Yes, we realize that there is a lot on social media. It is often very difficult to find the author or the owner or the person who is actually posting so in many cases, we submit a notice to the social media platform and tell them it is a copyright violation and ask them to correct it.

- Talk about the use of the Al-Anon name by a group that is not registered. Is it the Area's responsibility and WSO's responsibility to handle them? How do we let you know who they are? Especially pyramid groups that call themselves Al-Anon but really, they are not.

The WSO, within the World Service Conference Structure, is the entity responsible for protecting the copyright and trademark. We ask for conversations and discussions, but the defense of our copyright/trademark belongs to the WSO. Notify us. And we will follow up. It is our responsibility to handle that. Within the eyes of the law only the groups registered with WSO have the right to use the Al-Anon name/logo, but we have a Tradition that says when two people get together, they may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group. So that is something we continue to grapple with, but we do want to look at the principles and process.

- On al-anon.org, there are resources that can be used online. I do see other pamphlets and things that are posted. In theory, members may think they have permission to post everything. We have a lot posted from our Area websites that might be violations.

Members can post online only the items that say they can be posted. Pamphlets are not to be posted on Area websites or social media; those are copyrighted. The Guidelines can be posted and state that. There are also Forum articles that say you may post them online if the copyright statement is shared with it. Make sure you put the copyright statement every time something is posted.

- Great discussion! There is an app available that regularly posts the *Forum* articles along with a lot of other recovery articles. I believe there are meetings using the app as well, and people use other material in their meetings, thinking it is an Al-Anon app. The only way you can tell it is not Al-Anon is if you scroll way down to the bottom, and there it says this is just a recovery app.

We probably have been in contact with this site, but if you have more information for us, please email us so we can follow up.

- I stumbled onto a site when we were setting up and paying for our domain name. We found out that there was another domain name being used that was very close to ours, and it was really a treatment center. Is there anyone who is looking at that in all the different Areas? Is there a way to check if places are using our name and logo with just a small change to the Al-Anon name?

We do not have the capacity to search for all of that. We do want all of you to be informed so you can inform the Web Coordinators. As violations are recognized, we prioritize what we need to address first.

- As a Delegate, I am required to approve the flyers that will be published in our Area. I have seen flyers come through with an outline of the state in the background and our logo on the inside of the state. Is that a violation?

Yes, it is. There should always be space all around our logo. It should stand out.

Conference members were reminded that protection of Al-Anon trademark and copyright is essential to safeguarding our primary purpose: to help the friends and families of alcoholics. Without such protection, our Al-Anon message of hope could be harmed by those who might choose to use our trademark to represent outside interests.

Staff closed by encouraging everyone attending to share the presentation widely to help inform the fellowship and its trusted servants how they can help honor Warranty Four and ensure we don't unintentionally give away "the Al-Anon name itself."

DEI Workshop

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (COB) introduced the session.

"Over the last several months, the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) has led the Board in generative discussions regarding diversity and inclusivity. Those discussions have included several types of diversity and covered issues such as socioeconomics, culture, geography, disability, race, and gender. These discussions have helped the Board to realize that each person has their own concept of and frame of reference for diversity."

At the January 2023 Board meeting, Board members participated in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) workshop led by an outside consultant. After the workshop, the Board considered whether it would be helpful to share the workshop at Conference to give the members an understanding of how the Board was continuing its DEI work. The Board spent a great deal of time on a thoughtful, spiritual discussion of the idea. Board members shared varying opinions about presenting the workshop at Conference.

The COB continued by sharing some of the topics discussed when making the decision whether or not to present this workshop at Conference.

How the workshop impacted Board members:

The Diversity workshop helped Board members understand that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity starts with each person. Each Board member was impacted in a different way and on a different level. This workshop is not designed to be a fix, but to give us all the opportunity to be informed so we can evaluate our own thinking on the topic and determine if we need to make different choices.

How will a workshop focused on topics that are not directly linked to Al-Anon's primary purpose be received by Delegates?

The Board uses a number of outside consultants, materials, and publications to help us with our Strategic Planning work. The Nominating Committee has read outside literature to help us in our work to choose the best possible people for the Board and Executive Committees. The Envisioned Future Work Group brings forward many articles related to how boards function and fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities. When the Board uses outside tools, we are trying to become better Board members so that we can conduct the business of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Outside consultants and tools have been presented and used at past Conferences. Some examples are the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process that was introduced at the 2005 WSC and the Six Thinking Hats, which was introduced at the 2018 WSC. At the 2006 WSC, an outside consultant gave a presentation on Shared Leadership. At the 2007 Conference, an outside consultant gave a presentation on Conflict Resolution.

Diversity has been a Chosen Agenda Item at several Conferences going back to 1997. At the 2010 WSC, an outside consultant presented a workshop titled "Cultural Competency."

The feedback received from Conference members after the Diversity Today Thought Force presented at the 2022 Conference:

At the July 2022 Board meeting, the Board made a decision not to form any new Thought or Task Forces from the Diversity Today Thought Force. As reported in the July 2022 COB Letter, the Board made a commitment to Conference members to continue having conversations regarding diversity and inclusivity. We felt by sharing this workshop at Conference it was a way of honoring our commitment to WSC members regarding our continuing DEI work while also showing you some of the work we are doing.

Elements of the presentation could be controversial.

We discussed that Delegates are typically Al-Anon members well-grounded in the Three Legacies who know how to apply the spiritual principles of our program. They have the ability to reason things out with others, maybe even with a Sponsor.

The COB concluded, "After a thorough and spiritually based discussion, where the principles found in:

- Tradition Five, welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics;
- Tradition Six, diversion from our primary spiritual aim;
- Tradition Eight, using special workers; and
- Tradition Ten, having no opinion on outside issues;

were taken into consideration, the Board decided to present this DEI workshop at the 2023 World Service Conference. The workshop being presented is focused on racial diversity and acknowledges and reflects the racial composition of the majority of Conference attendees."

The COB informed the Conference that since the workshop, "Board members have been participating in a 21-day challenge to help us broaden our behavior and thinking. Each day of the challenge, a different activity is chosen from one of the following categories: read, listen, watch, notice, connect, engage, or act. Each category has multiple resources to choose from—everything from articles, podcasts, and songs to ways to become involved. Many Board members have also read the book authored by the workshop facilitator."

Before the COB introduced the facilitator to present the DEI workshop, Conference members were reminded that the Board was bringing the workshop to Conference not as a fix but as a means of honoring its commitment to continue the DEI conversation. The Board reassured the Conference that Delegates were not being asked to bring the workshop to or share it with their Areas.

Following the workshop, Conference members were invited to discuss the experience. Later, Conference members were given an opportunity to join a smaller breakout session with the Chairperson of the Board to discuss any concerns or questions about the Board's DEI work and the workshop itself.

Financial Feasibility to Continue Holding the WSC Triennially in New York/Connecticut

Debbie P., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

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The Conference Chairperson opened the session by framing the discussion. “Prior to the World Service Office (WSO) moving from New York City to Virginia Beach in 1996, the Conference visited Stepping Stones in Katonah, New York, which is the birthplace of the Al-Anon Clearing House as we know it today and the home of Lois and Bill W., cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A. respectively, once every three years.

“Following the 1996 move, in 1999, all Conference members rode buses from the Conference hotel in Connecticut to Stepping Stones for a visit, as the entire Conference was held in Stamford.

“As far back as 1999, the Board was contemplating other ways to ‘visit’ Stepping Stones. After that year’s Conference, Staff was asked to research relocation and visiting Stepping Stones and share the findings with the Board. The research included a mention that modern technology allows for easy access to Stepping Stones.

“Similar to the 1999 Conference, the entire 2002, 2005, and 2008 Conferences were held in Stamford or Waterbury, Connecticut so that the members could visit Stepping Stones.

“The 2011 World Service Conference was held in Virginia. However, Panel 49 Delegates visited Stepping Stones, which was included as part of the Conference budget, before the Conference convened by flying from their home Areas to New York on Saturday, visiting Stepping Stones and flying to Virginia on Sunday, and attending preConference activities, including the Opening Dinner, on Monday. The 2011 schedule was planned such that following the close of Conference on Friday, attendees had an opportunity to celebrate Al-Anon’s 60th Anniversary in Virginia Beach with an Open House at the WSO and an evening banquet at a nearby venue on Saturday.

“The 2012 Conference was held in Stamford, Connecticut, and all members visited Stepping Stones.

“Due to the rising costs of holding the Conference in the New York City area, the Board of Trustees approved holding the 2015 Conference in Virginia Beach, with an optional trip to visit Stepping Stones after Conference on Saturday, April 25, which was included as part of the Conference budget. Because the trip/visit was not part of the WSC, Conference members could choose to opt out of visiting Stepping Stones, which 14 out of 67 Delegates did.

“All Conference members visited Stepping Stones in 2018 when the Conference was held in West Harrison, New York.

“The planned 2021 trip to Stepping Stones became a virtual ‘visit’ due to the ongoing pandemic, and, in order to satisfy the 2021 Tarrytown, New York hotel contract, the Conference was held at that hotel in 2022,

and all Conference members visited Stepping Stones in person.

“As you might imagine, the cost of holding Conference in the New York/Connecticut area is much higher than holding the Conference in the Virginia Beach area. The higher costs affect most of the Conference line items, such as air travel in general as well as adding Staff members’ and interpreters’ airfares to the budget; airport shuttles in New York; hotel rooms; meal costs; per diem rates; AV; bus rentals; and trucking supplies to New York/Connecticut.

“The total expenses of Conference are partially paid through the Equalized Expense payments. The remaining Conference costs not covered by the Equalized Expense payments, or the net Conference costs, are paid from the WSO General Fund.

“The pandemic afforded us a glimpse into the nature and cost-effectiveness of a virtual Stepping Stones visit. The virtual visit also allowed for added value, as some Conference members noted that they saw more of Stepping Stones virtually than they had in person. We are now aware of other ways to honor the tradition of visiting our first clearinghouse.

“We are ready to gather information by opening up a generative conversation about the financial feasibility of continuing to hold the WSC triennially in New York/Connecticut.”

The Conference Co-Chairperson allowed time for discussion on each question, asking Conference members to remember to take only two minutes and one time at the mic for each question.

Is it important to continue visiting Stepping Stones once every three years? Why or why not?

- “I had the privilege of going to Stepping Stones virtually and last year physically. For me the virtual experience could never replace going physically—being on the grounds, going into the house, etc. You cannot replace that through a screen. In my opinion, every Delegate should get the experience of walking in the steps of our Cofounder.”
- “In 2018, I unexpectedly visited Stepping Stones with my Sponsor. It was a spiritual experience being there with my Sponsor. This experience is vital for all Delegates. Thank you to the WSO for continuing to do this as part of the Conference. I am aware of the expense and huge undertaking, and I am confident we can continue to experience this humbling visit.”
- “I feel very strongly we should go to Stepping Stones based on my experience. I visited before last year and am grateful to have another opportunity and look forward to visiting again in the future. It enriches the understanding of the foundation of our program. This is where it started. Lois’s desk—we got to see her desk and see the hope and recovery throughout the house. I think every Al-Anon member should visit Stepping Stones.”
- “It is vitally important that all Delegates get the opportunity to visit Stepping Stones sometime during their three years of service. New York is very expensive, especially when you compare it to other places like Virginia Beach, but comparing it to other cities is like comparing apples and oranges. Money is not everything; it is going to be expensive.”
- “I absolutely think we should visit; we cannot lose our history. Sometimes we forget how A.A. and Al-Anon work together, and we should not lose that. Feasibility is a big factor, and each Area may have to pay to do that. When we were viewing Stepping Stones virtually, there was not a dry eye on Zoom. Stepping Stones did a fabulous job doing in presenting it virtually.”
- “If it were up to me, I cannot say to someone you cannot do what I have already done. It is about abundance. It is the opposite of abundance to think we would not go.”

- “I have to say that when I picture the visit, I see it as a spiritual experience, but I do realize that the costs in New York are more expensive than other places. After the pandemic, prices went through the roof. Maybe prices will change in the future. I think there are a lot of companies that would nickel and dime everyone, but it was worth every penny because it filled my soul.”
- “I have attended both virtually and in person. If I want to return, I could do so on my own dime. I preferred the virtual visit. I would choose not to return in person, especially if Conference is meeting for four days instead of five.”
- “Going to Stepping Stones is part of my foundation. Through abundance, I can partake in our Al-Anon history; through abundance, funds will be found. Our Areas are experiencing higher costs, and we continue; the Conference can also continue.”

The Co-Chairperson then asked a second question for the Conference members to discuss.

How might Conference members honor the tradition of visiting our first clearinghouse, other than holding the Conference in New York/ Connecticut or traveling up from Virginia before or after Conference?

- “Prior to Conference, my Sponsor told me that when she came to Conference, they had the opportunity to be in Virginia Beach and go to New York after Conference. She shared that it was awesome. Each Delegate had the opportunity to choose if they wanted to go or not. I just don’t want to miss the experience and would be willing to do whatever was needed to get there.”
- “During our tour through the WSO this week, we got to see that we have an extensive archives selection. Could we tap into that? We could maybe do something with Archives during the Conference that would give us the same experience.”
- “I think having an alternative location outside of New York is good, and then we could continue to go to Stepping Stones.”
- “When I first read the question, I felt it was a loaded question. I am not a fan of wanting to recreate Stepping Stones. It would be like showing me pictures of items from the Smithsonian rather than actually experiencing the museum in person.”
- “We just came out of an Open Board Meeting on the topic of abundance—with faith and hope, I think we can do this. If I had known about this question prior to today, I could have come up with more possible answers.”
- “I don’t know the answer to the question of other options; it sounds like it is suggesting that virtual would be the other options. Maybe think about how we can use past Delegates and bring back all the experiences of the past; that is an important way to preserve our history so things do not become diluted. The virtual option cannot compare to the in-person experience.”
- “The question might be, ‘What is best for the fellowship as a whole, rather than what is best for the Delegates?’ An option might be that our Areas help pay for the visit.”
- “Yes! What is good for Al-Anon as a whole? I started in Al-Anon by always saying, ‘me, me, me,’ but now I trust and ‘Let Go and Let God.’ I would like to bring this to the Areas and ask the Areas for creative ways to do this.”

The Conference Co-Chairperson closed the discussion by asking the WSC members to imagine for a moment what value those additional “Stepping Stones visit” funds might have with regard to the Board’s Vision: “Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.” Each Conference member was asked to document their thoughts following a period of quiet reflection.

What would you like to see happen? Please select one option and explain why.

1. The Conference continues to meet once every three years in New York/Connecticut.
2. The Conference agenda incorporates a Stepping Stones presentation every three years.
3. Undecided.
4. Other ideas.

The Conference Chairperson thanked everyone for their participation in this discussion and noted that the Conference Leadership Team will share the information from these discussions and the feedback obtained with the Board of Trustees to further the Board’s discussions and future planning.

Literature Discussion

Sponsorship and Service Sponsorship

Tom C., Associate Director - Literature

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The following reflects a series of discussions held by the Literature Committee since December 2020. In general, the Literature Committee’s comments are based on realities of the trilingual World Service Conference Structure and may not reflect the realities of other structures. The Committee hopes this information provides adequate information with which the Conference can conduct an informed discussion of this topic at the 2023 Conference.

Framing/Background Information

This conversation began at the December 2020 Literature Committee meeting when it discussed several requests from the fellowship for more Conference Approved Literature (CAL) about sponsorship and service sponsorship. While Committee members were enthusiastic about the ideas presented, they also felt that more time was needed to make an informed decision.

In July 2021, the Committee discussed the topic further, expressing concerns about the difficulty members have in finding Sponsors or Service Sponsors, as well as fears of being a Sponsor and being sponsored. The Committee agreed that the next step would be to apply the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions to the idea of creating such a piece. These questions were posted on the Literature Committee community of AFG Connects for feedback, and in September 2021, after reviewing the responses to the KBDM questions, Committee members agreed to further brainstorm on AFG Connects about the types of ideas/topics they would want included in a comprehensive piece about sponsorship and service sponsorship that are not already included in existing literature.

In December 2021, after some discussion, the Committee agreed that it envisioned a booklet or small book primarily made of member sharings, similar in length and spirit to *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78) or *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33). Although there are members’ sharings about sponsorship throughout our literature, none of the current pieces specifically focused on sponsorship or service sponsorship, such as *Sponsorship, What It’s All About* (P-31); *Service Sponsorship: Working Smarter Not Harder* (P-88); and *Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* (M-78), include personal stories. Making different perspectives and experiences about sponsorship and service sponsorship available in one piece was viewed as helpful to the membership. Writing guidelines for

the piece could ask the membership how they handled different situations, such as having to find a new Sponsor, learning to be a supportive Sponsor or Service Sponsor, or ending a sponsorship.

A motion was carried unanimously in which the Literature Committee recommended discussion with the 2022 World Service Conference of a comprehensive piece on sponsorship and service sponsorship using personal stories from Al-Anon members. Concerns about WSO resources were brought up at the February 2022 Executive Committee in review of the recommendation. At the March 2022 Literature Committee meeting, after discussing the matter with the Chairperson of the Board and the Executive Director, the Literature Committee agreed to postpone the recommendation until the 2023 Conference so that the Board of Trustees and Staff would have time to examine the possible impact that development of the piece could have on WSO resources.

It is now 2023. The Literature Committee looks forward to a thoughtful and insightful discussion of this recommendation at the 2023 World Service Conference.

Ours is a sharing program in which we gain knowledge, courage, and hope from each other's experiences. For the remainder of this discussion, the Literature Committee is excited to respond to any questions Conference members may have and hear them share their experiences.

Conference members had the following comments:

- I am in support of the Literature Committee's recommendation. When we first started talking about this piece, there was a lot of discussion about not making this into a how-to manual. We felt that it is necessary and important to have personal sharings. The KBDM really opened our minds.
- Thank you. The members of my Area have been asking for something like this. They need more support regarding sponsorship. We put a survey on the Area website for two weeks. The members were asked: "How interested are you in purchasing something on sponsorship/service sponsorship?" We had 215 responses. Seventy-seven percent of responders were very interested or interested, with two percent not interested.
- We also did a two-week survey, and we received 17 responses. That's not many, but we received good information from those 17. We asked, "Do you think there is a need for a piece like this?" Eighty-eight percent said yes, and 11 percent said no. When we asked, "Would you send in a sharing for a piece like this?", 94 percent said no, and the rest said yes. When we asked, "Would you read a piece on this subject?", 100 percent said yes. Others said that they would really like the piece to include experience, strength, and hope in the sharings. Others said that we should just update literature we already have. Thanks for always thinking forward; this is a great idea.
- We had a survey with 92 percent saying they were very likely to use this and eight percent saying they were not likely to purchase and use.
- The AFG Connects question was timely, as it came in just before our AWSC. Almost everyone said yes to the need for something that could be used at meetings and included personal sharings.
- We received 425 responses to our survey. We asked, "Would you buy a book on this subject?" Eighty-five percent said yes, and 15 percent said they would not. "Would you submit a sharing on this?" Ninety-six percent said yes. "Would you read a book/literature on this subject?" Ninety-four percent would read a book, but seven percent said they would not. It was an interesting observation, though, that the percentage of members who said

they would buy the piece was lower. We do have a pamphlet already that has personal sharings, so maybe we should just update our pamphlets and have workshops on sponsorship.

- We surveyed our members. How many would be interested in purchasing a new piece of literature? Sixty-one percent said yes, 24 percent said maybe, and 15 percent said no. However, putting costs aside, how is the literature we have now selling? There were concerns about cost and how many would be sold.
- I love the question and love the idea. Sponsorship is a big part of my recovery. Everyone was passionate about hearing experience, strength, and hope in a new piece of literature.
- We posted a survey and 45 percent of the groups responded. We asked, "Are you interested in buying, reading, or using a piece on sponsorship?" Sixty-eight percent said yes, 22 percent said maybe, and ten percent said no.
- One comment to our survey was, "At this point in my recovery, I would like us to reduce our literature and just read the things we already have."
- We took it to the groups. One person said we already have literature on this topic; others overwhelmingly said yes, especially if there were personal sharings. I think it would be great, but it would be wonderful to set the parameters to ask members how they used the Traditions and Concepts in sponsoring.
- Members like the existing material, but they don't know how to find it on the website to order it. When you search for sponsorship, you do not find the proper piece of literature. When they do a search, it would be nice for them to find those documents, and that way members would utilize it more easily.
- This came at a very good time in our Assembly, as the GRs were in the room. There was no formal survey, but the comments that came during discussion were, "yes, let's do this!" Several of the male DRs and GRs felt that without sponsorship they would not have stayed in Al-Anon and they said, "Yes, we need this."
- All of the responses I received were positive. What a great way to stay involved in service with a Service Sponsor.
- Our Area just did a year-long workshop on sponsorship, so yes, it is needed. It is our hope that this piece sheds more light on our principle that *Sponsors do not direct or give advice*. We need to keep that in the forefront so that our members do not experience an unhealthy Sponsor/sponsee relationship.

Following the session, a motion was made, seconded, and carried. See WSC Motion #4, on page 61.

Open Board of Trustees Meeting

Lynette, K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

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Conference members observed a Board discussion during an Open Board of Trustees Meeting. The Envisioned Future Work Group gave a presentation to start the conversation. The members shared how their service recovery had been impacted by serving on this Work Group and that it opened their minds and hearts to what the future can hold for Al-Anon.

Before the open meeting, each Board member received a copy of an article that the Work Group had been utilizing about having an abundant mindset. Board members were asked to share on the various topics from the article that spoke about abundance and what they felt was the most impactful to Al-Anon Family Groups and how it can embrace the Strategic Plan.



The Task Force discussed Tradition One (unity), Tradition Four (freedom with responsibility), Tradition Six (cooperation, not affiliation), Tradition Nine (not organized but responsible), Concept One (ultimate responsibility), Concept Two (delegated authority), Concept Four (participation), and Concept Ten (defined service authority). The Task Force removed one bullet that was deemed not to be consistent with policy. The attached proposed changes were made to provide clarity for the fellowship.

Recommendation:

Conference members were invited to review the proposed changes to the “Announcing Events” and “Workshops” portion of the Policy Digest. The Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees have approved the proposed changes, and the Announcing Events Policy Task Force is recommending the World Service Conference also approve these changes.

Conference members were invited to comment and ask questions.

- I have a question about the second bullet under **At the WSO**

The WSO posts on its calendars:

“Only A.A. events with Al-Anon participation through its Al-Anon service arms. A representative of the Al-Anon service arm brings that event to the attention of the WSO for potential posting.”

My Area has a large event with more than 1,000 attendees. The Alateen members are hosted by certified AMIAS. Would this event be posted on the Al-Anon website? Can we share about it at our meetings? Our AIS provides literature, but the event is not connected to an Al-Anon group or District. A.A. invites us to participate.

Is your Area, District, or an AIS involved? Connection to a service arm is the criteria to be included on the WSO website.

- We had a speaker event announced in our Area. One part of the event was for attendees 18 years and older. Does that fit in with this Policy? To me, it meant that Alateen members were not welcome. The flyer was made by a group.

If a group created the flyer, the District could talk to this group to reiterate that Alateen is a part of Al-Anon.

- In our Area, we have a large event that happens every year. It is self-supporting and does not support any A.A. or Al-Anon service arm. Some of the Al-Anon members put together a literature table, but in regard to announcing to groups, since it is not an A.A. or Al-Anon service arm event, should it be announced in groups?

If it is hosted by a District or AIS, it would fit, and you could announce it.

- Why was this bullet removed?
 “Areas, Districts, and AISs often plan program-related activities for fun and fellowship, to encourage participation in service and sometimes fundraising. These gatherings unite groups within the District and neighboring Districts and often improve the health of the groups and lead to the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole. These events can be announced at Al-Anon meetings and communicated in our publications.”

The Task Force determined this was informational rather than Policy.

Following the session, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the revised Announcing Events section of the Policy Digest. See Motion #5, page 61.

Some of the topics were:

- **Abundance of money:** Being abundant in this sphere means not constantly worrying about resources running out. That doesn't mean spending carelessly and recklessly.
- **Abundance of imagination:** Those who are abundant in this area strongly believe that things can change, that we can create a world that's better, and that this reality is not all there is.
- **Abundance of trust:** Believing that most people will do the right thing the majority of the time.

Following the discussion, time was provided for the members rotating off of the Board to share briefly about their experience.

The meeting closed with all Conference members joining in saying the Al-Anon Declaration.

Policy Discussion

Announcing Events

Jeri W., Trustee, Policy Committee Chairperson
 Cindy M., Trustee, Policy Task Force Chairperson

On behalf of the Policy Committee and at the invitation of the Policy Committee Chairperson, the Announcing Events Policy Task Force Chairperson facilitated a discussion about recommended changes to the Policy Digest.

Background:

At the October 2020 Policy Committee meeting, it was clarified that the WSO only announces events that are supported by a service arm, whether held face-to-face or electronically. Therefore, the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) was asked to review and make recommendations to improve clarity to the Policy Digest sections on “Announcing Events” and “Workshops.”

The January 2021 Policy Committee approved recommendations from the EMWG; however, after discussion at the 2021 WSC, the recommendation was withdrawn for further discussion by the Policy Committee. A new Task Force was created with the following charge:

“Consider whether further changes are required to either the Policy Committee approved ‘Announcing Events’ or the ‘Workshops’ portions of the Policy Digest to reflect the intention to support groups announcing group events, such as group anniversaries, without providing an opportunity for outside entities, even those operated by Al-Anon members only, to use group sponsorship to allow their events to be announced at group meetings. If recommending revisions, please explain which Tradition, Concept, or spiritual principle may be applicable.”

Practicing the Seventh Tradition

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

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The Treasurer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. opened the session by sharing, “While the Seventh Tradition is about more than just money, today we will examine budgeting, or practicing the Seventh Tradition at all levels: the individual, the group, the district, the AIS/LDC, and the Area.

“Remember, the disease of alcoholism leaves many working on renewing their financial situations and returning to the basics of budgeting 101.

“Let’s look at some spiritual principles associated with our finances. As Lois said, ‘It’s all spiritual!’ One of our first Treasurers said, ‘Money is my messenger in places I cannot be!’ If we think abundantly, there will always be enough. However, we must act prudently, so our spending is wisely considered. We practice equality through the Equalized Expense, and we have gratitude for all who keep this program going so that it can be there for the next newcomer!

“Just as our links of service flow from the groups to the Districts to the Areas to the WSO/WSC, so flow our contributions. The groups ultimately delegate responsibility to the WSO, which has the ultimate authority to provide services to all of the groups.

“So, ‘Let It Begin with Me!’ As members, we decide how much we put in the basket at a face-to-face meeting or how much to contribute electronically or by mail to the Group Treasurer. We may support our home group more than we support other meetings we attend. We can also choose to contribute based on the Quarterly Appeal to Members that the AFG, Inc. Treasurer sends four times a year. We can set up auto withdrawals from our checking account, so a minimum amount each month is contributed directly to the WSO. Again, this is our personal choice. We can also choose to contribute on our Al-Anon anniversary, donating the number of dollars that matches our anniversary. We can give to the WSO in memory of some past trusted servants and have a bequest written into our will. All of these are based on individual choice.

“Of course, there are many myths about how to distribute to the service arms. Some you may have heard are:

- We should give more money to those closest to us! The District gets the most, then the AIS, then the Area, and then WSO.
- There is a formula of percentages out there—40 percent to District, 30 percent to AIS, 20 percent to Area, and ten percent to WSO.
- We should give more to one service arm because we heard through word of mouth it needs more now than the others.
- Somebody has a deficit budget, so we should give more to them!

“Each of the service arms has a budget, and WSO actually does the calculation for you each year to determine how much per group is spent on providing world services to the groups! Let’s look closer at each service arm!

“The group conscience decides how to spend the money contributed via the Seventh Tradition. A healthy group has enough money to pay its rent or platform fee, send its GR to District meetings and Assemblies, purchase literature to sell and/or gift to newcomers, and pay its share to support the service arms that support them.

“So, as an example, if you attend a group that pays \$25/month for rent, \$215 to send their GR to each Assembly and \$20 for each District meeting, gifts newcomers a newcomer packet at \$1.40 each, and would like to contribute to each service arm at least their part of the expenses. So, annually, to cover rent (\$300), GR expenses

(\$670) and literature given away (\$70), the group would need to have contributions of \$20/week ($\$300 + \$670 + \$70 = \$1,040/52 = \20). This group usually has about 20 to 30 members attending. We will come back to discuss the service arms and how to determine how much a group should contribute in total, but let’s examine them individually first.

“A healthy District creates an annual budget. This budget would include projected income from the groups within the District and projected expenses of the District. Most income is from group or individual contributions, but some Districts also hold fundraisers. District expenses include expenses for the DR to attend the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) and Assembly meetings, rent for meetings and venues where workshops are held, or food purchased for service meetings. Establishing an ample reserve is also an important action for the District to take. Excess funds can be put to use if distributed to the AIS, Area, or WSO instead of letting them sit in a bank account. After reviewing the costs associated with rent, DR expenses, food, and workshops, a cost per group can be established for the District to be fully self-supporting. Let’s look at an example.

“An example would be a District that pays \$20 per month in rent, \$215 to send the DR to each of two AWSCs and two Assemblies, and \$230 for an annual workshop. This adds up to \$1,300 ($\$240 + \$860 + \$230 = \$1,300$). If the District has 15 meetings and each meeting contributed \$88 per year to the District, the District would be fully self-supporting.

“Some groups also support an AIS and or LDC. These are usually in metropolitan areas and supported by one or more Districts. While they are not in the direct links of service, they still support the groups and should be supported by the groups. Any extra funds an AIS or LDC has can be contributed to the Area or WSO. The AIS/LDC has expenses beyond the cost of literature, which it resells to the groups or members. They pay rent, do public outreach, support Alateen, create a monthly newsletter, and update a local meeting list. They may also host a service workshop or hold fundraisers. If an AIS/LDC adds up their expenses outside of literature purchases, it can determine how much it spends on each group it supports.

“An Area elects a Delegate to send to the WSC each year and holds Assemblies and AWSC meetings to facilitate the transfer of information between the Areas and WSC/WSO. Workshops might be held during or outside of these service meetings, and conventions might be funded throughout the Area. If the Area has approximately 320 groups and a budget of \$40,000, and each group contributes \$125 per year to the Area, the Area will be fully self-supporting.

“The WSO provides all of the services on the back of the Quarterly Appeal to Members letter. Since the main sources of income for the WSO are contributions and literature sales, groups’ contributions are very important in order for the WSO to continue providing worldwide services. Most years, contributions and literature sales do not cover the total expenses at the WSO. The Board of Trustees voted to allow up to four percent of the Reserve Fund to be transferred into the General Fund each year. This helps to cover operating expenses and can sometimes fund special projects. The three separate funds make sure that the operating funds in the General Fund, which supports the groups, stay separate from the Reserve Fund and the Building Fund. Each year, the WSO calculates how much of the General Fund is spent in support of each group. If each group contributed approximately \$300 per year, the WSO would be fully self-supporting.

Example Cost per Group by Service Arm

Service Arm	Number of Groups	Annual Expenses	Annual Cost per Group	Percentage
WSO	13,000	Varies	\$300	45%
Area	325	\$40,000	\$125	19%
District	15	\$1,300	\$88	13%
AIS/LDC	80	\$12,000*	\$150	23%

*Excludes literature purchases

“Here are some examples put into one chart. The WSO listed the cost of supporting a group in 2021 at approximately \$288, so for 2022 it was estimated at \$300. A group that is fully self-supporting would contribute \$663 in total ($\$300 + \$125 + 88 + \$150 = \663) to the four different service arms.

“A group can use the percentages (or round up or down according to the group conscience) to determine their contributions to the service arms that support it. A group would possibly donate 45 percent to WSO, 20 percent to Area, 10 percent to District, and 25 percent to AIS/LDC. Your group can create its own version using budgets from your Area, District, and AIS/LDC if you support one.

“If we take the group expenses of \$1,040 and add the combined total of all service arm contributions, the group has a total expenditure of \$1,703. With 25 members attending on average, it only takes an average of \$1.31 per week per member for the group to be fully self-supporting. To get this amount, you would take total expenses for the year of \$1,703 and divide by 52 weeks, then divide by the average number of members, which was 25 ($\$1,703 / 52 / 25 = \1.31). We know that not everyone is able to contribute, and we certainly don’t want to discourage attendance. Any member can put in what they can in the basket, even if it is a nickel or a dime, as there may be other members that can afford to put more than the average in the basket. Someday they might be able to do so too. Whatever we give away comes back tenfold!

“Of course, all of this works if all groups contribute. We heard that in 2021, only 52 percent of the groups contributed. Help us carry the message that ‘it takes one to start something, but many to carry it out.’ In fact, it takes everyone!”

Conference members were given the opportunity for questions and comments:

- Thank you, this is something I will give to our Treasurer. Since most of our groups don’t have a budget, our Treasurer made up a group budget template and put that out at our meetings so we can use that. This presentation will help also. One thing I noticed is my group has a reserve fund; is that a good idea? Our District did not have a budget, so our District totally depends on the groups. Is that how it works?

Yes, it is okay to have a group reserve fund, but it doesn’t need to be a lot. Maybe one to two months is all that is needed. Yes, every service arm relies on the groups to support them.

- I think we need to add one more myth to the list. I have started to hear this often: “My group doesn’t have any expenses, we are on Zoom!”

Consider reminding them about the services delivered by WSO, such as the webpage and the meeting search. [In addition, there is a fee associated with having a Zoom subscription.]

- On the AIS screen, it looked like it only had rent listed, but some AIS/LDCs pay a special worker, so maybe you need to add that if you have it.

Yes, these are just examples. Everyone needs to adjust this information to their Area, group, District, etc.

- I heard you say more than once that healthy groups are self-supporting. Many groups that are not self-supporting are getting smaller and smaller; however, they want to hang on. In reality, they are relying on other groups to support them. Are Areas also looking at similar type of numbers as the WSO, where less than 60 percent of groups are supporting the Area? How can we help our groups understand that being self-supporting is not fully financial? There has to be room for additional conversation. How do we have that conversation?

This is a starting point; all of those things are important to talk to your groups about. What does self-supporting really mean? Do we have what we need? Each group needs to ask that question of themselves! There are no specific answers to that question, so we just need to continue talking about it.

- Thanks for keeping it simple. I appreciate breaking down who provides the most service.
- Some of the groups have asked how to deal with processing fees, specifically outside the US and Canada. One of the bigger groups has members outside of our World Service Conference Structure and they want to contribute, but they can’t use the platforms we use in the US. Do you have any recommendations for the Global Electronic Area (GEA)?

Our current understanding is that the GEA Treasurer is working together with the WSO to determine which is the best platform to get contributions from as many individuals as possible. We have to recognize that this will result in fees, and over time all Areas will have to address that. Sometimes, the donation request will be inclusive of the fee and it will be included in accepting your contribution. Other times it is not. The WSO does not currently ask for these fees from these WSC Structure members contributing online.

- Thank you for this presentation; it is a great way to get information to my Area. I was able to visit all District meetings in my Area and found our Districts have a huge amount of money in their treasury. It is hard to understand how a reserve fund is useful if it is not used. It might be interesting to rethink how we use the reserve funds and why we need them, maybe in trying to get them to re-address this by using a District budget. If you have \$5,000 in a District budget, it is probably too much, as you are probably not giving out that much in services at the District level.
- Generally, our groups do make contributions and WSO keeps track of those. Is there a line on the individual contribution sheet where we put the group number on there also? This would help let us know that members of our group are contributing as individuals also.

On the website, you can make a contribution and put in your group number, and that contribution will be counted as a group, not an individual, contribution. If you put in as an individual it will be counted as an individual contribution. We cannot list contributions under both categories.

Proposed Discussion Topics

During Conference, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) received two requests for topics to be added to the 2023 Conference agenda:

- Some Delegates requested the CLT consider adding a session to the Conference agenda to share thoughts regarding the outside consultants' diversity, equity, and inclusion workshop.
- Five Delegates requested the CLT consider adding a session to the Conference agenda to discuss adding Delegates to the Conference Leadership Team.

Following Conference Procedures, the CLT determined it was not possible to extend the hours of the Conference. Therefore, the only option for holding these conversations would be to postpone one or more of the existing Conference sessions.

The CLT provided the following documents so that Conference members could make an informed decision:

- A framing document that included answers to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions regarding adding Delegates to the Conference Leadership Team
- A list of those agenda topics the CLT recognized could be postponed
- The voting results of the 2023 Chosen Agenda Items

The CLT estimated the process to select which topics could be postponed would take an estimated 30-45 minutes. Therefore, the first order of business was to vote on whether or not the Conference wished to postpone any topics on the current Conference agenda.

The following morning, the Conference Chairperson determined by consensus that everyone was ready to vote.

A simple show of hands was requested, and the question was asked: Do Conference members wish to postpone current agenda items to discuss either (or both) of the requested topics? A simple majority, which would suffice for this vote, was not met.

The Conference Chairperson noted that the Conference would proceed as scheduled with no changes to the agenda.

- We ensure our officers, DRs, and Coordinators are clearly able to communicate information they receive.
- We support our AAPP by staying connected through the annual Alateen process.
- We learn from one another, learn how to communicate with one another, and share our spiritual connections by sharing experience, strength, and hope.

Panel 62

Charge: Panel 62 members will share tips for creating and giving a Delegate Report.

Panel 62 Delegates shared with the Conference the top five ideas for giving an exciting Delegates Report. Those ideas are:

5. Know your Area. Each Area is different; some are interested in finance, some are interested in Alateen, some want to know about electronic meetings or archives, etc. Some Delegates only get 30 minutes for their report, some get five hours. It is important to know what your Area wants and needs to hear.
4. Utilize photos (not videos!), skits, and visual effects to engage your Area members in your report.
3. Take lots of notes, but it is not necessary to write down everything that is said! A lot of information will be shared on AFG Connects after the Conference and in the *Conference Summary*.
2. Share what you know. Finances might not be your strongest topic, so just share what you know and are comfortable with. The cost of services for each group is an important financial sharing. Ask Area Coordinators to share parts of your report. They often have learned things from AFG Connects that correspond with what you have learned at Conference.
1. Keep everyone wide awake! Ask questions as you go through your report. Keep them interested. Maybe deliver a quiz on a couple of things to keep them engaged. Offering a prize helps. Do not forget humor and to "Keep It Simple"!

Special Presentations

Before the official start of the 2023 Conference, while the incoming Panel of Delegates attended the Orientation Meeting for New WSC Members, Panel 61 and Panel 62 Delegates were given the charge to make a presentation to the Conference on the opening day.

Panel 61

Charge: Panel 61 members will share ways they have fulfilled their responsibility of being a communication link between the WSO and the Area.

The Panel 61 Delegates formed a line at the front of the Conference room. Each member shared in one to two sentences how they have been the communication link. Here are a few of the statements:

- We have worked to be in constant communication with the Area officers, Coordinators, Districts, and groups to let them know how they are important.
- We strive to remain approachable and available and share new and updated information.
- We used the World Service Conference Structure Graphic to illustrate how the links of service work.
- We encourage unanimity, and we value each member, voice, and each idea. We continue to learn.

Transforming Electronic Groups

Vali F., Executive Director

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

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The Executive Director welcomed the WSC to the Transforming Electronic Groups (TEG) Project update. She and the Director of Communications & Community Awareness began their report by reflecting on the collective progress over the previous year on the technology and processes required to support electronic groups in geographic and non-geographic Areas. The TEG Project began following 2021 WSC recognition of electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups and continued even as the 2022 WSC welcomed the Global Electronic Area (GEA) into its Structure.

Since the last WSC, significant work has been accomplished by trusted servants both within and outside the WSC Structure:

- GEA trusted servants established banking processes to allow the newly recognized electronic groups to practice Tradition Seven and become fully self-supporting as a service structure in less than a year. The Area Officers appointed an Area Group Records Coordinator, began holding AWSC meetings, held their first Assembly, formed a Thought Force to identify strategies for creating Districts, and held their first technologically, self-supporting Assembly to elect an Alternate Delegate.

- Thirty-one geographic Areas completed Knowledge-Based Decision-Making efforts leading to informed decisions welcoming electronic groups into their service structures.
- The Poland General Service Office (GSO) became the first international structure to notify the WSO they had welcomed electronic groups into their service structure and transferred several Polish-speaking electronic groups from the GEA to their GSO.

The Project Team then discussed progress on TEG efforts undertaken by the WSO since May 2022.

Most significantly, in March 2023, the new Global Electronic Meeting Search was launched on al-anon.org. This Global Search supports electronic groups seeking global participation, which includes groups meeting in 18 different languages. The search provides improved features over the previous electronic group search, including the ability to search by type of meeting, print search results, and display meetings just beginning or about to start in the user's preferred language based on browser time zone and language settings. The Project Team reported that member feedback about the new Global Search has been overwhelmingly positive.

Two additional items prioritized based on Area and group trusted servant feedback had also been or were in the process of being released:

- Online forms to support groups requesting transfer from the GEA to a geographical Area within the WSC Structure or vice versa
- Updated registration and change forms to allow electronic groups to register with either geographic or non-geographic Areas

The Team confirmed that the constant need to update electronic group forms, for instance to include additional geographic Areas which had accepted electronic groups, had necessitated permanent discontinuation of the PDF versions of these forms.

Staff described the two efforts in progress as of April 2023:

- Creation of an electronic groups listing that Area trusted servants can export into spreadsheet format to organize the growing number of electronic groups in their Areas.
- Development of a process to display electronic groups registered with geographic Areas on the meeting search along with physical groups (Geographic Meeting Search).

This latter effort involves modifying the electronic group registration and updating forms to require city/town postal code for groups registering in geographic Areas. The Project Team noted the postal code requirement is only valid for the United States, Canada, and Bermuda since the WSO is only responsible for managing electronic groups seeking a local audience within the WSC Structure.

The Project Team closed their report with highlights of the TEG's future roadmap. Roadmap work commenced in 2022 with the formation of a Task Force consisting of WSO Staff, Area Group Records Coordinators, and, for the first time ever, District Representatives (DRs). The charge was to gather feedback to understand what was working in the current online group records system and to identify gaps Area trusted servants needed filled by the next generation solution. The Task Force received a strong response from AGRCs and DRs who provided data that will prove helpful in prioritizing the first component of the next generation solution to develop.

The Executive Director explained that "Many steps need to be completed before the WSO Project Team can announce the first release of the next generation of group records software." The initial

release will focus on processing of new group registrations that avoids AGRC rekeying of data and, if feasible, includes an approval process. The complete replacement of the current online group records system is expected to take many years to achieve.

To keep up to date on progress and plans, the Project Team encouraged all Conference members to stay tuned for the periodic AFG Connects updates on the TEG project, which are posted in WSC Members community.

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

- I heard it shared that there were three phases or workstreams. What are they?

The workstreams are: creating the Global Electronic Meeting Search, supporting electronic groups in geographic Areas including updating online forms, and replacing the online group records application.

- When it comes to making changes, can the Group Records Coordinator make the changes for a group, or do they have to do it on their own?

As long as it is a physical group, meeting in a physical location, then yes, the changes can be made either way, on their own or through the Group Records Coordinator. If it is an electronic group, then no, changes can currently only be processed by the WSO due to technology limitations.

- This presentation was awesome! If we have a group in the Area that is electronic and they do their changes through the WSO, at what point is our Area notified of those changes?

Currently, the Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) are notified when the form is submitted.

- On this workflow, there are 31 Areas that have decided to register electronic groups. Is there a way to understand what the different Area policies are?

Delegates are invited to talk with other Area trusted servants.

- Today you said that groups will need to decide what type of audience they want to attract, local or global. I have not heard this before. We want to be associated with our District, but want a global audience, so now what?

In 2021, part of the message shared by the Electronic Meeting Work Group was the need for group registration procedures to consider not only the WSC Structure but also our international structures, so the answer is basically that groups need to take a group conscience and decide which service structure they plan to serve and support. Hopefully, we each know that all Al-Anon meetings welcome anyone struggling from the family disease of alcoholism. So, the decision is about where the group members wish to attract newcomers and be of service. Their group will be listed accordingly. If they wish to attract a global audience, their listing will be global and their group trusted servants can reside anywhere. If they wish to attract newcomers from nearby geographic locations, their listing will be geographic and their group trusted servants come from their location.

- This is a question about Group IDs. If a group decided to switch to being an electronic group, do they retain their same ID? What if a group decides to split, if one part meets face-to-face and one part wants to meet virtually? Which part gets to use the group ID number?

Yes, groups will get to keep their same ID number if they become an electronic group. Regarding the other question, the group that formed initially maintains its name and its number, and the other part that is splitting off registers as a new group. In the system there will be no connection between these two.

- We are working on setting up our process. What we would like to do is give groups options like “go to an Area Electronic District” or “go to a local District as an electronic group.”

This sounds like a good path. It is part of your Area’s autonomy to decide how you want to connect the electronic groups to your service structure.

- In thinking about the geographical electronic groups currently on the website, could there be a dropdown listing electronic meetings in a geographical Area? That would identify an electronic meeting in a specific Area.

Thank you for the thought. We can take that back for discussion.

- Is it possible for a physical group to also hold electronic meetings?

No, a group has a single location. We agreed that a physical group can have a hybrid aspect, but they cannot have multiple locations. If group members wish to also have meetings electronically, we welcome and encourage them to register as an electronic group.

- We could not see any way we could come up with guidelines for 39 Districts. How is that possible for a District to tell a group they cannot join a District? That would mean they are not equal.

This would be something that would need to be discussed within the Area and within the Area’s autonomy.

- We have some groups that are “locationally” challenged during the winter months. They meet in person in the summer and electronically in the winter months. In other words, they shift locations every six months. Is that possible?

The answer right now is that they would need to change their location every six months or every time they change. They would need to submit a change form either through the AGRC or the WSO. It is about location, not about the group. It is their location that changes, not the structure of the group.

- When we talk about streamlining the process by registering an electronic group, they can choose to have a local audience or global audience and our Area has a policy to accept them. Does this mean they no longer have to register in the GEA?

This is correct, once you have developed your Area procedures and you have notified the WSO, electronic groups seeking a local audience in your geographic Area can then can just register directly in your Area.

- There are electronic groups, registered with WSO, that chose to add additional meeting days to their group. Can they keep their registration number? Is there a limit to how many days of the week that a group can hold meetings? If that group votes to have an evening meeting, can that meeting still be listed with that group?

Yes, groups can add more meetings. How many is too many or is there too many? These are questions the Staff has raised to the Policy Committee and is being considered for a Thought Force right now. Questions that have been raised also include, how is the group ensuring unity? Is everyone being heard if there are multiple

meetings for groups? Staff is holding on further decisions until the Policy Committee has completed their discussions. We hope this conversation will encourage discussion within that group; if the group changes days, they may ask, “Have we thought about it and talked about how we maintain unity and clarification, so every member can have the opportunity to be involved in the group conscience?”

- Our Area is currently working on Policy on whether or not to accept electronic groups. We have lots of groups that have not gone back to face-to-face but are still active. Since they are virtual, and we do not have a specific Policy, should we remove them from our Area meeting list or is there a possibility they can remain virtual in our Area?

Groups can stay temporarily online until six to twelve months after the Area makes a final decision regarding accepting electronic groups. (The timeline to transition is currently deferred until Geographic Meeting Search listing electronic groups registered with geographic Areas is available.) If the Area decides not to accept electronic groups, then the groups which decide to stay electronic will need to transfer to the GEA.

SHARING OURSELVES

Delegates (Panel 61)

John M., California North

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting, I just wanted the pain to stop. I had no idea the solution to my pain would be restoring a lost connection with my Higher Power. I had no trust, no self-esteem, and I certainly did not love myself. Today I know my Higher Power loves me, because it took a Power greater than myself to keep me on my recovery path. I'm in awe of a Power that can take a lost young man from the pit of darkness all the way to the World Service Conference (WSC).

Through Al-Anon, I have benefited from the wisdom and love of great sponsorship and countless longtime members who patiently sat with me for hours working our Three Legacies. Their service changed my attitude, which is changing my life. Today, I am grateful to be part of a vast network of recovery. Al-Anon has given me a path, through service, to continue giving away what was lovingly shared with me, first through Alateen service, which broke through my thick layers of defenses, then through our amazing service structure, where God makes sure I get the lessons I need to grow past my defects.

During my term as Area Literature Coordinator, Al-Anon was collecting written sharings for the new daily reader, so I facilitated a lot of writing workshops. Did you know that when *A Little Time for Myself* is released at the International Convention, it will be nine years in the making from when it was given conceptual approval at the 2014 WSC? That process, time, and dedication is not lost on me. Awareness, gratitude, and appreciation: these are all gifts of service that I cherish today. I know what it's like to not be able to appreciate the good things I've been given. I don't ever want to go back to living like that, encased in numbness, unable to feel the joy of living.

Delegate service has been the honor of a lifetime. Service has taught me to love and to laugh. Service often puts me outside my comfort zone, challenging me to grow. Through it all, I'm grateful to be able to feel love and to be able to laugh at myself and at God's sometimes odd sense of humor. I'm inspired by my fellow Conference members and WSO Staff who work tirelessly to ensure that the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen will always be there.

Tim P., California South

Love was the impetus that drove me to my first Al-Anon meeting 20 years ago. My three young adult sons were struggling with alcoholism and other drug addictions, and I was determined to save them. What inspired me to “Keep Coming Back” was the laughter I heard at meetings. That some Al-Anon members appeared joyful in the face of the deadly disease of alcoholism illustrated the truth of the Second Step: I could be restored to sanity.

It didn't take me long to accept that I did indeed love the members of my group in a very special way—the same way they already loved me. Traveling fairly often in my work for a global company, I was reluctant to take a group service position that I might not be able to fulfill. About 18 months into Al-Anon, my group's “World Service Representative” announced that her three-year term was up. She had me at “World.” I knew vaguely from her reports that Al-Anon was a global organization. Once she described her duties, I volunteered and was elected by my group—unopposed.

At my first District meeting, no one stepped up to be the Alternate District Representative, so I put my hand up, figuring the DR would show me the ropes. She informed me after the meeting that I should book my ticket for the upcoming Regional Service Seminar—in Hawaii. I quickly realized that service was going to be fun!

At Assemblies, I heard our Delegates describe the spirituality of their experience at the World Service Conference. They shared movingly about how being Delegate had transformed their lives. I hoped that eventually, if my Higher Power was willing, I would serve my Area as Delegate. After standing twice and having another candidate's name drawn by lot, my Assembly elected me Delegate for Panel 61—unopposed. However, in my case, it is 20 years of Al-Anon membership that has transformed me. Being Delegate is merely a particularly exciting stage in the remarkable personal growth that Al-Anon service has made possible in my life. As we hear in Step Twelve, the spiritual awakening we receive from working the Steps inspires us to carry the Al-Anon message to others—and that is the essence of service at every level of Al-Anon.

Matt W., Delaware

It is hard for me to believe this is my final year as Delaware's Delegate. I can honestly say that I was not prepared when I took on this service role at the end of 2020. But I can also say that my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, has prepared me along the way through my service work. So sadly, I will say goodbye to this service position this year—ironically, just as God has finally prepared me for the work!

Our theme this year is “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together.”

“Love.” When I think of love, I think of all of you. I think of my Area, District, and group service fellowship. I think of my home group, Sunday night's A Loving God Step Meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. I think of the love I received when I first walked through the doors of Al-Anon on a cold, rainy December night. I think of the love my heart has for every newcomer who I've seen walk through our doors since. And I remember that Al-Anon exists to help friends and families of alcoholics.

“Laugh.” When I think of laughter, I think of a joke I was told at my first WSC by a member of A.A. They told me, “You folks in Al-Anon are special. Anyone can be in A.A. But you have to know someone to be in Al-Anon.” I think of all the joy I've shared at conference with you these past three years; the laughter we've had during our Delaware AWSC meetings; the funny moments at our Area Assemblies; the smiles I always receive at our District Meetings, letting me know I belong. And I think of the laughter I saw at my first Al-Anon meetings, because it was something I didn't have in my life.

“Grow.” When I think of growth, I think of the tremendous spiritual growth I had during my first year of service as Delegate. I've never experienced anything like it before or since. And I think of how closely I've grown in my relationship with the God of my understanding, and how my faith and trust in God have grown through my service work.

The people in this room are here to perform an important responsibility for the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. And in performing that service we “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together.” Thank you.

Evelyn T., Florida North

When I first heard the theme for this year's Conference, "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together," I felt that this was written for me. Are they talking to me? Do they want me to share this message that I have been practicing with the people around me for quite some time? The dictionary defines *love* as a great interest and pleasure in something. For me, that is the *love* I feel for the program and the pleasure I get serving the fellowship of Al-Anon. *Laugh* is defined as a pleasant physical reaction and emotion, a good way to relieve stress with health benefits. A good sense of humor and laughter are the blessings that my Higher Power has shown me with the *love* that I have received from all the spiritual partners I have met during my recovery process, "One Day at a Time." *Grow* is defined as becoming larger or greater over a period of time, progressing to maturity. So, then, we *grow together* as a family, helping each other, loving and accepting each other, understanding our pain, and laughing when we are not perfect.

The process has been long and many times could have been smoother, but the benefits obtained are worth the effort. Nothing in life comes easy; it requires commitment and a great desire to change. My faith will continue bringing to my life the *love*, the *laughter*, and the *growth* that leads my daily path to serenity; that was precisely what I was searching for when I crossed the door of my first Al-Anon meeting.

Today, my life is not perfect, but I have made great progress on my spiritual path. Al-Anon has allowed me to love and accept myself as I am and to better love others. By participating in different task forces, I have learned to respect the opinions of others and communicate better with them. The service experience as a Delegate has given me the love, the laughs, the joy, and the growth that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I have confidence that my Higher Power will continue guiding me in the right direction, and I will be diligently looking for ways to be of service. I am open to discovering! I will be forever grateful for this opportunity and all the love, the laughs, and the growth I've found in these rooms. Thank you, Higher Power. Thank you, Al-Anon!

Diane B., Florida South

Serving as Delegate has certainly been an enlightening experience both wonderful and demanding, and a huge test of my understanding of the Traditions and Concepts. Beginning in 2020 with the pandemic, having to learn the ins and outs of online meetings and the experience of my first Conference online was very challenging. Year 2022 was completely different as we were able to meet at Conference and experience that most important face-to-face interaction that I so enjoy. Then, our visit to Stepping Stones brought a whole new dimension to my program. Here we are in 2023, and now that we have a better understanding of the who, what, and why of the Conference, it's time to gift that knowledge forward to the next Delegate.

So, what have I learned? I learned that a lot of the things that I thought were very important were not. I've learned that principles are more important than personalities. I've learned that whatever happens in my personal life, the members of my Area always stand behind me with love and support. I've learned that my Higher Power never fails as long as I listen to the messages. Giving a Delegate's report that is interesting as well as informative can be daunting. We are given so much information at Conference to digest and pass along. I thank my fellow Panel 61 Delegates for the combined help we've all given to each other. My Sponsors (yes, several) are my sounding boards for anything that comes up. They've given

me their experience, strength, and hope so that I can sort out my direction. I'm happy to report that my *Service Manual* is highlighted, paper-clipped, underlined, and dog-eared. So are my daily readers.

The reason I sought out this program was because of my mother's behavior when she drank. Thanks to the spiritual growth the Al-Anon program offered to me, I am now my mother's caregiver. I do these things not with resentments, but as a living amends. Thank you, Al-Anon, for teaching me to "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together."

Penni S., Hawaii

I have marveled at the WSO Dance Troupe these last three years. Their clearly defined roles allowed them to glide gracefully from one issue to the next with appropriately timed entrances, social pas de deux, and humble exits, responding kindly, calmly, and clearly every time. And there were no divas!

Deep listening, group-working, and patience abounded, and every question was honored, modeling for me and empowering me to be a more effective leader and follower. Witnessing references to a Tradition or a Concept when offering an opinion or a suggestion was an exquisite example of the practical application of placing "principles above personalities." The real gift of being here at the World Service Conference is witnessing the depth of the effects of the disease of alcoholism in group-working and the depth of the effects of the healing of the Al-Anon program when I practice the principles in the Traditions and the Concepts in all my affairs. So, standing here in my third year as Hawaii's Delegate, I am deeply curious about playing more often with the World Service Office Staff, the Conference Leadership Team, and the upcoming Delegates, so that more and more members have the opportunity to witness and experience the breadth of recovery that is possible for those who see that "service is not doing things alone for someone else. Service is working with other people to get something done."

I've become more fluent in the Traditions and Concepts, while the Warranties have become one of the clearest, most concise summaries of the Al-Anon program. They describe how recovered human beings, having had a spiritual awakening, can practice living in the world together peacefully and respectfully, curious about one another, financially self-sufficient, more solution-oriented, and less in need of punitive action. I relish the deep healing and the recovery that comes every day, with every situation, whether in or out of a meeting, when I practice actively placing "principles above personalities."

For that new life habit, I thank you, and I hope I have the chance in the next 45 years of my recovery to model the healing message of living a principled life as you have modeled for me these past three years as members of the World Service Conference. Thank you for allowing me to play with you. I'll be back.

Gregg R., Illinois North

I'm quick to consider the spirituality of the 2023 Theme, because I understand my Higher Power to be *Love*. When asked to stand for Delegate, the love within me answered "yes." Gratitude for my continuing service journey is my most important recovery tool. When serving with faith, trust, hope, and compassion, I find that I possess qualities worthy of love. At my first meeting, my self-esteem was low due to a perceived failure to help my son. Our Legacies provided the opportunity to find and value the person I am. Volunteering to serve and participate provided me an opportunity to grow. With support from other members, I was able to overcome the fear that I wouldn't be good enough.

We reviewed the Concepts at our 2021 Orientation Meeting for New WSC Members. I remember vividly how everyone recited Concept Four together: “Participation is the key to harmony.” Many of us shared laughter. I sensed relief that my Higher Power had me where I needed to be. Everyone has a spiritual need to belong.

I’ve been a long-tenured youth baseball coach. Working as a member and chair for task and thought forces during electronic group transitioning has reinforced for me many Concept themes: informed decision making, mutual trust and respect, accountability, open minded listening, delegation of authority, clarity of defined responsibilities, cooperative goal setting, and leadership qualities of stability, tolerance, flexibility, judgement, and vision. Bringing a loving team spirit makes us all winners by using the principles from our Warranties—prudence, humility, personal responsibility, unanimity, avoiding controversy, and equality—as we face challenges. Carrying our Twelfth Step message to those in need is a team sport.

Unity has been a component of our Conference themes the past two years, and still is in year three. *Growing together* means that we are united by one purpose: helping families and friends of alcoholics. “Moving Forward” for the greater good when passing 15 motions virtually in 2021 and “Enhancing Our Recovery” by uniting in person last year both show this unity. Sharing my “Love, Laughter, and Growth” with fellowship members at the International Convention will be this year’s highlight. The opportunity to serve as a three-year member of the Literature Committee and developing lasting relationships with fellow Delegates, Staff, Board members, and my Mentor and Mentee friends head today’s gratitude list. With a love song in my heart, I’m still and always happy to be on this journey and learning each and every day.

Maureen H., Indiana

When I received this invitation, my first thought was, “How is it time?!” When reflecting on this year’s theme, “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,” it describes my Al-Anon journey perfectly. When I came in, the thought of service in any form, let alone Delegate, wasn’t even on the radar! I entered the rooms as had I been “advised” to attend at least one meeting, thinking I would hear the magic words to fix my issues. Little did I know this would be the start of the journey to standing here today.

“Love”: unconditional love was what kept me coming back to meetings. The people in the rooms of Al-Anon understood what was happening in my home and offered their experience, strength and hope freely. I witnessed service in action from the GR, Secretary, and Treasurer of my first home group. I entered service to the group when I was “voluntold” I would be the next Treasurer! I will be forever grateful for that nudge, as it opened my eyes to service beyond the group level.

“Laugh”: laughter in the rooms was exciting in time. When attending my first Area Assembly, I saw that Al-Anon is truly magical. I was drawn to understand more about the District, Area, and then the World Service Conference. The Delegate report from WSC, the skits, and the encouragement to participate gave me a sense of belonging that was medicine to my soul! We had FUN while assuring the legacy of Al-Anon lived on!

“Grow Together”: I began Area level service as Secretary and Newsletter Coordinator and became intrigued with the possibility of serving as Delegate “someday.” I returned to District service as DR, then Alternate Delegate, and then had the honor of being elected to Panel 61, “The Legacies Live On.” The experience of a fully virtual 2021 WSC was overwhelming and exciting at the same time. Growth comes out of challenge, and WSO and the WSC rose to the challenge.

New York in 2022 afforded me the opportunity to experience what had been described by my prior Delegates. My experience of spiritual growth was magnified by visiting Stepping Stones. This year in Virginia Beach will bring me full circle in my Delegate experience! This year’s theme, “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,” is the perfect description of my personal journey as Delegate. I will be forever honored and grateful for this incredible experience.

Terry R., Kansas

My service journey has led me to some challenging positions and some enjoyable positions. I have learned a lot along the way and am still learning all the time. I have been in service now for quite a few years and my usual closing on emails has been “love in service,” but in these three years as Delegate, these words, “Love in Service,” have taken on a whole new meaning to me.

Love in service! What does this mean to me? It means that what needs to guide me in all that I do is love: love for my fellows, love for this program, love for my Area. I have a sticky note on my file cabinet by my desk; I don’t even know where I got it, but it says, “Forget about yourself and your little corner of the world! Think about Al-Anon as a whole.” This is love in service! Tradition One asks me to find what’s best for the common welfare, not just for me or a select few. My job is to be a channel between WSO and my Area, to reach out to all and work to increase participation in this fellowship, encourage connections between links in our Al-Anon family, and work to bring this fellowship to all who want it. And how do I do that? Love in service.

I love this wonderful program of ours, there’s no doubt. It has given me so much, but most of all it has allowed me to love myself. And that simple thing, loving myself, was necessary before I could open myself up to loving others and allowing others to love me. I have loved being a Delegate! It has given me such gifts—more confidence, new skills, increased knowledge, and more tolerance and patience for myself and others. It has changed me! I try to be enthusiastic, passionate, and excited in all I have done as a Delegate to show that love. And that means lots of laughter. I love to make people laugh. I love it! This year’s theme, “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,” could be my life’s theme from here on out! I want to keep loving, keep laughing, and keep growing with you all.

Linda C., Kentucky

I am a middle child, the stereotypical peacemaker. My home was filled with control. While there was love and laughter, there was a part of me lacking growth. When I started my own family, I shifted between the familiar role of control and lack of self-esteem. Active alcoholism was only part of the problem; my reaction is what got me here. My home group taught me that the principles of the program lead to changing my character. I saw hope when I became willing. I am filled with gratitude for “Progress Not Perfection.”

Our literature says, “you will love us in a very special way.” This means, to me, that because of our common bond we share unconditional love for each other. After seeing it in action, I am better able to share unconditional love with my family.

Being part of the World Service Conference has shown me love, laughter, and growth in action. Love is devotion and having the respect for Al-Anon to say yes to service. Laughter is being light-hearted, not taking things personally or too seriously. Growing together and working together in the world’s largest group conscience moves Al-Anon forward in strength for generations to come. My worldwide view of Al-Anon has gotten bigger by serving as Delegate. Alcoholism is active in other countries and every state in the US and so is the solution! Today, I have better relationships

with those who are most important to me. I wouldn't have known the depth of a healthy relationship. I am grateful I was gifted with a need for Al-Anon.

Brenda L., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario

I love this program for all that it has given me. The program taught me about the Three Legacies, which come with those wonderful spiritual principles. These principles help to guide me in my actions, attitudes, and behaviors. I can truly love today unconditionally, and it is reciprocated in my relationships. I am filled with gratitude that my faith has been restored. My Higher Power walks with me and guides me in my recovery and service journey. I have learned that it is "Progress Not Perfection" as I recover from the effects of the family disease of alcoholism.

My service journey as a Delegate was nothing I imagined it would be. The 2021 WSC was held on Webex, and I missed the feelings of all those anticipated friendships and connections, as we all did. They just occurred in a different way. I was unable to attend the 2022 WSC meeting, and I was disheartened. I know today, as in any solid relationship, it can become rocky. Leukemia, an unscheduled retirement, and a dying husband. My disappointment placed me in a position of discontent and resentment. Unworthiness crept into my heart, and I felt that I was failing Area 82.

The questions that I asked myself were: What does my program tell me? "How Important Is It?" Was I trying to manipulate the uncontrollable? Were Concept Four and inclusivity met? What did my Service Sponsor say? The outcome for me is that I will continue to work through this situation, as it has been difficult to let go. I will continue to find strength in the Three Legacies, the slogans, and the serenity prayer to resolve this in my heart. This is what my program teaches me, and I know that everything takes time when one is healing. I will continue serving the membership in my role as the Delegate, leading by example with grace, humility, compassion, and dignity. "Let Go and Let God."

Thank you, Panel 61, for all that you have given me. A huge thank you to my Area for their love, understanding, and compassion. They rallied around me, supporting me unconditionally in all that I could do. I love this program for giving me a life filled with peace and serenity beyond what I do in service as a trusted servant.

I will plant a seed, offer a word of hope, and watch my garden grow.

Phil B., Maryland/District of Columbia

As near as I can recall, I came into the program for the first time around 2006. I became the consummate Al-Anon newcomer in a state of extreme despair, equipped with people-pleasing, covering-up, fixing, and bottle-searching skills. Somehow, I realized that Al-Anon folks were experiencing similar circumstances. I found it strange for folks to be talking about positive life experiences before, during, and after the meeting.

As I fast forward a few years later, serving the group, the District, and the Area, I recall being an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and listening to Alateen members share their experiences. Even more than that, I watched them interact and have fun together at conventions, despite their home lives, which for many included living with an alcoholic. I loved being on convention committees where many committee members would share, interact, and help each other in ways previously unimaginable, while collectively fostering a convention where everyone grew together and we knew we would see each other again at the next convention. We had to; this felt too good not to do again!

I loved serving on Area committees where everyone listened to each person's ideas and opinions in an effort to come up with an outcome that was focused on our common welfare. While all these interactions were taking place, we took the time to laugh at ourselves and practice our program principles while growing together as a group, as a District, as an Area.

Looking back, since I came into Al-Anon, the folks I have served with the most have become my program friends whom I go to for input and to share ideas with for the good of our Area and its members. They may not be the friends I go watch a baseball game with, but they are the folks I've grown with, with whom I've learned how to live a happier life, with whom I've learned to make better decisions. The loving interchange among us has mysteriously, miraculously, and gradually helped me to grow into a person I really love today. What a magnificent life I live today. I am so very blessed!

Kristine G., Michigan

Humbled and amazed. I stand here humbled and amazed not only that three years have passed, but also that I have served them as Michigan Delegate. Never would I have dreamed this would have been me. I guess my Higher Power had a different plan.

Loving, laughing, and growing together has been somewhat of a personal mantra I've enjoyed since coming to Al-Anon. When a longtime relationship ended, I went looking for someone who didn't drink and stumbled upon an eight-months-sober alcoholic. His Sponsor told me, "If you want this relationship to work, you need to go to Al-Anon." I'd never heard of Al-Anon, but thought I'd go to stay one step ahead of an alcoholic. It didn't take long for me to learn that Al-Anon was for me, and I started my journey of recovery through our Three Legacies.

My first service position entrusted me with the meeting's key, which kept me coming back. I had to come back, as the other members needed their meetings. Unbeknownst to me, many members also held a key. After two years and a move, I worked with Alateens, which exposed me to the effects of someone's drinking on my childhood. Moving from Canada to the US, I wanted to stay involved, so I attended a District meeting and said a prayer. When it was over, I had been elected Alternate District Representative.

Thank you for accepting and including me in our fellowship. Becoming active at the Area level was as simple as getting in the car. The meetings on the way to and from the Area were priceless. Loving, laughing, and growing together. "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called," was a saying shared by group members when I was afraid to stand for Area Treasurer. I was able to trust them and my Higher Power. Early in recovery, it was suggested I never say "no." I now say, "Let me pray about it; I'll get back to you in 72 hours."

Service is a gift I give myself; it's also how I show gratitude for this program that was given so freely to me. Thank you for all you do to keep the message of Al-Anon available for those seeking recovery. When I walked in, there were members willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with me, leaving me feeling at home and ready to work my program.

Kit S., Minnesota South

I knew everything there was to know at age 19; however, I needed others to define me. Additionally, I knew how to isolate, act out, and take responsibility for things that were not mine. At 33, I married an alcoholic in recovery and right away we had three daughters. Ten years later, I asked myself, "Who am I?" At 44, I attended an Al-Anon beginners meeting. I found a home group where I was asked to wash the coffee cups and clean the ashtrays, though no one smoked. Later,



I was invited to join an Area fellowship planning team. I learned to apply the Traditions and Concepts in various committees and boards as well as at home and work. I worked with personal and Service Sponsors.

Our first daughter graduated from high school the same evening our second attempted suicide. The principles that I learned working the Steps helped with my thinking and attitudes, and I could give and receive recovery. The principles that I learned working the Traditions helped me with knowing when, where, and how I suit up and show up, and what I say and how I say it. The principles I've learned in working the Concepts have shown me a new way to love: to love myself, those with whom I interact, and a Higher Power to whom I give and receive service. Having grown up in a home that lives the principles of the program, our third daughter is a self-expressed, free spirit.

Al-Anon and Alateen offer the full dinner and dance. I show up at the party and find that I can be open and honest without seeking approval or agreement; that is, I grow in your care and company. I eat every course offered and find a pathway that continues to nurture me. Together, we sing and dance through our laughter and tears. I know who I am. I have a long way to go, but I am enough and I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be today. Little by little, "One Day at a Time," I "Listen and Learn" how to apply each of our three Legacies in every aspect of my life. As I look back on my Al-Anon journey, I see that I've grabbed nearly every opportunity this miraculous program offers us to "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together." Life is good. Thank you, Al-Anon and Alateen.

Kathi D., New York North

"Love, Laugh, and Grow Together," wow! There was very little love and nearly no laughter in my life before coming to Al-Anon. The disease of alcoholism casts a long shadow. For me, this shadow spans across many generations. Memories of laughter during my childhood mostly occurred outside of my home. Inside the home, the memories of laughter are from early childhood—before the family disease of alcoholism was firmly rooted. In my late teens, I rediscovered love and laughter with a man whom I would eventually marry. The laughter was short-lived, but my desire to love him into the man I knew that he could be only grew. I'm pretty sure that this year's Conference theme is not based on the type of love and growth I was undertaking.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting two months shy of my 30th birthday. It took several more months before I crawled back to another meeting, completely defeated. I didn't come to fix the alcoholic and didn't stay because of the love and laughter I felt in the room. I stayed to find out how to leave him. Early in my recovery, I reconnected with a childhood acquaintance. She was full of love and laughter. I wanted what she had, so I took my first really big Al-Anon step by asking her to be my Sponsor. She agreed and quickly introduced me to service work. She nudged me into accepting a Group Representative position. I laughed more at my first Spring Assembly than I had in years.

My Sponsor encouraged me to be the Alateen Co-Chair for the Spring Assembly, since our District was co-hosting. When I balked, she told me that a Co-Chair was like the first runner-up in a beauty pageant: you only have to do something if the winner is unable to fulfill their duties. Well, the Chair reunited with her husband and the military transferred him out of the Area, and I, the "first runner-up," became the Chair. This has been a recurring theme throughout my service journey!

I quickly learned that Al-Anon will never fire you from a service position. Instead, you will be surrounded with love, guidance, and even laughter, giving you the courage needed to grow in your position. Today, I have a much different idea of what it means to "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together" than I did all those years ago.

Ann F., Ohio

Laugh: I recently had the opportunity to hear the most amazing lead from a 15-year-old Alateen. When they said their first meeting impression was, "These people are crazy," I nearly raised my hand and said, "Me too!" That is exactly what I thought when I showed up at the doors of Al-Anon. I thought, "I don't have the kind of problems those people have," so I left that meeting and stayed away until I was as crazy as all of those people and had the same problems described in our literature. Years later, when a friend from A.A. told me that I needed to go to Al-Anon, I went and never looked back. To be honest, I didn't come to Al-Anon to cure the problem drinker in my life. I came so you could tell me I was justified in divorcing him. No one told me that. They said, "Keep Coming Back," and "give it six months." I have now been married to him for 45 years. That is 90 six-month periods!

Love: I am eternally grateful for the Sponsor who dragged me along as her alternate GR. She taught me how to ask questions. When I would bombard her with my struggles, her answer time and again was, "Well, what are you going to do about that?" I am continually amazed that I am the Delegate from Ohio. I only stepped up to fill an open Literature Coordinator position. When that term ended in the middle of a pandemic, no one had submitted a service profile for the Alternate Delegate position. When I said yes to being Alternate Delegate, my Higher Power had a plan to put me on the fast track. Within six months I was attending the 2021 virtual WSC! My Higher Power has plans for me that I never could have imagined. As my favorite page in *Courage to Change* (B-16) says, "My vision can be so limited."

Grow together: What a wild ride this has been! I do not know where else in the world I could have learned the things I have learned in Al-Anon. My Higher Power has provided me with experiences beyond my wildest dreams and allowed me to have relationships with people I could never have been able to relate to without this program. I am forever grateful to have been able to serve.

Gwen D., Ontario South

These past two and a half years have been such a gift. Admittedly, there were times when I thought I might like to return the gift. I have grown in ways I would not have imagined. I have come to know another level of love for myself and for others. I have come to believe that I am of value, even when I don't have the answers. I have been humbled in the most beautiful way. I am able to seek help and ask for guidance on a deeper level than before. I have learned to pause to breathe and pray when I am challenged. I can laugh at myself and know that I'm OK. I matured and stretched myself to be open and to be vulnerable when learning something new.

Being the Delegate for Ontario South has been life-changing for me. When I think back to my first few weeks in Al-Anon, I would never have imagined that I would be here with you now. All I really wanted was for the drinking to stop. That was as big as I could wish or dream. Recovery through the Steps taught me that I am responsible for how I contribute to my relationships with others. Traditions have helped me to discover how to work, play, and live with others. The Concepts have showed me how to serve Al-Anon and my extended community.

My heart is overflowing with gratitude for all the Staff at WSO, who have laughed with me and helped me too many times to count. I am thankful for all the Panel 61 members. You have demonstrated love, and we have certainly laughed. Panel 61, you made service fun. Our Canadian Delegates have a special place in my heart and in my service journey. I am humbled by the love and encouragement of all Al-Anon members, most especially those in Ontario South. My Higher Power brought me to Al-Anon. I stay for the love, laughter, and continued growth, “One Day at a Time!” Thank you!

Lori F., Pennsylvania

Hi friends. I didn't know Al-Anon was all about friendships and relationships with myself, God, and others when I came to you. Oh, how true it is, we “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together!” It is hard for me to think I am where I am today. When I came to Al-Anon, I was so full of fear and so exhausted I couldn't look beyond it all. I am glad that I wasn't the one to decide what my spiritual awakening would be, because I know today that I would have sold myself short every time. My God loved me into something more. Like my Sponsor often affectionately says, “You have come a long way, baby.”

Right from the start, I was welcomed by the loving embrace of my home group. I remember thinking how my world went from so small to so big in such a flash that I felt my heart would just burst. I was assured it wouldn't, and to “Keep Coming Back.” My friends in Al-Anon loved me for who I was even when I didn't know that myself. And before I knew it, I was sharing in the special laughter that we find in the air here. I longed to heal, and I was willing to change so it wasn't long before my heart, my God, and my friends were leading me into serving Al-Anon. All I had to do was hold unto the shirrtails of my friends, and they guided me while encouraging me to make it my own. The love of Al-Anon and God is so strong it carried me through the links of service up to this moment, in the final year as Delegate of Pennsylvania.

What is cool about all this is how the more I get to know myself, the less I am afraid of you. And the closer I get to you, the more clearly I see us all growing together as we serve this fellowship we all love. Learning that my best is always good enough helped me to go all in, knowing God would help me to do his will. Thank you for my recovery and thank you for this opportunity to give something back. I am grateful beyond measure, and I pray that I can always pass on the love of our program to others so they too can laugh and grow like me!

Hélène A., Quebec West

Early morning on October 17th, 2020, I was having my cup of coffee and a cigarette, praying to my Higher Power to guide me. It was our Area Election Assembly and there were three positions to be filled: Delegate, Alternate Delegate, and Treasurer. I knew that I had what it took for either one of these positions. I asked my Higher Power for help and guidance that morning. So, She guided me to raise my hand when it was time for the election of the Delegate. Since the Assembly was held on an electronic platform, I was put in the waiting room until the voting was over. It seemed like an eternity. When the Area Chairperson brought me back in the room, I was taken aback by a tsunami of *love*. I could not say a word. It took me almost a week to realize that I had been elected Delegate for 2021 to 2023.

I came to Al-Anon for my husband, and I stayed for me. At my first meeting, when they read the Twelve Steps, I said to myself, “What am I doing here?” I kept going every Monday night. I rediscovered that my Higher Power had always been there for me. She still loved

me, and I started to love Her. My relationship with my Higher Power grew. I could always count on Her. I started to talk to members and found my Sponsor. We have a good love connection.

In Al-Anon, I learned that I could laugh, too. I could even make jokes with other members and laugh together. I also learned that I could apply our Legacies in my home, and my relationship with my husband is great. We can sit down and have spiritual conversations, and that helps both of us in our recovery. So, today, when a new member comes through the door, seeking help, I am there to lend a hand. The road to recovery never ends because I will always need my Higher Power and the Al-Anon members surrounding me with their love and their laughs, and we will keep growing together. And by the way, I am still riding that tsunami wave of love, laughter, and growth. Let the Legacies live on. Thank you.

Cindy B., Rhode Island

Where do I begin? I avoided writing this talk until the very last minute, and even considered not doing it at all. Why? Because I knew that I would cry. I then remembered that it is okay to cry, that I am among friends, that I am safe. So here goes.

Grow together: Growth—wow—such an incredible word. When I think I have not grown enough, I remind myself that I ran from my first meeting, determined to never go back again. Now, today, I stand in front of all of you, sharing in this incredible opportunity as a Delegate. Through my recovery, so many aspects of my life have improved, personally and professionally. I am the definition of growth, with so many chapters still being written.

Laugh: Before the program, I thought I knew what laughter was. Before the program, smiles and laughter were part of my facade, the facade where I pretended everything was okay. Before the program, throughout my childhood and adulthood, I do not remember many times that I truly felt happy, a happiness where my laughter was genuine. Through this program, with the help of my Higher Power, I have felt so much love and happiness—happiness that has led to so much laughter, laughter that I can say is truly genuine.

Love: I have so much love in my life, but I want to share an experience of pure unconditional love from a complete stranger. Last year, just before the World Service Conference, I lost a very special kitty, and I was struggling to be here in my sadness. I forced myself out of my hotel room to get some air, to not isolate myself (which I do so well), to take a walk and cry a little. I wandered down a hall and went out a random door and turned a corner. When I did, another member was sitting on the curb and immediately stood up and asked if she could hug me. This, to me, was pure “love.” This wonderful person spent the next hour walking with me, listening to me speak about my kitty, and even asked to see photos. When our walk was over, she said, “I thought I came outside for myself, but my Higher Power had a different plan.” This showed me the love and power of this program, and that none of us are strangers.

Karla K., Tennessee

Shortly after I started Al-Anon, I heard about business meetings, and I vividly remember being very grateful to those who were taking care of business so I could go to a meeting. I promised myself the time would come when I would do that for the newcomers. Seven years later, I took my first, nervous venture into service outside my group by serving on our Area Convention. I expected criticism and ridicule; I experienced support, love, and laughter. I grew.

I went on to serve in Assembly and Area positions. I would sit, tense and on edge, as close as possible to the door. At supper, I would withdraw to my quiet, dark room to lessen my headache. My Sponsor



was gentle, kind, and lovingly supportive. When I bemoaned my struggle, she would blurt out something that would make me laugh.

After a couple of years, the headaches went away. I gained friends and felt a sense of belonging. I was growing. At last year's World Service Conference, I eagerly raised my hand to volunteer, then found out I had to stand in front and answer questions at the mic. All knowledge of the topic was gone. The Delegate from Indiana stood behind me, feeding me answers. I do not remember what she said nor what I said. I do remember that I trusted her. It was good.

On day two, I was terribly sick and sat alone, but I was frustrated. I wanted to be with you during meals, to ask about your families, to see pictures of your children, grandchildren, and pets, to hear your stories, and learn your hobbies. One member chose to sit with me, to hug me, and to be encouraging. I looked forward to it. My desire for isolation was gone. On Sunday afternoon, I passed a Delegate in the hall. He thought I had been isolating because I did not want to get sick. When I explained it was the exact opposite, he wrapped me in a loving hug, and it was wonderful!

I have learned to laugh and be a part, and I love that I love you. This program, service, and you have given me that. I have grown so much and am very grateful I can go home and pay this back to the newcomers.

Mattie T., Texas East

When I think about the theme, "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together," becoming a Delegate has been a journey of growth spiritually, mentally, and emotionally for me. I became a Delegate with my own agenda (what a concept) and because curiosity got the best of me, only to start my term and meet some amazing people. Getting to know Staff on a personal level was eye-opening, and it is comforting to know that Al-Anon will be around for my children and grandchildren.

And here I am, still growing, but the growth is different. I learned to love without expectations, to take care of my spiritual, mental, and physical health first. I learned to laugh at myself and be okay when others laugh with me. That's growth. I remember sharing that I never thought I would be a Delegate representing Texas East, and one past Delegate said, "Mattie, we knew that one day you would represent our Area; we were just waiting for you to get ready." Those words opened up a flood of emotions and gratitude. Others watched my transformation and growth with love.

My first year, 2021, was challenging due to the pandemic. Meeting virtually, just looking at a screen, did not give me the welcome I expected. However, the knowledge that my Area had faith that I could and would represent them was all the confidence I needed to know that I was where I was supposed to be. To be a part of voting for electronic meetings to become groups and taking that joy back to my Area. 2022 was the year that I actually grew spiritually; to visit Stepping Stones and walk among the garden that Lois loved so much was breathtaking. I felt the love of my God smiling on me as I stood in Lois's kitchen. I know that I played a part in making history—the admission of a new Area into the World Service Conference Structure, and Texas East accepting and welcoming electronic groups to our Area.

And now here I am, in the final year of my term as Delegate. I live life fully every day, and I laugh even when the situation seems dim (it removes its power). I learned to say "I love you" today, and that growth will be daily development. Thank God for the Twelve Steps of *love*, the ability to *laugh*, the Twelve Traditions (life relationships), and the Twelve Concepts of Service (continue to *grow*). Thanks to Panel 60 for the mentorship, Panel 62 for the enthusiasm to make

history, and Panel 61 for the unconditional love and respect we learned to have for each other.

Peggy D., Texas West

When I stood for the Delegate position in November 2020, I had no idea that three years would pass by so quickly. I had no idea how much I would treasure the opportunity to serve the Al-Anon fellowship as a Texas West Delegate.

The theme for the 2023 Word Service Conference (WSC) is "Love, Laugh, and Grow Together." How appropriate for this to be the theme for my final year as a Delegate because these words speak to my heart as I reflect on these past couple of years.

Love: I immediately felt the unconditional love in my very first Al-Anon meeting. I had no idea that that love extended to the service that I would be privileged to perform, beginning at the group level all the way through District, Area, and finally the World Service Conference. Through service at all levels, I have not only received unconditional love, but learned to give unconditional love. What a gift, to love and be loved unconditionally as a member and trusted servant!

Laugh: Prior to this program, my laugh was guarded. I remember my father telling me that I had a strange laugh, and I was hurt by those words. I have learned to laugh at myself. I don't take myself too seriously, most of the time. I am not perfect, and I certainly do not have to pretend to be something that I am not. As I have had the opportunity to serve in this fellowship, I have laughed with my Al-Anon family as we face challenges and victories. I found that the sarcasm I used to believe showed my "wittiness" was actual demeaning and hurtful. Today, I have come to reap the benefits of laughing out loud with other people instead of constantly guarding myself.

Grow: During the 2022 WSC, the Global Electronic Area was admitted to the World Service Conference Structure. What a milestone for our Al-Anon fellowship! What a testament to the "growth" of our Al-Anon family! As Al-Anon grows, I grow. There is always something new to learn, a new way to accomplish a task, and best of all, another Al-Anon member to share the experience of growing together. Al-Anon service has helped me to grow up, to mature. The greatest aspect of growing up in Al-Anon is that I always have someone growing with me.

Opening Speaker

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

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I came to Al-Anon full of fear, anger, resentment, self-pity, and thoughts of revenge. I had no idea that I was not equipped to get along with alcoholics, or really anyone else for that matter. I thought I was a wonderfully nice person and that everyone loved me. I think the reality was that I was unapproachable and terrifying. I was a hot mess with a truckload of baggage.

I did not grow up in an alcoholic home, but I definitely had some behaviors that caused me problems. As a child and well into adulthood, I was always trying to fit in, trying to be, do, and say what I thought you wanted me to be, do, and say. I was making decisions based on assumptions about what I thought other people wanted me to do. I grew up thinking that I had to be perfect. I worked hard to keep up the façade that my life was perfect, because I did not want you to know what was really going on.

The first alcoholic in my life was my first husband. When I met him, I had no idea what an alcoholic was, what the family disease of

alcoholism was about, or that I would be affected. Alcoholism had me in its clutches right from the start. I had been told by friends that I should be careful because he drank a little too much. I remember thinking that his drinking would not be a problem because I was so wonderful and perfect that I would be able to fix it. Well, we all know how that went. The character defects that I already had were magnified by the active alcoholism. I started telling many lies to cover up what was really going on. It was hard remembering what lie I told and who I had told it to. As it says in the Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome, “Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.” I had no idea how much the disease of alcoholism was affecting me.

As you can imagine, things were not going well, so my husband and I decided to go to counseling together. I was ecstatic. This was the solution: somebody to tell my husband what he needed to do to change. At the first meeting with the counselor, I was irritated when the counselor started asking me questions. He should have been asking my husband questions. There was nothing wrong with me! The counselor asked me only a few questions and then said, “Have you ever been to an Al-Anon meeting?” I quickly told him that I was fine and did not need those meetings. Eventually he wore me down. I gave in and went to my first Al-Anon meeting in Scottsdale, AZ. I am not sure what was really shared by the members at that meeting, but I left thinking they all needed a lot of help but that Al-Anon wasn't for me. A few months went by, and my life continued to get worse and more unmanageable. Fortunately for me, a seed had been planted, and I thought that maybe I should give Al-Anon another try.

I found a meeting near where I was living. What I found at that meeting was hope: hope that things could get better for me. I heard the members at the meeting sharing thoughts that I had and feelings that I felt. I had a sense that I was not alone. I started going to as many meetings as I could. Eventually I got a Sponsor who guided me through the Steps. Doing that first Fourth Step was the first time in my life that I had ever looked at myself, my thoughts, my attitudes, and my behaviors. I realized how much of my life I had spent blaming everyone else. I became aware that the things I was doing and saying were causing many of my problems. I also came away with a list of assets that I didn't even know I had. I realized that I had so much to learn.

Service has been the key to my recovery. My service journey started when my home group needed someone to go pick up literature at the local AIS. That sounded easy enough, so I volunteered. I had no idea what my Higher Power had planned for me. Each time I went to the AIS, the office manager, Nancy, would visit with me. Pretty soon she started saying things like, “You know, your group doesn't have a GR,” and, “Maybe you should consider being the GR for your group.” Then came the clincher: she said, “Lynette, I think you would be good at being a GR, and I will help you.” Well, guess what? I volunteered to be the GR for my group. After serving as the GR, I had the opportunity to serve in several different positions both at my group and at that AIS.

About 16 years ago, my husband and I moved from Arizona to South Dakota. At the Al-Anon meetings I was attending, they announced elections were going to be held at the next District meeting. I remember thinking, “Maybe I should go. I won't get elected to anything because nobody here knows me.” I went to that District meeting and guess what? I got elected to the District Secretary position. Once again, my Higher Power was at work in my life. Then someone encouraged me to apply for an Area Coordinator position, which started my journey of serving at the Area level.

In 2017, I was serving as the Panel 57 Alternate Delegate for my

Area. About three weeks before the start of the 2017 Conference, the Area Delegate contacted me and told me that due to a medical condition she would not be able to travel to attend Conference, and she would like me to go in her place. Fear immediately kicked in, and without hesitation I told her, “No, I can't do that.” Without hesitation she told me, not with these exact words, that it was my role as Alternate Delegate to attend in her place. After some prayer and meditation, my fear somewhat subsided and I began preparing for Conference. I arrived at the hotel in Virginia Beach feeling unworthy and wondering what sort of mistake had been made that I was there to represent my Area. Then I remembered that my Higher Power had a plan, and that I was right where I was supposed to be.

I will never forget walking into the General Session room where the Conference was being held. I was overcome with emotion and gratitude to my Higher Power for allowing me to be there. It is a feeling I will never forget.

The theme of the 2017 Conference was “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.” At the 2017 World Service Conference, the Board announced their timeline for hiring a new Executive Director, who was hired later that year. We continued the discussion from the 2016 Conference on the “Prayer for Today” which is on the Just for Today bookmark (M-12). I attended the open Board of Trustees meeting. I was inspired by how thoughtful and respectful their discussion was. I remember thinking, “I could do what they are doing,” and then quickly dismissed the thought. One of the highlights for me of the 2017 World Service Conference was the opportunity to visit the World Service Office. I started tearing up as soon as the bus got to the parking lot. As we were getting off the bus, the Interim Executive Director and all the members of the Board of Trustees were standing at the front entrance. The Interim Executive Director opened her arms and said, “Welcome home.” I was so overwhelmed with gratitude that tears started pouring down my face.

After I attended the 2017 Conference, I was encouraged by two members in my Area to put my resume forward for the open US Northwest Regional Trustee position. I immediately told them that I could not do that. They asked me to prayerfully consider the idea. Here is another example of how my Higher Power works. In a conversation with my Sponsor about putting my resume forward, she told me that just because you put your name forward doesn't mean you will get picked. With the thought that I would never get picked, I decided to submit my resume. When I received a call from the Executive Director telling me that my name had not been put forward for the Northwest Regional Trustee, I was disappointed but also a little relieved. Then Vali said, “...but the Board has put your name forward for a one-year appointment as a Trustee at Large.” Full of fear, I called my Sponsor and told her a terrible mistake had been made and that I could not do it. She talked me off the ledge and reassured me that everything was going to be okay. I began serving on the Board in May 2018.

The next Conference I attended was in 2019 in my role as a Trustee. I felt almost as nervous as when I first attended Conference in 2017. The Conference theme guiding us was “Action is Attraction—There is no Growth in the Comfort Zone.” The 2019 Conference was the first year of a three-year trial to provide simultaneous interpretation in French and Spanish. I was invited to be part of the Work Group that presented the Mega Issue topic of holding a hybrid Conference. During the presentation, the Work Group members assured Conference members that the Board was not intending to make any changes to Conference and that the Mega Issue discussion was just an opportunity to gather information. We had no idea what was going to happen in 2020.

In 2020, a worldwide pandemic was upon us, and a face-to-face Conference was not a possibility. The theme for the 2020 World Service Conference was “Dreaming Big With 20|20 Vision.” We could not have had a more fitting theme. Who would have thought that this “Dreaming Big” Conference would make history? It was the first ever Conference held virtually. We were pretty new at doing virtual meetings, so there were some technical glitches and issues that we had to deal with along the way, but we got the business of Al-Anon accomplished.

The 2021 World Service Conference theme was “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.” This was my first year attending the Conference in my role as Chairperson of the Board. Once again, I experienced some of that same fear and doubt as when I attended my first Conference, but I also knew that I had a lot of people and a Higher Power supporting me. We were still dealing with the pandemic, so once again Conference was held virtually. Because the Conference was being held virtually, there were 12 international representatives in attendance, the largest number ever at any Conference.

One big topic at this Conference was the proposal from the Electronic Meeting Work Group to make permanent electronic meetings Al-Anon Family Groups and to create a non-panel Area, which we now call the Global Electronic Area. Two motions were passed which made electronic meetings Al-Anon Family Groups and gave them a chance to have representation at the World Service Conference. That was not the only memorable thing that happened. We also gave conceptual approval to develop the Alateen “Just for Tonight” bookmark and to add new introductions to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) and *One Day at a Time In Al-Anon* (B-6). With the passing of Motion Ten, the three-year trial period for simultaneous interpretation that started at the 2019 Conference ended, and interpretation became a permanent part of Conference.

The 2022 WSC Theme was “Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding.” We were finally able to have a face-to-face Conference after two years of holding the Conference virtually! The first order of business was to vote on the request from the non-panel Global Electronic Area to join the World Service Conference Structure. The motion to admit the non-panel GEA to the WSC passed with substantial unanimity. I will never forget the standing ovation that welcomed Ozzie, the 68th Delegate, into the room. We made our Al-Anon circle bigger, and I was fortunate to be there for this truly historic moment in Al-Anon.

I am so grateful for this Al-Anon journey that I have been given. It has been beyond anything I could have ever imagined. When I went to my first Al-Anon meeting, I did not know or understand what Al-Anon could do for my life. My goal was to not cry so much and to get rid of that sick feeling in my stomach. As a result of studying and applying the principles found in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, today I am the best version of myself that I can be. I am grateful to all those who came before me and worked tirelessly to make sure that Al-Anon was there for me when I needed it. Thank you to all who continue to work tirelessly to make sure Al-Anon is there for all those who need it in the future. I am especially grateful to those people who saw something in me that I could not see in myself and encouraged me to become involved in service. I need the encouragement because my head tells me that I am not good enough and that I can't do it.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend an Al-Anon meeting where the speaker was from South Africa. She shared about what she had read on the page for that day from the *Courage to Change* (B-16) book. As she shared, I realized she had read the same page I

read, and that it had impacted me in the same way it had impacted her. I got goosebumps as I got a new understanding of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

Early on in Al-Anon, I was told not to leave before my miracle happened. I thought that meant one miracle. I have been given so many miracles on this Al-Anon journey. I can't wait to see how many more miracles my Higher Power has in store for me.

I look forward to this 63rd World Service Conference as we “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together.” Thank you for letting me share.

Spiritual Speakers

Matt W., Panel 61, Delaware

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About a year ago, my oldest daughter, who is working on her psychology degree, was doing research for a paper. I was walking through our kitchen, and she called out to me, “Hey Dad, did you know there is significant research and data to indicate a correlation between practicing spirituality in life and having grit in life?” I thought to myself, what an odd term to associate with spirituality. “Grit.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “grit” as “firmness of mind or spirit; unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.” And the more I thought about it, the more I realized how true that statement is for my own journey in spirituality.

As I look back today on my journey in Al-Anon, I see clearly the linkage between my service work in this program and my spiritual growth. And I could not be more honored and humbled to have the opportunity to share a bit of my story with you, centered around three lessons I've learned along the way. I've titled this sharing “Spiritual Grit.”

The first lesson I've learned is that having faith is not enough. I must also have trust. Some of you may have heard the story of the tightrope walker. But please indulge me. The story goes like this:

There was a tightrope walker who had tied a tightrope line between two skyscrapers. He was going to walk a wheelbarrow across the tightrope line from one rooftop to another. A large crowd had gathered together on the rooftop of one of the skyscrapers to watch the tightrope walker and cheer him on. And so, the tightrope walker pushed his wheelbarrow across the tightrope line from one rooftop to the other. And the crowd cheered. He then pushed the wheelbarrow back across to the original building he started from, and the crowd cheered even louder. The tightrope walker then hushed the crowd with his hands and asked them, “Who believes I can do it again?” The crowd went wild, and they all raised their hands to indicate their belief—their faith, if you will—in what the tightrope walker could do. After all, they'd just seen him do it. The tightrope walker then quieted the crowd again with his hands and asked them, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow as I walk it across?” This time the crowd remained hushed. No one raised their hands. For even though the crowd believed, even though they had faith that the tightrope walker could do it again, no one had enough trust to get into the wheelbarrow themselves.

I first heard this story early on in my Al-Anon service journey. And it helped me understand the difference between faith and trust and where I needed to apply Step Three more in my life.

My father was a Methodist pastor. So, growing up, I always thought I had a strong relationship with my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. I had always had faith in God. When I started working Steps with my Sponsor, I thought the first three Steps would be a breeze. But the truth was that I did not have trust in God. I began

to seek out a more trusting relationship with my Higher Power. I started with my Step Eleven prayers. Up until this point, I had practiced “give me” prayers instead of “change me” prayers. And as I sought out to have more trust in my Higher Power, I remembered a lesson my father had taught me as a young child.

In addition to being a pastor, my father was an avid football fan. He played football in high school and in college. As an adult, he no longer played football but was a lifelong fan of the Philadelphia Eagles. During football season, his Sundays would consist of preaching at two church services, then making sure he was home for the Sunday afternoon football games to start. I recall on one particular Sunday, the Philadelphia Eagles were playing the Dallas Cowboys—which, if you are from Philly, you know is their main rival team. As I sat there watching football with my dad, I remember asking him if he prayed for the Philadelphia Eagles when they had a game. And he said “yes.” I then said to him that surely there were people who also prayed for the Dallas Cowboys. And I asked him, “How does God decide whose prayers to answer?” My dad then explained to me how he prayed. He prayed for the center to make good snaps; for the quarterback to make good hand offs to the running backs and to read the field well to identify the most open receivers; for the guards to block well so that the defensive line could not rush the quarterback; for the running backs to see the holes made for them in the backfield to run through; for the receivers to make good catches. On and on he listed the various positions and how he prayed for them to do well in their roles. “But,” he said, “I do not pray for the Eagles to win the game.”

As I sought to have more trust in God, remembering this discussion from my childhood helped me keep in perspective how to stop the “give me” prayers and instead have “change me” prayers. I had to stop looking at the outcome I wanted, to stop praying for that outcome, to stop measuring success or happiness or joy by outcomes altogether. Instead, I tried to pray for the inputs, the changes I needed help with, my character defects that, despite all my best efforts, I was not able to change. Slowly, my “give me” prayers became “change me” prayers. Slowly, I began worrying less about the outcome. Slowly, I began to add trust to my faith. And as time went on and I became better at not focusing on outcomes, my trust grew, and I became more willing to do whatever I believed God was asking me to do.

In short, I came to an awareness that having faith was not enough. I also needed to have trust.

One of my favorite slogans is “Let Go and Let God.” Countless times I had used it for my loved ones in this program. But the second lesson I’ve learned is that “Let Go and Let God” applies to me as well.

After a couple years in Al-Anon, the pain subsided, but a void remained. I looked at all of you and saw you had something that I wanted for myself. I wanted more. And so, I got a Sponsor—one who immediately threw me into service with my first role as Group Representative. And through my service work I began to discover a rich and beautiful relationship with the God of my understanding.

When I started in Al-Anon, I was all in. It was like I had been drowning in the ocean and someone had just thrown me a life preserver. I would go to three to five meetings per week, share at each one, sign up to chair regularly, and I began speaking at some of our Area events. It was the same for my service work when I stepped into the role of Group Representative. I bought my copy of the *Service Manual* and off I went. I attended everything I could—the District Meetings and the Area Assemblies, all the events in our Area, and as many District events as I could. The pandemic hit, and as we adjusted to Zoom, I realized I could show up to even more meetings and events across our Area. I just kept showing up. At most of the meetings and events I attended, I didn’t plan on doing much,

but was there more to listen and learn from others. Occasionally, I would get asked to do something, and I would just do it. But most of the time, I was just listening and soaking up all the experience from these amazing members of our fellowship.

And so, one Saturday, I found myself showing up at our first Area Elections meeting. When it came to Area Delegate, the Area Chair asked for nominations. One by one, as the “usual suspects” were being nominated, each declined, as their Higher Power was drawing them to a different service role. And as I listened to the process take place, I received two texts at almost the same time: one from a member on the call, asking if it was okay if they put my name forward, and another from a different member on the call, saying they believed I would make a good Delegate. I was typing out a response that basically said “no” to one of those texts when I heard someone on the call say, “I’d like to nominate Matt.” Then, immediately, a second person spoke up and said, “I second that!”

Suddenly I could feel everyone on the Zoom looking at my little video square on their screens! But in those few seconds, I felt God moving me to a place of willingness and comfort. I was at complete peace—not anxious or scared or any number of emotions I would expect in that situation. The Area Chair asked me if I would be willing. To this day, I remember exactly what I said: “Yes, I am willing. But I am not qualified. I would prefer for someone else to be Delegate for our Area. But if no one else puts their name forward for the position, then I would do it the best I was able to.” And so, that’s how I became the most unlikely and certainly most unqualified Delegate for Delaware.

It was in this process I learned that letting go and letting God didn’t just apply to my loved ones. Apparently, it applied to me as well. And what unfolded over the next year was the most intense spiritual awakening I’ve had in this program. I discovered a deep and personal relationship with God, lost the dependence on another person to meet my needs, and overcame very deep fears resulting from low self-esteem.

This brings me to the final lesson I’ve learned on having “Spiritual Grit”: I am a spiritual being on a human journey.

Early on in my role as Delegate, I remember talking to my Sponsor about some challenges I was having, how I was feeling a bit overwhelmed. And thank God for Sponsors, right? After going on for a good five minutes about how I couldn’t get to reading everything I needed to in advance, how I didn’t know as much as anyone else, how I wasn’t feeling like I was doing a good job, I remember my Sponsor just looked at me and said, “Matt, the primary purpose of Al-Anon is to help families and friends of alcoholics. That’s what this program is. Don’t let the rest of it get in the way of the primary purpose behind our service work. This is a spiritual program. And we are spiritual beings on a human journey.”

I found that to be a beautiful phrase that I’ve clung to again and again as I’ve made mistakes in my personal life, dealing with active disease in my home, and in my service work, trying to imperfectly perform my role as Delegate and to do my part in the links of service.

This pain I share with you, the fact that my life had become unmanageable, the distorted view of reality I held and still hold in areas of my life: these are some of the common threads that bind us all together. But they are also just the human part of my journey through this life. Because inside of me, just as inside of each one of you, I am a spiritual being, capable of endless love and deep joy and fully capable of healthy relationships in my life. I am a spiritual being on a human journey.

In closing, as I look back over the past few years of my service as Delegate, I realize how uniquely God placed me in a position to



help our small Area navigate through our discussions and decisions around electronic meetings, from sharing information through the links of service to leading a thought force, KBDM exercise, and task force on the topic. At our Spring Assembly we'll finally bring the topic to a vote, and I feel I've done my part well in ensuring we are ready for that.

I may not have been qualified to hold this position, but God has qualified me through my service work along the way. And on the occasions I was in over my head, God brought people forward with greater experience who guided me and taught me. Many of them are sitting in this room today and probably have no idea the impact they have had on my service journey. I'll say this: if I ever have an opportunity to be Delegate again, I want to do it just like you!

I leave you with the three lessons I've learned on spiritual grit:

Having faith is not enough. I must also have trust.

"Let Go and Let God" doesn't just apply to my loved ones. It applies to me as well.

I am a spiritual being on a human journey.

Thank you.

John McG., Panel 61, California North

My recovery journey in Al-Anon has truly been an unforgettable adventure. If you don't hear anything else, I want to say how much I love Al-Anon. I walked into my first meeting on November 6, 2008. I was in the grip of obsession. Yes, I was obsessed with the alcoholic, but it was always about how I felt in reaction to his drinking. If he was sober, I felt loved and safe. If he was drunk, I felt abandoned and afraid. Feelings ruled my life.

I wasn't in Al-Anon long before I realized I'm not here because of his drinking; I'm here because I have decades of unresolved trauma and grief from living with active alcoholism. I believed the Twelve Steps offered a path out of that pain.

I grew up in San Francisco with a mom, dad, and two sisters. Both my parents were daily drinkers, but my father would become the identified alcoholic. I also knew from age five that I was gay, and I believed my father didn't love me. That hurt. To cope with that pain, I pushed my father away. My father gave me lots of excuses to reject him, and I did. I judged and criticized. Most nights he would pass out on the couch. But some nights dinner plates would fly from the table, guests would get thrown out of the house, and furniture would get turned over, and I never knew when it was coming or what caused it.

I judged my mother even more. I would look at my father passed out on the couch and think, "It's obvious what his problem is; he's drunk." Then I'd look at my mother with so much anger and think, "What's your excuse? When are you going to do something?" But nothing was ever said. The word alcoholism was never used. I never felt safe in my house. My primary goal was to get out. I excelled in school because I knew that was my ticket out.

Then, in my third year at college, I got a call from my older sister. She said, "Mom is tired of Dad's drinking. She's going to hold an intervention and you need to be here." We sat in a circle and told him how much we loved him and that if he did not stop drinking, he would need to move out. I hated the entire experience. I remember my younger sister shaking and crying. I remember looking at my father, thinking, "Can't you see what your drinking is doing to our family? Why can't you just stop?" I did not yet understand that alcoholics are just people who have lost the ability to choose. His alcoholism would not allow him to make that choice. When it was over, he walked out and I never saw my father again.

A year later, my mother walked into my room and said, "I'm so sorry to tell you, but your dad just died." My dad was 54 years old, and I was flooded with so much hurt, anger, sadness, guilt, and grief. I had no ability to feel those feelings, much less talk about them. So, I stuffed them all down and made up a story. The story was: he's the bad one, I'm the good one. He's the problem, and now the problem is gone. His drinking did not affect me.

Part of recovering is becoming aware that I have experienced significant traumas which drove me deeper into an obsession with feelings.

When I was 20, the same year we held the intervention, I was diagnosed with HIV.

At 26, I become disabled with a condition called neuropathy.

At 28, I was involuntarily committed after my second suicide attempt.

These traumatic events compounded the effects of the family disease of alcoholism. I felt damaged, worthless, and unloved. Because I was not finding support within my family, I walked away after my father died, cutting off communication with my mother for 20 years.

During my 20s and 30s, I tried everything to feel good about myself, but nothing took away those feelings of being worthless and unloved in any lasting way. Not until I met the alcoholic who would become my partner. Obsession with an alcoholic turned out to be the best relief for my feelings of inadequacy. I could focus all the attention and criticism I was directing at myself onto him. After seven years, when that stopped working, I found a new alcoholic whose drinking was far worse, and my bottom came up fast. By this time, I was 39 years old, exhausted, and I could not imagine life without him, yet my anxiety was so bad I knew I could no longer stay. I could see my own insanity but felt unable to stop it. We ended up in couples counseling, and the therapist suggested I check out Al-Anon.

I could not see how attending meetings would help me feel loved and safe, but a crisis with the alcoholic brought me to my bottom. I found myself begging for help from a God I did not know or trust. Within moments my fear and anxiety evaporated, and I could see clearly. I became willing. I recognize this today as a spiritual experience that came to pass. What Al-Anon has given me is a spiritual awakening that came to stay.

This began my recovery journey. It was 2008. I was 41 years old when I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting. I came to Al-Anon because my illusion that I could control alcoholism had broken.

I grabbed onto Al-Anon like a lifeline. I got a Sponsor within two months, and we worked together for nine years until he moved out of the country. Then my Service Sponsor became my Sponsor. I don't know what I have done to be so blessed with great sponsorship, but I know gratitude makes receiving their love possible.

At my home group we study *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32). Chapter 14 is titled "Service," and the first section is called "Putting Love into Action." I would say is that service is love in action.

My first introduction to the Al-Anon service structure came in 2010 through Alateen service. My home group was starting an Alateen meeting, and they asked if I would commit to being a Sponsor for one year. I feared a year-long commitment and rejection by the teens, but I said "yes, I'm willing." My fears were quickly erased when the teens embraced me. I stayed for nine years. I did go into Alateen service believing I would save the teens. Instead, the teens saved me. They broke through my layers of defenses, allowing all those buried emotions and memories to pour out of me. Sponsoring Alateen initiated my grieving process. I always resisted grief, fearing it would destroy me. Instead, grieving broke me open. In Alateen I learned I must feel it to heal it.

In 2011, I was elected to chair the Al-Anon committee for our local A.A. convention. Working with sober alcoholics that year helped me understand that, like me and my father, we often saw things differently. But when the committee meetings ended, they would invite me to join them for lunch. Although my father and I often saw things differently, it did not mean he didn't love me. But I interpreted it that way. I was in the middle of my Fourth Step, and service with sober alcoholics helped me break through my lifelong resentment towards my father. That year of service hanging with the alcoholics was fun and essential to my recovery. I could also see that if I was going to continue to progress, I would need to make service in Al-Anon my focus. There was still my unresolved resentment with and estrangement from my mother.

In 2012, I had been sponsoring Alateen for two years when I was elected District Alateen Coordinator, then, in 2014, Alternate Area Alateen Coordinator. As Alateen Coordinator, I made mistakes. But I learned and grew from those mistakes. I took things personally. I put personalities over principles, and I judged. And everything I judged about others has shown up in my own life.

Then a longtime member asked me, "When are you going to become a Group Rep? Don't you want a vote?" She knew how to get my attention. My home group needed a GR, so I volunteered and was elected. I will never forget the excitement of my first Assembly. I started to see the big picture, and I got bit by the service bug. I longed to be a part of something bigger than myself. Al-Anon service filled that longing.

I learn best by doing. In my second year as GR, our Area Chair asked if I would chair a thought force. I spent decades hiding my disability, and because I hid it, it owned me. I would not walk in front of people. So, when she asked, I knew that meant I would have to give a report. I said to my Sponsor, "I can't bear the thought of walking in front of the Assembly because I don't walk gracefully."

She said, "But John, you do walk with grace. When you walk imperfectly, it gives others permission to be their imperfect selves. You have a job to do. Hold your head up and give your report." She was right! It was not easy, but I walked through it. I learned that when I focused on my disability, my shame increased. But when I focused on being of service, my self-esteem increased. That day I moved one step closer to freedom and one step out of the bondage of self. I began to understand that thoughts become things. *Courage to Change* (B-16) says, "What a man thinks, that he becomes."

After GR service, I was elected District Rep. I loved DR service because I had a great group of willing District members who wanted to learn and grow, and I got to practice the leadership skills we read about in the Twelve Concepts of Service. I learned that as a leader, it was important to have a vision, but it would ultimately be up to the GRs to decide in which direction we would go.

After DR service, I stood for Area officer and lost. But I didn't walk away. Instead, I stood for Area Literature Coordinator and was elected. I believe my Higher Power wanted me to have three more years of experience. During that panel, Al-Anon was collecting written shares for the new daily reader, which meant I facilitated a lot of writing workshops.

When *A Little Time for Myself* is released at the International Convention in Albuquerque, it will be nine years in the making from when it was first given conceptual approval at the 2014 WSC. That process, time, and dedication is not lost on me. Awareness, gratitude, and appreciation: these are all gifts of service that I cherish today. I know how it feels to not be able to feel my life. I don't ever want to go back to living like that, unable to feel the joy of living.

On the last panel, I stood along with four other members to serve on our Executive Committee. I was honored to be elected after having lost the officer election on the previous panel. Our five-member Executive Committee provides legal and financial oversight for the nonprofit corporation of Northern CA as well as oversight of our Area officers.

Then, at the end of the last panel, the pandemic hit. Our election Assembly was held in October 2020. Members would often ask "Are you going to stand?" I would simply respond that I was willing. Then I would ask if they planned to stand. Their response surprised me. They would say, "Well, I don't know what's going to happen next year, so I can't stand." I would just laugh; did they think I knew what was going to happen next year? I realized that I had learned to be willing and let God take care of the outcome. I became aware that I had grown in trust and faith more than I realized. I could feel myself walking hand in hand with my Higher Power. *Hope for Today* (B-27) says, "If I don't take the action to trust, my Higher Power has nothing to work with."

What happened was that three of us stood for Delegate. The other two members had decades more service experience than I did. But, to my amazement, the members of my Area elected me by substantial unanimity to serve as their Delegate.

Nothing but a Power greater than myself could have made any of this possible. I had no idea the growth that was available to me when I walked into Al-Anon. I had no idea the solution to my pain was a connection with my Higher Power. Alcoholism left me feeling really bad about myself. I had no self-esteem, no self-compassion, no self-love. I always wanted those bad feelings to go away. Al-Anon taught me that I can't change my feelings, but I can change my attitude about them. I always wanted others to love me so I could feel loveable. *Courage to Change* says, "The only person who can love me the way I want to be loved is me."

In 2009, I had only been in Al-Anon for four months when my first partner called to ask if we could meet. He seemed different, humble. He shared that he had gotten sober in A.A. the previous year, which shocked me. I shared that I had joined Al-Anon, which formed the foundation for a new relationship, one based on recovery. Eventually, he would ask if I would move back in. That was 14 years ago. I didn't know I would have to learn to love myself first before our relationship would work. Fortunately, he has been patient with my recovery progress. Today, I'm so grateful we have a loving, safe, and sober home.

In 2013, after a transformative Fifth Step experience, I reached out to my mom with a card asking if she would like to meet. It was so difficult to drop that card in the mail. I felt the power that comes from letting go and letting God. I'm grateful she responded positively. I made direct amends and we have slowly been rebuilding our relationship.

Delegate service has been the honor of a lifetime. But Delegate is just a title. A title cannot bring me fulfillment, self-esteem, or self-love. A title does not make me feel like I'm enough, because it cannot do that! Real fulfillment has not come from the achievement of a goal. It comes from the person I become in the pursuit of that goal. The real gift of service is who I become in the process.

IN CLOSING WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY...

Closing Session

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Debbie P., Trustee, Chairperson of the Conference

.....

The Chairperson of the Board opened the Closing Session by saying, “As I arrived at the hotel prior to the start of Conference, the lobby was filled with Delegates. I could feel the energy and excitement. As I waited for my turn to check in, I reflected for a moment and thought about all the Conference members who came before me and possibly had an identical or similar experience. I thought about how grateful I was to be able to have the opportunity to be a small part of something much bigger than me, the opportunity to continue the conversation that started 63 years ago.

“This year, the Board was excited to invite you to an open Board meeting. The open Board meeting gave you just a small glimpse into the work the Board does and the thought-provoking conversations the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) brings forward to the Board to help us expand our thinking and become better leaders.

“We accomplished the business of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Some of that business was the 2022 Annual Report and updates, the Finance Committee report, and the auditor’s report. I think Niketa is on to something with her prize giveaway.

“As with any Conference I have attended, there were some difficult and uncomfortable conversations. These difficult conversations are where I see evidence of our collective Higher Power and the spiritual principles of the program being used as we talk to each other and reason things out. I am grateful for the difficult conversations.

“One of the highlights of this Conference for me was the World Service Office tour. The last time that Delegates visited the World Service Office was six years ago, during the 2017 Conference. As I shared at the Opening Luncheon, I was one of the Conference members who visited the WSO in 2017. This year’s visit allowed me to experience the WSO Tour from the other side. I could feel the excitement building as WSO Staff and Volunteers lined up at the front entrance of the building. I started crying as soon as the bus got to the parking lot. It was heartwarming to watch Delegates get off the bus as Staff and Volunteers welcomed you home.

“This Conference has been both energizing and exhausting. It was uplifting to see the Conference theme, ‘Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,’ come alive in our interactions with each other throughout the Conference. The love that Conference members have for Al-Anon was apparent in the presentations, the discussions, and the thoughtful questions that were asked. Laughter could be heard during meals, during breaks, and during the General Session. I am grateful for a program that allows us not to take ourselves too seriously. I don’t know about you, but this Conference, like others I have attended, has helped me to grow not only as a leader, but also, I hope, as a person. The last word of the Conference theme, ‘Together,’ reminds me that in Al-Anon I never have to do anything alone. I am so very grateful that I have been able to share the journey with all of you.

“As this 63rd World Service Conference comes to a close, I hope that you are inspired to return to your Areas and share with members what it means to be part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups and how members all over the world are working

tirelessly to make sure that Al-Anon is there for those who need it. I want to thank each and every one of you for your service so that Al-Anon can continue to be there to fulfill our primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics.”

The Conference Chairperson then shared her closing thoughts, “Love, Laugh and Grow Together; Aimer, rire et grandir ensemble; Amar, reír y crecer juntos.”

“It is challenging to find words that describe what an unforgettable gift the experience of these last few days has been. It has been an honor and a privilege to participate with all of you. I have been witness to such dedication, commitment, respect, and love for our fellowship and have seen our Legacies in action. I have several times been caught off guard at how emotional and impactful is the magnitude of the small miracles happening around us.

“I mentioned as we opened the Conference that our 2023 WSC theme was simple and uncomplicated. I have not faltered from that belief. Life *is* simple; it’s me who complicated it. And just because it is simple doesn’t mean it’s always easy. We were challenged this Conference. We were perhaps asked to move beyond our comfort level. And in doing so, I know I grew. We were gifted with the opportunity to serve our fellowship in a way that is unique and yet the same as what has been done for decades.

“We continued the 63-year-old conversation, making sure every voice was heard and respected, practicing flexibility and adaptability that couldn’t have been planned and was not on the agenda.

“A longtime member now gone from my home group had an expression that I cherish. It reflects the essence of what I suspect happened here these last few days: ‘Trust God, trust Al-Anon, and do the dishes.’ How much simpler can it get?

“We trusted our collective Higher Power to be with us in our work. We trusted our Legacies to guide us along the way, and we accomplished and completed what we set out to do.

“I have laughed, and I have had tears of gratitude. We shared an amazing journey during our 63-year-old conversation, expanding our vision, listening to and witnessing the incredible efforts of our WSO Staff and their dedication to supporting us and each other.

“We witnessed the volume of detail and effort that it takes to accomplish what they make seem so effortless. We had a visit to *our* WSO. We had the opportunity to be welcomed home and be embraced in our rich history and meet many of the Staff who are so dedicated to our mission and vision.

“We have completed our responsibilities within our roles. We have listened and had conversations. We heard firsthand our program in action around the world from international visits and our Staff and Volunteers who attended the 2022 IAGSM. We have heard much about our evolving presence in electronic groups and so much more.

“Flexibility and adaptability were required as we navigated through some unique challenges. We accomplished this because we worked together. And I suspect we all grew in that togetherness.

“My belief and hope is that each of you embrace the opportunity to continue the conversation in your respective Areas. As you share the information and wisdom, I suspect that your passion will naturally shine through. And collectively, together, we have done all of this so that when anyone, anywhere reaches out, we have done our part to make sure Al-Anon Family Groups is available.

“I thank you for the opportunity, the support, and your encouragement.”

With the tap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson brought the 2023 World Service Conference to a close.

That evening, the Conference Chairperson opened the Closing Dinner with the Serenity Prayer. Following dinner, outgoing Panel 61 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—John McG., Panel 61, California North, and Matt W., Panel 61, Delaware—then shared their stories. (See pages 55-58.)

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.

World Service Office Visit

Conference members boarded a double-decker motor coach for the trip from the hotel to the World Service Office (WSO). Members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff greeted the Delegates and their guests at the entrance by saying, “Welcome home.” There were tears and hugs as the Delegates walked into the lobby.



The Executive Director then welcomed everyone to their home and explained the unique architectural features of the building. Portraits of Al-Anon’s Cofounders, Lois and Anne, as well as Lois’s typewriter, used to write to the first 87 groups, were pointed out. The Chairperson of the Board and Chairperson of the Executive Committee also welcomed the Delegates and encouraged them to take pictures in the nook with the paintings of our Cofounders.

The Delegates then assembled into small groups and Trustees conducted tours of the office. Prior to returning to the hotel, the Delegates also had the opportunity to hear about being a Trustee, paid a visit to the Archives, and had the opportunity to walk around the grounds to take pictures to share with their Areas.

2023 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – (88 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention, 1 void) – CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 2023 World Service Conference:

With voice, but no vote:

Niketa Williams

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

Britt M.

International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon Member

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

Liz D.

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to facilitating the DEI Workshop on Friday, April 21, 2023, but no vote:

Debby Irving

Conference Consultant, Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff members be seated to observe at the 2023 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Friday, April 21, 2023

Camille Peters

Associate Director – Customer Service & Shipping, Non-Al-Anon Member

Silvia K.

Programs Assistant, Al-Anon Member

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Rory Mulford

Senior Data Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member

Beth Rodriguez

Digital Communications Coordinator, Non-Al-Anon Member

Colette Norman

Translation Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Christa A.

Senior Group Services Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Tracey S.

Group Services Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Anne P.

International & Legal Specialist, Al-Anon Member

Valérie Stump

AFG Records Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – (88 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 1 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2022 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #3 – (89 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2023 Finance Committee Report

MOTION #4 – (83 yes, 6 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To give conceptual approval to develop a comprehensive piece on sponsorship and service sponsorship using personal stories from Al-Anon members.

MOTION #5 – (87 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the text of the “Conventions and Other Events”: “Workshops” and “Conventions and Other Events”: “Announcing Events” portions of the “Policy Digest,” which appear on page 90 and pages 91-92 respectively of *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/P27)* v2 as presented.

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

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Workshops

An Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)/Intergroup, or one or more registered Al-Anon or Alateen groups may host a weekend, day, or evening of workshops and meetings, luncheons, or banquets. These activities are planned in keeping with the spiritual principles of the Twelve Traditions to address various topics of interest to members or for public outreach purposes. Weekend events often combine workshops and speaker meetings.

[Page 91-92]

Announcing Events

Various types of events are held for Al-Anon and Alateen members to gather for fun and fellowship, to celebrate recovery and enhance their understanding of the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

It may be helpful for members to consider the following spiritual principles when announcing these events:

Cooperation
Participation
Responsibility
Singleness of Purpose
Unity or Common Welfare

What to Announce at Meetings

Al-Anon/Alateen recovery and service events cultivate a sense of community. Recognizing this spiritual need to belong, the principle of participation links the membership to these events.

At Meetings

Members often wonder if a particular event is appropriate to announce. The following should be considered when deciding what to announce at meetings:

Generally, those ~~events put on~~ hosted by or connected to the WSO, an Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)/ Intergroup, or one or more Al-Anon or Alateen groups can be Al-Anon service arms are announced at meetings, ~~in our newsletters, and on local websites.~~ These events bring members together to connect through experiences and discussions.

~~Areas, Districts, and AISs often plan program-related activities for fun and fellowship, to encourage participation in service and sometimes fundraising. These gatherings unite groups within the District and neighboring Districts and often improve the health of the groups and lead to the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole. These events can be announced at Al-Anon meetings and communicated in our publications.~~

Al-Anon is often invited by A.A. to participate in recovery events. Almost from its beginning, Al-Anon has taken part in these events. Such participation often led to the growth of Al-Anon and an enhanced spirit of cooperation between both fellowships. ~~While we remain a separate entity from A.A., we cooperate whenever possible.~~ When Al-Anon participates through one of its service arms or a registered group in an A.A. event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at meetings, ~~in our newsletters, and on our websites.~~

At the WSO

The WSO posts on its calendars:

- Al-Anon events hosted by the WSO or Al-Anon service arms.
- Only A.A. events with AlAnon participation through its AlAnon service arms. A representative of the AlAnon service arm brings that event to the attention of the WSO for potential posting.

MOTION #6 – (88 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2022 Annual Report

2022

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT



Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

GREETINGS & THANKS

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

Vali F., Executive Director

Our second year since the global pandemic that changed the world of Al-Anon meetings, World Service Office finances, and WSO capacity started with optimism and hope. In January, the Board of Trustees approved a refreshed Strategic Plan and confirmed the decision to hold the 2022 World Service Conference in person. Literature sales continued to be limited due to substantial supply chain issues and the gradual reopening of Literature Distribution Centers; however, members' generous contributions, including the response to the special appeal letter for individual members, allowed the WSO to continue to deliver services to Al-Anon members and trusted servants within the WSC Structure and across the worldwide fellowship.

Throughout the year, Al-Anon's Mission and primary purpose were fulfilled in many ways with:

- rollout of enhancements to the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*
- hosting of the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in London, UK
- successful, on-time completion of the Alateen recertification process across all eligible Areas

Making prudent use of Al-Anon resources, WSO Volunteers and Staff visited European locations near the London IAGSM. The visits strengthened connections and shared Al-Anon's message of hope with trusted servants building evolving and national structures, typically while relying upon smaller financial resources than enjoyed by Areas within the WSC Structure.

The 13-member Board of Trustees continued its Concept Nine focus on evaluating the trends, challenges, and opportunities that will shape Al-Anon Family Groups' future vision. Trustees nourished connections with Areas and the fellowship with visits to WSC Structure Area Assemblies, AWSC meetings, workshops, and by hosting the first in-person Road Trip! You and your Board Connect in two years. The Policy Committee, Al-Anon's second-largest group conscience, continued its discussions, bringing updated interpretations of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service to the 2022 WSC for approval. The Executive Committee performed its oversight responsibilities, helping WSO Staff prioritize Strategic Plan initiatives as the need to implement solutions for electronic groups and Alateen electronic meetings expanded.

The work of the World Service Office, including the Board of Trustees, its Executive Committees, and WSO Staff, can only continue to be accomplished through member contributions and literature sales. We wish to express our deep gratitude to each member, group, Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service, and international structure who contributed in 2022, allowing contributions to exceed literature sales for only the third time since 1954. Your support allows the WSO to pursue Al-Anon's mission and primary purpose at a global level, truly making Al-Anon Family Groups a worldwide fellowship.

WHO WE ARE: VISION, MISSION, DOMAINS & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Members:

1. Provide access to the Al-Anon program for all
2. Advance support to underserved and diverse communities
3. Understand member and group needs

Recovery & Service Tools:

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

Awareness:

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

Financial Sustainability:

1. Align resources to support the needs of the fellowship in accordance with Al-Anon's spiritual principles
2. Create opportunities for members to support AFG, Inc.
3. Improve transparency of the financial needs of AFG, Inc.
4. Manage risk to reputation, operations, and assets

Global Engagement:

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

OUR INTENTIONS

Strategic Plan

In January 2022, as in the last several years, members of the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)¹, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee gathered at the January Board meeting to agree on priorities for the World Service Office (WSO) and its Staff and Volunteers for the coming year. SLT presented a vision, referred to as the WSO Projects Landscape, which outlined Strategic Plan Strategies it proposed undertaking or carrying on in 2022 as well as major project initiatives not directly identified as Strategies. These initiatives included items such as planning for the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in London, United Kingdom and the Transforming Electronic Groups effort initiated by the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC) motion to recognize permanent electronic groups as Al-Anon Family Groups.

Strategic Plan Refresh

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (outgoing)

Vali F., Executive Director

Additionally, at the January meeting, the Board approved the final version of the Strategic Plan, which had been refreshed through a process beginning with a joint meeting of WSO Staff, Volunteers, and a consultant in July 2021. The Refresh included:

- Minor revisions of the Mission and relabeled Vision
- Development of five Domains which better define all the elements of work conducted by the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and Staff than the previous Goals
- New Goal Statements
- New Strategic Objectives, approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2021

So, in January, the only outstanding component of the Strategic Plan was the development of Strategies relevant to each Domain and Strategic Objective. As Strategies define the “how,” aka implementation work, while the Domains, Goal Statements, and Strategic Objectives define the “what,” aka vision, responsibility for Strategies development belonged to the SLT. Unlike the previous Strategic Plan process, the new format and approach provided for identification of Strategies that might span years and/or might not be ready for immediate implementation. Through this process, longer-term Strategies are captured and approved so they can be implemented when appropriate. The Board approved the final version, including Strategies and major initiatives, at its January meeting.

The Refresh process also raised awareness among all participants of the opportunity for Board Committees and work teams to use the Strategic Plan as a guidepost for prioritizing their work. Implementing this principle, for example, the Road Trip! Work Group Guideline, approved by the Executive Committee at its December 2022 meeting, included two Strategic Plan Domains and Goal Statements as part of its vision statement.

¹The Strategic Leadership Team consists of the three Directors, two Associate Directors and a Manager. Its primary purpose is to deliver the strategic priorities of the organization as defined by the Goal Statements and Strategic Objectives established by the Board of Trustees.

2022 Strategies Update

Staff Strategic Leadership Team

In 2022, SLT consisted of the Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations, Director of Programs, Associate Director–Brand Communications, Associate Director–Community Relations, and the Publications Manager. Both the Associate Director–International and Director of Programs Emeritus also served on SLT for portions of 2022.

Unaware of Higher Power plans for the WSO at the January meeting, the members of the SLT presented a robust WSO Projects Landscape (listed below) which included its intention to implement Strategies and major initiatives spanning all five Domains.

Domain: Members

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

- Electronic Meeting Transformation
- 2023 International Convention with A.A. Participation (IC 2023)
- Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility

Domain: Recovery & Service Tools

AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

- New Daily Reader & Translation
- CAL Globally in All Languages
- WSO Guidelines Refresh
- Animations/Cartoons via Social Media

Domain: Awareness

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

- First Longitudinal Study
- Staff Speaking in Professional Capacity

Domain: Financial Sustainability

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

- SharePoint Implementation
- Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App Premium Content Process Implementation
- Electronic Payments for Al-Anon Family Groups
- Member Guidance: Bequests

Domain: Global Engagement

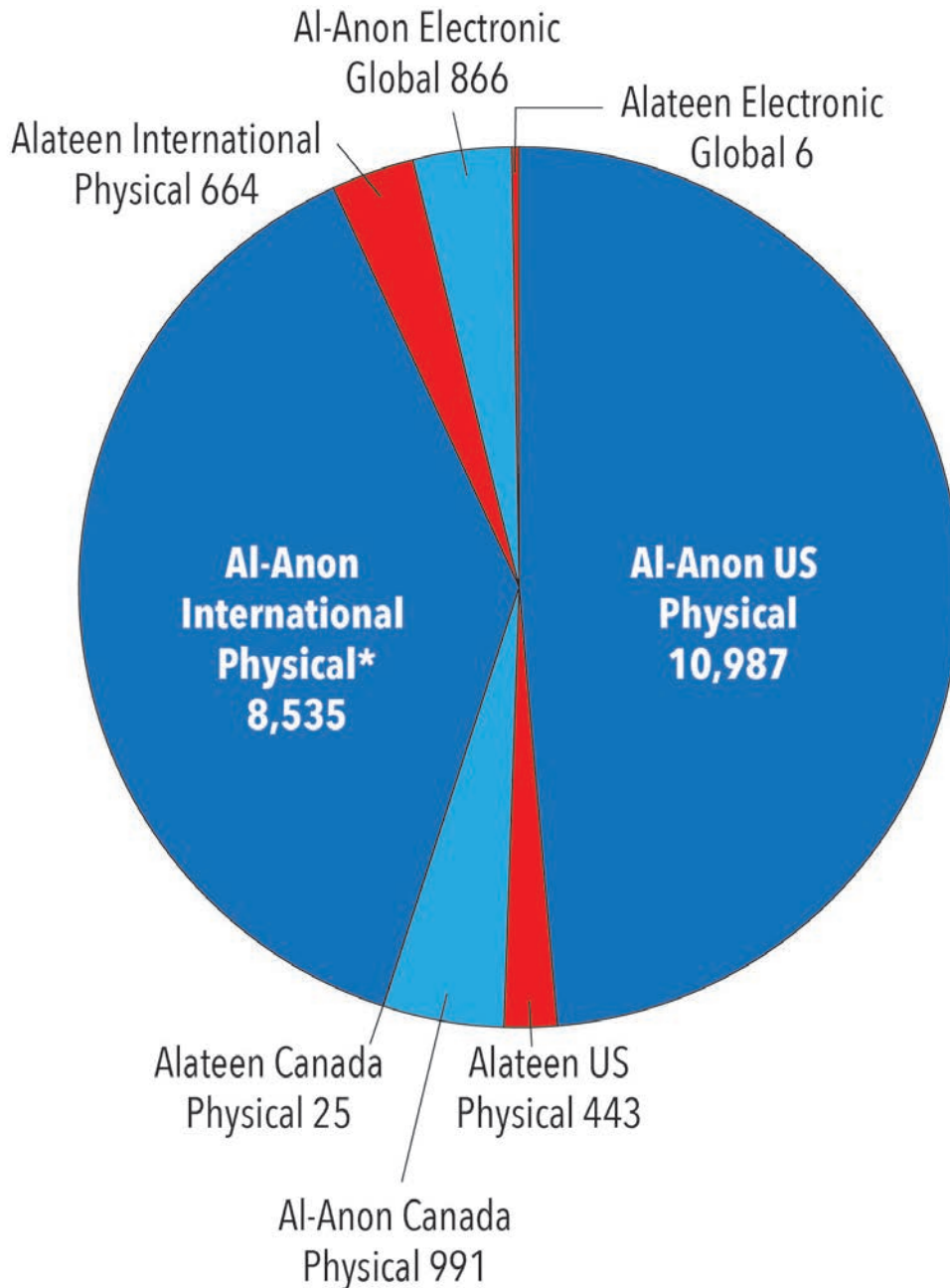
AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape.

- Service Manual Translation
- IAGSM London

Details about each initiative are referenced in the upcoming Annual Report sections: Our Impact, Our Work, and Our Plans.

OUR IMPACT

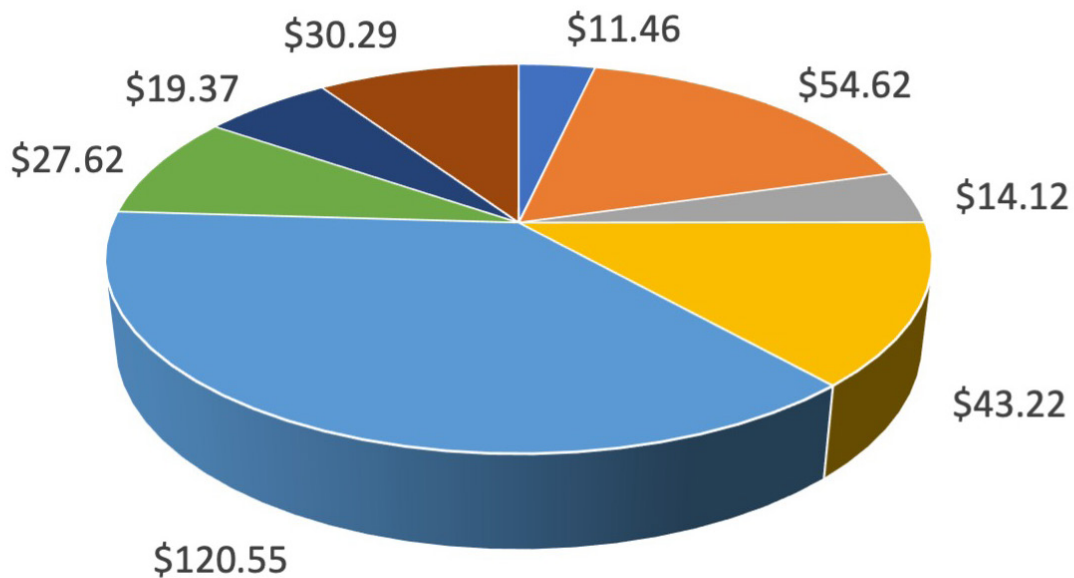
2022 Worldwide Al-Anon Family Groups Statistics



*The Al-Anon and Alateen International Group Count Survey was temporarily suspended in 2021. This service resumed in 2022, resulting in a more accurate group count.

Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Groups

Cost of Services Per Group \$321.25



- Volunteer Oversight
- Brand Communications
- Community Awareness
- Conference & Events
- Group Services
- International Support
- Translation
- CAL & Magazine Editing

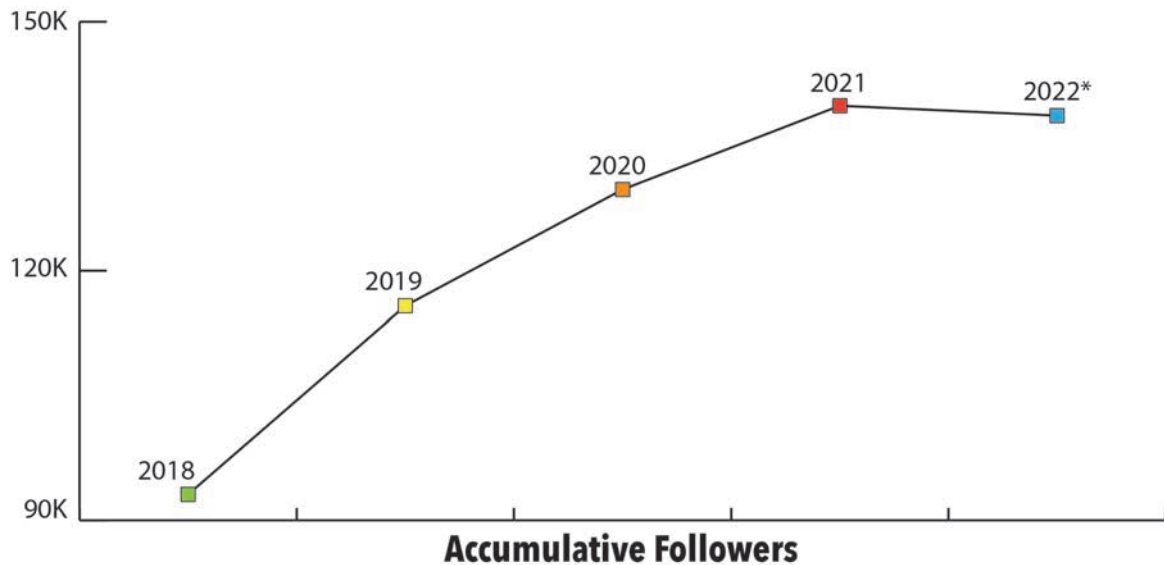
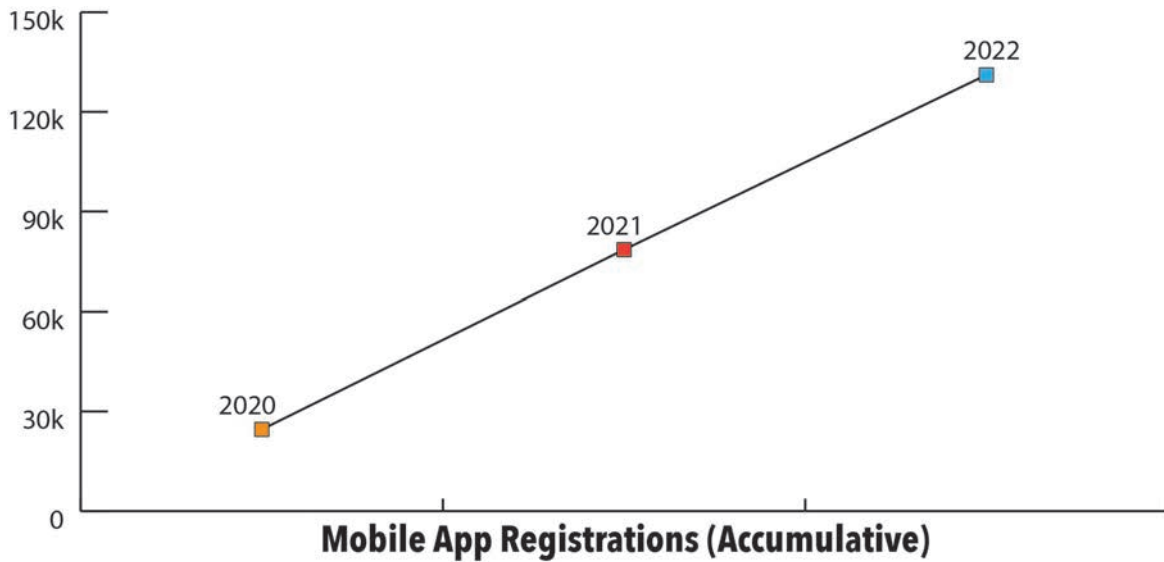
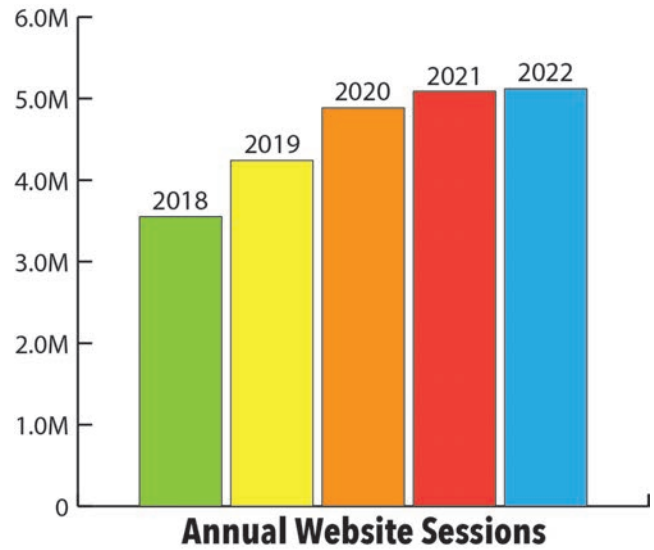
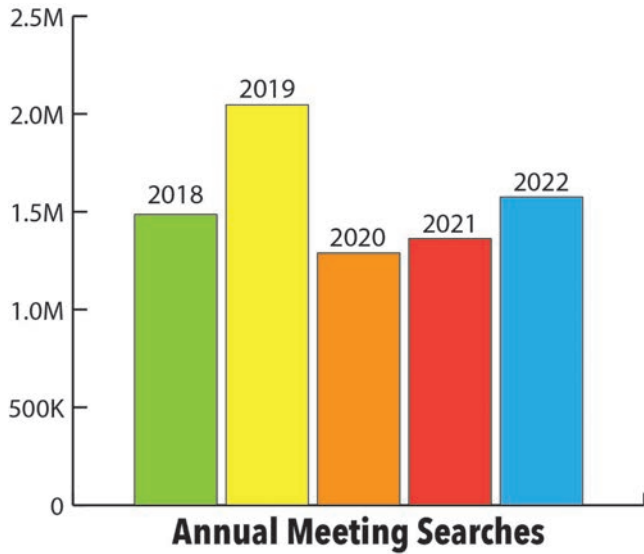
Groups by Language



Meeting Platforms

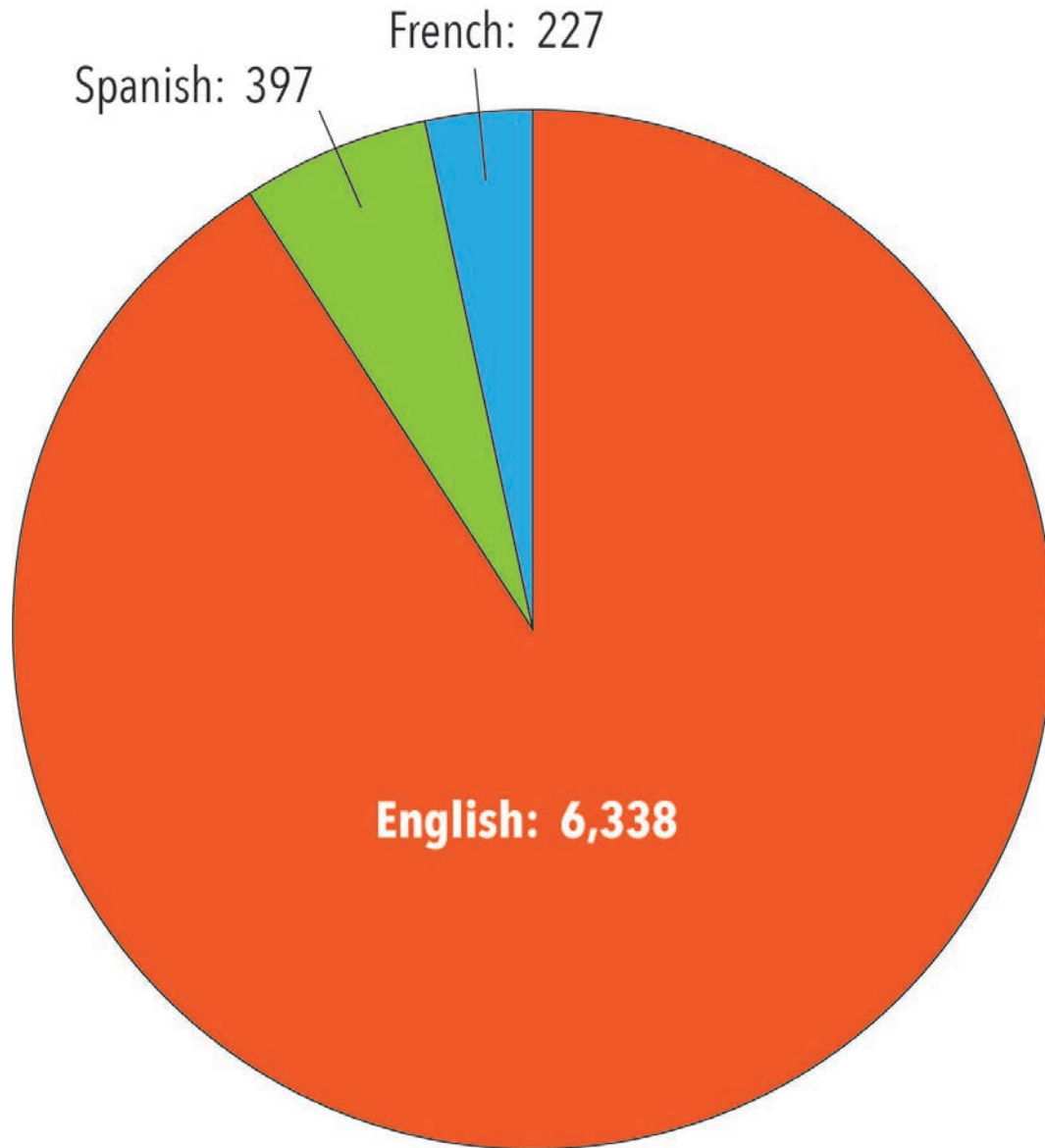


Digital Communications Connections



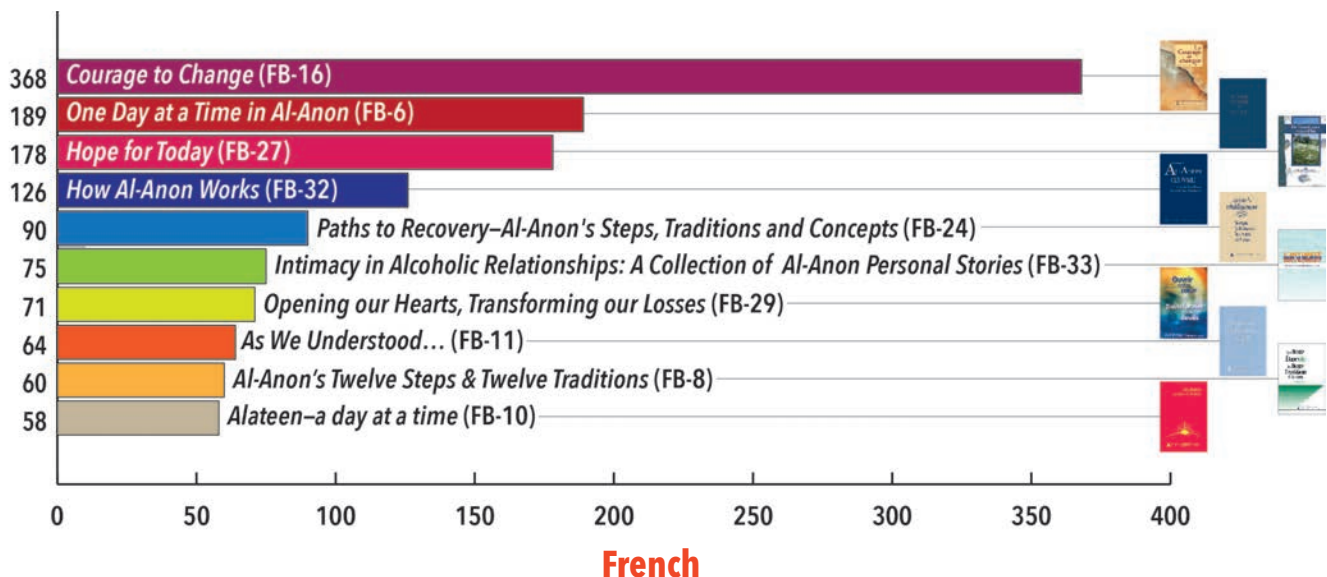
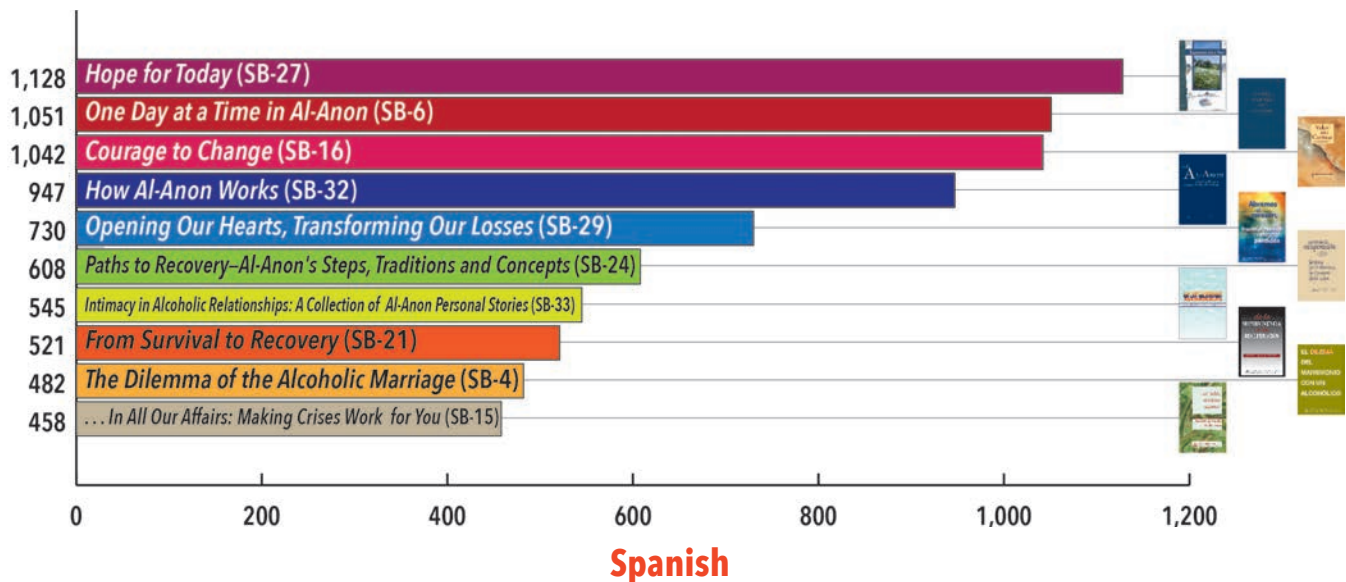
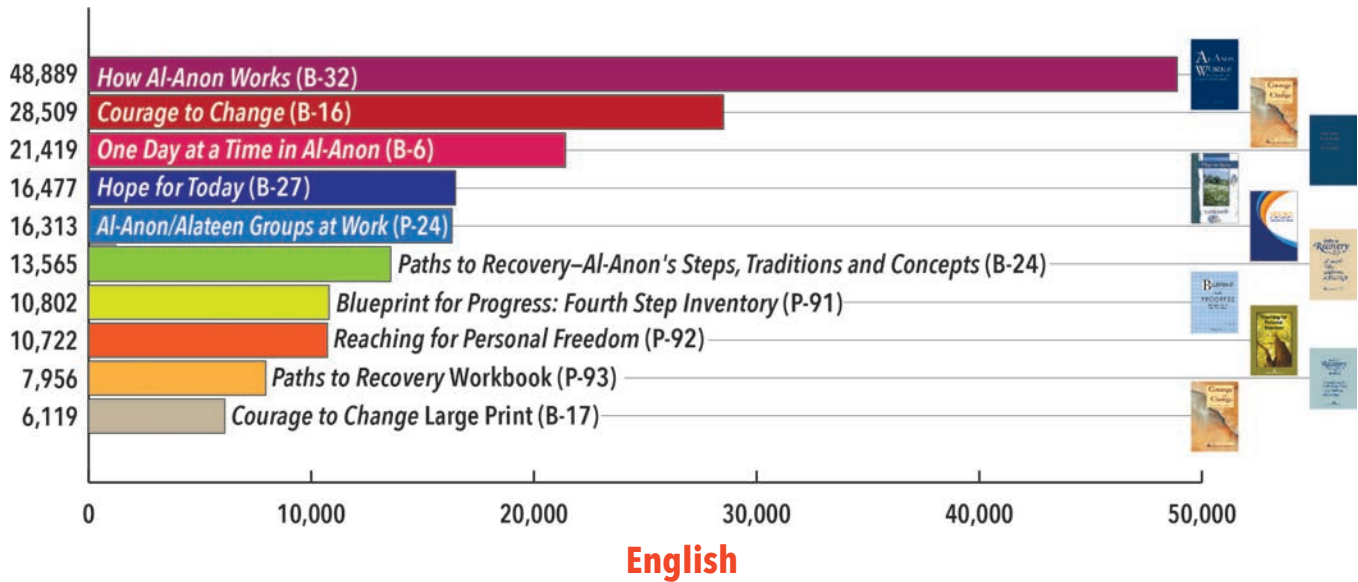
* No longer managing Alateen pages - removed 9,021 followers as a result

Meeting Line Statistics

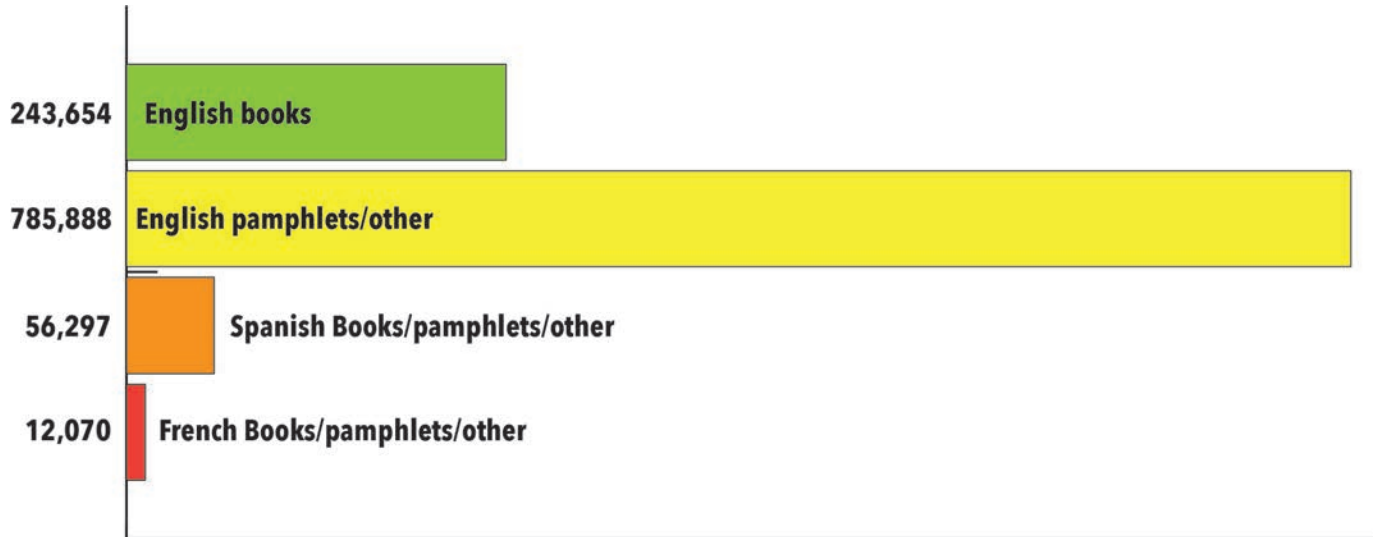


Total Calls on the WSO Toll-Free Meeting Line (6,962)

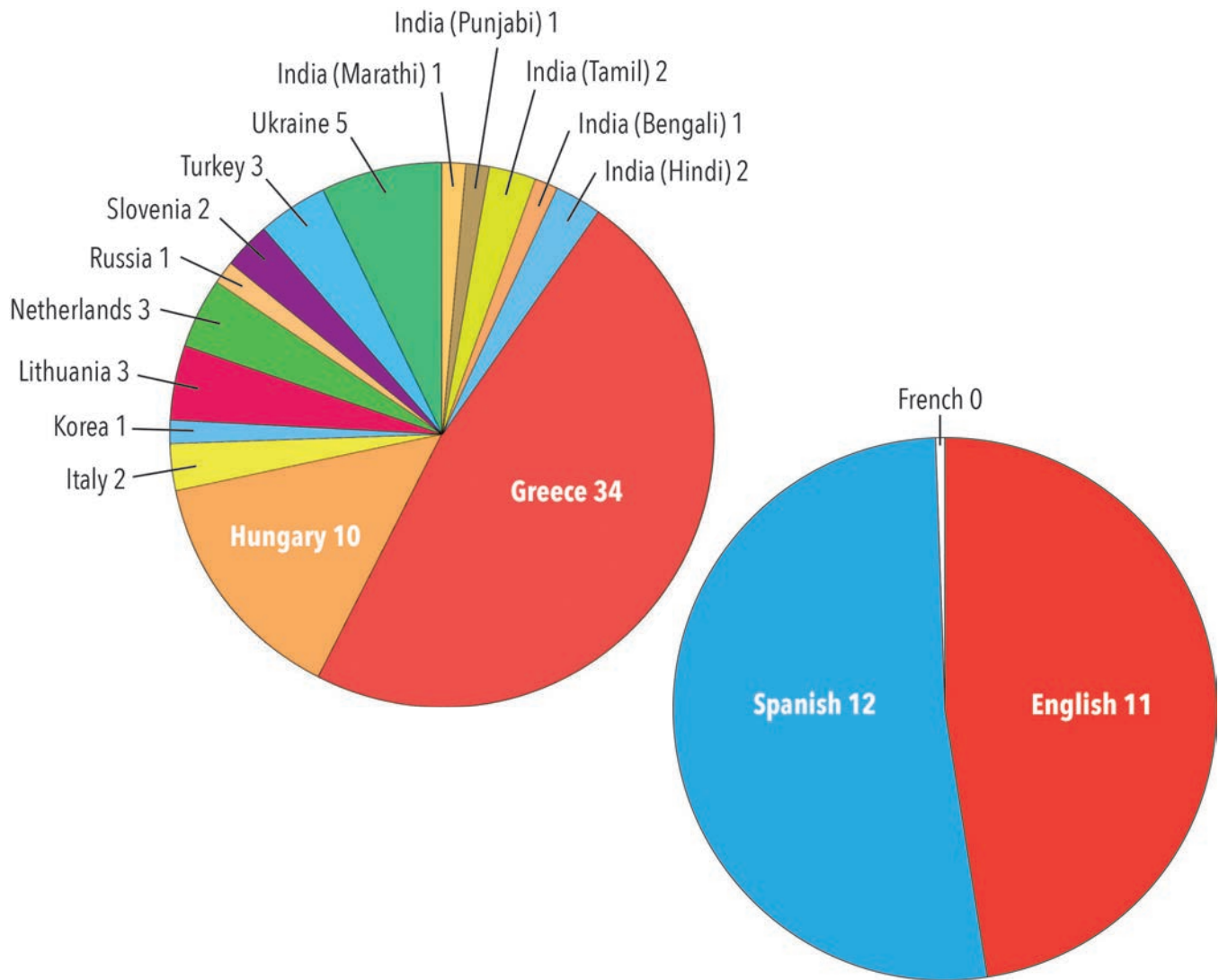
Top 10 Selling Books/Booklets of 2022



Conference Approved Literature Volume



Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally



Translation Statistics

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)
- Appeal letter to members (quarterly)
- 2022 Highlights from the WSC (once yearly)
- 2021 Annual Report (over 20,000 translated words)

Special projects

- 2022-2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2 updates
- New daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself*, translated into French and Spanish
- 2022 Longitudinal Survey and related communications
- 2023 Al-Anon International Convention Registration emails, receipts, and related communications



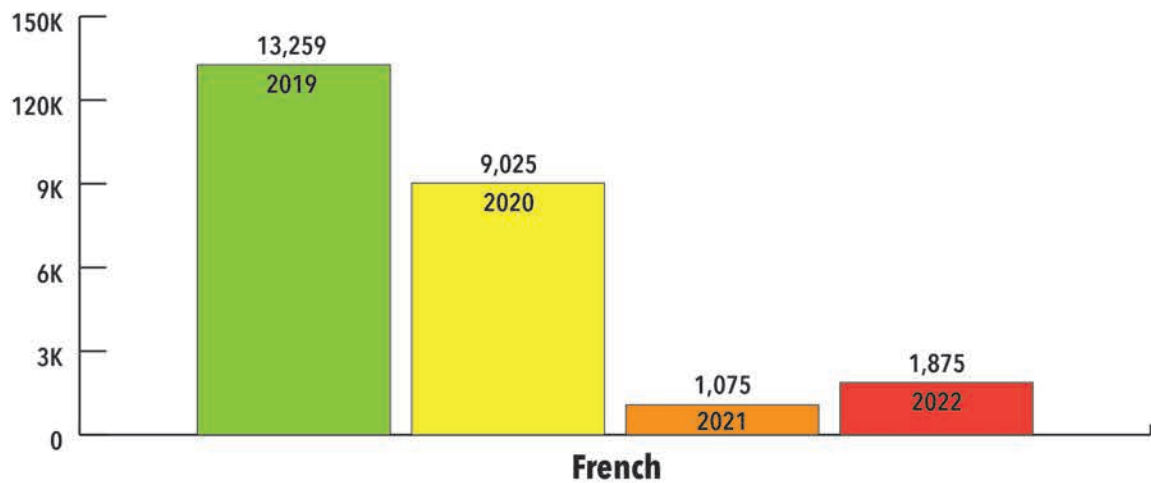
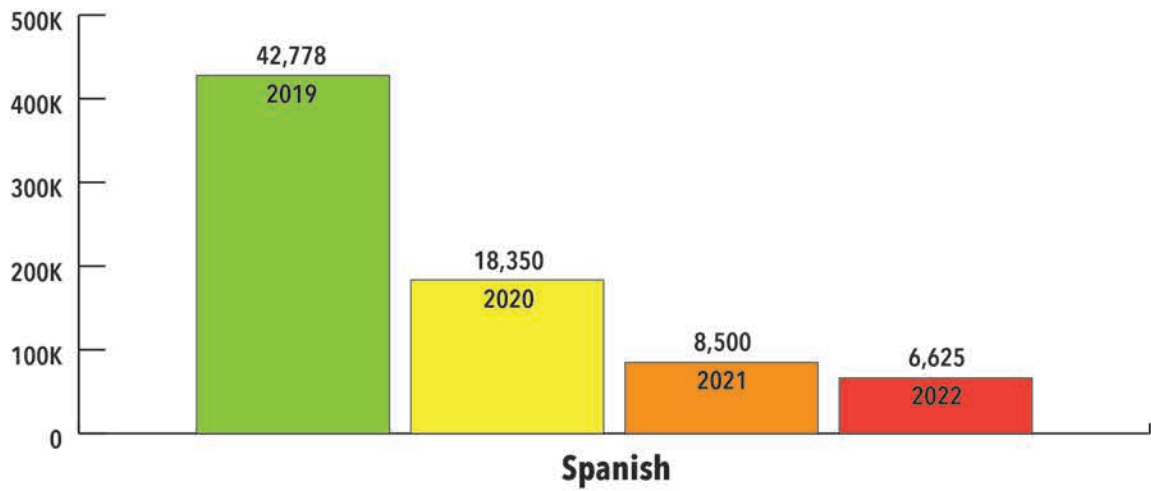
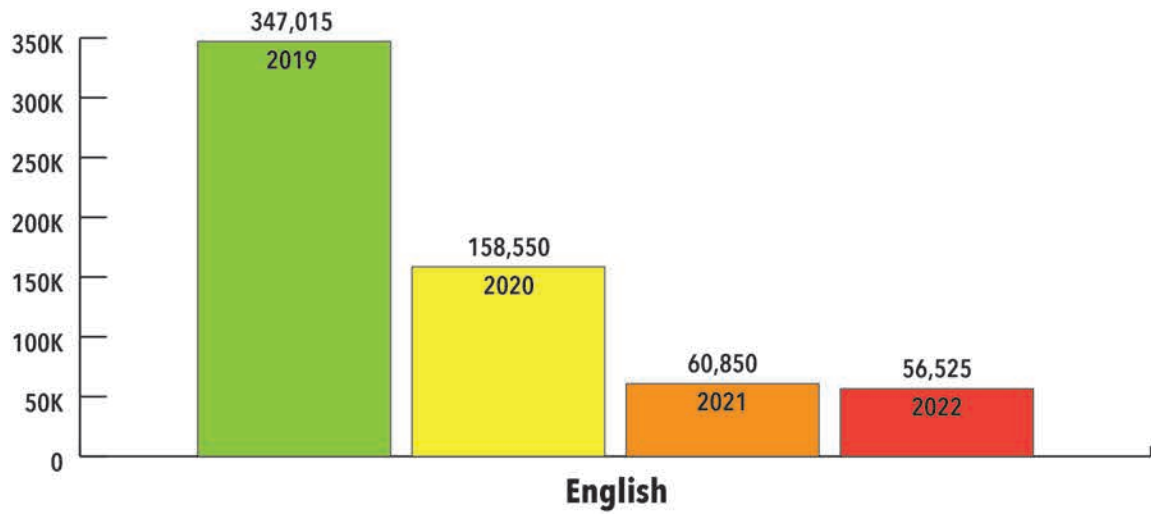
- Al-Anon Guidelines – Several outdated guidelines have been updated in French and Spanish and posted on the al-anon.org/guidelines web page.



Other items

- AFG Records – Update of all Al-Anon group forms (Registration, Update, and Instructions) for Al-Anon groups with physical and electronic locations (Al-Anon structure and international)
- Digital Communications – Various social media and *Mobile App* text updates
- Translation tools and resources – To help maintain consistency in vocabulary, styles, grammar, punctuation rules, and overall typography guidelines applied to our Al-Anon publications and communications, the Translation Team created individual WSO bilingual glossaries of commonly used terms and stylesheets for internal use. They are available to all our WSO bilingual Spanish and French Staff.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



OUR WORK

Domain: Members

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

Understanding Our Groups' and Members' Needs

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus (retired)

Sue P., Associate Director–Group Services

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Manager (Non-member)

Al-Anon Members and Group Communication

The WSO's ability to serve the fellowship became more effective with the hiring of a new Group Services Specialist, Tracey S., on June 6, 2022. She supports email correspondence and conversations with members on issues relating to group concerns and policy interpretation while supporting the informed group conscience of the World Service Conference (WSC).

One of the greatest achievements for Group Services in 2022 was the ability to collaborate with other team members across several projects this year, including:

- Rotation of Service web conference calls with AFG Records
- Planning the Alateen and Spanish-speaking Al-Anon meetings for IC 2023
- Collaborating with Public Outreach to prepare the Day of Connecting program for IC 2023
- Building the "Expanding our Structure" presentation which focused on how we are incorporating electronic groups into our structure which was shared at the Twelve Step Organizations - Day of Sharing meeting hosted by AFG Inc.
- Cooperating with AFG Records on a Task Force identifying the current and future needs of the Online Group Records application.

Group Services receives ten to 12 calls daily in addition to email communications. Responses centered on providing guidance to groups in the following ways:

- Resolving group members confusion and concern regarding returning to in-person meetings, creating hybrid meetings (physical meetings which also allow members to attend on an electronic platform simultaneously), and deciding whether to continue to meet online while an in-person meeting occurs separately. Members were consistently encouraged to reach out for guidance through their links of service and to participate in discussions for support. There has been an abundance of discussions on what it means to be an Al-Anon group, the principle of unity, interpretation of the meeting registration policy, and the purpose of having accurate meeting information displayed to welcome newcomers.
- Navigating how to conduct informed group conscience discussions about returning to in-person meeting locations as restrictions were lifted. Many groups had attracted a new online membership while temporarily meeting online. Many of these online members did not reside within the geographic Area of the group location. This new online membership presented a dilemma to those groups deciding whether to return to meeting in-person. There were many members who shared about the challenge of deciding who had voice in these discussions. Group Services shared about the principles of unity and Al-Anon's primary purpose, as described by the Twelve Traditions, in offering guidance focused on talking to each other and reasoning things out. These members were encouraged to become involved in the conversations taking place at the Area level surrounding accepting electronic groups into the Area service structure following acceptance of the Global Electronic Area into the 2022 WSC.

- Addressing questions about group funds and managing contributions for those groups which decided through group conscience to continue permanently with a hybrid or online format. Members were consistently redirected to the updated language found in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v2* related to service in electronic groups. Groups that split into separate physical and electronic groups realized the online group registered with the GEA was now its own entity responsible for managing their own Seventh Tradition. These were challenging conversations for all!
- Clarifying for groups which were meeting temporarily on electronic platforms during the pandemic and chose to continue meeting using a hybrid approach, how their meetings should be listed. In-person groups with an electronic component meeting together at the same day and time are designated as “groups with an electronic component,” also known as hybrid groups. These groups must register with a physical location. Groups with an electronic component that doesn’t meet concurrently with the physical meeting or meets separately are guided to register the electronic component of the meeting as a separate group.

Impression-Considerations in Returning to In-Person Meetings

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Like so many groups, when the pandemic hit in early 2020, my home group took a group conscience to decide what to do. There was another Al-Anon group in our District that met at the same time, and we decided to come together for a common meeting via a District videoconferencing account. This was a new concept for most involved, and there were lots of questions about how it would all work. The first week of the joint meeting, I was signed up to give the lead in my home group on Tradition One, so I agreed to speak on this to the combined groups.

What a fitting topic to discuss our common welfare and unity within Al-Anon in the face of all the changes that everyone faced at that time. Over the subsequent months, we adopted some of the format of each group’s meeting for the joint meeting, and we came to know and love each other in a special way as we shared. Again, through group conscience, members of my home group eventually decided to move back to a physical meeting, and the other group decided to create a meeting with an ongoing video presence along with physical attendance.

Some of my home group’s members came to prefer the video format and so remained with the now-hybrid group. Some of the other group’s members now periodically attend my home group to share with new friends they no longer regularly see. We have adopted the best from each other and found ways to meet the needs of the group as a whole—Tradition One in action.

Alateen Members and Groups

Electronic Alateen Group Feasibility Strategy

Alateen meetings taking place on the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* continue to attract and serve teen members, despite wide reports from Areas of the online fatigue facing teens. Reported attendance averages from four to 16 in any given meeting, with two to three newcomers at each! Certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) are rotating to serve the meetings serving Alateen on the *AFG Mobile App*. They are supported through a dedicated AFG Connects community as well as scheduled quarterly conference calls with Group Services Staff, in-meeting support, and test meetings on request.

Electronic meetings for Alateen were a topic of discussion at the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) and garnered much interest. As a result, the Electronic Alateen Group Feasibility Strategy pilot project is expanding through cooperation with five other international General Service Offices. This greater collaboration is proving fruitful in gaining a better understanding of legal concerns with teens using online platforms and parental/legal guardian roles. The ability to offer help and support safely to teens on online platforms remains the primary concern.

Al-Anon Information Services

The 2022 Annual Update was mailed via postal service for the first time since 2019. A total of 155 registered and active Al-Anon Information Services (AIS), combined AIS/Literature Distribution Centers (LDC), and 134 stand-alone LDCs were part of the mailing.

- 90 responses (58 percent) have been received from the AIS and AIS/LDCs.
- 52 responses (39 percent) have been received from the LDCs.

Group Services has updated all records as per the Annual Update and continues to reach out to the service entities that did not respond. Time is needed to follow up with them to determine whether or not the service entities are active in order to update contacts and to verify incomplete information. There is ongoing follow-up for those entities that are in “No Mail” status to determine what activity is taking place.

Despite these service entities having access to AFG Connects, not much engagement or discussion has been observed. Group Services Staff have identified the need to create a process to invite discussion. To date, there have been no video-conference calls to offer support for these communities. This is set to begin in 2023 to orient trusted servants to the information available to them that may assist them in their service responsibility.

Inmate Correspondence Service

The challenge of this service continues to be the limited exposure to Al-Anon that the incarcerated population receives. Areas are encouraged to carry the message to local prisons and institutions through their Public Outreach Coordinator efforts. Areas may have funds to provide local institutions with CAL. Trusted servants are encouraged to bring in a meeting on wheels or establish another form of regular meeting. In addition to supporting those confined who have been affected by someone else’s drinking, Group Services also receives inquiries from inmates looking for either A.A., free literature, or to request free literature to be sent to family members (WSO does not send free literature and does not send information to third parties).

Staff-Member Connections

Welcome Newcomers

The Welcome Newcomers! Webpage (al-anon.org/series/welcome-newcomers/) has now replaced the previously available one-time email that was sent to newcomers upon their request. One benefit this new approach offers is that groups, particularly electronic groups, can guide newcomers to WSO’s free resources without their needing to provide the group member their personal email address. The webpage—available in English, Spanish, and French—has been live since June 2022 with announcements made to the fellowship through various communications platforms, including AFG Connects, Announcements and *In The Loop*. From January to May 2022, 3,276 emails were requested and delivered. Starting June 8, 2022 through the end of the year, the short link al-anon.org/welcome has driven 6,864 sessions leading to 8,262 views of the welcome newcomer page.

Meeting Information: 1-888-4AL-ANON

In 2022, WSO Staff answered 6,962 calls through the Toll-Free Meeting Information Line Service, which offers dedicated lines to serve English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking callers. The meeting information line is very often the first entry point for a newcomer or professional. During the pandemic, the WSO remained open with Staff on site to provide essential services, particularly answering the phone lines. The phone agents who answer the meeting information line do this in addition to their daily responsibilities. The AFG Records Manager facilitates quarterly meetings with the phone agents so they can share their experience, strength, and hope to better support these sensitive calls with grace and compassion.

Although WSO does not track how callers find the number, sometimes the source is provided during the call. One caller shared that he found it challenging to find information about Al-Anon online; however, when he heard a radio public service announcement, he pulled his car over and called right away. Another caller, affected by her daughter’s drinking,

shared that she was familiar with Al-Anon because her grandfather had attended Alcoholic Anonymous meetings in New York with the organization's founders.

WSO Reopens for Tours

In September, after a two-year hiatus, the WSO reopened its doors to members. To better serve members and provide appropriate staffing, a new online reservation system (al-anon.org/tourwso) was created to schedule tours. Guided by WSO Staff, tours are provided in English, French, and Spanish and booked anywhere from 24 hours to a year in advance. The 45-minute tour includes a glimpse into the day-to-day business as well as a peek into WSO Archives, a repository of Al-Anon records and ephemera.

Transforming Electronic Groups: Updating WSO Processes

Vali F., Executive Director

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Manager (Non-member)

Karen Wolff, Software Engineer (Non-member)

One System: Groups Meeting Electronically and Physically

The motion to create the Global Electronic Area was an historic event that will be celebrated for many years to come. Accomplishing the integration of groups meeting electronically into the WSC Structure, however, is a large undertaking. Improvements have been made to the database structure to accommodate the capture and use of additional information. Reports and queries, PDF and online forms, internal processes, and fellowship communications have all been evaluated for changes to reflect the inclusion of these groups into the WSC.

At year end, the WSO AFG Records Staff retained responsibility for maintaining the electronic group records for the Areas due to the effort required to update the Online Group Records (OGR) application. The OGR web application, used by trusted servants for many years to maintain their group data, is due for a technology and feature modernization. A Task Force was assembled, consisting of Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs), District Representatives, and WSO Staff, to gather requirements for the next generation of the Online Group Records application. All AGRCs and District Representatives were invited to provide input about their Area and District processes, experience with the current system, and suggestions for features to better support them in their roles. The Task Force was grateful to receive responses from 42 Area Group Records Coordinators and 195 District Representatives. This input will be invaluable as this system continues to evolve. The next generation OGR development is a multiyear undertaking.

Accompanying this technical work, WSO Staff spent time updating, translating, and communicating with the Areas about the registration and update forms for electronic, physical, and international groups. The WSO currently manages 12 different forms per language—that's 36 different forms. This is due in part to the fact we have both PDF and online versions, which are each significantly different due to their format. 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. Recognizing the burden of the many different forms, the decision was taken to eliminate the PDF version of the registration and update forms for electronic groups. Further streamlining of forms will occur in 2023.

Twenty-six geographic Area Delegates notified the WSO in 2022 that their Areas had voted to accept electronic groups and created policies/processes to support them. Staff refined and shared with these Areas the WSO process for submitting new Al-Anon group registrations and for groups moving from a physical location to an electronic one. Area trusted servants were informed that electronic groups registered with a geographic Area are not displayed on either al-anon.org meeting search. These groups have indicated they are not seeking a global membership, so they are not included in the electronic group search. Since the WSO forms do not include the ability to enter a geographic location for electronic groups which could be used to "pin" them, they are also not displayed on the meeting search.

The Transforming Electronic Groups Staff team discussed how to remedy this situation and created a plan to allow electronic groups registered in geographic Areas to submit a zip or postal code representing their local audience, which could be used to “pin” the group on the meeting search. Work to implement this plan was underway at year end. Meanwhile, Areas are encouraged to list these groups on the Area and local websites, so newcomers and members alike can find their meetings.

WSO Staff worked diligently in 2022 to develop a process, design the forms, and update backend technology to allow electronic groups in the Global Electronic Area (GEA) seeking to attract a local audience to transfer from the GEA into a geographic Area within the WSC Structure once the geographic Area approved incorporation of electronic groups into their service structure. The resulting new Group Area Transfer Request Form will become available in early 2023 and will be posted in the Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community. The revised process is designed to streamline this transfer in recognition of the groups in the GEA which only registered in that Area due to the lack of alternative. Staff will create a similar process for groups to transfer from geographic Areas into the GEA in 2023.

Archives: Engaging with Our History

Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Collecting and Sharing Memories

The WSO Archive consists of digital records, audio recordings, and collectibles. The collection is the most comprehensive source of original documents relating to the history of Al-Anon Family Groups the fellowship as well as the administration and operations of the organization, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

The Archive collection has significance beyond the fellowship. Because Al-Anon is one of the leading Twelve-Step mutual support programs, the collection represents meetings and recovery activities worldwide. The records about the work and programs at the Clearinghouse are an invaluable reference source and provide context and perspective for the WSO’s future programs and initiatives.

Some items gifted to Archives in 2022 include a selection of cassette recordings and books, inscribed by Al-Anon co-founder Lois W., which belonged to Alice B., former Chairperson of the Literature Committee responsible for compiling the sharings to create the book *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6); the Ohio Area 2022 Road Trip! Book; selected copies of *The Forum*; and other pieces of original correspondence.

The Archives Request for Research (AR-9) form, located on the Al-Anon website, generates inquiries from both members and the general public. A member shared that his group, which is fortunate to have many men, didn’t know *The Stag Line*, a pamphlet published for men in 1962, existed and felt it would be very much appreciated by group members, many of whom are Al-Anon history oriented. Although WSO no longer distributes full versions of *The Stag Line*, the thorough research provided is a recovery resource for the group. A university professor inquired about the selection of Ralph Waldo Emerson quotations in *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) for a future Ralph Waldo Emerson Society publication.

As a result of internal restructuring this past spring, the Archivist and the Community Relations team worked together to explore creative ways to share elements of the collection with the fellowship. To celebrate American Archives Month in October, a “pilot” campaign limited to Staff was conducted to raise awareness about the WSO collection. Each week of the month, each member of the team shared a personal favorite from the collection with Staff via email.

Area Archives as Links to WSO History

While attending an Area Assembly, the Associate Director–Community Relations saw the Area’s 60th anniversary materials that the Archive Coordinator had displayed. One of the items on exhibit was the original 1996 letter that the Director of Programs–Emeritus had written to the Area resigning as Area Chair to accept her position at WSO. The letter was read at her retirement celebration in November.

Digital Communication: Connecting Members

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications

Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App

The *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* community continued to grow this past year, with over 130,000 downloads. Thirty-seven Al-Anon groups call the *Mobile App* home, hosting over 100 Al-Anon meetings each week. Significant updates were made to the *Mobile App* to improve accessibility, security, and navigation and increase engagement. Staff, together with the development team, created a more visually appealing homepage with large buttons so members can more easily navigate to their favorite sections of the *Mobile App*, including meetings and the social newsfeed. Members can now also add meetings to a “favorite meeting” list and set a reminder to be notified when meetings are about to start. The social newsfeed was modified to give more space to allow members to browse others’ sharings and to offer more ways to engage through comment replies and reactions. For first-time users in the *Mobile App*, Staff included new welcome screen links to videos demonstrating how to use the app and other important resources. These updates went live in September. Staff then began tracking engagement levels and found that the monthly baseline is roughly 23,000 users logging in each month, with 761 users creating a total of 2,000 newsfeed posts, which garner approximately 8,750 comments.

Mobile App Town Hall Meetings

The World Service Office (WSO) extended an invitation to all members using the *Mobile App* to attend a town hall meeting so the WSO could understand any wants and needs members had that may improve the user experience. We asked members to share their successes and challenges with the app.

The team created a robust agenda for each meeting that included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Celebrating the *Mobile App* two-year anniversary
- Clarifying the role of the WSO as the administrator of the *Mobile App*
- Clarifying the difference between Group Services questions and technical questions
- Providing *Mobile App* statistics to explain our rapid growth
- Providing app updates for 2023
- Explaining member responsibilities in *Mobile App* meetings
- Encouraging Seventh Tradition participation

The meeting ended with a question-and-answer session. Many members prepared and sent questions in advance. All three sessions were well-attended. Attendees appreciated the chance to share their experience with the *Mobile App*. Members requested that the WSO host town hall meetings biannually. The team will resume planning for the next town hall meeting in 2023.

Planning the 2023 International Al-Anon Convention with A.A. Participation

Vali F., Executive Director

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

IC2023: The Convention Reimagined

In 2022, the IC2023 Planning Team continued its focus on ensuring Al-Anon members attending the International Convention feel included in celebrating recovery through a memorable, familiar, and yet reimagined experience. To this end, the Team, working with the convention management consulting firm (Consultant), reimagined participation to include a virtual component. The virtual component will include simulcast Big Meetings and daytime sessions in all three languages, as well as offering a recorded version for playback during convenient local time zone hours. Borrowing from our friends at Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), the Team decided to create a Thursday night party to kick off the Convention with music and dancing, along with other quieter activities for those interested in Al-Anon Family Groups and A.A. history.

The Consultant suggested to the Planning Team the idea of kicking off the Convention with a Big Meeting, rather than waiting for the conclusion of the first day's sessions before participants get together to share the Serenity Prayer with 3,000-4,000 fellow Al-Anon members. Staff agreed this proposal aligned with our goal of encouraging as many members participating virtually as possible to attend live. So, the Friday evening International Big Meeting, including the Language of Love Parade, will now occur first thing Friday morning to start the Convention with energy, excitement, and "New Hopes."

Based on the 2018 experience, the WSO again invested in an app to generate social engagement, provide program session information, and offer the ability to create meetings and meetups on demand. Having the app allowed the WSO to consider, and ultimately decide, to forego printing of a Convention program for the event. This decision will allow the Planning Team to be more responsive to session demand as we get closer to the event, as printed programs must be sent to the vendors long in advance, particularly with current supply chain issues.

Also reimagined for IC2023 is the program speaker selection process. Staff wish to offer members interested in speaking the ability to volunteer for the specific session(s) in which they are interested. This minimizes participant schedule conflicts and supports our principles of self-support and self-care.

Overall registration response has been very positive and WSO Staff and Volunteers are very much looking forward to the "New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery" the event is bound to deliver.

IC2023: The Program

With the goal of connecting and supporting the friends and families of alcoholics, the IC2023 Planning Team has continued exploring ways to reimagine the open daytime Al-Anon meetings on Friday and Saturday.

- In addition to the various *types* of sessions—Book Study, Next Pick, Panel, Speaker, Writing Workshop, and Workshop—attendees will be able to choose from an added layer of *personal interests*: Back to Basics, Legacies, Literature, Meeting Topic, and Relationships.
- Consistent with our theme of New Hopes, the Team created "Many Voices"-themed sessions to offer a greater sense of equality and belonging. Speakers for these sessions will be members who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope from the perspective of the following Al-Anon communities: Adult Children, Men, LGBTQIA+, Parents/Grandparents, People of Color, and Young Adults.
- Alateen members will have six meetings during IC2023, two of which will be open to all attendees in English and one of which will be open to attendees speaking Spanish.
- French- and Spanish-speaking members will have sessions throughout the day on Friday and Saturday, including an opportunity to hear longtime French- and Spanish-speaking members share concurrently with the Trailblazers Breakfast on Route 66!, which is available in English. The Trailblazers Breakfast on Route 66! celebrates trailblazers throughout Al-Anon's history, including those still trailblazing today, as these members share a piece of their story.
- A.A. will offer open daytime meetings at a hotel just across the street from the Convention Center—all attendees are welcome.

IC2023: The Day of Connecting

Continuing with the theme of reimagination, the Associate Director—Community Relations led a Day of Connecting Task Force to revisit and refine the 2018 program. The Task Force included WSO Staff, WSO Volunteers, and Past Delegates. The program was presented to the Board of Trustees at its October 2022 meeting and enthusiastically approved. The reimagined program includes an opening and closing general session to which all participants are invited. Another new addition will be a lunch, included in the Convention ticket price, during which a member of the local professional community will share their experience with Al-Anon Family Groups.

Domain: Recovery & Service Tools

AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

Literature: Collecting, Editing, and Maintaining Our Member Sharings

Tom C., Associate Director–Literature

Carol C., Magazine Editor

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

During 2022, the WSO Staff and the 15 members of the Literature Committee received 20 more requests for the development of new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces. Although the Committee did not bring any recommendations to the 2022 Conference, it did agree to recommend to the 2023 Conference the development of an in-depth piece about sponsorship and service sponsorship. The Committee discussed several other ideas and began answering the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions regarding the need for a piece about members' relationships with finances in Al-Anon recovery. Work also continued on the three projects that were given conceptual approval by the 2021 Conference, which are detailed below.

While the development of new material is important, so is bringing attention to already existing literature. In addition to the monthly "CAL Corner" department in *The Forum*, several newsletter and magazine notices put the focus on Al-Anon literature throughout the year, including the June "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article in *The Forum* on "Where CAL Comes From." The magazine continued the new "CAL on..." department, featuring memorable quotations on specific topics. April's issue included "CAL on Obedience to the Unenforceable" and June's featured "CAL on Conference Approved Literature."

Area Literature Coordinators are essential in sharing news and information about literature to local members. Updates are regularly posted on the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects, where Coordinators also share their ideas with one another on writing workshops and other ways to encourage Area members to take an interest in CAL.

For members' convenience, the WSO once again provided 20 quotations in English, French, and Spanish for service arms to use in fundraising calendars without having to seek written permission. This service reduces work for trusted servants as well as WSO Staff.

A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences

Al-Anon's next daily reader, our first in 21 years, will be introduced at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This year's work focused on completing the index, design, and translation into French and Spanish. The English version went to the printers in July, and French and Spanish went there in November.

Alateen Just for Tonight Bookmark

Having received over 100 sharings from Alateen members for the new bookmark, in July the literature Committee graded all sharings to determine which ones to include in the bookmark. In August the Committee reviewed a first draft including the highest-rated sharings, and by November had unanimously approved a final draft. The next steps are reviews by the Director of Programs, an Alateen Task Force, a Policy Task Force, and the Executive Director.

Impression—Creating Conference Approved Literature

Mary W., Chairperson of Literature Committee (At-Large Member)

One of the highlights in my Al-Anon journey has been volunteering on the WSO Literature Committee. It has been an honor to work with other Literature Committee Volunteers and the WSO to contribute in a small way to the process of producing Conference Approved Literature. The Literature Committee discusses ideas submitted by our fellowship and, after thorough discussion, can make recommendations to the World Service Conference (WSC). One of the recent approved projects was the development of a *Just for Tonight* Alateen bookmark. After developing a writing guideline and asking Alateen members to submit their writings on the topic, we waited to see if the idea was something that the Alateen fellowship would support.

Over a hundred writings were submitted, and it was a gift to read what our Alateen members wrote. I was inspired by their courage, bravery, and ability to put their thoughts and feelings onto paper. I am grateful for all the Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service who supported our Alateen members in this project. The voices of today's Alateen members helped me connect to my own youth. I smiled, I healed, and I am hopeful. I am especially grateful that the principles of the program are universal, regardless of our age. I can be comforted knowing that the gifts of this program will continue for the next generation so others can continue to heal from the family disease of alcoholism.

New Introductions to ODAT & Dilemma

The introduction to *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), which was given conceptual approval by the Conference in 2021 and completed the CAL process in 2021, was included in the latest printing of the book in October. As had been mentioned in discussion at the 2021 Conference, Literature Distribution Centers with previous stock of the book without the new introduction were given the opportunity to receive a limited quantity of free stickers of the introduction. *These stickers were not intended for members with earlier printings of the book. A free downloadable version of the introduction is available on the website at al-anon.org/b6 and is sized for placement in previously purchased books.*

The new foreword to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) completed the Conference approval process in early 2022, having been reviewed by the Literature Committee, the Policy Review Task Force, and the Executive Director. It is included in the latest printing of the book, and a free downloadable version of the foreword is available on the website at al-anon.org/b4.

The 2021 Conference motion for the Dilemma foreword also included development of "a booklet of gems from this book, possibly including some new material." In January, new members of the Committee were invited to add their ideas for what should be included as gems to those previously provided by the Committee in 2021. Approaches to the booklet were discussed by the Committee during the year, and in December a first draft of the booklet was sent to the Committee for its review.

Recovery Magazines—*The Forum*, *Le lien*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*

The Forum continues to provide help and encouragement to families and friends of alcoholics as the monthly magazine of Al-Anon Family Groups. *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* are the bimonthly French and Spanish magazines, which use translated excerpts from *The Forum*. All magazines feature sharings from members in a variety of relationships with alcoholics and are meant to provide recovery in meetings and between meetings. The Publications Team designs *The Forum* from the manuscript developed by 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 and make recommendations for publication. The Committee also meets quarterly via web conferencing to discuss the status of the magazine and address any concerns readers may have. In 2022, FEAC members took first steps toward formulating an electronic survey about *The Forum*. No survey has been conducted since 2010 and never electronically.

Building on the milestone first-ever web conference call for *Forum* Coordinators, which took place in 2021, three such web conference calls were held in 2022. Dozens of *Forum* Coordinators from throughout the U.S. and Canada joined these calls and shared experience, strength, and hope on getting *The Forum* to members and encouraging submission of member sharings.

To make the online submission process inclusive of Spanish- and French-speaking members, in 2022, all writing and submission guidelines were translated, as were the online submission forms and related webpages. Because the WSO does not currently have the resources to translate member submissions, they must still be accompanied by an English translation; however, the submission process itself is now accessible in English, Spanish, and French.

Impression – Reading the Monthly Sharings

Meg U., Chairperson of the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (At-Large Member)

I felt very honored to be asked first to join the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) and then to serve as its Chairperson. Having been a longtime subscriber to *The Forum*, it has been a privilege to be able to give back to the Al-Anon program in this way. The FEAC is a group of five Al-Anon members from across the United States and Canada and a WSO Staff Liaison. We meet online a few times a year and stay connected through the wonders of technology. It has been a pleasure meeting and working with the members of the Committee and with the talented and helpful Staff.

Every month we read a group of sharings that have been submitted by Al-Anon members around the globe. We evaluate each sharing to ensure that it is consistent with Al-Anon principles, and to offer our thoughts on how each one impacts and inspires us.

I have found reading a few sharings every day is a wonderful way to complete the assignment. It is a little like having my own personal Al-Anon meeting every day in my house as I read the experience, strength, and hope of fellow members. Daily, I am inspired by and in awe of their wisdom, creativity, and resilience. Serving on the FEAC has definitely been a boost to my recovery, and I have found much joy in being a member. Thank you, Al-Anon!

Alateen Talk

Production of *Alateen Talk* remained behind schedule in 2022 because of the continued effects from the pandemic, time required to support the transformation of electronic groups, and the open Group Services position, which was not filled until June. After careful consideration, including an evaluation of current subscription statistics, which sadly do not include any individual Alateen member subscriptions, Staff decided to recommend to the Executive Committee discontinuation of the newsletter in its current format.

The WSO and its Staff remain committed to providing a newsletter that is relevant to and written by teens, in a format that will be inviting to them. The WSO has established a Task Force to explore options. Many Staff hands currently contribute to the publication, and all remain dedicated to creating the next generation of *Alateen Talk*.

Translation

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

Colette Norman, Translation Manager (Non-member)

WSO Guidelines Refresh

In 2021, the WSO commenced a multiyear Strategic Plan Strategy to progressively review and update all WSO Guidelines, which are the shared experiences of Al-Anon and Alateen members on diverse topics. The primary aim of the Strategy was to honor the WSO commitment to make these Guidelines available in all three languages. An added benefit was that the process included updates to these sought-after, member resources, many of which required updates to reflect the evolving Al-Anon Family Groups experience.

In 2022, Staff continued to use a phased approach, selecting first those WSO Guidelines requiring minimal changes in all three languages. Staff across many Teams collaborated to successfully update ten WSO Guidelines, complete translation on each, and post them in all three languages throughout the year.

In July 2022, the Guidelines Refresh Strategy was temporarily put on hold as part of a broader WSO workload balancing decision. Staff will gradually continue to translate, refresh the designs, and post those Guidelines for which revisions were already completed and approved in English as time allows. Revisions will be posted within a year of refresh.

Members can find WSO Guidelines relevant to their needs in English, Spanish, or French and download them for free under the Members menu at al-anon.org or by visiting al-anon.org/guidelines.

Publications: Publishing Recovery and Service Tools

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

Suzanne M., Associate Director–Conference

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

Our Newest Audiobook: *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*

We continue to evaluate options for electronic media offerings to meet the increasing needs of our fellowship. In 2022, we published *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29) as an audiobook. The audiobook was professionally recorded and digitally mastered. The book is offered on a variety of electronic platforms, including library formats. Members can find the link by visiting the Online Bookstore at al-anon.org and selecting “Digital Products.”

2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual v2

The posting of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2 in August afforded our English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking Al-Anon members with amended text approved by the 2022 World Service Conference (WSC). This included an update to the “Social Networking” portion of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” and broadened Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter language related to non-geographically based Areas being part of the WSC Structure. The updated *Manual* also contains a revised WSC Structure graphic that conveys the links of service of the WSC Structure so effectively that some Areas have printed posters and even a full-sized banner of the graphic to share with their members! Supply chain issues continue to plague the delivery of all literature, the *Service Manual* was no exception. At year end, further delays pushed delivery of the printed version into 2023.

eBooks - Plans & Awareness

At the beginning of 2022, the Board of Trustees charged the Executive Director and WSO Staff with building a plan for all Conference Approved Literature sold as printed books to begin to be offered as ebooks. The Director of Finance & Operations and her team evaluated costs and researched vendors. Staff also researched the volume of WSO ebook sales generated from countries outside the WSC, which appeared to be quite small. Based on that research, Staff recommended to the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees a plan to roll out these ebooks, which the Board of Trustees approved in July. With that decision, Staff began the work involved in preparing the books for rollout in the late summer. This process included electronic-appropriate indexing and several other activities.

The magnitude of that effort, thankfully, provided the necessary delay for WSO Staff and Volunteers to join international structures at the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in London, where the WSO discovered the potential challenges created by the decision. Like the WSO, and in keeping with the Seventh Tradition, international structures rely upon only two sources of revenue to support their operations and efforts to achieve the primary purpose: member contributions and literature sales. Many Al-Anon international structures are English-, Spanish-, or French-speaking, and they rely upon reprint permission from the WSO to publish in any format; today those permissions are limited to print format. The structures, therefore, recognized the WSO decision to publish ebooks in English, Spanish, and French as potentially posing a risk to their literature sales. What the WSO discovered through conversation was that what appeared as small volumes of ebook sales in the context of WSO literature sales had the potential to represent significant volumes for some structures.

As a result of this discussion, the ebook rollout was temporarily paused so additional research and discussion could occur to create a mutually beneficial solution. More will be revealed in 2023.

Warehouse: Distributing Literature & Al-Anon Tools

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

Camille Peters, Associate Director–Customer Service & Shipping (Non-member)

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

Supply Chain Challenges

The printing industry continues to face the challenges of paper shortages and diminished production capacity. Timelines, while still much longer than pre-pandemic levels, have shown stability over the past year. Production scheduling for literature is now somewhat more manageable to forecast. WSO Staff continues to source new suppliers and work closely with vendors to replenish literature. The updated ordering procedures have led to fewer backorders.

Domain: Awareness

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

Digital Communications

Scot P., Associate Director–Brand Communications

Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Public Service Announcements

The 2021-2022 PSA campaign ran from August 3, 2021 to August 7, 2022. It received approximately 210,900 total airings (TV and radio), yielding an estimated 1.1 billion gross impressions with an ad equivalency of \$19 million. The PSA based on the *20 Questions* pamphlet (S-17) continues to receive a high number of airplays. For the 2022-2023 PSA campaign, only the *20 Questions* PSA will be distributed; this campaign is off to a slow start due to the timing of political campaigns taking up much of the TV/radio inventory.

Longitudinal Study

The Longitudinal Study is a five-year study of members who opted in for additional surveys during the 2021 Membership Survey. Those members participated in the first year of the study in September. Approximately 50 percent of the members responded, and data is currently being analyzed. This is a closed study to those members who initially opted in. In order to maintain the integrity of the data, it's important to survey the same members in each year of the study; adding new members into the study would add new variables, which may impact the validity of any insights gained. The goal of this study is to measure the impact of Al-Anon recovery over time.

Impression – Debut of the First Spanish-Speaking Member Interview

Sally K., Member of the Board of Trustees

I have been given the privilege of viewing the first Spanish-speaking interview to be used as a PSA. It is encouraging to see how the WSO is moving to include a more global outlook by creating the interview in Spanish. I am reminded of the impact that Al-Anon has globally.

As I observe, I realize that, although the culture and language portrayed in the video is different than mine, Al-Anon members all struggle with the effects of alcoholism. I feel the pain and desperation of the member being interviewed as she explains how living with alcoholism has almost destroyed her life. I relate to her hopelessness because I felt the same before reaching out to Al-Anon. It is encouraging to realize that Al-Anon will be helping the Spanish-speaking community by the awareness created through this video.

As the video reaches the end, the speaker explains how much Al-Anon has changed her life. She now has hope and encouragement from other members. She has the Al-Anon tools available to bring sanity back into her life. I realize that even though our stories are not exactly alike, our language is different, and we probably live in different countries, I relate to the speaker as if she were in my Al-Anon group.

WSO has made Al-Anon available to many Spanish-speaking members with this video through public outreach and technology. I am grateful to be a part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

Community Relations

Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Scot P., Associate Director–Brand Communications

Building Relationships with the Recovery Community

In June, the Associate Director–Community Relations attended a joint conference of the Association of Recovery in Higher Education Conference, the Association of Recovery Schools, and the Association of Alternative Peer Groups held at Virginia Commonwealth University. In addition to staffing a booth in person for one day of the conference, the conference’s mobile app was utilized to create a “virtual” booth. The nearly 600 in-person and virtual attendees included college staff, students, and other recovery industry professionals. Quite a few people were pleasantly surprised to see Al-Anon’s presence; two people shared that they had Al-Anon meetings (non-registered) on their campuses, and one person had no clue that Al-Anon had paid Staff.

Through in-person activities and virtual events, the Associate Director–Community Relations networked with medical and healthcare professionals, community service agencies, educators, and administrators, as well as other leaders in the recovery industry.

In-person

- Mental Health in the Workplace Forum Hampton Roads Chamber Event
- Eastern Virginia Medical School (Art Therapy and Counseling MS Program)

Virtual

- 2022 Second Annual Engagement in the Black Community: A Virtual NAADAC Summit
- Incorporating Peer Recovery Support Services in Medication Assisted Treatment and Recovery
- Women’s Global Recovery Roundtable on International Women’s Day
- “Does ‘Sober’ Mean ‘White?’”: Collegiate Recovery, Racial Justice and Decolonization
- Braiding Western Treatment Modalities and Indigenous Approaches for SUDs: Sweetgrass Method
- Helping Families Recover from Addiction: A Webinar with Jean Heaton
- Recovery Month Stakeholders Quarterly Meeting

The numerous professional connections established have supported the creation of a pipeline of prospective professionals for future interview projects and established opportunities to grow public outreach in communities beyond the traditional professional networks.

Domain: Financial Sustainability

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

Human Resources: Recruiting, Growing, and Retaining Staff

Vali F., Executive Director

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

In 2022, WSO Staff turnover was 13.3 percent² which represents an increase from 2021. However, turnover reflects the retirements of two long-term Staff members: the Director of Programs Emeritus, who served the WSO for 26 years, and the Maintenance Technician, who supported the WSO for 14 years. Staff planned a separate retirement celebration for the Director of Programs Emeritus to recognize her willingness to stay beyond her original April retirement date to lead several key initiatives through Staff transition.

As in 2021, the WSO continued to operate with fewer Staff members than historical average, both as the result of budget constraints and positions held open based on pending increased literature sales. Despite the shortages, Staff worked collaboratively to ensure the AFG, Inc. Mission was fulfilled. As the year progressed, several new and existing Staff positions were filled, including Programs Project Specialist, Administrative Assistant, Group Services Specialist, and Associate Director–International. At the end of 2022, only two positions remained open at the WSO.

Employee engagement continues to remain a priority at the WSO. The Staff participated in a summer picnic, which created an opportunity to connect and relax during this busy time of year, as well as in the year-end holiday party. The WSO Sunshine Club held fun events, celebrated birthdays, and ensured coffee pod availability as a means of fundraising. At year end, a discussion was brought to the Staff Management Team (SMT)³ regarding the role of Sunshine Club at the WSO. Over the course of several years, the list of Sunshine Club responsibilities had informally expanded. SMT plans to revisit the Sunshine Club definition in 2023. In the meantime, new Club officers were elected as usual.

The Accounting Manager led a Task Force of Staff members from different levels within the organization to update the WSO Employee Manual. The Task Force reviewed all sections of the Manual, proposed changes, identified topics requiring further discussion, and highlighted opportunities to update the Manual to encourage recruitment. The revised Manual was reviewed by the Executive Committee at its September 2022 meeting and, in accordance with operating practice, has been sent to legal counsel for review prior to publication to Staff.

Operations: Managing Operations

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

Michael Rodriguez, Building & Office Manager (Non-member)

Balancing Technology with Cybersecurity

Recognizing the need for better cybersecurity and network protection, the WSO enhanced its cybersecurity protection by increasing services with the current managed service vendor. A strong cybersecurity program helps the organization defend itself against data breaches and protects sensitive information. Those enhanced services included monthly cybersecurity training for Staff and Volunteers, multi-factor authentication, spam and phishing protection, and 24-hour network monitoring. The vendor continues to provide managed IT services for the organization including backup and disaster recovery.

² 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 in that year.

³ The Staff Management Team at the WSO consists of all Managers, Associate Directors, Directors, and the Executive Director. It meets monthly to prepare the Staff Meeting agenda and bi-monthly to improve its management skills and Staff communication.

WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety

In 2022, Staff continued to use remote capabilities during the first half of the year and practice social distancing. As the world continued to open and restrictions were lifted, the decision was made to reopen the office to visitors, on an appointment basis only. Meanwhile, to ensure Staff safety, doors into the office and warehouse sections of the building remain closed and require a security code for entrance.

Continuing to enhance safety at the office, the WSO is subscribing to an emergency broadcasting solution that uses text and voice to contact all employees immediately with prepared or ad hoc messages. This software solution will allow Staff to be alerted in the case of any onsite emergency as well as any office closures related to weather or operations.

Legal: Protecting Al-Anon's Name

Vali F., Executive Director

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Anne P., International & Legal Specialist

Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet

Often, organizations and concerned others, including members themselves, display items or use Al-Anon's trademarked name without realizing that doing so is a violation of both Al-Anon policy and federal law. To support the identity and integrity of Al-Anon, the Copyright & Trademark Protection Task Force was established and charged with creating an informative PowerPoint presentation to explain the importance of protecting Al-Anon's trademarked name and intellectual property. The final presentation will be shared with WSC Structure Delegates. The Delegates will be encouraged to share the presentation with their Area trusted servants to educate the fellowship.

Impression – Our Awakening Understanding about How We Each Can Contribute to Protecting the Al-Anon Name

Jean L., Member of the Board of Trustees

As an Al-Anon member, I want to carry the message as described in Step Twelve. As we move toward electronic forms of outreach, it can be easy to forget my responsibility to protect Al-Anon's name. I can get confused about what I can and cannot do with regards to reaching out to others about our program.

I wonder if it would be beneficial for Al-Anon if I share Al-Anon information and describe the help I've received on Facebook or start an Al-Anon page for my friends to post local events? It seems so harmless. Although my intention may be good, I realize that this type of outreach would violate the principle of anonymity described in Traditions Eleven and Twelve.

Working last year on the Social Media section of the "Policy Digest" in the *Service Manual* has given me a deeper understanding of the importance of keeping a consistent outreach message and defining the roles of each member in carrying the message. I do not want the Al-Anon name and message to be diluted by individual personalities or harmed by implied affiliations. Every member does have a role to play to carry the message. As an individual, I can share social media posts from service arms if I do not reveal my membership. And, of course, I am responsible for supporting our service arms who create social media pages and content for public outreach.

The Al-Anon name is especially important to our fellowship, and I must use care to protect it.

International Copyright Protection and Accessibility

International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Revelation

While working through the translation and reprint process, the International Team realized that not all structures that currently have licenses to translate and print CAL reference two ISBN numbers on the copyright page of the publication. In order to protect the AFG, Inc. copyright, each book or booklet must reference the ISBN for both the English version and the translated version.

The team is working with structures to confirm that CAL books and booklets currently being translated (and past publications) reference two ISBNs: the original English version and the translated version. If the materials have already been printed without both ISBNs referenced, Staff provide the appropriate ISBN and provide instructions for structure trusted servants to update the copyright page.

For the structures currently translating and printing, the team works with the Translation Team to provide the ISBNs after approval of the translated materials and before publication. The Request for Permission to Translate and Print form (A-17) is in the process of being updated to reflect the new process.

Registered Trademarks

In 2016, the WSO began an effort to restore registration of Al-Anon trademarks to AFG, Inc. Prior to that time, through misunderstanding of legal roles, trademarks were erroneously being registered as belonging to AFG international structures. Discussion with attorneys clarified that the appropriate process is for AFG, Inc. to retain ownership through registration, then permit international structures to use the registered trademarks. Between 2016 and 2021, all but one of these registrations were restored to AFG, Inc. Unfortunately, due to a combination of the trademark office backlog and the pandemic, the Iranian registration remained outstanding. In 2022, the WSO was excited to learn that the Iranian Patent and Trademark Office had reached an affirmative decision on registering the Alateen and AFG logos and Al-Anon trademarks. These three registrations were initiated on April 19, 2017.

All trademarks are subject to periodic renewals. In the case of Iran, these registrations will be subject to renewal on December 12, 2027. Most, though not all, country trademarks are set on a ten-year renewal cycle. This year marked the renewal period for three United States trademarks. The US renewal process is more elaborate than some, requiring Staff to collect an example of use of the trademark in each format, such as booklet, book, etc., and provide these to the Patent and Trademark Office. This process was underway at the year's end.

Through the work of the WSO International Team, Staff determined it was time to initiate the filing process for Kazakhstan to register the Al-Anon, Alateen, and AFG logo trademarks for the first time. This process began on June 22, 2022. International trademark registrations can take months and even years to complete. Each structure requires different documentation to validate ownership of the trademark. Staff work with AFG's trademark counsel, who works with local counsel to understand and deliver the requirements.

Domain: 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.

Coordinating the World Service Conference

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Yadi McCoy, Event Logistics & Training Specialist (Non-member)

Chris Baker, Meeting & Travel Planner (Non-member)

Nancy S., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team for 2022 WSC (Trustee)

Debbie P., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team for 2023 WSC (Trustee)

Subsequent to the virtual World Service Conferences (WSCs) held in 2020 and 2021, the 2022 Conference members gathered together in person in Tarrytown, New York for the 62nd WSC, during which the WSC approved a motion to widen its circle to include a 68th Area! This was an epic demonstration of 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 barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences," as well as the Conference theme, "Enhancing Our Recovery through Abundance, Unity, and Understanding." Following the motion to admit the Non-Panel Global Electronic Area, 87 voting members and other attendees carried out Al-Anon's business meeting, which is held each year in April.

In addition to discussing and voting on routine motions such as the Annual Report and the Finance Committee Report, the Conference passed a motion to amend language in the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter to include non-geographically based Areas as part of our WSC Structure, and voted to amend the Social Networking portion of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” to clarify what individuals, groups, and service arms each may do in relation to creating and/or tailoring social media for public outreach.

During the Conference, members took a morning trip to visit Stepping Stones in Katonah, New York, which is the birthplace of the Al-Anon Clearing House and the home of Al-Anon’s Cofounder Lois W. and A.A.’s Cofounder Bill W.

Impression – Historic Moment: Admitting the Global Electronic Area to the World Service Conference Structure

Nancy S., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (Trustee)

Today, when I tell you, “I’m a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon,” it has a very different and much more personal meaning to me than it did a few years ago.

After I became a member of the Board of Trustees for Al-Anon in 2020, I had the honor to watch, listen, and consider the work required to transform electronic meetings into Al-Anon groups, including inviting the groups to form an Area and elect a Delegate.

In 2021, I was named Conference Chairperson for the 2022 WSC. During the process of planning for Conference, I realized that I would be the one bringing the motion to admit the newest Area to Conference! What an honor! It would be the first motion of the Conference so that the Delegate could have voice and vote. As I prepared for Conference, I made sure to read through my first-day script several times to be able to get through it without too many tears when I announced what I hoped would be the results of the first motion of Conference—the one to create a 68th Area. As I read the voting results, I did shed a few tears out of gratitude and joy as we welcomed the Global Electronic Area and its Delegate to fully participate at the 62nd World Service Conference. At that moment, I felt connected to the pioneers of Al-Anon’s past, as well as the pioneers of our present—enlarging the circle of (virtual) chairs to include “anyone, anywhere,” as we state in the Declaration.

Impression – Creating Statements to Interpret Al-Anon’s Traditions and Concepts

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)

The responsibility to create, change, interpret, and make policy recommendations for our fellowship is one that the Policy Committee takes on in a loving and patient manner. I get to be part of something in which the primary purpose of Al-Anon/Alateen is ever-present: making sure we provide clarity in all we do with the spiritual guidance of our Traditions and Concepts. They are the guiding lights that keep us focused on why we are all together trying to answer a question, make the distinction between a policy and a procedure, and provide a source of information for the newcomer as well as those of us who have been around a while.

What I love about the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” is that it is ever-changing, just like our fellowship. It is a source of current knowledge as well as a springboard to our future. With this ongoing work, we become a part of the global engagement that is represented in our Strategic Plan.

This year the Policy Committee has been working on creating or revising text in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” related to Local Services, Announcing Events, Registering Multiple Groups, Choosing A Group Name, and Social Media. At the 2022 World Service Conference, the members voted to approve the Social Media section, and it is included in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v2*.

As a Trustee and Policy Committee member, I look at those 56 pages differently than I used to. What I see is cooperation, respect, participation, the minority view, equality, singleness of purpose, trust, and perseverance, but primarily *love*. I hope today or in the future you will see those spiritual principles as you study what has been provided to all of us.

Supporting the WSC Structure and its Trusted Servants

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Suzanne M., Associate Director–Conference

Scot P., Associate Director–Brand Communications

Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Supporting Trusted Servants across the WSC Structure

Throughout the year, the Board continued its commitment to hold virtual presentations of 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, as these presentations increase the speed with which the COB Letter is made available to the Delegates in English, French, and Spanish.

The Conference Leadership Team crafted a series of messages to revitalize information that may have made its way to the “bottom of the box” that guides Area Delegates and Al-Anon members who are considering standing for the position of Area Delegate. Some items detail Al-Anon policy with regard to elections; most of the communication relates to preparing for Conference, which documents are confidential, who attends Conference and in what role, etc.

The AFG Connects communities remain a vital communication platform for members in service. Participants use the communities to share their Al-Anon-related successes, challenges, provide constructive feedback, and ask questions of fellow service members. As you might imagine, there have been numerous posts regarding permanent electronic groups in several different communities!

Public Outreach Coordinators

As part of the ongoing commitment to the PO Coordinators, biannual meetings are offered to share experience, strength, and hope. Up to 40 percent of the 71 Area Public Outreach Coordinators, (including three Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinators, one French Public Outreach Coordinator, five Institution Coordinators, four Public Information Coordinators, and nine Spanish Public Outreach Coordinators) participated in the virtual meetings facilitated by the Associate Director–Community Relations and Associate Director–Brand Communications. Members of the Public Outreach Committee have been invited to attend these calls in “listen only” mode to better inform them in their efforts at the committee level. At the August meeting, coordinators shared successes and challenges and exchanged many great ideas. Sharing topics included getting a committee together or having an alternate to help with the work, producing contactless public outreach materials using the WSO templates from the website, and challenges attracting teens back to Alateen since the pandemic.

In the fall, the Associate Director–Community Relations was invited to participate in two Area assemblies, both in Areas where the Public Outreach Coordinator position was vacant: Illinois North (virtual) and Virginia (in-person). The public outreach presentation and materials were well-received and WSO learned in November that the Virginia position had been filled.

Global Electronic Area Trusted Servants

With the 2022 WSC decision to accept the Global Electronic Area (GEA), it was quickly realized that the GEA Officers would benefit from continued support from the WSO until the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) is fully formed. To that end, the WSO committed to meet with the Area Officers and previous Task Force members every other week to address issues of concern and to offer WSO technology resources as they were helpful. The GEA Officers hosted the initial Assembly in July 2022 to share the Delegate’s Report from the WSC.

The WSO Tech Team was invited to share their experience, strength, and hope in how to support a seamless Assembly meeting. They shared tips and written guidance that the newly formed GEA Tech Team can use as they plan for their initial meetings in 2023, starting with a standalone Group Representative Orientation in January and an Assembly on March 4.

While the Online Group Records application is being upgraded to support electronic meeting locations, Group Services Staff is providing a detailed monthly report of Al-Anon groups connected to the GEA, which includes new Group Representatives (GR)

who can be added to the GEA Area groups.io email communication platform. The Officers identified early on that they needed to create a means of communication with the GRs and were swift to set up groups.io, which has been highly effective. In addition, the Officers have access to the Electronic Meetings community on AFG Connects, as only 40 percent of the groups have elected a GR. A separate report, focusing on newly-added groups and changes to GR and/or Current Mailing Address (CMA) information, is also shared to support the Area Secretary until an Area Group Records Coordinator for the GEA is appointed.

The Area officers are being challenged with the daunting task of creating links of service within their new service structure. They have been utilizing the guidance found in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Service Manual* and the service communities on AFG Connects to ask for help on a variety of topics. A thought force to consider creation of Districts has begun, as well as task forces for technology support and not-for-profit incorporation. They have created a process to collect Tradition Seven contributions and were able to pay for the 2022 and 2023 GEA Delegate expenses to the WSC!

Impression – The Smallest AWSC for the Second Largest WSC Structure Area

Kathi M., Member of the Board of Trustees

I feel fortunate to have been part of the Task Force that supported the Global Electronic Area (GEA) through the process of becoming part of the WSC. Currently, the Task Force has continued meeting with the GEA/AWSC. As a part of this Task Force, I have gotten to watch this new Area take shape and grow. It has been rewarding to see the GEA figure out what works for an electronic Area and what doesn't. In this process, the new Area is breaking ground in so many ways.

The Task Force has continued to meet bi-weekly so that the Officers can present questions and concerns. The best part is the way that, as a group, we have been able to talk to each other and reason things out. I am so grateful to be a small part in this amazing journey. The Global Electronic Area has been able to hold one informational Assembly with help from the WSO Tech Team. They are now almost ready to host their own Assembly, using their own platform and with their own tech team. Being able to watch their growth and their progress has been truly incredible, and I look forward to watching them continue to grow and learn in this wonderful fellowship.

Alateen Recertification & Trusted Servant Support

2022 Area Alateen Recertification

We are happy to announce that the 2022 Alateen Recertification was effectively completed by June 15, with 100 percent compliance for those Areas recertifying. This was the result of a robust communication plan to keep in frequent contact with trusted servants. In the spirit of shared leadership, these trusted servants included Delegates, Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs), Alateen Coordinators, and District Representatives. Extra emphasis highlighted that the annual recertification is twofold, involving recertification of AMIAS and verification of each Alateen group record.

Announcements and reminders were shared on a variety of communication vehicles such as AFG Connects communities, direct email, and reminders appearing in *The Forum* and *In The Loop*. Conference calls and training opportunities were offered throughout the open window to assure help was available to trusted servants. WSO Staff shared periodic updates to celebrate completed recertifications.

Alateen Certification

In 2021, 11 Areas lost their certification to use the Alateen name. Since that time, these Areas have been diligently reviewing and updating their processes to ensure their Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) are in substantial compliance with the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees and current policy for Alateen.

- In 2021, two Areas completed this process and certified to register Alateen groups and use the Alateen name.
- In 2022,
 - Four additional Areas certified.
 - Five Areas initiated the certification process and at year end were under WSO review.

So, by December 2022, thanks to many Area trusted servants' efforts and collaboration with the WSO, there were 62 Areas certified to use the Alateen name in the WSC Structure.

Ongoing Area Alateen Safety & Behavior Requirements Changes

Fourteen Areas made changes to their Areas' Alateen processes and procedures this year and submitted their ASBRs to the WSO for review and approval. The WSO completed one review and provided approval. Thirteen submissions remain outstanding. In anticipation of the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation (IC2023), WSO Staff has prioritized the New Mexico/El Paso ASBR, so Alateen meetings may be safely supported in Albuquerque.

Areas have been reminded that current Area ASBRs need to be reviewed and approved by WSO prior to being presented to the Area Assembly for vote of acceptance.

Impression – Lessons Learned through the Process of Recertifying our Area

Jeff F., At-Large Member of the Executive Committee

A deadline is a deadline is a deadline. A past Pennsylvania Alternate Delegate used to say those words, and in 2021 the Pennsylvania Area realized how true they were. That's when the Area lost Alateen. A missed deadline is all it took, and everything changed in one day.

Members were in shock and blame was widespread. People wanted answers, and unfounded rumors were quickly spreading. Some said that the Area didn't care about Alateen or that the WSO wanted to eliminate Alateen. But nothing could be further from the truth. The PA AWSC worked extremely hard with the WSO, devoting many hours to restore Alateen in Pennsylvania. Nine months later, Alateen was back.

No one person was responsible; it was a series of events that caused the loss. New AWSC officers and coordinators were learning their roles. Outdated and incorrect information was relayed to the new AAPP. An unknown spam filter caused email problems. It was a perfect storm. But there was a silver lining.

Because of the loss of Alateen, Pennsylvania has a new comprehensive ASBR in place. Procedures have been created to improve communication between AWSC members. Better training and the latest available information will be provided to new coordinators. The WSO has been holding sessions with AAPPs to help with questions, concerns, and procedures. And yes, that spam filter has been removed.

This situation turned into a good learning opportunity. Now we look forward to more teens returning.

WSO Staff and Volunteers Alateen Certification Process

The members of the Board of Trustees and voting and non-voting members of the WSO Administrative Staff participated in the Alateen Certification training program in July, facilitated by the Associate Director–Group Services. This is the second year this training was conducted, following the Board of Trustees motion to create training specific and relevant to WSO Staff involved in guiding Areas within the WSC Structure as it relates to Alateen. The purpose of this training is to provide the participants with basic, foundational knowledge about Alateen for them to share when interacting with the fellowship in their respective roles.

The training includes:

- A brief historical perspective on the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. All participants reviewed the 2003 Motion in its entirety.
- Information about the highlighted Area responsibility when using the Alateen name, found in the policy for Alateen.
- A summary of responsibilities from various teams at the WSO that support Alateen and the Area certification/recertification process.

Participants were reminded the WSO training does not certify them to serve as AMIAS, as this can only be done by the Area in which they reside.

Another component of the WSO Alateen Training program approved by the Board of Trustees requires WSO Staff to be trained in how to best address concerns related to the Alateen program at the 2023 International Convention. Since IC2023 is a WSO-hosted event, WSO Staff certified through this program may be called on to address conflicts. In doing so, Staff can always rely upon their knowledge of AI-Anon principles. Additionally, these Staff will take part in de-escalation training to further prepare them. The Senior Group Services Specialist, Associate Director–Group Services, and Human Resources Generalist spent time researching options in 2022, and training will occur in 2023.

Supporting WSO Volunteers

Vali F., Executive Director

One System: Volunteers and Staff

Utilizing One Domain

To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of communication between WSO Volunteers themselves and with WSO Staff, the decision was made to onboard Trustees and At-Large Executive Committee members into the AFG, Inc. domain, providing them full access to the Microsoft 365 productivity solution for email and document/presentation/spreadsheet collaboration. WSO Volunteers were invited to attend in-person training prior to the WSC as well as to participate in individual training as necessary to become comfortable with the tools.

The implementation has streamlined collaboration on the many documents and presentations that are routinely evaluated and refined through Committee, Task and Thought Force, and Work Group efforts. As a result, many Committee meetings are now shorter because so much communication and collaboration has occurred in advance, leaving discussions to focus on strategic topics and those about which opinions vary widely and could not be resolved through online communication. All appear to benefit significantly from the opportunity to participate in these meaningful discussions.

Extending Use of the WSO Project Management Software

In 2016 and 2017, the Board of Trustees (Board) initiated development of “work plans” designed to capture the responsibilities of each of the Board committee chairpersons. These work plans are helpful in providing guidance as to what needs to be completed when by incoming Volunteers. The work plans were originally documented using Microsoft Excel. When the WSO adopted its current project management software, a few of the work plans were transferred to this new tool. Given the success of their implementation, and the increased confidence and familiarity demonstrated by most WSO Volunteers in this advanced technology, additional work plans were transferred into the tool this year.

Connecting with the Fellowship

As always, WSO Staff and Volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to connect with members when invited to attend Area events. In 2022:

- WSO Volunteers participated in eight Area Assemblies, one Area World Service Committee meeting (AWSC), and one all day Area workshop focused on the Traditions and Concepts.
- Staff members had the opportunity to attend many similar events as well as several Area Conventions. In total, Staff participated in nine in-person and six virtual events in English as well one AIS event in Spanish.

When visiting, Staff and Volunteers are usually asked to share their personal story and quite often to also conduct a workshop or two for the event.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

The Board of Trustees established Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect as a permanent event to offer outreach to the fellowship in January 2022 after two three-year trial periods. The event supports the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan “Members” Domain by connecting Volunteers, Staff, and members together in fellowship, and the “Global Engagement” Domain by communicating leadership skills required for trusted servants in a creative and engaging manner. The role of Chairperson

has transferred from WSO Volunteer to WSO Staff member to better manage event logistics and operations. The BOT remains responsible for the event content.

After a two-year pandemic hiatus, Road Trip! finally made it to Cleveland, OH. This year a Road Trip! Program Task Force, which included both Trustees and Area Delegates, was created to assist with the development of the program agenda. The Welcome Committee, consisting of Area Officers and other Volunteers, was responsible for publicizing and encouraging attendance locally. And they did! With a total of 131 participants plus the 18 WSO Volunteers and Staff, this was the highest attended Road Trip to date. Results from the take-away activity were shared with all attendees in the hopes of encouraging participation at the local level.

Impression – Celebrating the End of the Trial: The Largest Road Trip! Yet

Ann Marie Z., Member of the Board of Trustees

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect 2022 in Ohio was a huge success. In my first year as Trustee, I was able to participate in the best-attended Road Trip! yet in the first year it was made permanent! We started with an icebreaker activity in which I got to meet people from New York, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Iowa, Missouri, New Jersey, and, naturally, Ohio. I was amazed to look around at all of those people that represented a sampling of our fellowship. It was a pleasure to share the table with five other members. We were able to share experience, strength, and hope throughout the day.

I was honored and nervous to share some of my personal story with everyone, along with my recovery and service journey. I enjoyed hearing some of the other WSO Volunteers sharing their stories as well, since it helps all of us to know each other at a different level.

Another highlight for me was the World Service Office presentation that included some pictures of our amazing Staff. Many members were taking notes during presentations to bring back information to their Areas about how the Volunteers and Staff work on behalf of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

For me, everything about the day spoke to the AFG, Inc. Goal of connecting the fellowship. The event connected the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee with other members of the fellowship and was an example of how we support each other.

Day of Sharing: Cooperating with Alcoholics Anonymous and Other Twelve-Step Programs

In 2022, AFG, Inc. was awarded the privilege of hosting the Day of Sharing event originated many years ago by Alcoholics Anonymous. This event is designed to bring together senior Staff and Board members from Twelve-Step programs for which we have contacts to share experience, strength, and hope related to operating these organizations. As the hosting organization, AFG, Inc. established the agenda, decided whether to host in person or virtually, and prepared presentations on relevant topics to encourage and invite conversation. Given that, historically, more organizations have attended when the event was held virtually, the WSO decided to host via web conference. Presentation topics included attracting new members, developing leaders, and electronic groups.

Twenty-three participants, excluding WSO Staff who attended to take notes and present, attended from 13 organizations. The discussions offered the opportunity for members to confirm that none of us are alone, even at the organization level, and to find others tackling the same challenges in creative ways. The participants shared contact information so they could stay in touch and discuss specific topics. Additionally, they voted to share the recording amongst the participants, with the commitment that the video would not be distributed outside the group to ensure protection of anonymity. The event feedback was very positive and WSO Staff and Volunteers are looking forward to attending, but not hosting, next year.

International: Increasing Global Availability

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus (retired)

Kerri K., Associate Director–International

Jennifer U., Associate Director–International

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee–2022 (Trustee)

Kathi M., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee–2023 (Trustee)

Forming the New International Team

The WSO has a responsibility to support evolving and national Al-Anon Family Groups service structures around the world, providing the information, resources, and shared experience that new and existing structures need to be successful. In 2022, communication with our international structures increased dramatically thanks to expanded awareness of electronic platforms created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The WSO is now able to connect more easily with structures around the globe! International structures immediately responded to the renewed availability of the WSO, sharing that they were feeling part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups as they never had before. Truly, electronic communication had changed everything! Recognizing the greater demand for international support, the WSO jumped into action.

In response to expanded need, an international team was created this year to better support the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and to keep the lines of communication open and flowing. In service to our international Al-Anon members, the WSO established the international@al-anon.org email address and implemented regularly scheduled structure meetings with countries across the globe. Staff members from across the organization are now regularly invited to join these meetings to share with and learn from the international structures. The result has benefited not only the international service structures but WSO Staff as well. Additionally, since the high cost of cellular and phone plans in many countries limit access to these forms of communication, the WSO also created a WhatsApp account to support timely communication with the international structures.

European Structure Visits

In late September-early October 2022, for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic began, a group of six Volunteers and Staff traveled to Europe to meet with General Service Offices (GSOs) and emerging structures there. Upon arrival in London, England, they split into two teams of three: Team North and Team East.

Team North met with groups in Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands. Team East met with groups in Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, and German-speaking Switzerland. Both groups reunited in Versailles, France, for a meeting with the France GSO. Both teams returned to London for the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) held October 12-15, 2022.

Highlights for both teams included finding that, like Al-Anon service arms in the United States and Canada, these national structures are navigating the changing technological landscape, seeking to fill service roles, and striving to ensure safety and support for Alateen groups, among other issues. These structures face many challenges, including translating Al-Anon literature and, for some, serving in climates of instability and hardship. The family disease of alcoholism is the same everywhere, and both teams felt honored to listen and connect, build relationships, share experiences, and offer ongoing support to these European structures as they carry the Al-Anon message of hope and help in their respective countries. These trips provided greater unity and created more trust and encouragement among all who participated and proved once again that Al-Anon is a profoundly global fellowship.

Impression – Gaining Gratitude and Humility by Connecting with Trusted Servants Globally

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

In October 2022, as part of a three-person team, I had the honor of visiting Al-Anon members in Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, and France.

I discovered there are Al-Anon members all around the world who love Al-Anon as much as I do. They are working tirelessly to make sure that families and friends of alcoholics can find help. They serve Al-Anon for the same reason I serve—because Al-Anon saved my life. They are finding recovery from alcoholism, even though oftentimes they do not have access to all the Conference Approved Literature, service tools, and information that is available to members in our World Service Conference Structure.

I had the opportunity to share my Al-Anon story with members in some of the countries I visited. What I learned is that no matter where you live or what language you speak, alcoholism has affected people in much the same way as it has affected me. I made heart-level connections with Al-Anon members around the world and will forever carry them with me.

Participating in these international trips was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I received because I was willing to say yes to Al-Anon service. I never imagined that visiting Al-Anon members around the world would be part of my Al-Anon service journey. I cannot even find the right words to express how grateful I am to my Higher Power for giving me this opportunity.

Supporting Structures Worldwide

Regular Structure Meetings

Beginning in February 2022, the International Team began holding Regular Structure Meetings (RSMs) with evolving structures and General Services Offices (GSOs) to improve communications and exchange information between the WSO and the structures. As of November 2022, regular RSMs are held with 44 structures and growing.

These meetings have been well-received and are greatly appreciated by participants from all over the world. Participants discuss shared experiences and challenges on topics such as electronic groups, Alateen, access to CAL, and many others.

Typically, RSMs have anywhere from five to 20 participants and meet via web conferencing. If the meeting involves Spanish- or French-speaking participants, the WSO offers interpretation; otherwise, the meetings are held in English. These meetings elicit a range of emotions, as participants experience the shared language and feelings that affect all Al-Anon members globally. It is a true gift to be able to help and support the worldwide fellowship in such a capacity. Heading into 2023, these meetings will be continued and are expected to expand to other parts of the world.

New Al-Anon Information Services Registered

Through the RSMs, the International Team learned more about the services several countries were providing to their members and, as a result, were able to register these structures as Al-Anon Information Services (AIS).

- Bulgaria registered as an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)
- Israel registered as an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)

Honduras Approved as General Service Office

Al-Anon Family Groups meetings are held in over 133 countries. There are 37 countries with established GSOs. GSO is the term given to national service structures in countries outside the World Service Conference structure. A GSO is linked to the WSO through the International Coordination Committee (ICC). GSOs partner with the World Service Office to support families and friends of alcoholics around the world. Each GSO operates as a distinct service entity within its respective country.

Becoming a GSO is a monumental achievement for an international structure because it reflects the time, energy, and determination needed to establish a service office. As a GSO, a structure must demonstrate that it can support its groups and members throughout the country. To function independently as a GSO, the structure must accomplish many things, including abiding by Tradition Seven to be fully self-supporting, providing consistent and accurate information to its members in

line with Al-Anon principles (including the freedom given in Tradition Four to adapt guidelines for their own country and culture as long as they do not affect Al-Anon as a whole), and making CAL available to its members. National service offices are encouraged to incorporate as a nonprofit organization and must maintain an office and telephone line to serve in their role as a clearinghouse for inquiries from those in the country looking for help or information about Al-Anon. They must also commit to having a Board to advise the national service office. It takes many years and many hands to become a GSO, and this achievement is celebrated widely.

At the August 2022, International Coordination Committee (ICC) meeting, the ICC voted to recommend to the Board of Trustees that Honduras become a GSO, and in October 2022 the Board met and approved the recommendation. The team was able to share the news and celebrate with the trusted servants of Honduras at the December 2022 RSM. When a congratulatory announcement was posted on the AFG Connects International Structures community, other GSOs responded warmly with enthusiasm, encouragement, and a sense of fellowship.

Structure Celebrations

In 2022, several international structures notified us that they were celebrating milestones:

- Spain - Al-Anon 59th Anniversary
- Portugal - Al-Anon 38th Anniversary
- Iceland - Al-Anon 50th Anniversary
- Brazil - Alateen 50th Anniversary

The Team sent letters of congratulations to each of these structures for them to share with their Al-Anon members. As a result of these notifications, the Team alerted all international structures of the opportunity to have the WSO celebrate with them.

International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)

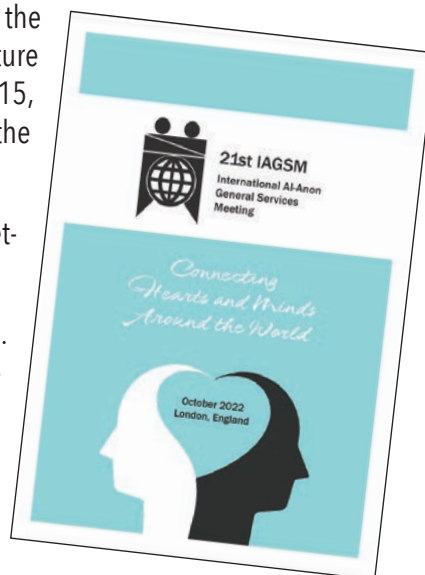
The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experiences of Al-Anon GSOs around the world through its International Delegates. Every two years at the IAGSM, national structures can meet in person. The topics of the Delegate-led presentations and workshops during this meeting are the result of the input received from GSOs, Delegates, and the ICC.

UK & Eire successfully bid to host the 2020 IAGSM in London, England. However, due to the global pandemic, the 2020 IAGSM instead met electronically and attracted the largest attendance from General Service Offices (GSOs) in many years. The IAGSM is held every other year; every other meeting, when feasible, it is hosted by a GSO.

The ICC, an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees, plans and coordinates the agenda program for the biennial IAGSM. For the 2022 IAGSM, the UK & Eire Structure confirmed its interest in hosting the meeting in London, England from October 12-15, 2022. The Board approved this decision, and the WSO revised the contract with the event venue at no additional cost.

The 2022 IAGSM went successfully and was well-received. The theme for this meeting was **"Connecting Hearts and Minds Around the World."**

There were 34 participants, including WSO Staff, Volunteers, and several guests. Eighteen GSOs were represented, and 16 new International Delegates participated. The UK & Eire GSO provided stellar hospitality, creating for attendees an atmosphere of fellowship, loving care, and warmth. Additionally, the event venue provided the precious gift of true serenity and calm while attendees stayed in the bustling city of London. Overall, the event was a spiritual experience, full of hope and encouragement for all national structures who attended.



To share some highlights from this 2022 IAGSM, Delegates offered the following comments:

- "I enjoyed the workshops because the topics that I learned showed me the differences between the way other countries are working and how my GSO can make changes."
- "There was so much valuable information in the 'Let's Talk About Finance' presentation. Finances are a universal topic."
- "The workshop entitled 'Welcoming and Supporting Al-Anon Family Groups Meeting Electronically' helped each Delegate share his/her structure's experiences. The topic was relevant."
- "The Alateen topic will have a direct impact on our structure going forward."
- "To attend and meet people from different countries and to exchange experiences was valuable because of practical solutions."
- "Shared the honesty, openness, and realities of the challenges we face and the willingness to do better."

One special highlight of this meeting is the country flag ceremony, in which the Delegates come up to the front of the room, place their flags in holders, and put a pin on a global map showing where their GSO is located. This is a very emotional time, as it displays for all the vast global reach of the Al-Anon fellowship.

All Al-Anon members are encouraged to read the *2022 IAGSM Summary* when it is issued in early 2023. It will be posted to al-anon.org/for-members/international/international-al-anon-general-services-meeting-iagsm-summary/

Impression – Appreciating the Scope of Al-Anon Family Groups Services Worldwide

Debbie P., WSC Structure Delegate to the IAGSM (Trustee)

I could not have imagined that my Higher Power would lead me to a room with other Al-Anon members from around the globe, all with such dedication, commitment, passion, and willingness to serve Al-Anon Family Groups. This happened at the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in London, England in October, where I was honored to attend as the Canadian Delegate from our World Service Conference Structure.

I had envisioned Al-Anon Family Groups as being worldwide; however, experiencing it at the IAGSM was beyond what I could have imagined. I saw regular Al-Anon members dedicated to nurturing and growing Al-Anon in their respective countries.

I was touched by how intimate it felt, how quickly the members connected, and how every structure expressed their passion for Al-Anon. I was impressed to hear how much many of the international structures can accomplish within their countries, with mostly volunteers and few if any paid staff. Many of them were so young it was inspiring. It all created a deeper appreciation and gratitude for me of how fortunate we are with the resources and experience found within our World Service Office.

It was evident how other structures look to the WSO for guidance and direction. I was proud to be a witness to how open, honest, vulnerable, and available our WSO Staff want to be to support the international Al-Anon community, and how the Staff reinforced their desire to nurture and grow communications to reinforce worldwide unity and inclusiveness. Everyone's dedication to the global community was tangible. Worldwide Al-Anon is in great hands.

OUR FINANCIALS

Manage Our Budget & Financials

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)
Cindy M., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)

The World Service Office saw improvement in operations as literature sales began to improve in 2022; however, Staff and Volunteers recognized as operations returned to normal that the WSO might still experience financial challenges. Literature sales continued to be impacted due to supply chain issues and Literature Distributions Centers' delayed reopening. In August 2022, due to rising inflation and significant cost of paper increases, the Finance Committee approved increasing Conference Approved Literature prices for the first time since 2013. AFG, Inc. experienced a 14 percent increase in literature sales compared to 2021; however, they remained below historical levels by 36 percent.

In order to support continuing operations, a special appeal letter went out to the fellowship. Through your overwhelming response, member contributions totaled \$3,337,919, which accounted for 59 percent of WSO revenue for 2022. This amount exceeded totals received in any previous year and continues to exceed literature sales.

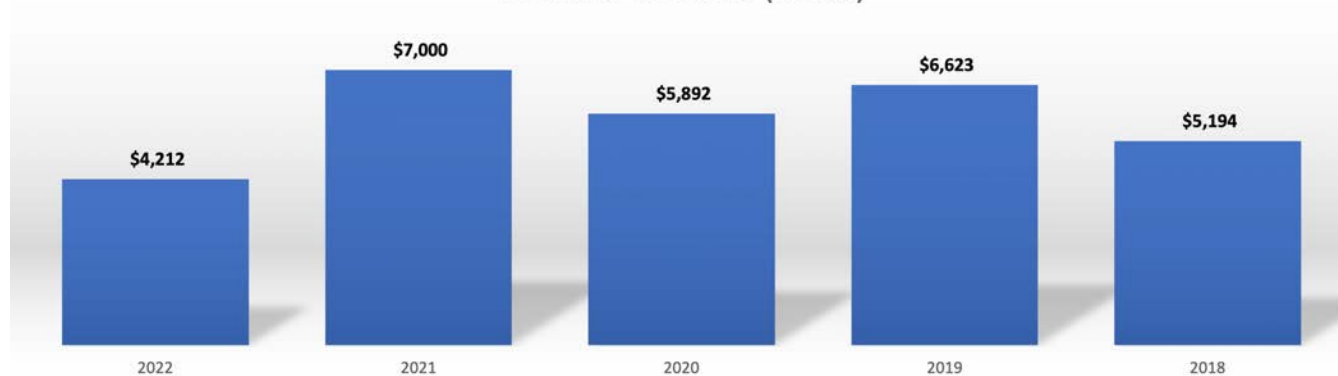
As a result of the enormous member support, the WSO was able to provide essential services, along with other important achievements such as:

- upgrading the *Mobile App*,
- expanding our work to support electronic groups,
- hosting the Al-Anon International General Services Meeting in London,
- completing the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself*,
- increasing global availability by visiting European structures.

Consistent with our principle of self-support, the WSO also reduced expenses, particularly Board of Trustee and Executive Committee travel; and operational expenses, 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 percent 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 (in thousands)



Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. for fiscal year 2022 may be obtained online at al-anon.org.

Impression – Practicing Our Seventh Tradition

Cindy M., Treasurer for the Board of Trustees

I remember attending a Regional Service Seminar (RSS) back in 2006 in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan. One of the topics was finances, and, during the Q&A session, a member asked how they could get members to stop putting coins in the Seventh Tradition basket. What I did not realize was that in Canada, they have coins (“loonies” and “toonies”) equivalent to the United States one- and two-dollar bills. Their smallest paper bill is a five! That was 16 years ago. I know we continue to talk about breaking the dollar barrier and in 2022, the 1951 dollar is equivalent to over ten dollars!

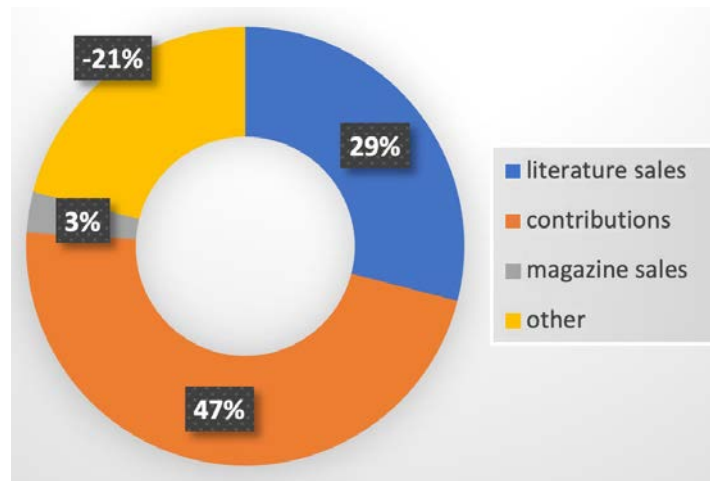
As the cost of goods and labor continues to increase, I have to look at my ability to increase my contribution at the meetings I attend. Additionally, I have increased my monthly automatic withdrawal—and I don’t even miss it! I am also getting experience using Zelle, Venmo, and PayPal at the electronic meetings I attend.

As Treasurer of the Board of Trustees and Chairperson of the Finance Committee, I have participated in and facilitated some tough decision discussions this past year. One was to send out a special appeal letter as we were not meeting our budget projections for revenue. Since contributions and literature sales are the WSO’s main sources of revenue, we asked for an additional contribution or the purchase of a book. The other decision was to raise literature prices on all books, since the cost of paper continues to rise, and we had not raised prices since 2013. We continue to strive to be fully self-supporting and can only do so with the support of all our members. So, I “Let It Begin with Me!”

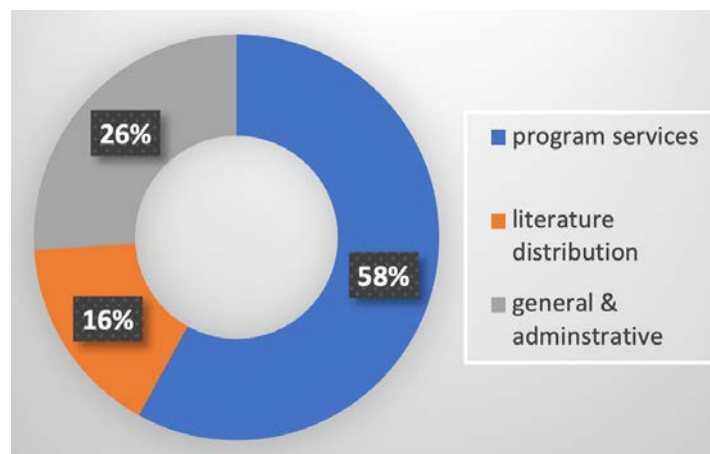
Financial Highlights

Statements of Financial Position	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total Assets (in thousands)	\$12,757	\$13,783	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
Liabilities and Net Assets Total liabilities	\$1,850	\$1,497	\$1,333	\$1,531	\$1,387
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$10,907	\$12,286	\$10,500	\$9,529	\$8,446
Total liabilities and net assets	\$12,757	\$13,783	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
Operating revenue (in thousands)	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Literature sales, net	\$2,100	\$1,906	\$1,847	\$2,914	\$3,194
Contributions	\$3,338	\$2,623	\$3,295	\$2,187	\$1,953
Magazine sales	\$247	\$238	\$292	\$275	\$258
Other income, net	(\$1,473)	\$2,233	\$458	\$1,247	\$(211)
Total operating revenue	\$4,212	\$7,000	\$5,892	\$6,623	\$5,194
Operating expenses (in thousands)	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Program services	\$3,333	\$2,752	\$2,484	\$2,865	\$2,731
Literature distribution	\$904	\$922	\$866	\$839	\$860
General & administrative	\$1,352	\$1,540	\$1,571	\$1,837	\$1,804
Total operating expenses	\$5,589	\$5,214	\$4,921	\$5,541	\$5,395

Operating Revenue



Functional Expenses



OUR PLANS

AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Nancy S., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Group (Trustee)

The Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG), a work group of the Board, guides the Board in its duty of foresight by presenting discussions and questions that engage Board members in generative, visionary discussions. Rather than continuing to do things the way they've "always been done," the purpose of the EFWG is to scan the horizon for trends and issues that face other nonprofit organizations and share them with the Board for consideration. The EFWG is unique in that it does not produce a work product—only questions. The work group does not seek to find answers in its facilitation of Board discussions. It is up to the Board to decide if these issues and trends warrant further examination, or if there is a special topic for the EFWG to prepare for a future meeting. This year, the work group examined issues concerning Board member recruitment and retention, trends facing nonprofits, and diversity and inclusion. It has been an interesting time to be on the Board of Trustees, as the Board helps to envision a future in which Al-Anon's legacy is preserved for generations to come.

Some questions the EFWG has discussed and brought to the Board in the last year include:

- 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?
- What is the Board's conception and frame of reference for diversity in our own lives, i.e., generational, geographical, cultural, gender, socio-economic, that we bring to the conversation?

One of the roles of the Board of Trustees is to make long-range plans for AFG, Inc. and set direction for the organization. In order to set that direction, the Board has developed a Strategic Plan. In 2021, the Board, Executive Committee, and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) all worked together to review and update the Strategic Plan. At the January 2022 Board meeting, the Board approved the new, revised Strategic Plan. The discussion topics the EFWG brings to the Board assist the Trustees with Strategic Planning work by expanding their thinking and helping them to have generative discussions.

In developing the current Strategic Plan, the Board discussed trends they thought would most impact AFG, Inc. in the next three years. Some of the trends the Board discussed were electronic meetings, diversity and inclusion, recovery alternatives, electronic literature, and electronic contributions. The Board discussed what they thought brought the highest value to our members, such as adhering to Al-Anon principles and having information and literature that is more accessible, and how AFG, Inc. could be the main resource for the families and friends of alcoholics if the organization could increase involvement with professionals.

During the Strategic Planning discussions, the Board has to balance predicting what will be needed in the future with meeting members' needs today. As part of this balancing act, each year the Board reviews and prioritizes which Strategies to move forward with. The Strategic Plan is the guide for AFG, Inc. Think of the Strategic Plan as AFG's GPS. The Board has to keep adjusting or rerouting so that AFG, Inc. will continue to be available to help the families and friends of alcoholics for many years to come.

Impression – Serving and Learning as a First-Year Trustee

Sally K., Member of the Board of Trustees

I walk into the Board room at the World Service Office following my mentor. I am amazed and grateful that I have been chosen to be one of the Trustees. As I look around the room at my now-peers, I realize that we are all Al-Anon members who want to serve and make a difference.

I want to give back in service to Al-Anon for the many years of ongoing recovery I have experienced. I am hopeful that my small contribution will help to keep Al-Anon available for all the prospective members who are still struggling.

It is unbelievable to me that my service journey has brought me to the Board. I feel encouraged and welcomed by everyone.

As we work through the topics of the day, I realize that we are all here to support and connect with every Al-Anon member. We are providing tools through literature and minimizing barriers that can be present in minority groups due to culture and language.

I hear how WSO uses Tradition Seven by being financially responsible and transparent.

We have discussions regarding diversity and how this can affect our membership. Building relationships with professionals and educating the public through public outreach will help to create awareness.

By the end of the day, I realize at a new level the responsibility WSO has to communicate with and share knowledge with many other countries around the world. Those countries are also seeking to use the tools of Al-Anon to help their members.

As we all pack up at the end of the day, I am in awe of the responsibility I have been given to serve. I wish everyone could also have such a fulfilling experience.

2023 Strategies

Vali F., Executive Director

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

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs Emeritus (retired)

Scot P., Associate Director–Brand Communications

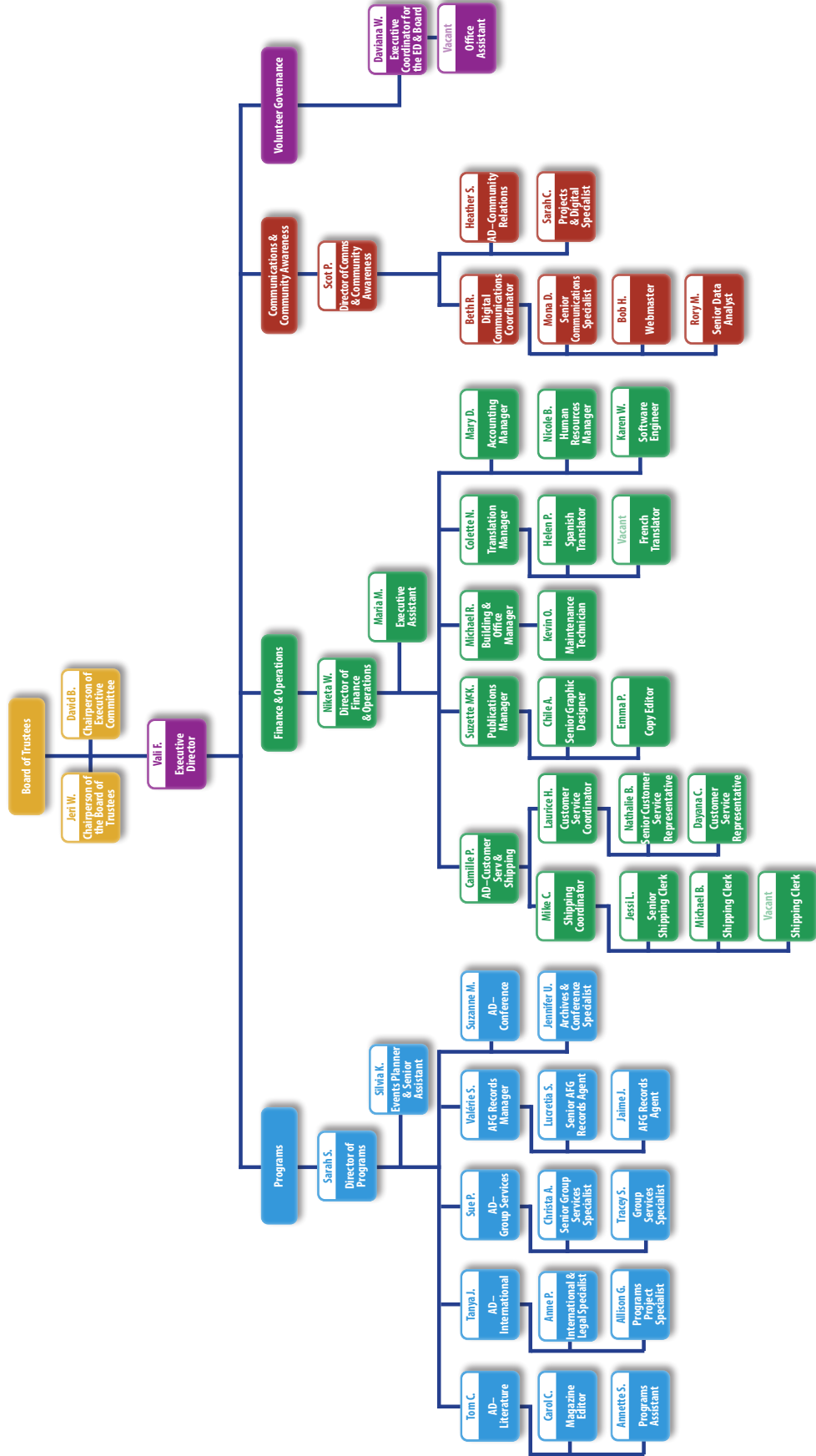
Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

As 2022 progressed, the SLT met consistently to discuss Staff capacity and progress on both the Strategic Plan Strategies and other WSO projects, such as translation and printing of the *Service Manual*. When SLT met with the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee at the Board's October 2022 meeting, the Team alerted the Trustees that planning and execution of the 2023 International Convention, along with continuing efforts toward the Transforming Electronic Groups project, were likely to preclude any new Strategies being initiated in 2023. The Board supported that recommendation, understanding SLT would present a final 2023 recommendation for Board approval at the January 2023 meeting.



APPENDICES



Confidential - Property of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Board of Trustees Motions and Decisions by Consensus⁴

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

The Board, in its legal, financial, or oversight capacities, acted:

- to approve the 2022 Preliminary Budget as presented
- to approve to end the three-year trial for Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect and make it a permanent event
- to approve to add a hybrid component to Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect for a one-year trial at the 2023 Road Trip! event, if financially and technically feasible
- to delegate authority to the CLT, when appropriate, to invite Delegates and all Conference members to approve, using simple majority, whether or not to allow Conference member guests to attend the Closing Dinner and/or visit Stepping Stones
- to proceed with forming a Day of Connecting Task Force of Staff, WSO Volunteers, and a few Delegates—chaired by Staff—to collaboratively plan the session content for this component of the IC2023 to achieve the recommended goals
- to have Staff pursue development of Electronic Alateen Safety & Behavior Requirements (EASBR) for the WSC Structure and bring back a specific recommendation on requirements to the Board of Trustees for consideration
- to accept the refreshed Strategic Plan
- to accept the 2021 Annual Report to the WSC as presented
- to approve the revised 2022 Budget as presented
- to approve that the Equalized Expense amount be set at \$1,881 (70 percent of full cost) and that the full cost for a Delegate to attend the Conference be set at \$2,687 for the 2022 WSC
- to accept changes to the AFG, Inc. Nominating Committee Process for Selecting and Electing Trustees, Board Officers, and Executive Committee Members as presented
- to accept the adoption of the skills-based role description to be used as a tool beginning with the 2023-2024 Nominating Process as presented
- to accept changing the nominating process for the selection of Executive Committee members by moving the deadline to November 15 starting in 2022 and including a short interview conducted by the Nominating Committee
- to approve adding a step to the CAL Literature Process requiring presentation of new literature concepts to the Conference to include information on the resource and financial implications of the proposal
- to approve the change to the Executive Director and the Director of Finance & Operations performance evaluation process
- to confirm that WSO Staff who are members of AI-Anon are permitted to speak at relevant professional conferences in their professional AFG, Inc. capacity without revealing their membership
- to modify the GSO invitation to the WSC to offer these structures the option of bringing an interpreter to support their Representative at the GSO expense
- to approve the revised 2022 WSO Projects Landscape
- to hold the January Board of Trustees meeting virtually on a permanent basis beginning in January 2023
- to approve that the Board requests CLT to add an Open Board Meeting to the WSC agenda at least once every three years

⁴Following best-practice recommendations provided by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), following confirmation with the AFG, Inc. attorneys, in 2022 the Board of Trustees together with its Executive and other Committees, began using a consensus methodology for decisions except when matters, such as legal and other fiduciary responsibilities, required formal motions.

- to approve WSO Staff, who have been appropriately trained, speaking to the media in a professional capacity, provided they do not reveal their membership, when approved to do so according to WSO procedure
- to approve the Nominating Committee asking Trustee candidates for confidential AI-Anon and skills-based references for a Volunteer position on a non-profit Board on a two-year trial basis
- to not move forward on a TEAM event replacement and close the topic, removing it as a future agenda item
- to update the language in the requirements section of the Board of Trustees resume form to clarify that it is preferable to share a room with another WSO Volunteer, but it is not a requirement
- to not bring forward a 2023 WSC Chosen Agenda Item but to bring forward a diversity, equity, & inclusion (DEI) workshop

Executive Committee Motions and Decisions by Consensus⁴

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (outgoing)

The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee and presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees:

- to approve the monthly Finance Committee Report and financial statements
- to review and approve the recommended candidates for the At-Large committees
- to review and approve the guidelines for all Board of Trustee Committees and Work Groups
- to review and approve the Staff and Volunteer presentations to be shared at the 2023 WSC
- to discontinue *Alateen Talk* and allow Staff to determine the best way to execute that task
- to approve simplification of the W21.07 (carryover) Strategic Plan Strategy: Electronic Group Transformation scope to focus on automating the meeting search interface for electronic groups and continuing to define the needs of the next iteration of the Online Group Records application
- to approve the Literature Committee's recommended discussion at the 2023 WSC of a comprehensive piece on sponsorship and service sponsorship using personal stories from AI-Anon members contingent on additional Staff reporting at the March Executive Committee meeting

2023 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Ann Marie Z. Lynette K. Kathi M.
Don B. Nancy S.
Jeri W. Pennie K.

Regional Trustees

Cindy M., US Southwest Debbie P., Canada Central
Diane B., US South Central Sally K., Canada West
Jean L., US North Central Tony S., Canada East

Sustaining Member

Vali F., Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

David B., Chairperson
Vali F., Executive Director
Lynette K., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)
Cindy M., Treasurer
Jeri W., Policy Chairperson
Carol M., Member at Large
Jeff F., Member at Large
Sarah S., 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
Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness
Heather S., Associate Director – Community Relations
Sue P., Associate Director – Group Services
Suzanne M., Associate Director – Conference
Tanya J., Associate Director – International
Tom C., Associate Director – Literature

AREA DELEGATES

Laura M., Alabama/Northwest Florida
Mari J., Alaska
Diane G., Alberta/Northwest Territories
Gene T., Arizona
Marti P., Arkansas
Owen H., British Columbia/Yukon
John McG., California North
Tim P., California South
Kari O., Colorado
Elaine M., Connecticut
Matt W., Delaware
Gretchen S., Florida North, Alternate Delegate
Diane B., Florida South
Char G.F., Georgia
Nieta G., Global Electronic Area, Alternate Delegate
Penni S., Hawaii
Cheryl S., Idaho
Liz P., Illinois North, Alternate Delegate
Carol W., Illinois South
Maureen H., Indiana
Becky V., Iowa
Terry R., Kansas
Linda C., Kentucky
GW W., Louisiana
Carol G., Maine
Brenda L., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario
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
Sue K., Missouri
Pamela C., Montana
Lalit J., Nebraska
Lisa S., Nevada
Kate M., New Hampshire
Katie O’C., New Jersey
Rocio N., New Mexico/El Paso
Kathi D., New York North
Pat G., New York South
Marilyn McC., Newfoundland/Labrador
Aileen W-M., North Carolina/Bermuda
Darcy A., North Dakota
Ann F., Ohio
Emily C., Oklahoma
Debbie C., Ontario North
Gwen D., Ontario South
Joanne C., Oregon
Lori F., Pennsylvania
Lourdes C., Puerto Rico
Johanne S., Quebec East
Hélène A., Quebec West
Cindy B., Rhode Island
Mary C., Saskatchewan
Barbara O’D’, South Carolina
Renaë B., South Dakota
Karla K., Tennessee
Mattie T., Texas East
Peggy D., Texas West
Dave B., Utah
Laura A., Vermont
Stacy L., Virginia
Katharine R., Washington
Elliott B., West Virginia
Joanne F., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Donna W., Wyoming

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Britt H., Germany**

*Non-member, non-voting

**Non-voting