

# 2020 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)*

*Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)*

*Vali F., Executive Director*

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In welcoming our AI-Anon membership and trusted servants to the 2020 Annual Report, it seems only appropriate to begin by offering a huge, shared exhalation of breath in hopes that the new year will bring a vanquishing of the pandemic and a return to the hugs and connection experienced in face-to-face meetings.

In 2020, as our membership was challenged to adapt to the “new reality” of lockdowns which closed most face-to-face meetings, the 42 World Service Office (WSO) Staff members, 15 Trustees of the Board, and three At-Large members of the Executive Committee scrambled as well. WSO Staff were furloughed and laid off. Out of health and financial necessity, the Board suspended travel starting March 2020 and Staff wage increases. By necessity, Staff and WSO Volunteers shifted quickly—in only four short weeks—to transform the World Service Conference (WSC) from its traditional face-to-face to a virtual format. Even though WSO was operating with reduced staffing, the WSO Staff continued offering support to members who called and emailed seeking support and guidance on forming temporary electronic meetings, hosting service events virtually, and collecting the Seventh Tradition.

Despite the constrained conditions, WSO Staff, with support from the Board, delivered both our initial and upgraded releases of the first AI-Anon Family Groups mobile app. WSO Staff and Volunteers successfully streamlined Board of Trustee meetings, shifting the focus from the operational to strategic needs of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) and decreasing meeting duration. And, most importantly, throughout it all, our dedicated trusted servants and Staff members worked alongside each other in an atmosphere of compassion, goodwill, and faith.

As lockdowns spread across the globe, it was not only AI-Anon Family Groups face-to-face meetings which were impacted. Literature Distribution Centers ceased operating across the WSC Structure, bringing with it a dramatic decrease in WSO literature sales revenue. In May 2020, considering a projected \$1.6 million dollar deficit, the Board of Trustees authorized a Reserve Fund transfer, and the Treasurer of the Board wrote a Special Appeal to the fellowship describing the WSO circumstances.

As the Chairperson of the Board, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and the Executive Director, we stand in awe of our membership’s response. In the first month, members, groups, and service arms contributed a record \$509,058 in Seventh Tradition giving. And the contributions continued. Month after month, contributions broke records. This incredible response was considered in the Revised 2020 Budget recommended by the Finance Committee in July. The Revised Budget included reduced literature sales and expenses and increased contribution goals.

By year end contributions broke more records: exceeding \$3 million dollars and, for the first time since 1954, exceeding literature sales in WSO revenue. AI-Anon Family Groups and member contributions, along with rigorous expense management, allowed the WSO to end the year with a surplus. There are simply no words to adequately express our gratitude for your commitment to ensuring the AI-Anon message continues to be available when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help.

# Who we are: Mission, Envisioned Future, and Goals

## MISSION STATEMENT

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



## ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.



## GOALS (2022-2024)

- **Goal: Members**  
AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.
- **Goal: Public**  
Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.
- **Goal: Organization**  
AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



# Our Impact



## Fellowship Visits within the WSC Structure

After recovering from the initial COVID-19 lockdown, and —as groups stabilized through the temporary use of electronic platforms —Areas, General Service Offices, and the WSO turned their attention to hosting vital Al-Anon service events, such as Area World Service Committee meetings, Assemblies, and Conventions. When the WSO updated the form for requesting Staff and Volunteers attendance at events to include a virtual option, requests for personal sharings and workshops exploded. Staff and Volunteers made visits to WSC Structure events and were even given the opportunity to participate in the Australian A.A. National Convention with Al-Anon Participation. All enjoyed the opportunity to connect!

## 2020 Global Al-Anon Family Groups' Statistics



### PHONE MEETINGS



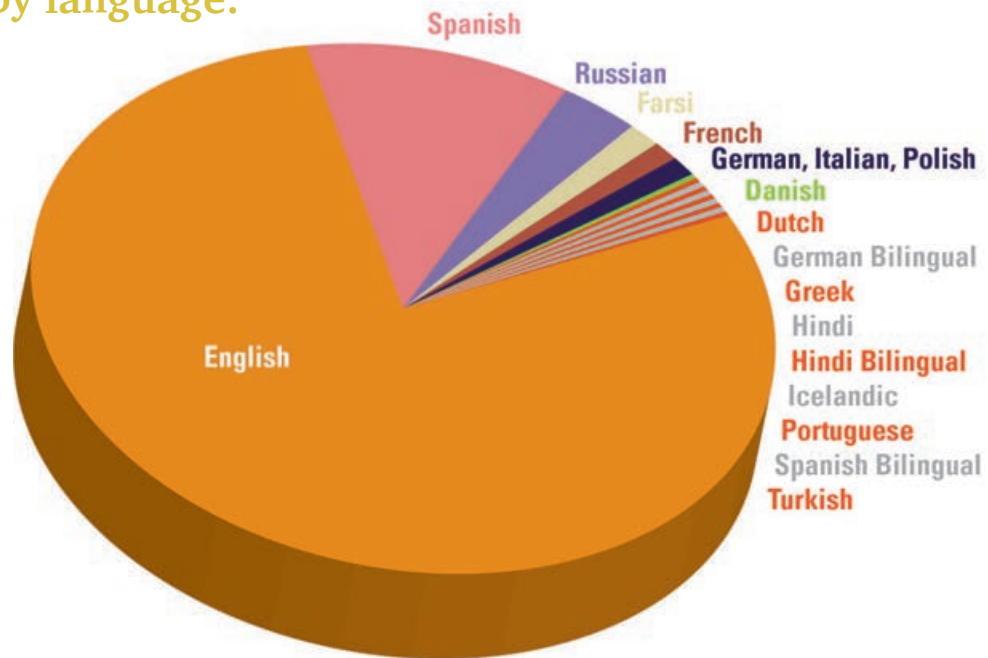
### ONLINE MEETINGS

The effects of the pandemic in 2020 prevented many Al-Anon and Alateen groups from meeting face-to-face. This, in turn, impacted the accuracy of group records for the WSO and many service arms around the world. For example, the WSO did not request groups complete the Annual Update in 2020. Many service arm offices were closed for some part of the year and experienced interruptions in record keeping services. Therefore, the WSO has determined it is preferable to not report these figures for 2020 rather than report them with a high degree of doubt as to their accuracy. Electronic Meeting statistics will be reported because these records are updated through electronic methods that were not impacted in the same way.

# Total electronic meetings: 409

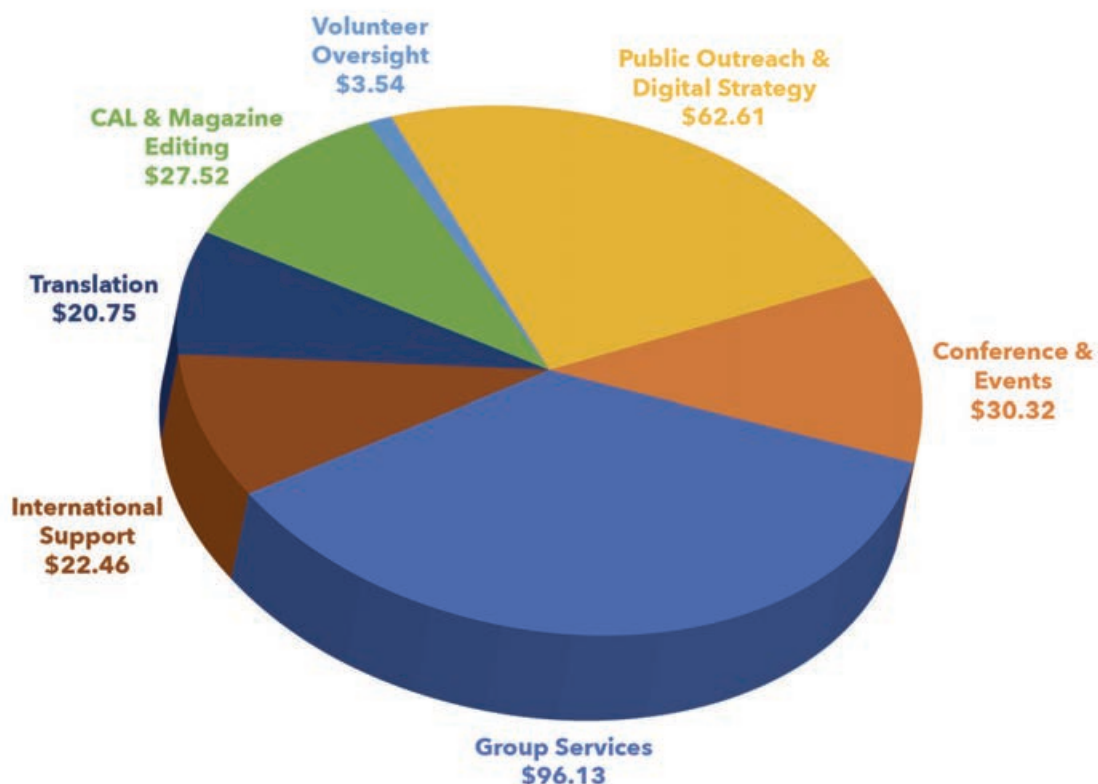
169 phone meetings • 233 online Al-Anon • 7 online Alateen

## Breakdown by language:



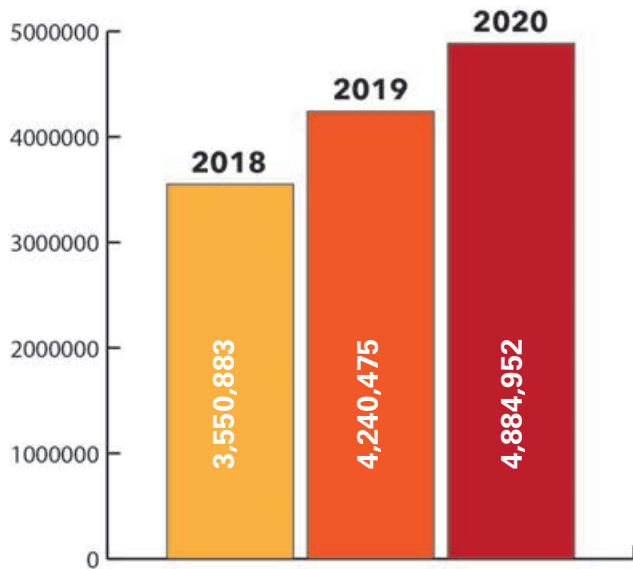
## Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Groups

Cost of Services Per Group \$263.33



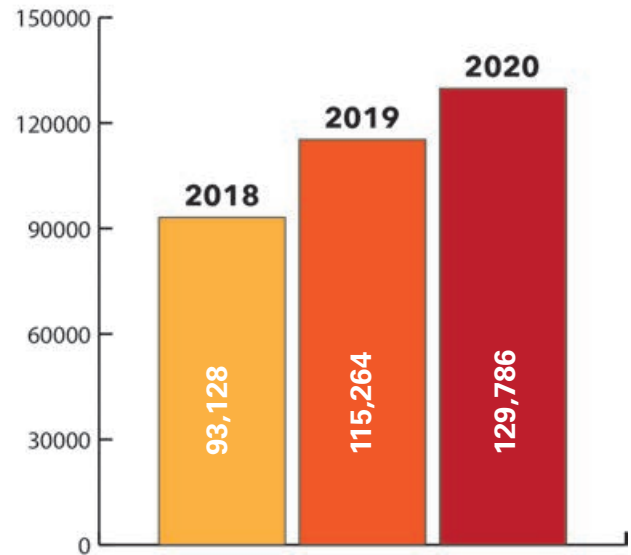
# Digital Strategy Connections

These are measurements of key WSO digital efforts in 2020 compared to the previous two years (where data is available):



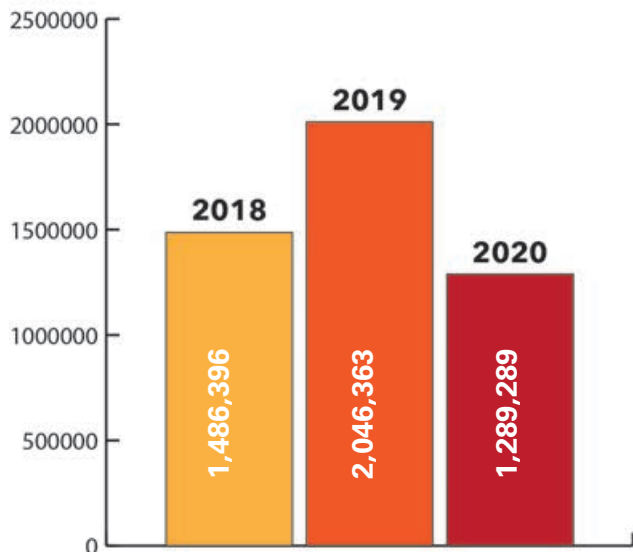
## Website Sessions

Website Sessions is the total number of unique sessions on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).



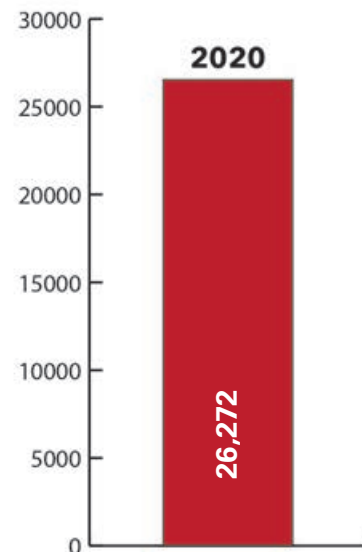
## Followers

Followers is a total count of people who have followed the WSO social media account across all social platforms: four each (English, Spanish, French, Alateen) for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages; one YouTube; and one LinkedIn.



## Meeting Searches

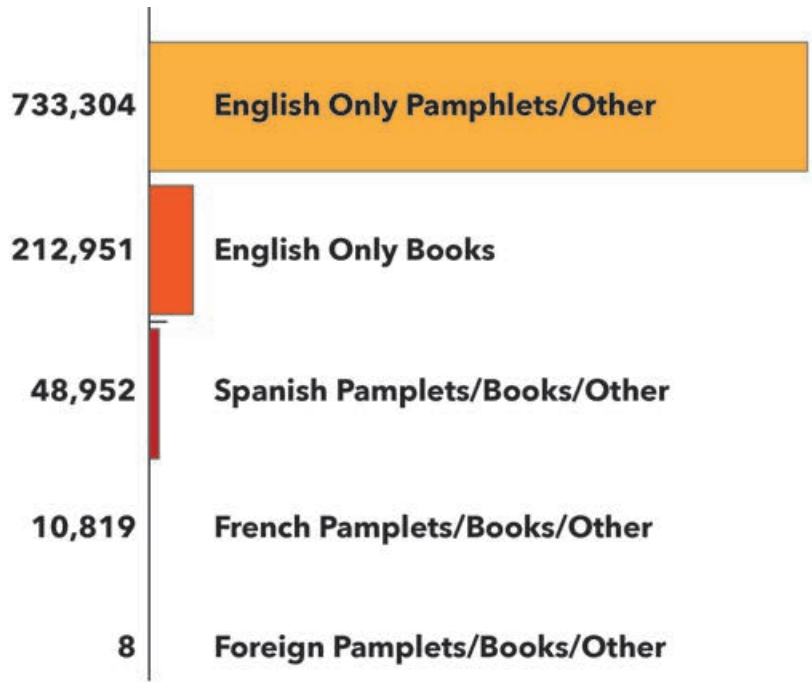
Meetings searches is the total number of searches conducted on all meeting search pages in all languages.



## Mobile App Installs

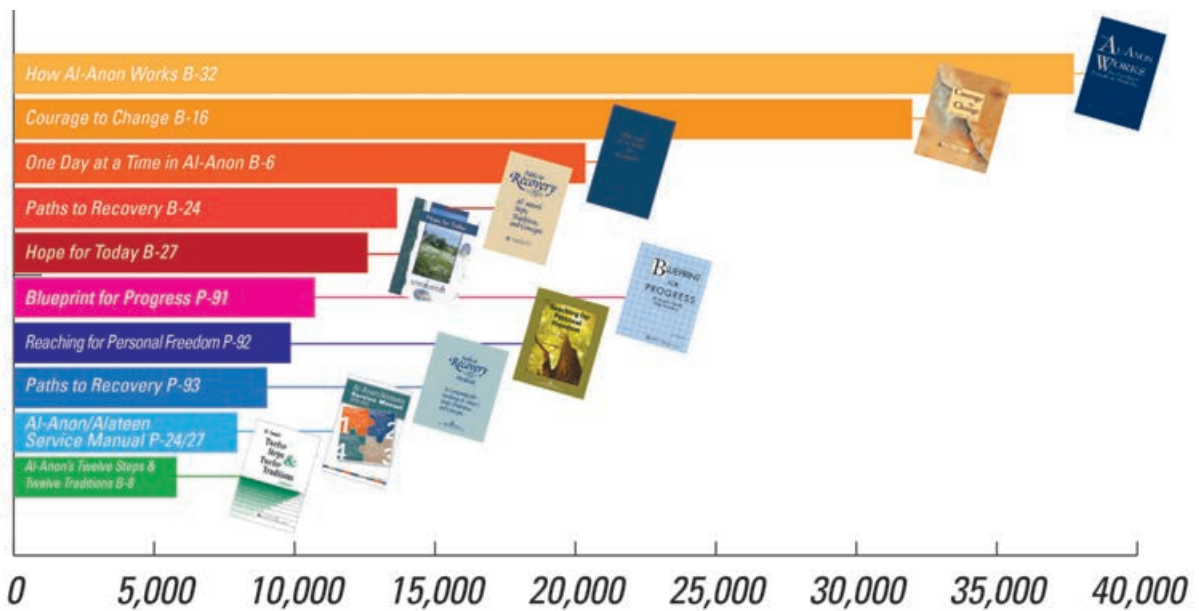
Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app installs is the total number of app installations.

# Conference Approved Literature Volume

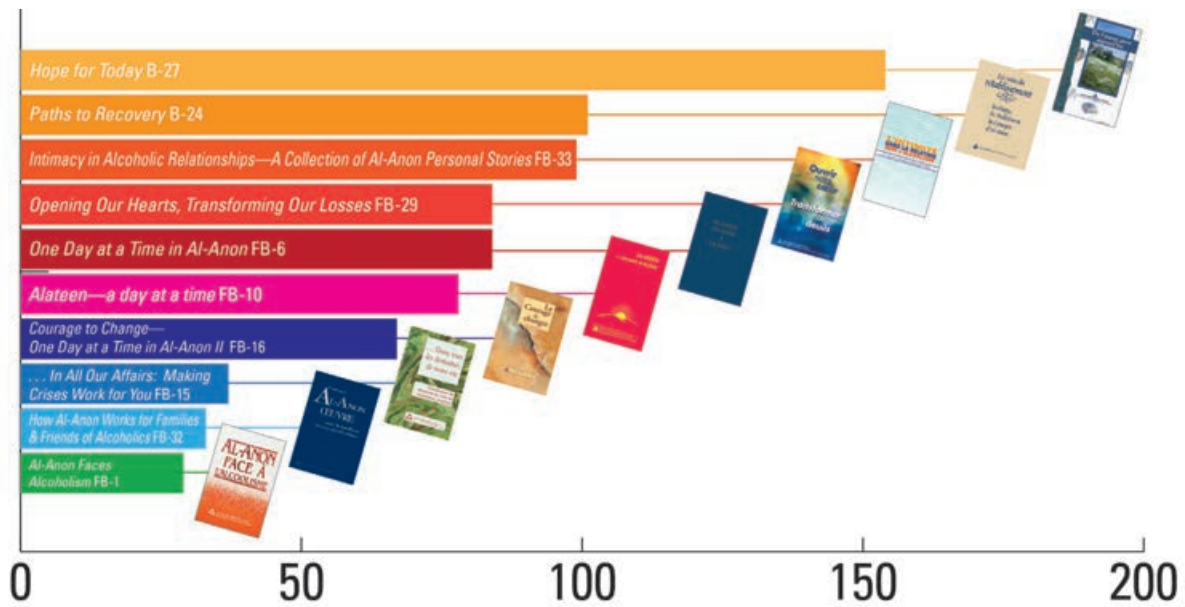


## 2020 Sales

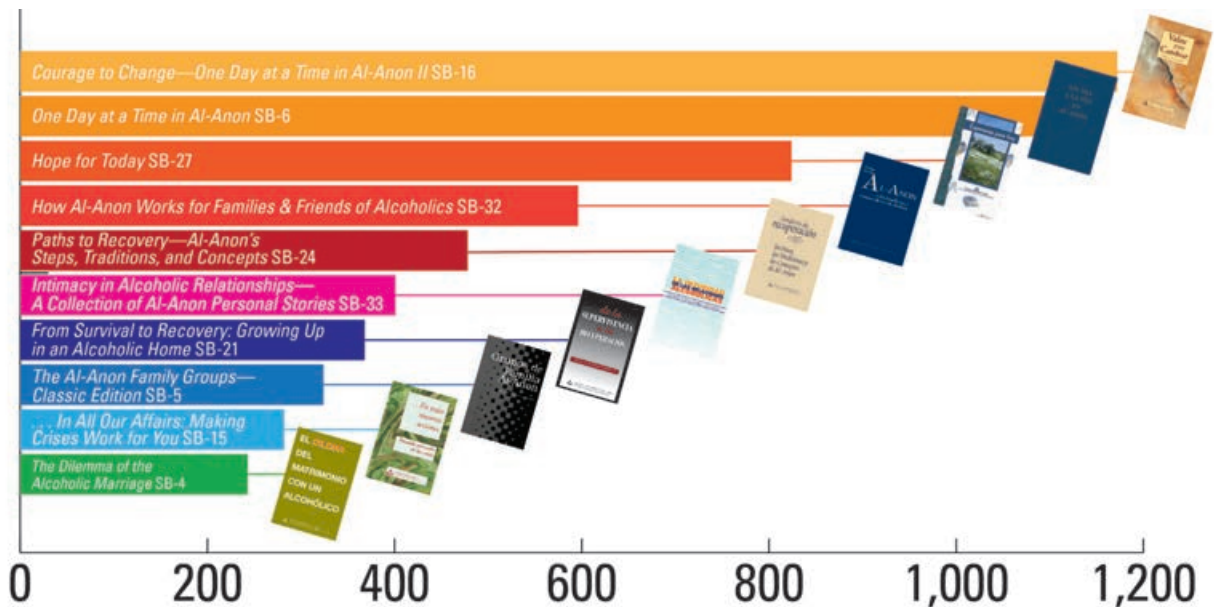
# Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - English



## Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - French

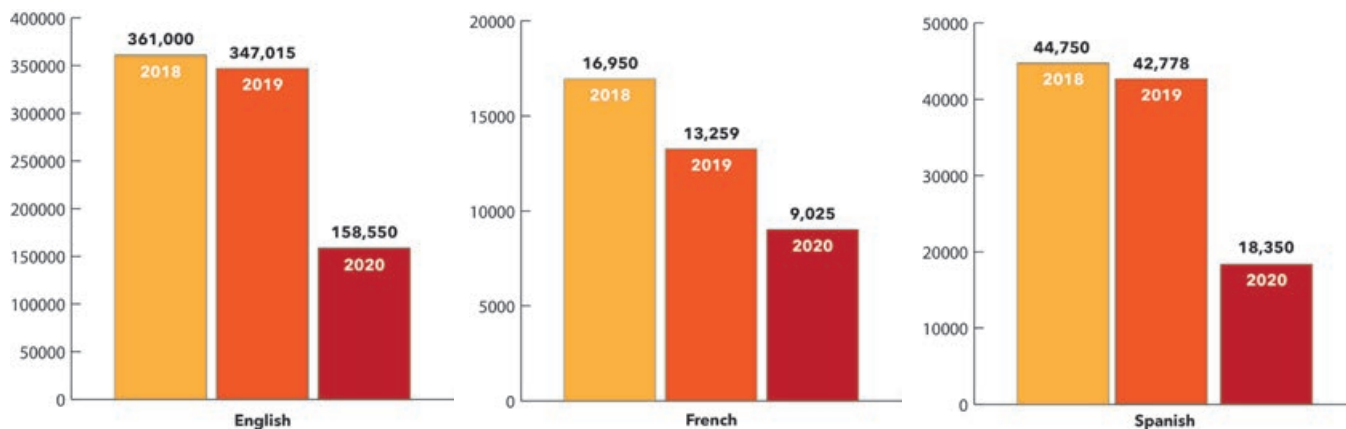


## Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - Spanish



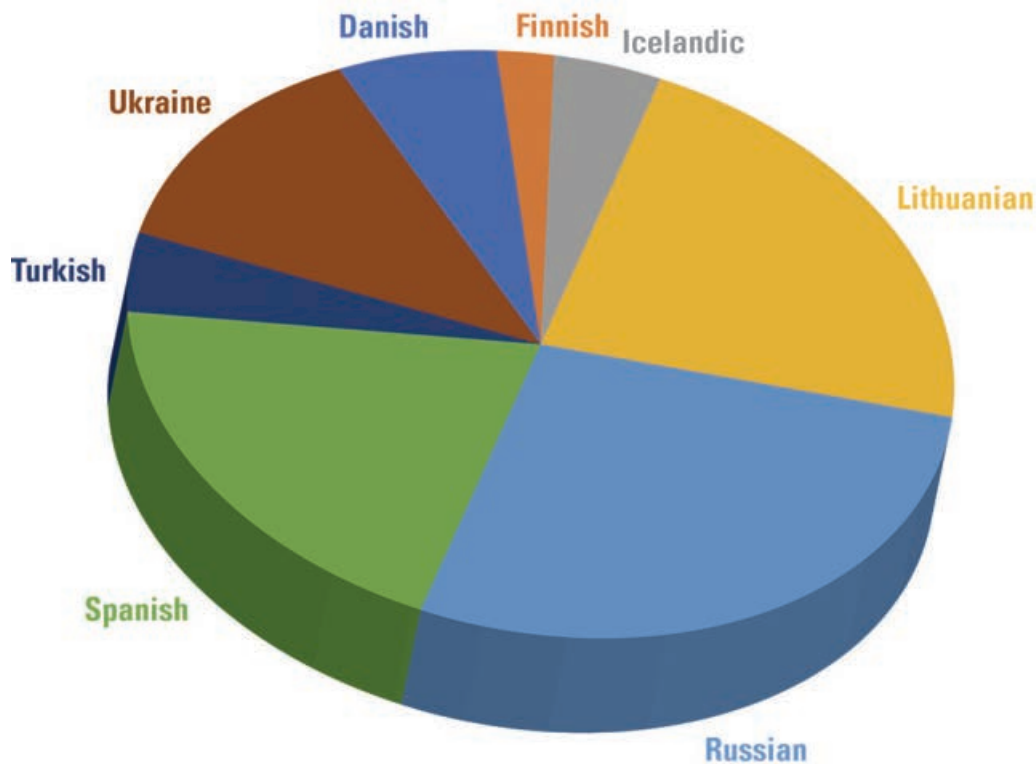


## Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



## Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally

In 2020, the WSO processed a total of 39 reprint permissions from national structures.



# Translation Stats

## Publications and Board letters:

- *Le lien*, a French-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues with an average of 7500 translated words per issue)
- *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, a Spanish-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues with an average of 7500 translated words per issue)
- Appeal letter to members (quarterly)
- Chairperson of the Board letter and Policy, Finance and CLT Committee updates (quarterly)
- *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto* (monthly)

## Special projects

- Mobile App framing text, commands, key phrases, messages, FAQs, host instructions, and website pages
- Mobile App premium content suscriptions (353 articles translated)
- French and Spanish Member Blog framing text and discussion themes
- Welcome email for new face-to-face Al-Anon groups
- Temporary electronic messages for website
- Electronic meetings newcomer e-packet sign up page for website
- Vanity URLs for various website pages
- New Public Outreach posters
- Order forms for Gratitude Bundle

## Other items

- 2019 Annual Report (over 20000 translated words)
- 2020 CAL Catalog
- 2021 PSA scripts - Interpretation and recreation of scripts in French and Spanish as translation cannot adequately capture the intention in the PSA time limits
- Update of several pamphlets featured in the Al-Anon and Alateen Newcomer packets



# Our Work

## Goal: Members

*AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.*

From its origin in 1951, the purpose of the Clearing House has been to achieve greater unity across the growing and evolving fellowship, which often involves talking to each other and reasoning things out together through inevitable disagreements. 2020 saw the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff continue this tradition of communicating with members as together they strove to provide universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism despite the challenges created by the global pandemic.

## Serve Members, Meetings and Groups

*Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services*

*Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy*

*Christa A., Senior Group Services Specialist*

*Valerie Stump, AFG Records Coordinator (Non-member)*

*Bob H., Webmaster*

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## Al-Anon Members and Group Communication

The primary responsibility of Group Services is to be able to respond to members, and potential members, when questions arise in groups. 2020 was a year of many questions posed that were starkly unique as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing responses to those questions was challenging at times as none of us were prepared to immediately navigate through the changes initially encountered.

Despite the uncertainties, members and groups demonstrated they understood the need to continue to meet in order to be available for newcomers to Al-Anon and Alateen and long-term members alike. This facilitated a WSO-wide team collaboration to provide support and direction. As a result, members and groups were able to follow a newly created process to temporarily meet on various electronic platforms and share that information at the local level.

Some challenges that Al-Anon groups temporarily meeting on electronic platforms encountered:

- How to welcome newcomers with no newcomer CAL to provide
- How to collect Tradition Seven contributions
- How to share the meeting readings so that everyone feels part of the meeting
- How to have a cohesive group

In parts of the WSC structure, some meetings could continue to meet in a face-to-face format. This prompted new challenges for those groups. Some members were very concerned about attending these face-to-face meetings for personal health reasons. This prompted the idea of creating a hybrid Al-Anon meeting: a meeting where members would be in the physical location and would use technology to patch in members that were not able to attend in person. Some localities placed a limit on crowd gathering. This posed a challenge for Al-Anon groups that would have to consider that families and friends of alcoholics could be turned away from a face-to-face meeting. Offering support to groups in these situations required us to focus on our Traditions and the principles of unity, membership, autonomy, and our primary purpose. This created an opportunity for each group to firmly link to its District and Area to talk to each other and reason things out on how to best meet the needs of each group. Lastly, all groups and members were reminded that there is no time limit for a group to temporarily meet online. It is important to consider the safety of all members.

The information that evolved because of the pandemic prompted Group Services and AFG Records to review disparities in various internal processes that support the display of registered Al-Anon face-to-face groups and electronic meetings. It has prompted us to look at creating a standardized process to display the WSO meeting ID and to access a “report a problem” feature for all meetings. In collaboration with the Webmaster, Digital Strategy, and the Software Engineer, we developed the plan to implement this process.

In addition to supporting members and groups via telephone and email correspondence, there were times when Group Services Staff were asked to participate in virtual Area Service Meetings and Events. In 2020, Group Services participated in the following:

- **Florida North Area World Service Committee Meeting:** participation included an opportunity to meet with the Area Alateen Coordinator and AAPP to discuss issues surrounding Alateen Conferences and fundraising ideas, an Ask-it-basket session, a personal sharing to the AWSC, and viewing the online AMIAS training created by the Area.
- **Ohio Assembly:** asked to share as a spiritual speaker in their virtual Assembly.
- **Iowa Assembly:** participation included a personal share and ask-it-basket session.
- **Puerto Rico Convención #45 “Visión de vida para toda mi vida”:** participation in the 45th annual Area Convention with a personal sharing focused on service as a recovery tool as a part of the topic of a panel session.

### Mobile App

In August 2020, Al-Anon launched its very first recovery mobile app. The Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (Mobile App) was designed to be a safe community for people affected by someone else’s alcoholism, where they can connect with one another to find support in a social environment without concern about breaking their anonymity. There were 10 Al-Anon groups registered hosting 21 meetings each week, including at least 1 meeting every day of the week. The WSO hosted a couple meetings a week to get things started, and the first registered electronic meeting occurred in the app on August 31, 2020 at 8:30pm EDT.

In December 2020, the Mobile App was updated to provide safety for our teen members and the first Alateen meeting occurred in the Mobile App, in place of Alateen Chat, on December 6, 2020 at 9pm EST.

Once the Mobile App was officially launched, Group Services Staff facilitated two temporary meetings to help members get acquainted with its meeting functionality. The temporary meetings took place until the end of October when at least one Al-Anon meeting was registered for every day of the week. The very first meeting to register was “Senderos de Amor” a Spanish-speaking meeting!

## Alateen Members, Groups, and Trusted Servants

### Area Alateen Coordinators

The Alateen Service e-Manual required a language change to reflect the updated Alateen policy approved by the 2019 WSC. In addition, it was noted that some of the images found therein needed to be updated. In the review process some of the content was revised to incorporate live links to resource materials on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) to assist Al-Anon members considering serving Alateen. Group Services was able to update the service tool and post on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) as well as in the Area Alateen Coordinators Community.

The following Areas submitted changes to their Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements that were found to be in substantial compliance with the 2003 Motion from the Board of Trustees and approved by the WSO:

- California North
- California South
- Florida North
- New York North
- Oklahoma

Please remember that any changes made to current Area Alateen Safety and Behavior Requirements need to be reviewed by WSO prior to presenting to the Area Assembly for vote of approval.

In the same manner that Al-Anon groups were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so, too were Alateen meetings. The challenge to move Alateen meetings to a temporary online platform was an impact experienced throughout our structure. Finding information about Alateen groups temporarily meeting online at the local level, while keeping in mind the safety of the meeting, became a concern. Maintaining member anonymity at the public level also was a challenge as to how to safely display contact information for Alateen meetings. It was determined by the WSO that temporary online Alateen meetings could only be conducted based on their Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

For that reason, Alateens could not participate in temporary online Alateen meetings outside of their Area.

Area Alateen Coordinators, AMIAS, and other trusted servants shared in their respective AFG Connects communities regarding safety for Alateen meetings. When Alateens wanted to attend a temporary Alateen meeting outside of their Area, it needed to be coordinated through the links of service as an AMIAS needed to escort the Alateen to the out-of-Area meeting and remain at the meeting. This supported the understanding of a need for a communication plan between the Areas and the importance of the trusted servants involved, verifying current AMIAS certification to ensure the safety of the teens.

### **Area Alateen Recertification**

Group Services, in collaboration with AFG Records, reviews the process in place after each recertification cycle is completed. There is always room for improvement when sharing the message that the Area Alateen Recertification process involves both recertification of certified AMIAS and verification that Alateen groups list certified AMIAS as Alateen Group Sponsors, CMA, and Phone Contacts for the Public.

Since the Recertification window is now open earlier in the year (January) we felt it best to create some “on-demand” videos to assist the incoming panel of AAPPs with their transition into this service role. The “Welcome Presentation for the incoming AAPP Panel” was completed with vital feedback from WSO Staff on the content. The presentation was well received by the AAPPs when presented for initial training session.

As a result of the pandemic, the Board of Trustees extended the deadline for the Annual Alateen Recertification to August 31. All 67 Areas completed the recertification by the August 31 deadline. Moving forward, we will go back to the June 15 deadline where AFG Records and Group Services will continue to collaborate to create a communication plan that reinforces the importance of adhering to the deadline. New on-demand video training is in progress to assist in this endeavor.

### **New WSO Staff and Volunteers Alateen Certification Process**

At the January Board of Trustees Meeting, the Board decided to approve the Staff development of a certification program for those serving Alateen on behalf of the World Service Office, which complies with the 2003 Alateen Motion. The certification program currently consists of the following elements:

- National background checks identifying any felony convictions, charges of child abuse, or any other inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Government training on Virginia laws regarding working with minors.
- WSO Alateen overview training provided by the Associate Director—Group Services.
- Third-party professional training that includes best-practices for working with teenagers. The training and professional facilitator may vary but the training will minimally include techniques for resolving conflicts with teenagers.
- Attorney-led or government information session on specific laws for working with minors in the state or province in which an Al-Anon or A.A. with Al-Anon participation International Convention will be held.

If WSO Staff or Volunteers wish to serve Alateen in the Area in which they reside, they must participate in the certification process of the respective Area.

### **Alateen Chat meetings**

Since 2013, the WSO has offered Alateen Chat meetings that take place in an online text-based platform. The meetings over the years have been supported by Areas where the AMIAS volunteer to serve in the chat meeting. The WSO was made aware that the software that supported these meetings would become obsolete at the end of 2020. Over the course of the year, there were numerous times when the chat meetings were not able to be held due to software problems. Finally, it was determined these meetings would be relocated to the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (Mobile App).

WSO contacted all the AMIAS connected to each of the seven meetings (six from the WSC structure and one from Poland) and invited them to a web conference training session. The meetings were launched in the Mobile App December 6. We are excited to discover whether the trial period for these meetings in the Mobile App may allow the WSO to consider registering other permanent electronic Alateen meetings.

### **Al-Anon Information Services**

The AIS Update for 2020 was suspended due to the pandemic, since many service centers remained closed, operated with limited hours, or worked from remote locations. The AIS Community on AFG Connects was moderately used for sharing experience, strength, and hope regarding Seventh Tradition contributions over electronic platforms. The Literature Distribution Center (LDC) Community was used a little more, as members were seeking which best practices have evolved in providing literature safely to members.

### **Inmate Correspondence Service**

Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICS program continues to be upside down with more members interested in being an Inmate Contact but little to no interest from Inmates. Local Public Outreach into prisons will be encouraged when it is safe to do so, as we would like to be able to continue supporting inmates affected by the family disease of alcoholism. The role of the WSO is to protect anonymity by acting as the postal service between Contacts and Inmates. We continue to need support from the Areas to create those connections.

### **Electronic Meetings**

Permanent electronic meetings (Electronic Meetings) continue to grow on phone and online platforms, with over 200 new registered meetings added in 2020. To date, a total of 386 Electronic Meetings (223 online and 163 on the phone) have registered. They host 558 meetings in total, as many gather on multiple days. The online meetings continue to be held in many languages. 2020 saw the first French-speaking phone meeting register with the WSO!

A total of six web conference calls for the online Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs) and five web conference calls for the phone CMAs were conducted in 2020. All Electronic Meetings were impacted by increasing numbers of members joining their meetings because of the pandemic. Business meeting discussions centered around how Electronic Meetings adjusted to the influx of new members to their meetings.

With this influx, the need to create and share a “meeting script” arose. CMAs shared experience, strength, and hope on their Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community, giving examples of different types of web-based technology that allowed them to post scripts without creating searchable websites. The importance of protecting Al-Anon’s trademark name and copyright continues to be a guiding principle in the endeavors of the permanent electronic meetings.

CMAs for electronic meetings have long identified the need to provide newcomers a welcome kit of information similar to what many provide in face-to-face meetings. In March 2020, the WSO responded by creating a “Welcome Newcomer” email. The one-time available at [al-anon.org/welcome](http://al-anon.org/welcome) provide valuable links to basic newcomer information found on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org). While this email was intended for newcomers of permanent electronic meetings, Staff realized that due to the pandemic, it was useful to also provide it to members participating in temporary Al-Anon meetings. The links of service and fellowship were informed of availability starting in May. An average of 775 email sign-ups are being requested each month and close to 8,000 emails were generated from March to December 2020.

Group Services collaborated with AFG Records and Legal to resolve the backlog of requests for licenses to quote Conference Approved Literature (CAL) online in Electronic Meetings and developed a system for alerting them when renewal is due. The [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) display of online meetings was completely revised to include updated language regarding meeting attendees, license to display CAL, language spoken in the meeting, and the Electronic Meeting WSO ID number. Filters were also added to allow members to search for Electronic Meetings by language, platform, and day of week. Electronic Meeting members have appreciated the changes.

AFG Records and Group Services collaborated and revised the Electronic Meeting Registration and Electronic Meeting Change forms and instructions, including adding Mobile App specific responsibilities. This year, CMA letters to Electronic Meetings were sent in English, Spanish, and French, based on the language spoken in the meeting.

Prior to launching the Mobile App, Group Services clarified for the Phone and Online CMAs the Mobile App was not intended to replace their meetings but rather to provide another platform for Al-Anon meetings to take place. Everyone was encouraged to share this information in their meetings as the Mobile App is a major milestone for Al-Anon Family Groups.

### ***Impression – Electronic Meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups***

*JP M., Chairperson of the EMWG (Trustee)*

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In the last 4 years, I have been privileged to participate in the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG), including being the Chairperson of the Work Group this year. Our work this year was very exciting to me, as I hope it is to you. Due to the pandemic, many of us in the fellowship have had an opportunity to participate in electronic meetings this year, which has allowed us to have a better appreciation for them.

I am excited that EMWG may be able to bring forward the following to the 2021 Conference for consideration:

- Permanent Electronic Meetings are Al-Anon Family Groups and should elect a Group Representative like any Al-Anon group.

- AI-Anon Family Groups that meet only electronically have elected representation within the AI-Anon service structure. This could include such groups choosing to be a part of a geographic component of the structure—such as an Area, a General Service Office, or an Emerging Structure—or part of an Area serving groups meeting electronically which could be formed within the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. Each group would receive support, do service, and use the service manual and language(s) supported by the component of the AI-Anon structure through which it registers.
- AI-Anon Family Groups which meet face-to-face could have an electronic component, if that is the wish of the group conscience, and would remain a part of the service structure in which the group is registered.

I am excited to learn the will of the WSC Conference regarding these ideas which, I believe, unify all components of the fellowship, and provide a path forward without harm to what already exists.

## Facilitate Conference, Convention, and Fellowship Visits

*Marsha W., Director of Programs*

*Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference*

*Chris Baker, Meeting & Travel Planner (Non-member)*

*Yadi McCoy, Training & Project Specialist (Non-member)*

*Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)*

*Rosie M., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (Trustee)*

*Jean L., Chairperson of Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect (Trustee)*

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### The World Service Conference

The 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) was unlike any other as expressed in the *Impression – Virtual/Electronic Conference* immediately following this report.

Several WSC agenda items were discussed on AFG Connects, a communication platform, where Conference members posted their comments over five 24-hour periods; agenda items relating to legal Board matters were held via web conferencing during two half-day sessions; and other agenda items were postponed.

A French-speaking Conference member benefitted from the simultaneous interpretation of the virtual sessions into French. This resource was approved as a three-year trial in July 2019 by the Board of Trustees in support of providing barrier-free access to information. Spanish translation was not requested for the 2020 WSC.

Although this was not the Conference experience the 92 voting members had anticipated, the pandemic offered a growth opportunity for the Conference to actively engage in its 2020 theme, “Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision,” by holding the 60th WSC in an electronic format.

Following Conference, members were invited to share “what you are ‘taking away’ from Conference?” A Delegate shared, “I am humbled and grateful to be a part of AI-Anon history. I cannot imagine the tremendous work that went into pulling this off! I couldn’t help but think back to the ‘pioneer days.’ I appreciate all the knowledge that was shared in the discussions on AFG Connects, but I did miss the in-person feel of Conference. We are all in this together and we hold AI-Anon’s best interest at heart.”

In addition to the virtual/electronic Conference in April, members of the 2020 WSC celebrated the service of outgoing Delegates, WSO Volunteers, and one retired Staff member in November as they listened to the Panel 58 Delegates share their Three-Minute Talks and the Spiritual Speakers share their stories. Members also witnessed outgoing 2020 WSC members “receive” certificates of appreciation in recognition of their dedication and contribution of service to the worldwide fellowship of AI-Anon. The celebration included time for fellowship and a video tour of the WSO in support of AFG, Inc.’s Mission Statement, in part: “. . . a



spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through . . . shared experiences.” (To read these talks, see page 49-60 of the *2020 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), <https://al-anon.org/pdf/P46-2020-web.pdf>)

While the 2020 WSC was a successful event, put together in a short period of time, going forward, the 2021 WSC will see the 2021 Conference Theme, “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance,” come to fruition. The 2021 WSC will build on the 2020 experience, as the Board, in October, approved *not* holding the 2021 WSC in New York in favor of a virtual Conference. This is due to the continuing travel and meeting restrictions related to the pandemic. With this advance notice, WSO Staff, along with the Conference Leadership Team (CLT), have begun planning for a *full* Conference agenda in 2021—thereby increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program. The 2021 WSC will be held virtually, including general sessions, breakout sessions, and electronic AFG Connects discussions for some reports and sessions. In the spirit of Tradition One—our common welfare and unity—CLT reached out to gain a sense of the will of the Conference members regarding the virtual 2021 Conference agenda.

### ***Impression – Virtual/Electronic Conference***

*Gail G., Member of the Board of Trustees*

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Each year, planning for the next WSC begins shortly after the closing of the *current* Conference. This was the case for the 2020 WSC—and then “*it*” happened!

By mid-March 2020, health and government authorities had issued restrictions to limit gatherings to less than 50 people. On March 20, 2020, the Board of Trustees convened a Special Board Meeting to discuss the options available for holding the WSC. We were four weeks away from the start of Conference and all options appeared quite daunting. This was the first time, in the history of the WSC Structure, that we were not able to meet face-to-face! So, after much prayerful deliberation, the decision was made to hold two, abbreviated half-day virtual meetings with an electronic component on AFG Connects.

To say the next few weeks were somewhat frantic would be an understatement. Meetings, technical training, decisions, more meetings, pre-Conference voting training, communicating—everyone worked tirelessly to overcome barriers and challenges. Conference members soon found themselves attending training sessions and for some, new skills were quickly developed. And when it was time, we came together in our new format. We fulfilled the traditional obligations required to support the Board of Trustees in executing its legal requirements at the Annual Meetings. We listened, we participated in written discussions, we voted, and we made history. The Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, the WSO Staff, and the Delegates all displayed courage, goodwill, patience, and their ability to adapt to new and innovative ideas. It was exciting and a privilege to feel the love and dedication which was abundant at our first ever virtual/hybrid World Service Conference. I will never forget it!!

### ***Impression – Fulfilling WSC Responsibilities to Guard Al-Anon’s World Services through Policy Discussions and Decisions***

*Terry F., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)*

*Marianne B., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)*

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The Policy Committee is committed to ensuring that Al-Anon policies are in line with Al-Anon’s Traditions and spiritual principles. This is a large Committee comprised of all members of the Board, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the WSO Staff. There can be up to 30 Policy Committee members at the Policy Committee meeting! Regardless of its size, the Policy Committee always relies on a Higher Power to guide them in discussions that are considerate, thoughtful, and loving. It is always cognizant of its responsibility to the WSC and the fellowship, focused on decisions that are founded on “our common welfare.”

This year, adapting to meeting virtually for all Policy Committee meetings has been both exciting and challenging, but the Committee continues to *move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance*. There were many Policy Committee, Task, and Thought Force recommendations that were approved for presentation at the 2020 WSC, but due to the virtualization, will now be presented at the 2021 WSC. In addition, new Task and Thought Forces have been working hard to bring their discussions to the Policy Committee in the hopes of presenting their work at the 2021 WSC too! We are so excited to be presenting many Policy items for discussion, decision, and vote at the next WSC!

### **Supporting the WSC Structure and Trusted Servants**

In providing “universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism” as stated in our Strategic Plan Goal: Members, the April 2020 Chairperson of the Board Letter and accompanying three updates from the Finance Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Conference Leadership Team, was released simultaneously in English, French, and Spanish for the first time. This demonstrated the Board of Trustees’ continued commitment to enhancing trilingual communication. Members continue to receive this valuable quarterly resource simultaneously in all three languages.

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) Subcommittee held its debut “Session with the Delegates.” This was an idea shared with WSO Staff by a current Delegate, discussed by the CLT, and implemented prior to the close of the year. This first session reviewed the relationship and differences between Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization. The session included a Q&A segment for Delegates to ask questions about the material presented. In support of the Strategic Plan Goal: Organization, current Conference members have access to this session (and future sessions) as it was recorded *for use within the WSC Members AFG Connects community* thereby “increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.”

Also in support of the Strategic Plan Goal: Organization, members of our communication platform communities on AFG Connects received notice of an update to the AFG Connects’ Code of Conduct (formerly named) document that provides an Al-Anon principle-based Usage Policy (newly named) that is clearer and more user-friendly. Key changes include highlighting how to ask questions of the WSO (via email or the “Contact Us” link), listing supporting Traditions for each “AFG Connects Etiquette” and “Discussion Group Etiquette” bullet point, and stating the importance of maintaining confidentiality within the community.

### **2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation**

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, our friends at A.A. made the difficult, unprecedented decision in late March to cancel their in-person gathering—originally estimated to attract 50,000 plus members—of A.A., Al-Anon, and guests planning to travel to Detroit, Michigan on July 2-5 of 2020 to celebrate A.A.’s 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during their 2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation. The WSO Convention Planning Team’s preparations had been in the works for a couple of years designing a program for Al-Anon’s participation; and while we were disappointed that we would not be participating with A.A. at their International Convention, we appreciated A.A.’s thoughtful foresight in cancelling when they did.

In addition to the WSO Convention Planning Team’s work, the Michigan Al-Anon Welcome Committee—made up entirely of volunteers—was well underway with its plans to welcome Al-Anon members from all parts of the world to Detroit. The WSO expresses its deep gratitude to the core Welcome Committee and all its members for their generous service to Al-Anon Family Groups.

## **Fellowship Visits within the WSC Structure**

### **Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect**

We were disappointed, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, to have to cancel Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect 2020, set to take place in Cleveland, Ohio in October. Nonetheless, the Board of Trustees are grateful to the Ohio Area for their willingness to agree to host the event in October 2021 instead; and an agreement was reached with the hotel to reschedule.

### **Participating in Area Events**

WSO Staff and Volunteers were also disappointed to be unable, due to the pandemic, to physically attend events in the Areas planned earlier during the year. However, once adjustments were made to the situation, Areas contacted and requested WSO participation for Assemblies and Conventions using virtual platforms. Staff and Volunteers were appreciative for these opportunities and impressed with the resiliency and enthusiasm displayed by the members in attendance. Everyone looks forward to 2021 creative possibilities.

### ***Impression – Sharing at Area Events in a Virtual Format***

*Teri M., Member of the Board of Trustees*

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One of the privileges Trustees have throughout their service in Al-Anon, is visiting different Areas—as assigned by the Chairperson of the Board (COB). Normally, we fly to the respective city, spend a day or so, and are surrounded by fellowship. We attend Assemblies and share our Al-Anon personal/service story and whatever else the Area needs us to share. 2020 changed all of that. The pandemic halted us in our tracks in regard to travel. The resiliency of the fellowship, and our need to connect and still do our Al-Anon business, quickly turned towards a rapid learning trend on virtual events.

Virtually flying into Minnesota North October 3 of this year was a pleasure. The members were engaged in their first virtual Assembly and used electronic software voting for the first time. As Trustees, we provide reports to the Board on the places we visit; and virtual meetings have allowed us to visit many places in last year. Assemblies, in their autonomy, are having robust conversations with respect and principles, and are modeling what is best for Al-Anon during a very strange time. There seems to be a common thread—while we deeply miss the personal connections, the willingness to engage and participate is heartfelt. Many of us are getting out of our comfort zones. Visits to Areas, whether in person or virtual, keep the connection going, keep all of us better informed, and keep reminding me that I am not alone on this journey of recovery

## **Produce and Distribute Literature**

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

*Marsha W., Director of Programs*

*Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)*

*Tom C., Associate Director—Literature*

*Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services*

*Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy*

*Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)*

*Colette Norman, Translation Manager (Non-member)*

*Hannah Brown, Copy Editor (Non-member)*

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### **Conference Approved Literature**

As 2020 began, the writer/editor chosen to work on the NEW DAILY READER (working title) was hard at work selecting and editing sharings for the book from among the 1,587 member sharings that had been submitted up to that time. The Associate Director—Literature, as liaison to the 14 members of the Literature

Committee, provided an initial review of each sharing before forwarding batches of them to the Committee each month. This intense work continued until the end of December, by which time the first draft of an entire year's worth of daily readings had been evaluated, and hundreds of opinions had been sent back to the writer/editor for consideration in creating the next draft.

Our literature provides recovery not only to those who read it, but also to those members who write sharings for consideration as part of their service. During the year, the fellowship received a final request for additional sharings for the daily reader on topics that had not yet been addressed. Over 300 more additional writings were submitted and gratefully received by the WSO.

Developing new material is only one way in which Al-Anon literature helps families and friends of alcoholics. Drawing attention to the incredible resource in recovery that is already available in existing literature is also essential. In addition to the monthly "CAL Corner" department in *The Forum*, a variety of notices and articles put the focus on topics and materials that members might otherwise not know. These included an "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article about literature that focuses on using the Traditions and Concepts of Service in one's personal life, and a series of announcements on where to read more about topics like gratitude, sponsorship, and growing up with alcoholism.

For members' convenience, the WSO once again provided 20 quotations for use in fundraising calendars by service arms without seeking written permission. This service has reduced work for trusted servants as well as WSO Staff.

### ***Impression – Creating New Conference Approved Literature***

*Mary W., Chairperson of Literature Committee (At-Large Member)*

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I am very grateful to serve this year as the Chairperson for the Literature Committee. This wonderful group of Al-Anon members loves our Conference Approved Literature (CAL), practices the Al-Anon principles, and serves to help fulfill our core purpose—to help families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

In 2014, the WSC approved development of a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship. Since May, the Literature Committee members, in following the CAL process, have been reading 50 new sharings for this project each month and grading them using the CAL criteria. The Committee also meets virtually every quarter to discuss our experiences with the assignment and review any new literature suggestions from the worldwide fellowship. I find it invaluable to receive many opinions on every sharing, knowing that this feedback will be carefully considered by the writer/editor of the book (who is also an Al-Anon member).

Just like in my personal Al-Anon journey, I have had a lot to learn and unlearn in this service role. The Al-Anon tools help build a foundation of trust that allows participation and expression of diverse reactions to the sharings. The Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process has helped facilitate discussion, and ultimately helps attain unanimity with our decisions.

I have enjoyed working with the Area Delegates, At-Large members, and WSO Staff on this Committee. This is my favorite service that I have done in Al-Anon so far.

### ***Recovery Magazines—The Forum, Le lien, Al-Anon y Alateen en acción***

*The Forum* continues to provide help to the families and friends of alcoholics as the monthly magazine of Al-Anon Family Groups. *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazines are the bimonthly French and Spanish versions, using translated excerpts from *The Forum*. The magazines include sharings from members in a variety of relationships with alcoholics and are designed to provide recovery in meetings and in-between meetings. Fifty of these sharings are evaluated by At Large members of the *Forum* Editorial

Advisory Committee (FEAC) each month. The Committee also meets quarterly via web conferencing call to discuss the status of the magazine and any concerns that readers may have.

Over the past year, the Board of Trustees and Staff have been looking at ways to better serve our members who require translation in French and Spanish. They have reduced the turnaround time in which subscribers to *Le lien* and *en acción* are getting the magazines, enhanced their design, included more timely content, and, most recently, added a color front and back cover and the “One ‘Quote’ at a Time” department. Contrary to the old “newsletter” design they once had, these publications now sport the modern, friendly look one would expect from the French and Spanish equivalents of *The Forum* magazine.

In recent issues, Staff has begun addressing the timeliness of the Legacies sharings in *Le lien* and *En acción*. By next year, the sharings will more accurately correspond to when the magazine is received, so that those who wish to can use them to study the Legacies of the month.

For each issue of *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, the Translation Team translated the French and Spanish articles. Some articles were adapted to ensure the referenced literature, material, and URLs were specific to each language. Some selected internet articles from each issue were also published in *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto*, the French and Spanish editions of *In The Loop*.

The Production Team designs *The Forum* from the manuscript they receive each month. The Designer uses stock photography, as well as incorporating member photos throughout. The content drives the design, with the cover story often setting the theme.

### *Impression – From Newsletters to Magazines*

*Rosie M., Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)*

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In support of our Mission Statement, “Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences,” the WSO collaborated and completed a transformation of the *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* from a newsletter to a magazine. It’s exciting to see the new magazine format align with the content and information in *The Forum*. I can’t imagine a better way to connect with members of our Spanish-speaking community. The information and shared experiences are relayed in their language, and provide content that can be understood, discussed, and shared. All of this can enhance members’ spiritual connection and growth.

This publication is the “voice of the fellowship” in Spanish and extends an open invitation for individual members and groups to share. The content ranges from the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service to updates and news from our WSO and personal Al-Anon and Alateen sharings on a variety of topics.

The *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazine is a handy, readily available resource. We’ve had meetings in our Spanish group using topics from this magazine that led to great discussions and much recovery. We share this magazine within our group so that everyone has an opportunity to read it. We also encourage subscriptions so we can all be connected and enriched each time we receive it. Thank you to the WSO Staff for providing this wonderful recovery tool in Spanish in a magazine format.

*Thérèse S., Member of the Board of Trustees*

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Looking at how *Le lien* has evolved through the years has helped me realize how much this precious magazine means to me. Its new presentation makes the content so much more attractive. The idea of presenting Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in advance is an amazing improvement as it allows members to use *Le lien* for monthly workshops on the Legacies.

When I arrived in Al-Anon, I was told that *Le lien* was “a meeting in my pocket.” I agreed with this statement, and it helped support me throughout the day. I always had an issue in my purse and I still use it whenever I am chairing a meeting. *Le lien* is a very valuable recovery tool. I always have an issue at my bedside. It calms me down and helps me end the day with great peace.

### **Alateen Talk**

As a result of Group Services staffing limitations and the COVID-19 pandemic, *Alateen Talk* is behind in production as only one issue was mailed in 2020. Group Services Staff are committed to creating all newsletters for our paid subscribers and Alateen groups.

### **Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism – AFG’s Year-Round Public Outreach Magazine**

In 2020 the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazine completed its transition from a bi-annual special pre-order to an item available for purchase throughout the year. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the overall sales of *AFA* magazines, so we were unable to experience the full benefit of its continual availability. In September, the Public Outreach Committee recommended, and the Executive Committee approved, the removal of the year from the cover, while leaving the copyright date on the inside cover. This approach expands *AFA*’s timelessness and eliminates service arms’ need to figure out what to do with excess inventory of the previous year’s magazine. The new *AFA* magazine, which is being printed for 2021, will be the first to exclude the year from its cover.

## **Goal: Public**

***Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.***

In 2020, the WSO sought to honor the intent of the 1966 Policy statement which encouraged a proactive approach to public outreach: “Al-Anon is cooperating when it works with others, rather than alone.” The Board of Trustees encouraged WSO Staff to “consult widely” to understand how other recovery organizations were attracting diverse members to their programs. The Board, Executive Committee members, and WSO Staff reviewed the results of this consultation together before prioritizing AFG, Inc. “plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship” in 2021. Through these efforts, AFG, Inc. continues to expand recognition of Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected by the family disease of alcoholism.

## **Attract New Members**

*Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy*

*Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)*

*Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies*

*Mona Dougherty, Senior Communications Specialist (Non-member)*

*Beth Rodriguez, Senior Social Media Specialist (Non-member)*

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## **Public Outreach**

### **Public Service Announcements**

In 2019, WSO Staff were contacted by another Public Service Announcement (PSA) distribution vendor with a proposal to distribute our PSAs to the US and Canada in 2020. Their proposal included digital advertising which would be aired in grocery stores, medical waiting rooms, and across CBS online properties to expand awareness of hope through Al-Anon recovery. So, Staff decided to test out these new delivery methods to determine if this approach would increase awareness.

The PSA campaign, which featured our 2019 Questions campaign alongside our 2017 Samantha (Alateen) campaign, were distributed in August 2020. Through the first 96 days, the 2020 PSA campaign was played over 24,600 times which is greater than the first 96 day of the 2018 and 2019 PSA campaigns combined. In addition to the sheer volume of airplays, our PSAs also reached a much broader audience as they were played in more top cities than ever before, including 77% of the 100 most populous cities in the US and Canada, and all the top 10 most populous cities.

Given the success, and considering feedback from our new vendor, the Public Outreach Committee recommended a change to how the Al-Anon fellowship participates in the annual PSA campaign. Historically, PSA distribution has been limited—due to the costs of producing DVDs which had to be mailed to a select number of stations. The new approach is 100% digital and allows the Al-Anon PSAs to reach all Nielsen tracked stations (three times as many as before). Since the distribution gap has been eliminated, there is no longer a need for members to contact stations which protects Al-Anon from a Concept Ten duplication of effort issue with our vendor.

The Public Outreach Committee is excited to be able to consider new opportunities for members to serve in Public Outreach campaigns.

### Public Outreach Service Tools

In 2020, a small team of WSO Staff worked together to develop new poster templates for public outreach. There has been a lot of demand for the “trapped in the bottle” poster which has been shared among Areas. The WSO has purchased extended license images which allow for use and distribution by WSC Structure service arms. The team developed several versions using the tagline “Not everyone trapped by alcohol is an alcoholic” depicting people trapped in bottles. Some new Alateen posters focusing on the statement, “1 in every 4 children is effected by someone else’s drinking” were also produced. These posters, with a placeholder for local contact information, will be added to the [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) Public Outreach page from where they can be downloaded for free. To reduce impact on Staff resources, service arms are able to update these posters with contact information without WSO approval.

### Competitive Analysis Project

In late spring, WSO Staff, at the direction of the Board of Trustees, distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to complete a Competitive Analysis across numerous digital channels (LinkedIn, AFG Connects, *In The Loop*, and [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org)). The goal of the Competitive Analysis was to learn from other recovery programs how they are attracting a younger, more diverse audience so that the Board and Staff might consider these ideas for attracting members to the Al-Anon program.

Having screened eleven (11) firms, the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) selected the final vendor and work on the project commenced in early July. A Staff Steering Committee was formed to guide the consultant’s work, answer questions, and offer suggestions. The resulting analysis yielded a comparison of direct competition—recovery programs most like Al-Anon which incorporate peer support—and indirect competition—organizations that post digital content such as podcasts on websites, or social media channels, as a means of offering relief.

The consultant presented their findings to the Board of Trustees in October 2020. Following the presentation, Trustees were invited to suggest ideas on how the themes and trends shared by the consultant could be incorporated into the 2021 Strategic Plan initiatives. These ideas were handed off to SLT for consideration and, ultimately, prioritization in the context of resource constraints and other project work to be performed in 2021.

### Public Outreach to Professionals

#### Increasing Professional Awareness of Al-Anon Family Groups

In 2020, a small team of WSO Staff, including the Associate Director—Public Outreach to Professionals (now retired) and members of Digital Strategy, developed a content strategy to be deployed through LinkedIn to

reach addiction and mental health professionals. The content included key statistics from the Membership Survey, links to view the professional panel videos from the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention, and the *Fact Sheet for Professionals* free download. The intention was to provide the professionals with more information about Al-Anon to increase the professional referral rate. Due to the pandemic, funding for this program was reallocated to critical programs and services.

### Networking with Professionals

There were limited opportunities to network with professionals in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WSO Staff continue to attend public meetings with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) via web conferencing. Additionally, Staff continue to participate remotely with other Recovery Month stakeholders as this group continues to work together to celebrate with the entire recovery community.

## Protect Al-Anon’s Name

*Vali F., Executive Director*

*Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies*

*Kerri K., Associate Director—International*

*Kia Cabbler, Legal Assistant (Non-member)*

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### Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet

The advent of the pandemic brought increased trademark and copyright infringement activity across all electronic platforms as members sought to adapt to their new circumstances. Initial WSO infringement efforts typically focus on informing groups and individuals—most of whom are unaware of the permissions required to use the Al-Anon name or distribute Al-Anon material—about the need to protect Al-Anon’s copyright and trademark. Many members respond positively and quickly once informed. Occasionally, the situation warrants a more immediate response.

This was the case with an electronic event identifying itself as an international Al-Anon event. The event was using the Al-Anon name without permission and, the WSO learned, planned to play a copyrighted Al-Anon video to an audience of potentially thousands of members. These actions both substantially risked Al-Anon’s ability to protect its trademark and copyright. Given the event was not linked to a WSC service arm, in June 2020 the Board of Trustees directed WSO Staff to inform the organizers of the need to cease its violation of Al-Anon trademark and copyright. Several conversations occurred between WSO Staff and the organizers following that action. These conversations focused on the principles of Warranty Four outlined by our cofounder Lois W. and approved by the World Service Conference and the current Al-Anon Policy regarding the WSO’s responsibility for Public Outreach at the National and International level as described in the *Service Manual*.

This and other situations improved WSO Staff understanding of current and ongoing copyright and trademark responsibilities. The new Legal Assistant, in partnership with outside counsel and the Executive Director, educated Staff and WSO Volunteers on identifying trademark and copyright infringements, empowering them to raise appropriate concerns to the WSO. This expanded the WSO Staff’s ability to respond quickly to issues.

In total, Staff has catalogued and researched 26 separate intellectual property violations across electronic platforms—including eight websites, four electronic meeting platforms, three mobile apps, and an assortment of social media platforms. Nearly all of these (21) constituted copyright violations, whereas three were trademark infringements and two represented both. Staff have so far been successful in gaining compliance from eight parties. The infringement work continues.



In addition to infringement activities, Staff also focused on encouraging service arms to renew their limited licenses which permit them to post brief extracts of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) electronically. The online CAL permission request process for new and established meetings was simplified, enhancing WSO recordkeeping capability. Staff also recognized and shared with the Board of Trustees the need to formally document the limited licenses which have been historically understood to have been granted to registered AI-Anon Family Groups meeting face-to-face. This process will be implemented in 2021.

### ***Impression – Our Responsibility for Protecting AI-Anon’s Name***

*Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)*

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One of the primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, in its role of oversight, is addressed on page 169 of the 2018-2021 *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27), “They are concerned with guarding the legal rights of the AI-Anon fellowship against those who may try to profit from our ever growing public acceptance, with protecting our principles from distortion or and dilution.”

In the years following the publication of our first book in 1955, *The AI-Anon Family Groups: A Guide for the Families and Problem Drinkers*, the need for diligence in protecting not only our intellectual properties, but the AI-Anon name itself, has grown. With the growing presence of social media platforms, and our growth as a fellowship within these platforms, the Board, Executive Committee, and our WSO Staff have sought out ways to educate ourselves regarding what constitutes copyright and trademark violations, as well as develop means of reaching out to those who, in most cases, breached copyright and trademark laws without knowing it. In those instances, we have sought ways to communicate, that are in keeping with the presumption of goodwill and the practice of not becoming a source of controversy. In other words, we talk with each other and reason things out.

The Executive Committee, in its role of delegated authority through the Board of Trustees, receives weekly Director Reports which include information regarding work being done by Staff related to copyright and trademark violations. In this way, we are all working from the same information in our efforts to protect our name and copyright. It is in keeping with this work that we continue to keep in the forefront AI-Anon’s willingness to share all but our name.

### **International Copyright Protection and Accessibility**

Since the late 1960s, AFG, Inc. has granted permission for AI-Anon structures outside of the WSC Structure to reprint and translate CAL. This process is administered by the WSO. For many years, the WSO has enforced a policy that prohibits any given country from selling copyrighted CAL outside its national borders. This policy exists for all countries with reprint or translation permission and it helps to protect AFG, Inc.’s copyrights on CAL, a significant source of revenue for many international service arms and the WSO.

In 2020, the WSO continued talking with the global AI-Anon community to understand the needs and wants of the fellowship and international service arms regarding global availability of CAL. Staff also continued to consult professionals in the fields of copyright and publishing. As a result, the WSO’s understanding of the law has evolved and, with that, new strategies have become possible. New ideas were provided by many countries represented at the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in October 2020. These ideas will be pursued as part of a 2021 Strategic Plan Strategy.

Also, in 2020, in recognition of the growing number of copyright violations occurring each year and the need for more focused and consistent attention on recordkeeping, the WSO transferred responsibility for international copyright permissions from the Associate Director—International to the Legal Assistant. Requests for licenses to reprint and translate CAL are now reviewed and maintained by the Legal Assistant with programmatic and policy oversight provided by the Associate Director.

## International Trademarks

Beginning in 2016, the WSO initiated a project using outside counsel to restore ownership of the Al-Anon name and logo trademarks to AFG, Inc., as many trademarks were erroneously registered to national structures. The project also included completing trademark registrations in countries where national or evolving structures had formed, and registrations were not completed. In 2020, all remaining registrations, apart from Iran, were received. Counsel informed us the Iran registrations may be delayed for many years due to issues within the country. The Legal Assistant and outside counsel will continue to track Iranian progress as well as the renewals which will begin to occur in 2026. This milestone of the Trademark and Copyright Strategy is now concluded.

Certificates are pending for three trademarks the WSO renewed in Brazil in 2020. AFG, Inc. recently applied to renew the Al-Anon mark in Uruguay; and an assignment of rights was provided to AFG, Inc.'s Uruguayan affiliate allowing it to use Al-Anon marks locally. Upon recommendation of counsel, AFG, Inc. granted consent to an Australian company—which offers services entirely unrelated to recovery—that requested permission to use the initials 'AFG' to obtain its own trademark and conduct its business affairs. Counsel acting on our behalf completed the correction to the AFG, Inc. name as registered on the United States trademark.

## Goal: Organization

*AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.*

The goal of increasing global access to knowledge, resources, and the program was challenged in 2020 by travel limitations and local lockdowns resulting from the pandemic. The Board of Trustees, Executive Committee Volunteers, and WSO Staff strove to creatively overcome these challenges, achieving some unexpected successes. The 2020 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) met electronically and enjoyed the largest attendance from General Service Offices (GSOs) in many years. The concept of temporary electronic meetings was created to support face-to-face groups which transitioned to virtual formats, rekindling and creating fellowship recovery across global and local boundaries.

### *Impression – Evolving Board Responsibilities to Attract New Volunteers*

*Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)*

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After a Board development session in January 2020, Board members realized we had to change how we thought about, and how we accomplished our work. One of the things we looked at changing was shortening the Board Week. Some Board members, depending on what committee they served on, and the work the committee was doing, could be away from home for seven or more days during Board Week.

Board members brainstormed ideas, and a plan was formulated that would allow committees—which typically meet face-to-face during Board Week, to meet virtually prior to Board Week. Even though Trustees liked the plan, we were a little hesitant to give up face-to-face committee meetings. We decided to do it on a trial basis. That Board meeting in January was our last face-to-face meeting in 2020. All the Board meetings and committee meetings since January have been held virtually.

Even though I, and other Board members, are missing the face-to-face contact, we have realized that we can meet virtually and still accomplish our work. When we get back to meeting face-to-face, a shorter Board Week means less time away from home for Trustees. My hope is that a shorter Board Week will encourage more members to apply to be a Trustee!

## Increase Global Availability

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Lynette K., IAGSM Delegate (Chairperson of the Board of Trustees)

Gail G., IAGSM Delegate (Trustee)

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

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### Global Fellowship Support

The AI-Anon World Service Conference (WSC) Charter states that the purpose of the Conference is “to be the guardian of both AI-Anon’s world services and its Twelve Traditions” and that it is the “senior” of all the Conferences worldwide. The WSO is the chief service arm of the Conference. From this delegated authority arises the responsibility of the WSO to provide support to the global fellowship. This work is accomplished by the WSO International Team and the International Coordination Committee of the Board of Trustees working directly and indirectly with AI-Anon members and service arms around the world.

In 2020, the International Team provided routine support in much the same way it has for many years. These responsibilities included processing requests for licenses to translate and print Conference Approved Literature, assisting evolving structures with the registration process, and sharing information with AI-Anon offices around the world about available resources such as the Mobile App, the online meeting search, social media platforms, and public outreach tools. Staff shared resources to assist other Structures with information about Board composition, nomination, and affirmation, application/interpretation of the Traditions, how members can correspond with the WSO, and whether individual groups (from outside the WSC Structure) can make contributions to the WSO.

Some routine tasks were disrupted by the global COVID-19 pandemic and some new priorities arose. For example, the normal distribution of service materials, particularly the French and Spanish translations of the 2018-2021 *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27) and the *2020 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), were impacted by postal system and General Service Office (GSO) closures around the world. So many *Service Manuals* could not be delivered to GSOs that the decision was made to forgo trying to mail the *Summary* in 2020.

New priorities included assisting structures around the world with applying the Traditions in electronic meetings, many of which were brand new, temporary, and not something most Structures had experience with. In some cases, it only took a minor adjustment in thinking to understand that the Traditions can be applied to the problems of electronic meetings—protecting anonymity, dealing with disruptive members, members’ unwillingness to be welcoming to all—as effectively as they can be when meeting face-to-face.

While face-to-face meetings continued to meet “temporarily” online, the International Team addressed many questions related to the policies on electronic meetings and events. Many GSOs wanted to know how to register electronic meetings and were surprised to learn that under the current policy all electronic meetings (including phone meetings and online meetings on all platforms) are registered with the WSO. This is due to the lack of geographical location associated with most electronic meetings and, therefore, the inability to determine what Structure or Area in which an electronic meeting should register. The policy stayed a priority throughout the year and was a topic for discussion at the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting as well as several Policy Committee meetings.

With so many AI-Anon groups meeting electronically, questions besides just registration came to the forefront. The WSO addressed, and shared with the global AI-Anon community, information about how to welcome newcomers, how to obtain literature, how to collect and distribute voluntary contributions under Tradition Seven, and how to establish or maintain Alateen meetings. Staff also shared widely the experience of the WSO in hosting its first hybrid World Service Conference.

## International Structure Events

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. It plans and coordinates the program for the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). In 2018, the UK & Éire Structure submitted a bid to host the IAGSM in London, England on October 7-10, 2020.

In March 2020, planning for the event was temporarily halted. By June it became clear that a decision would be needed about how to prepare for the IAGSM. During several meetings in June, the ICC reviewed information about the status of program planning, global GSO operations, travel and venue restrictions, financial obligations and projections, and potential impacts to the agenda. Members brainstormed and evaluated several options before consulting with the GSOs. With their strong support, the ICC recommended to the Board of Trustees in July, that the 2020 IAGSM be held virtually, using the AFG Connects platform to host online discussions, over a period of time sufficient to allow Delegates to participate across all time zones. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Around the same time, the General Service Board for the UK & Éire Structure affirmed its interest in hosting the IAGSM in 2022, the IAGSM Delegates voiced their traditional approval of this, the Board approved the decision, and the WSO was able to revise the terms of its contract with the venue at no additional cost. Therefore, the next IAGSM will be held in London, England from October 12-15, 2022.

## Participating in the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting

Holding the 2020 IAGSM in an electronic format with Delegates from around the world, posed new challenges and opened new opportunities. With the financial burden of travel removed due to the IAGSM being held via AFG Connects, some Delegates, who might not have been able to attend, had the opportunity to participate. Forty Delegates registered this year, including two new GSOs—Nicaragua and Slovenia.

Training on the use of AFG Connects was carried out by WSO Staff ahead of time for any Delegate who wanted it. The hope moving forward is that Delegates may now feel more comfortable communicating with each other using AFG Connects. As with all electronic meetings, internet connections can be frustrating at times; however, the four IAGSM General Sessions were enthusiastically participated in and much information was shared.

As the 2020 IAGSM was almost entirely in written format, this necessitated a lot of reading and we were reminded that clarity in the use of words is very important, as English is not the first language of many Delegates. The IAGSM Delegates resided in twelve different time zones which posed another challenge, and possibly more time between sessions could have been allowed. Once a session opened, it had to remain open long enough to allow all the Delegates time to be able to read and respond to the material. How to conduct the business (group conscience) meeting certainly presented the biggest hurdle, particularly finding a way to handle motions and conducting voting without running the meeting into an indefinite number of days.

Although Delegates were not able to meet face-to-face, several things were done to enhance the electronic IAGSM. Delegates were able to post a profile picture on AFG Connects and recordings of the Keynote and Spiritual Speakers were posted as well as audio recordings of Delegates saying the Serenity Prayer. These all made a difference in setting the spiritual tone of the meeting with love and unity.

## Impression – More Firsts—Our Electronic IAGSM

*Jean L., Chairperson of the ICC (Trustee)*

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One of my duties as the Chairperson of the ICC, is to serve as the Chair of the IAGSM. It was an honor, privilege, and challenge to serve at this historic IAGSM—the theme of which was “Practicing Universal Principles with 20|20 Vision.” From the time the decision was made to hold this event electronically, we worked hard, overcame many obstacles, and succeeded in holding an event that was spiritual, insightful, educational, and fun.

One of the first things I noticed as the IAGSM week began—due to the electronic format we decided to extend the event—was that the Delegates were excited to participate in this format. Some of my concerns about whether they would be able to participate vanished as I soon saw Delegates from all over the world using AFG Connects to make connections. It filled my heart to read their sharings and picture them “talk[ing] to each other, reason[ing] things out with someone else” even though they may have been across the globe from each other.

One of the highlights for me was the recordings of the Keynote and Spiritual Speakers. They reminded me that no matter where we serve, we all have the common bond of being affected by someone’s drinking. I also learned so much about how AI-Anon is practiced in other parts of the world, although the principles are the same. As the event closed, I looked forward to continuing these conversations.

I am forever grateful for this opportunity to experience first-hand, this worldwide fellowship.

### *Impression – An International Structure Addresses COVID-19*

*General Service Office—Spain*

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The global pandemic has unexpectedly shaken us and has made the Board of Trustees work hard on on-line groups. In Spain, electronic groups did not exist or, if there were any, they were few. To deal with this, the WSO provided us with the Electronic AI-Anon Meeting Guidelines. We also contacted structures in other countries to share experiences about how to address Traditions being broken. Both literature sales and contributions (Seventh Tradition) have dropped considerably as the groups were closed and the Area Assemblies were canceled.

This has been a frustrating year because all scheduled activities had to be suspended: The Board of Trustees, Conference, Service Seminar, and the 57-year celebration of AI-Anon in Spain. The doors of Spain’s GSO were closed for 70 days. Although both the Director and the administrative staff worked from their homes to answer telephone calls and emails, no literature could be provided. We’ve had to recognize that, thanks to new technology, we’ve been able to hold online meetings which allowed us to have meetings between Delegates and Trustees. At the same time, this tested our ability to adapt to changes and new technologies. Our International Delegate represented us virtually at the IAGSM. Likewise, our Director is in contact with the South American GSOs at the RIASA 2021 planning meetings. We’re very grateful to the WSO for the support they’ve offered us, as we’ve had to do “an accelerated course of adaptation to the situation” and their experience, in many fields, has been of great help to us.

Due to the government’s security measures, our XXXIII Conference could not be held in-person. This was very disappointing, particularly because this year we were celebrating 40 years (1980-2020) as a GSO. Due to these restrictions, the Board of Trustees decided to hold a hybrid meeting for two and a half days. The Board, which was present in person, met virtually with the Delegates to provide the 2020 financial report and the 2020 proposed budget. The outgoing Trustees retired and the résumés of the possible new members of the Board were read for later voting. Delegates who were finishing their service had the opportunity to say goodbye.

During this time we haven’t been able to carry out face-to-face public outreach events, but we continue to pass on our message to professionals, who are experts in addiction, nursing, social work, etc. through our newsletter. Every year two professionals give their opinions about how AI-Anon can help families and friends living with the disease of alcoholism. We’ve also been able to conduct interviews with local radio stations, over the phone, as well as with the print media. For those people who cannot find a group near them, live in isolation, or physically cannot attend a face-to-face group, we have created an online group that is part of the GSO.

This has been a year of overcoming critical situations, putting the Al-Anon program into practice at all times—especially by practicing the slogan “Just for Today”—to continue transmitting the hope that everything, sooner or later, will return to life. Normality and groups will open and welcome those who need to recover from the effects of a loved one’s alcoholism, and when that day comes, we must be ready to pass on Al-Anon’s message of experience, strength, and hope so it continues to reach the many people who need us and who do not yet know us.

Each of us, because we practice the principles of the program in all our affairs, has been personally affected in some way by our situation. As we have said, many groups have had to close their face-to-face meetings and hold them online. This, at an economic level, also affects the GSO since we do not know if the Seventh Tradition is being put into practice. We trust that when this ends (“This Too Shall Pass”) all groups will resume their activities and life will normalize. In the meantime, we entrust ourselves to the Higher Power to help us have serenity, strength, and hope to accept what is happening to us; to have the courage and wisdom to begin to repair the consequences; and to “Let Go and Let God” with trust and thanks for the gifts we’ve received, and the new opportunities for growth, as members, as servants, and as a service structure.

We are grateful to the World Service Office for entrusting us with the development of this very special topic, in this very special year, which tests our serenity, recovery, and ability to overcome a crisis of this magnitude.

## Facilitate Access to Our History

*Marsha W., Director of Programs*

*Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)*

*Joe T., Archivist*

*Yadi McCoy, Training & Project Specialist (Non-member)*

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To increase the efficacy of the cloud-based archival software, the Training & Project Specialist focused on reconfiguration of the Archives folder structure. This is an ongoing process. Organizations such as A.A. were consulted to ensure the most comprehensive and user-friendly categorization and retrieval of Al-Anon documents for years to come.

## Recruit, Grow, and Retain Staff

*Vali F., Executive Director*

*Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies*

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In 2020, WSO Staff turnover was 18%<sup>1</sup>. Significant reductions in the overall WSO revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant delays in filling open positions. Additionally, annual merit or cost of living increases could not be awarded. A smaller revised budget, combined with reduced literature sales and call volumes during the peak of the lockdowns, led to employee furloughs and layoffs. Remaining Staff responded with enormous generosity, filling the gaps left as the WSO operated at 80% Staff capacity for most of the year.

At the mid-year, we bade farewell to the Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals, the last employee who worked at the WSO with our cofounder Lois W., who left the WSO after 33 years to enjoy retirement. In the latter part of the year, four new Staff were hired to fill critical roles, including the Human Resources vacancy. Positions also evolved throughout the year to reflect the changing needs of the WSO, including the creation of a new Training and Project Specialist position to replace the Administrative Assistant (Spanish). This new position was created in response to an increasing and ongoing need for technical training of our Staff and Volunteers. Another new position, Associate Director—Administration and Strategies was created to consolidate Administration Team (Human Resources, Legal, Events and Special Projects) management responsibilities into one role. This position, which also has ownership of the annual Strategic Plan Strategy development process, was filled early in the year.

Necessity being the mother of invention—or desperation being the key to recovery—resource constraints and turnover in the Receptionist role led to a re-examination of needs in that area. Evaluating the data on call transfers, Staff realized 65% of calls answered by reception were transferred to one of three teams—Customer Service, Group Services, and AFG Records—and member experience could be enhanced through automated call processing. Automation, in turn, would free up Staff time to focus on other critical responsibilities, such as answering the toll-free meeting line. Staff researched technology that would provide cost-efficient alternatives while maintaining WSO standards of service to the fellowship. A simply configured, automated reception phone system was implemented to achieve WSO goals. Members calling the WSO can now reach the Team they need directly, or if they prefer, can speak to a live person.

Thus, the new Office Assistant (Spanish) position was created. WSO Meeting Line Operators participated in a series of focus groups and their feedback led the Staff Management Team (SMT) to support increased coverage during the busiest hours (12:00-2:00PM) on a consistent basis.

A Task Force was charged with updating the content of the WSO Employee Manual. The new version, which underwent a thorough legal review, was approved at the October Board meeting before being distributed to Staff. The new Manual includes a gender-neutral Dress Code—which was defined by another Staff Task Force, a more generous Leave of Absence Policy, a pet policy for visitors and Staff, and a revised Time Off policy.

At the close of the 2020 Performance Year, the Directors' Team resolved to overhaul the WSO performance evaluation process in time for the 2021 mid-year reviews. Definition of the revised process was still underway at year end; however, two components were completed. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) developed an updated set of WSO organizational values, and all Staff were trained on setting goals that are business relevant and achievable.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The turnover percentage for 2020 is not comparable to previous years' calculations as the WSO Human Resources Staff members applied an industry-standard calculation method beginning this year.

## Manage Operations

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

*Karen Wolff, Software Engineer (Non-member)*

*Michael Rodriguez, Building and Office Manager (Non-member)*

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### Improved Effectiveness with Technology

#### WSO Online Store Upgrade

This year we continued to leverage investment approved by the Board of Trustees as part of 2019 Strategic Plan initiatives to license the WSO database (iMIS) automation module:

- Automated email confirmations for contributions, *The Forum* subscriptions, and literature orders sent to the WSO whenever an email address is on file. This process provides more immediate feedback to the fellowship when these transactions are recorded.
- Automated follow-up with groups which members have reported as not meeting via the [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) meeting search. This process improves the accuracy of the meeting information provided to those seeking help on our [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) website.

In preparation for completing the WSO Online Store Upgrade Strategy, Staff created a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor. Staff evaluated RFP responses from vendors, including the iMIS reseller which had been supporting the WSO for many years. Staff selected a new vendor, positioning the WSO to better meet the expanding needs of the fellowship, and upgraded to the latest iMIS software version. This effort provides the best possible platform upon which to build the redesigned trilingual online store as part of the carryover Strategy in the upcoming year.

#### WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety

During the past year expanded operational measures were implemented to increase the safety and well-being of the Staff and visitors to the WSO. To minimize the possibility of exposure to COVID-19, the WSO was closed to non-employees in March and WSO tours were suspended until further notice. Only essential contractors and employee candidates have been allowed access to the premises since that time. Signage has been posted at all entrances directing deliveries to our Shipping and Receiving Team. Staff and visitors continue to adhere to a strict surface and area sanitizing schedule as well as a hazard assessment of all work areas.



# Our Financials

## Manage Our Budget & Financials

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

*Mary Davis, Accounting Manager (Non-member)*

*Cindy K., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)*

*Cathy T., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)*

*Cindy M., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)*

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During the pandemic, the WSO saw a dramatic decrease of literature sales primarily due to the Literature Distribution Centers being closed. Literature sales historically make up 59% of our total revenue but were only 31% in 2020. With sales falling well below 50% of traditional levels, a Special Appeal went out to the fellowship. Through their overwhelming response, member contributions totaled \$3,295,721 which accounted for 56% of WSO revenue for 2020. This amount exceeded totals received in any previous year and exceeded literature sales for the first time since 1954.

As a result of the enormous member support, the WSO was able to continue to provide essential services, complete the launch of the Mobile App, and begin the online store upgrade during the pandemic. The Board of Trustees was able to approve refunding to Areas a total of \$96,023 in WSC equalized expense payments, after deducting the Delegates' portion of those minimal expenses involved in hosting the 2020 virtual/hybrid WSC. Consistent with our principle of self-support, the WSO cut expenses by \$635,000 based on the original Budget. Salary expense—through furloughs, layoffs, and a wage freeze; Board and Executive Committee travel; and Staff training were all reduced or eliminated to meet the challenge created by the pandemic.

Through the members' strong support and careful fiscal management overseen by the Finance Committee, the WSO was able to close the year with a surplus rather than the significant deficit projected during the initial lockdowns.

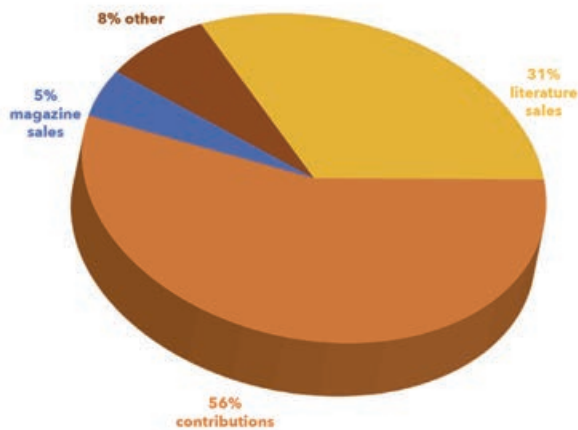
Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. WSO expenses totaled \$4,920,000 in 2020. More than 68% went directly towards achieving the Mission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provided customer service, shipping, and financial support to maintain operations.

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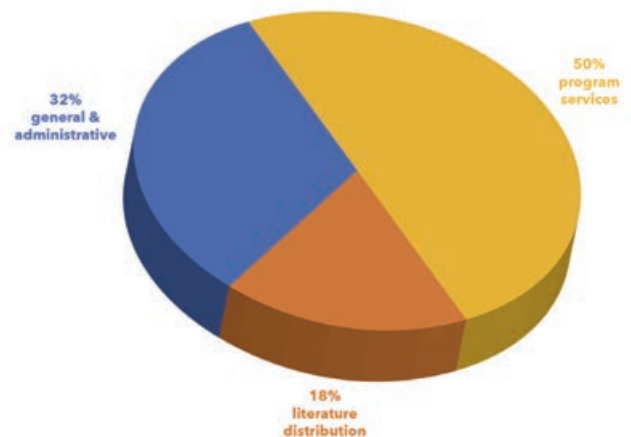
Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. for fiscal year 2020 may be obtained online at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org).

Statements of Financial Position	2020	2019	2018
<b>Total Assets</b> (in thousands)	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>			
Total liabilities	\$1,333	\$1,531	\$1,387
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$10,500	\$9,529	\$8,446
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
<b>Operating revenue</b> (in thousands)			
Literature sales, net	\$1,847	\$2,914	\$3,194
Contributions	3,295	2,187	1,953
Magazine sales	292	275	258
Other income, net	458	1,247	(211)
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	\$5,892	\$6,623	\$5,194
<b>Operating expenses</b> (in thousands)			
Program services	\$2,484	\$2,865	\$2,731
Literature distribution	866	839	860
General & administrative	1,571	1,837	1,804
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	\$4,921	\$5,541	\$5,395

Operating revenue



Functional Expenses



Five Year Revenue (in the thousands)



# Our Progress & Plans

## Strategic Plan

### 2020 Strategies Update

Staff Strategic Leadership Team

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A new Strategic Plan for AFG, Inc. was developed in 2018. WSO Volunteers and Staff committed to ensuring the Strategic Plan was more than a list of activities to complete, becoming instead the means to achieve the envisioned future of AFG, Inc. With it, the WSO would establish a long-term vision that could be realized over time by executing a series of relatively short-term actions. Strategic planning in 2018 led to Strategic Plan initiatives (Strategies) in 2019 and 2020.

In October 2019, the Board of Trustees approved the Staff Leadership Team (SLT) recommended Strategies for 2020—subject to Preliminary Budget approval. The 2020 Strategies, which included some carryover Strategies from 2019, were:

#### Goal: Members

- Expanding accessibility and content availability through development, implementation, and support of the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (see *Impression – Making History with the Mobile App*)
- Upgrading the WSO online store technology to improve member usability and provide trilingual access to literature (see WSO Online Store Upgrade)
- Enhancing trilingual communication by expanding access to Spanish and French language content—including Mobile App premium content member sharings, contracting with freelance translators to increase capacity, and estimating the translation backlog for completion in future years
- Increasing the number of international groups registered with the WSO and listed on the [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) meeting search
- Strengthening understanding of membership eligibility to help ensure Al-Anon groups remain welcoming to all

#### Goal: Public

- Understanding and increasing knowledge of AFG, Inc. responsibilities for addressing trademark and copyright infringements and addressing violations (see Copyright and Trademark Protection on the Internet)
- Increasing WSO Staff and Volunteers knowledge of how other recovery organizations successfully attract and retain a more diverse membership (see Competitive Analysis Project)

#### Goal: Organization

- Engaging in conversations with the Policy Committee and Board of Trustees as to how electronic meetings might be incorporated into the World Service Conference and international service structures (see Electronic Meetings)
- Evaluating options for improving membership access to other language CAL across the globe

As described throughout the Annual Report, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Staff focus and capacity in 2020. Despite its constraints, Staff and Volunteers together were able to achieve progress on all committed Strategies. Some Strategies started later than initially planned—such as the online store upgrade which was deferred until after the initial Mobile App release. Other Strategies were refined mid-year—such as enhanced translation plans which shifted from the backlog to Mobile App premium content. SLT met with the Executive Committee in its Board delegated role of Strategic Plan execution oversight to review and gain approval for changes to the Strategies. SLT provided Strategic updates to the Board at its quarterly meetings.

Despite the pandemic and its impacts, WSO Volunteers and Staff are grateful to report the efforts made in 2020 continue to progress the goals they set together in 2018 to ensure the vibrancy of the Strategic Plan.

### **Impression – Making History with the Mobile App**

*Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy*

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When the joint Board of Trustee, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff Leadership Team brainstormed the idea of developing a mobile app to move AI-Anon towards providing universal access to our program, I was both excited and terrified. Terrified because introducing a mobile app is a big deal—not only have members have been asking for a mobile app, but we also wanted to attract younger members to our program. There is a lot riding on the success of a mobile app. Excited because developing an app offers many possibilities to help people around the world find recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

As we published our apps in the app stores on August 12, 2020, I held my breath. Was it going to work, would it be well received, or was it going to be a flop? Only time would tell, and I had to reassure myself that whatever was going to happen would happen and we would take it “One Day At A Time.” We learned a lot those first few weeks about technical issues that need to be resolved. But above all, we learned that the mobile app *was* fulfilling a need, as early meetings reported a high number of newcomers and emails from members in countries where recovery programs are considered illegal. Now, they were able to find recovery without the fear of persecution.

We are truly a global organization and the historic launch of the AI-Anon Family Groups mobile app just months before we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary brings us closer together. It prepares us to be accessible to anyone, anywhere. Now anytime someone reaches out for help and downloads the mobile app, they are given a great, big, digital AI-Anon hug.

## **2021 Plans for the AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future**

*Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees*

*Norm W., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Group*

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To understand AI-Anon’s plans for 2021 and beyond, it is necessary to briefly review AFG, Inc’s Strategic Plan. The foundation of the Strategic Plan is AI-Anon’s Core Purpose, its Mission Statement, and Core Values. In AI-Anon’s Envisioned Future, the Strategic Plan anticipates where AFG, Inc can be in 15 years. To plan for this, Goals and Objectives are created. In 2018, the Board revised and fine-tuned the Mission Statement, Core Purpose, Envisioned Future, and Goals and Objectives. The Board and WSO Staff play different roles in the Strategic Plan. The Board is responsible for the “what,”—the Strategic direction of the organization, and the Staff is responsible for the “how,”—the Strategies and action plans to accomplish the Goals and Objectives that make our Envisioned Future a reality. Goals carry a projected timeframe of 3-5 years, Objectives 2-3 years, and Strategies 1-2 years.

At the January 2020 Board Meeting, the Board selected Objectives, and the Staff began creating Strategies to effectuate, in 2021. At the April 2020 Board meeting the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) presented Board members with 12 Strategies. Conceptual approval was given to four of the Strategies. At the October 2020 Board Meeting, the Staff advised the Board that it would not be able to accomplish all selected Objectives, due to the need to perform normal ongoing critical programs and services, ongoing 2021 Operations (e.g., member survey and development of the 2022-2025 *Service Manual*), and work carried over from the 2020 Strategies—including the AI-Anon Family Groups mobile app. The Board then prioritized the Objectives they wanted Staff to concentrate on, based on the Staff’s recommendations and available resources. The 2021 Strategies, created by Staff, and approved by the Board, are designed to:

- Increase the number of professionals referring clients to AI-Anon.
- Use information gained in the recently completed Competitive Analysis regarding how other similar organizations reduce the effects of bias, to develop our own Strategies to assist AFG, Inc. in addressing similar issues.
- Evaluate what the barriers are to international structures attending the World Service Conference.

As part of the Board’s responsibility for the Strategic direction of AI-Anon Family Groups, at the October 2020 Board Meeting, the Board also began prioritizing the Strategic Plan Objectives for 2022. This timeline allows Staff sufficient time to create Strategies and gain Board approval on priorities before establishing budget implications of the proposed Strategies for the following year.

Among the factors discussed by the Board in prioritizing strategic Objectives were shifting demographics, evolving technology, multiple cultures and generations, transformations in how members and the public receive information, and new digital competencies. The Board considered developing trends (e.g., reduction in face-to-face meetings, growth in international meetings, the increase of participation from Spanish- and French-speaking members in electronic meetings, continued development of the AI-Anon mobile app, AFG, Inc’s continuing financial dependence on sale of literature, the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many others).

Incorporating the Strategic Planning process initiated in 2018, the Board also considered for each Objective:

- “Impact”—the breadth of importance, how essential it is
- “Consequence”
- “Depth of importance”—how directly linked it is to AI-Anon’s Mission and Core Purpose
- “Immediacy”—how important it is to accomplish now
- Return on financial and Staff time investment—which offers the greatest return

In 2020, the Board of Trustees continued its commitment to being more of a thinking, and less of a doing, Board, striving to focus 80% of our work on forward-thinking and planning for the future. In essence, the Trustees are working to become a more visionary, non-decisional Board. In 2019, the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) came into being. Its purpose is:

*The Envisioned Future Work Group of the Board of Trustees of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a visionary Work Group that supports the Board of Trustees in its role of world service leadership. With a focus on foresight, the Work Group stimulates future-minded, strategic thinking and is committed to advancing AI-Anon’s Mission.*

In order to effectuate its purpose, the EFWG's duties include:

**Future Trends:** Provides Trustees with information about future trends as they relate to the Board's role of governance and the future viability of AFG, Inc.

**Environmental Scanning:** Helps the Board understand the fluctuating environment in which Al-Anon is operating by bringing future-focused information for discussion about social and cultural issues that may affect not-for-profit organizations

**Generative Discussions:** Leads the Board of Trustees in open-ended, non-directed discussions, focusing on issues related to AFG, Inc.'s Mission Statement and spiritual principles.

**Visionary Discussions:** Guides the Board in focusing on the future by planning discussions/presentations that engage Board members in visionary discussions.

Consistent with its goal to lead the Board in having visionary discussions on future oriented topics, in 2020, the EFWG prepared topics for Board discussion:

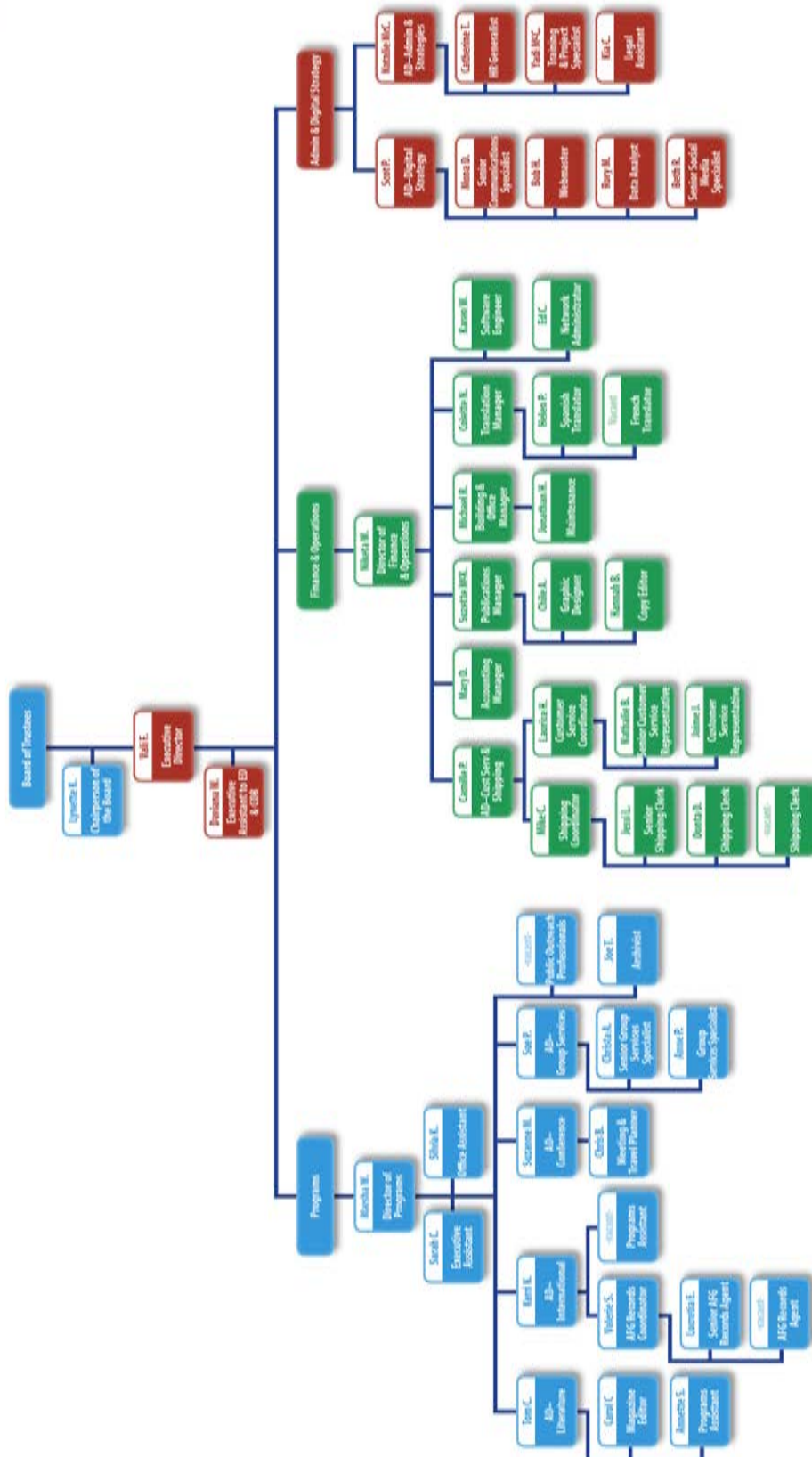
- How do we as a Board exercise vision to meet our Concept Nine obligation to assume primary leadership for worldwide Al-Anon, into the future?
- The Board's Duty of Foresight, Bill Wilson's essay "Leadership" which appears in the descriptive text of Concept Nine, 2018-2021 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27).
- How to develop specific plans for navigating Al-Anon through the current crisis?
- The changes the Board envisions in Al-Anon following the pandemic.
- How we can guide and support our fellowship through those changes into the future?
- What changes would improve us as an organization in the future?
- What are the future trends and outcomes affecting our decisions today and in the future?

# Appendices

## Organization Chart



World Service Office Organization Chart - March 01, 2021



Confidential - Property of Al-Axon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

## Board of Trustees Motions

Gail G., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

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### The Board, in its legal, financial or oversight capacities, acted:

- to approve the 2020 Preliminary Budget as presented.
- to approve the 2020 Strategic Initiatives be funded as special projects from the Reserve Fund in the amount \$68,160.
- to approve the 2020 World Service Conference Agenda Topics as presented.
- to approve the wording of the proposed motion to the World Service Conference (WSC): *Starting in 2021, the annual selection of Regional Committee on Trustee (RCT) Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson for each Region participating in the Regional Trustee process will be completed by web conferencing format prior to the World Service Conference.*
- to authorize the World Service Office (WSO) to establish an AI-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service recertification and training program (“WSO AMIAS Program”) for all World Service Office (WSO) Staff members who may be required to work with teenagers in a capacity representing AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.), including voting members of the World Service Conference (WSC), Administrative Staff and WSO Staff whose roles involve guiding Areas within the WSC Structure as relates to Alateen  
The WSO AMIAS Program shall minimally comply with the Minimum Safety and Behavior Requirements stipulated in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees.
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the *Forum* Advisory Editorial Committee (FEAC) effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the Public Outreach Committee effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020.
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the Literature Committee effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020.
- to eliminate the Delegate questions in the Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter.
- to implement the following format for the 2020 World Service Conference:  
Conduct an abbreviated virtual conference—pertaining to only critical Board matters—the week of April 20, 2020 prior to the Annual Board meeting and conduct the majority of agenda items via AFG Connects or postpone them to the 2021 WSC.
- to approve in the case of cancellation or virtualization of the 2020 World Service Conference that equalized expenses be refunded only if the current net Conference expense for the WSC can be maintained. Any refund to be allocated on the basis of the amount contributed.
- to approve postponing the deadline for Areas to complete and submit all updates related to their Area Alateen Recertification process from June 15, 2020 to August 15, 2020.
- to recommend to the World Service Conference the creation of an annual longitudinal study.
- to approve the Revised 2020 Budget as presented.



- to hold the 2020 IAGSM virtually, using the AFG Connects platform to host online discussions, over a period of time sufficient to allow Delegates to participate across all time zones.
- to modify the Article VI (6) – Officers of the Bylaws of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to include a new paragraph:  
6. A Trustee cannot serve more than three one-year terms in a particular Board Officer position.
- to change the Nominating process for all eligible Trustees to submit a general Board Officer résumé even if not standing for a particular Board position.
- To require the Board of Trustees and At-Large Executive Committee members to participate in WSO AMIAS Program training starting the 2021 recertification year.
- to approve the 2021 World Service Conference theme: Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.
- to accept the Audit Committee’s recommendation to accept the 2020 Engagement letter, from Dixon Hughes Goodman, LLP, to conduct an audit of the financial position of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc as of December 31, 2020.
- to cancel the (2021 WSC) New York hotel contract as soon as is advisable under the basis of the Impossibility clause or, if not possible, to postpone the New York contract including full celebration to 2022.
- to approve changes to the Conference Procedures on pages three, nine, and pages 12-13 as presented.
- to adopt and implement the Board Officer Skills and Résumé Form, with the three skills-based questions and one additional question as to why the Trustee had chosen not to apply, for eligible Trustees not standing for Board Officer.
- to adopt and implement the Trustee and At-Large Executive Committee résumé forms with the new requirements regarding WSO AMIAS Program starting with the 2021-2022 service term.
- to remove the floor nomination process from the selection process of Board Officers, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

## Executive Committee Motions

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

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**The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee, presented to, and approved by the Board of Trustees:**

- to approve At-Large members for the Audit Committee, *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee, Literature Committee, and Public Outreach Committee
- to implement that LDCs may return any item currently in print that has not since been revised which was ordered from the WSO between October 2019 and March 2020 provided that the return is in its original, unopened shipping container and does not exceed whichever is the lesser amount of \$3,500 or 5% of the total inventory ordered by that LDC within that timeframe.  
The WSO will not accept returns for any inventory purchased by LDCs before October 2019 or starting April 2020 until such time as the policy for LDC returns can be reevaluated.
- to approve the shift in (Strategic Plan Strategy) Members M01-2 Enhance Trilingual Communication Strategy 2020 resource plans from reducing the backlog of untranslated Spanish and French Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to translation of content necessary to support Mobile App premium content.
- to approve the AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Employee Manual as amended.
- to confirm the WSO Staff AMIAS Certification Program meets the Board of Trustees' requirement to comply with the minimum safety and behavior requirements stipulated in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees.
- to accept revised Guidelines for the Conference Leadership Team, Compensation Committee, Electronic Meeting Work Group, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Pension Committee, and Policy Committee.
- to approve that the 2022 IAGSM be held in London, UK with the goal of arranging a similar event for a similar timeframe and a similar cost as that agreed to for 2020.
- to approve the updates recommended by SPIRiT to the AFG Connects Usage Policy (formerly Code of Conduct).
- to accept the recommendation from SPIRiT that WSO Staff update the format of the *AI-Anon Newcomers Packet* (K-10) to reflect the content selected for development of a "Newcomers Brochure" by the 1997 Literature Committee, with necessary revisions to reflect current versions of the component pieces of CAL.