



# Al-Anon Family Groups

## Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

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Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

### **Core Purpose:**

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

### **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.

### **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.

October 2018

Dear Al-Anon members:

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

Board Week began with the Nominating Committee meeting for a full day to review all submitted résumés for Trustee at Large, for Regional Trustee for US Northeast, US South East, US North Central, Canada Central, and for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The work of the Nominating Committee is confidential and done in cooperation with the confidential work of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs), both of which are Delegate-only committees. The Nominating Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees that consists of a Trustee Chairperson, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board, and four Trustee members, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board in consultation with the Nominating Chair. The Executive Director, who participates in her role as Secretary of the Corporation, and the Chairperson of the Board serve with voice but no vote. The sole purpose of the Nominating Committee is to aid the Board of Trustees in discharging its primary obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committees are filled with members of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry. Through the nominating process, this Committee makes recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services. Members selected to move forward for further consideration in the Trustee nomination process will be invited to meet with the full Board in January. Names of those selected to serve will be announced in the January COB letter.

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**Strategic Plan:** In the July COB letter we shared with you the work that the World Service Office (WSO) Senior Leadership Team, Board, and At-Large Executive Committee members completed in a day-long Strategic Planning session. With the assistance of a strategic planning consultant, we clarified the forward direction of the organization and the operations of the WSO, as well as how we can work together. We clarified in that session that the Board is responsible for the “What,” strategic direction, and the Staff is responsible for the “How,” implementing the “What.” We outlined the beginning of a new Strategic Plan, which includes an updated Core Purpose and Mission Statement in addition to updated Core Values:

### **Core Values**

- ▶ Spiritually based: adhering to our Legacies
- ▶ Honest: treating all equally, with integrity and respect
- ▶ Transparent: sharing process, content, and information
- ▶ Self-supporting: refusing outside funding

an Envisioned Future:

### **Envisioned Future**

- ▶ 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.

and new Goals for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

With the intent of working together and supporting what we help create, the Board, At-Large Executive Committee members, and WSO Staff Leadership Team members traveled to Houston to participate in the next step of the Strategic Planning process. Based on work completed in the interim, the Board formerly approved a new Strategic Plan, which includes an updated Core Purpose and Mission Statement in addition to updated Core Values and Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (all of which are shared in this letter). Staff task forces are now actively creating Action Plans to achieve the approved Goals and Objectives and identifying costs for consideration as part of the 2019 Budget.

**New Board Vice Chairperson and Board Treasurer:** The Board elected a new Vice Chairperson and Board Treasurer during our October Board week. Teri M. will be serving in the capacity of Vice Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Joan S. will now be serving as the Board Treasurer. Joyce B. was previously serving as Board Treasurer and stepped down from the role of Board Treasurer for personal reasons. Joyce remains in her role as US Southwest Regional Trustee.

**Executive Committee:** At-Large member résumés are due January 1, 2019. Concept Eight outlines the Board’s delegation of full authority of routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to the Executive Committee.

Within the context of Concept Eight, the Board delegates its administrative function to a more constantly available seven-member Executive Committee, which possesses the Board’s full legal powers between Board meetings. This Executive Committee is composed of three Al-Anon members—preferably not Trustees—elected by the Board, the Executive Director, an Al-Anon member from the administrative Staff of the WSO, and the Chairpersons of both the Finance and Policy Committees. The Chairperson of this Executive Committee is elected by the Board of Trustees. The

Chairperson of the Board serves in an ex-officio capacity with voice but no vote.

The Board has assigned these responsibilities to the Executive Committee:

- To approve the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee, including the monthly, unaudited Financial Statement;
- To approve special projects for the Board and Staff that involve day-to-day operations;
- To receive weekly updates on departmental activities from the Executive Director, Director of Finance and Operations, and the Director of Programs (these contain progress on projects and insights into how the activities are related to the Strategic Plan);
- To review additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.;
- To approve Committee Guidelines;
- To approve résumés for At-Large Committee (*Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee [FEAC], Public Outreach, Literature, Audit) members and certain thought and task force members;
- To review presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference (WSC);
- To approve discontinuance of Conference Approved Literature based on recommendations from Literature Committee;

And finally,

- To perform other duties assigned by the Board.

Does this sound exciting? Can you appreciate the depth of understanding of how and why it is important for Al-Anon Family Groups and the WSO to work from legal and traditional perspectives? If you can, and you believe you have the skill sets and time to serve, please consider submitting a [résumé to serve as an At-Large member of the Executive Committee](#). To accomplish these duties the Executive Committee meets monthly, face to face or through web conferencing.

**At-Large Committee Members:** The WSO is currently accepting résumés for the following committees. Click the link to review each Committee's Guideline.

5 At-Large members, [FEAC](#)

5 At-Large members, [Literature](#)

5 At-Large members, [Public Outreach](#)

2 At-Large members, [Audit](#)

Participation on these committees offers the opportunity to work with our WSO Staff and Board members on exciting projects in service of our fellowship.

The deadline for résumé submission has been changed; all résumés are now due by January 1. This deadline allows adequate time for the process of review, recommendation, and approval of candidates to be completed in April so that selected At-Large members can begin their assignment in May.

At-Large members can live anywhere in the WSC Structure—the United States, Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico. Selected committees require a one-year time commitment, which runs from May to April each year.

To be considered for a position as an At-Large Committee Member, please submit this [résumé](#).

**Audit Committee:** In October of 2017, the Board approved a one-year trial allowing the Audit Committee to meet virtually instead of in person at the WSO. The purpose of the trial was to determine if meeting virtually would allow the Committee to fulfill its primary responsibilities of demonstrating AFG Inc.'s commitment to ensuring financial accountability to the fellowship and conferring with the auditor to ensure that the financial affairs of the organization are in order. A survey was completed following the February 2018 virtual meeting. Those participating in the survey included the five Audit Committee members, the Director of Finance and Operations, and the two auditors. The results of the survey were positive and demonstrated that meeting virtually for the February meeting is beneficial and allows the Committee to fulfill its responsibilities successfully. It is important to note that the auditing firm confirmed these conclusions. Therefore, the Board unanimously approved the following motion:

*To end the one-year trial virtual meeting of the annual Audit Committee held in February, and for the annual Audit Committee meeting to be held virtually moving forward for 2019 and beyond.*

**2018 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM):** The IAGSM was held from October 3–6 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The purpose of the IAGSM is for General Service Offices to share the experience of Al-Anon national service structures around the world through their Delegates. Participation at the IAGSM encourages the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of our Traditions. Ultimately, this helps fulfill the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amidst cultural and language differences.

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) holds the responsibility of planning the IAGSM agenda and bringing forward to the Board the suggested theme. The theme for the 2018 IAGSM fit perfectly with the meeting's intent: "Leading by Example: Structures Supporting Structures". IAGSM-participating Structures were: Australia, Denmark, South Africa, India, United Kingdom/Eire, Germany, Mexico, Guatemala, Iceland, India, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, France and the US/Canada.

Included as part of the IAGSM agenda was a formal tour of the WSO by the participating Structures. Delegates arrived by bus and were warmly greeted by our WSO Staff while exiting the bus and entering the office. Tours of the office were given by Staff and time was offered to walk the grounds, take pictures, visit the Archives, meet in the Board room with Trustee members of the ICC, and take part in prearranged meetings with Staff regarding Public Outreach, social media, and Alateen.

The IAGSM agenda was broken into General Session discussions and workshops. General Session discussions were assigned, prepared, and shared with all participants prior to the IAGSM. In this way, all participants had an opportunity to read, translate, and come prepared for discussions. General Session topics included: *Including Spiritual Principles in Business and Policy Discussions, Global Participation through Remote Access, Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Challenges and Pitfalls of Social Media for Al-Anon/Alateen*. While the IAGSM is not a decision-making or policy-setting body, each IAGSM includes a business meeting as part of the agenda. During the 2018 IAGSM business meeting, bids were presented for the site of the 2020 IAGSM. During the October Board meeting, the Board approved the recommendation that the IAGSM be held in London, UK in 2020. In the event of an emergency, the 2020 IAGSM will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The 2018 IAGSM ended with a spiritual speaker representing the structure of India.

As is tradition with the IAGSM, the Host Committee typically incorporates an opportunity for the Delegates and their guests to experience the local flavor of the hosting structure. We ended the IAGSM with a guided bus tour of Norfolk and a lovely dinner in a carriage house constructed in 1850. Complete summary of the 2018 IAGSM will be available online. Watch for announcements on AFG Connects and *In the Loop*.

**Continued Proactive Trustee Visits to Areas:** The Trustee visits serve two main purposes. First, these visits allow the Trustees to personally connect with the Area to ensure Area members realize how important they are as part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. Second, the visits show Areas how they are served and supported

by our Board of Trustees and our WSO. To date, Trustees have visited New York South, South Dakota, and North Dakota and Quebec East. November visits include Delaware and Puerto Rico. Each visit includes an attendee survey and report-back to the Board by the visiting Trustee. Results have been positive, with members making the following comments:

Trustees are Al-Anon members; we can all be of service and we all have gifts and a Higher Power. As a past Delegate, I always learn something new, or something I never thought of. I learned so many new things done for Al-Anon as a whole, about the program beyond the group.

We look forward to upcoming visits in 2019.

**Just for Tonight Bookmark:** The Just for Tonight bookmark is ready for print and the Finance Committee, during the October meeting, approved pricing at \$0.10 each. Sizing is in keeping with our other current bookmarks. Look for announcements of availability on AFG Connects and *In the Loop*.

**By-Laws Review of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.:** As shared previously, while our By-Laws have been updated to reflect changes as they have occurred, it is imperative that a Board also periodically review its By-Laws in their entirety to ensure timely amendments are added when necessary. Our By-Laws formalize the Board's legal structure and practices. The Board's needs evolve over time, as do the external circumstances within which the Board functions. I am pleased to share the Board has completed the full review of the By-Laws. The proposed changes are currently under review to ensure all changes are in compliance with the law. The 2019 WSC will be presented with and informed of the changes and the full text will be included in the *2019 World Service Conference Summary*.

**2018 Membership Survey:** The WSO has conducted a membership survey every three years since 1984. The 2018 Membership Survey is the WSO's twelfth study. The findings will serve as an aid to professionals, researchers, students, the media, and anyone seeking information about Al-Anon Family Groups. Results of the 2018 Membership Survey have been compiled by Staff and placed in an easy-to-comprehend PowerPoint. Members involved in public outreach efforts are encouraged to use the 2018 Membership Survey PowerPoint as a means of cooperating with the professional communities that are seeking information about Al-Anon Family Groups. On behalf of the Staff, thank you to all who participated in taking the survey and being a part of the results that show Al-Anon works.

**Financial Update:** The good news is that contributions increased in September and are meeting budget predictions for that month. However, the budget is established based on historical monthly trends, and, therefore, the rest of the year must continue to meet the anticipated trend to meet expectations. This means that, in order to meet our 2018 budgeted contribution of \$2,000,000, contributions need to meet or exceed a total of \$186,000 per month for October, November, and December, or a grand total of \$558,000. At this time last year, we were \$600,000 away from making our budgeted contribution amount and came within \$27,069 of reaching our goal.

As I've shared in prior letters, I need things broken down visually and into smaller numbers to understand what \$558,000 could look like and how attainable that number really is:

If 60%, or 9,000, of all our registered groups contributed \$50, and 5,000 members contributed \$10 each, and 55 Areas contributed \$400, we would easily meet our budgeted 2019 contributions goal.

**Delegate Question:** Two weeks following the posting of this letter, the Trustees will begin contacting their assigned Delegates. **The purpose of this contact is to allow Trustees to offer clarification for any information contained within this letter, if desired.** If you prefer not to have the Trustee phone you, please let him/her know when the initial contact is made. The Board is seeking additional information from Delegates regarding the following two questions:

**Based on the Board's decision to support Do Not Refer/Re-Refer Policies, in what ways has your Area initiated a conversation on safety?**

**In what ways could your Area consider using the new Membership Survey PowerPoint to reach out to professionals in your Area?**

We ended our week with the 2018 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, hosted by Texas East. Once again, the Board and its At-Large Executive Committee members came away with much more than they shared. The room was filled with enthusiasm and Texas hospitality. Members from Minnesota North, Louisiana, California, Texas West, Missouri, Arizona and Manitoba/Northwest Ontario traveled long distances and through Texas rain to join us for the day. We want to give a special shout-out to the members of Texas East for their warm hospitality and fellowship! Several members commented that Road Trip! is like a Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) event on steroids.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect is in the last year of a 6-year trial. During our January meeting, the Board will make an informed decision related to Road Trip! and its future beyond 2020. Until then, we will enjoy planning for the 2019 Road Trip! We are most grateful to the 19 Areas who submitted to host the 2019 Road Trip! An Area has been selected and an announcement for the 2019 site will be made once all site needs are confirmed. Until then, mark your calendars for Saturday, October 19, 2019. Who knows? We could be coming to a town near you!

This will be the last COB letter and update to our Panel 56 Delegates. We thank you for your service and deep commitment to our fellowship. We look forward to seeing you in the near future, hopefully at the 2019 Road Trip!, the 2020 A.A. International Convention in Detroit, a TEAM event, or perhaps in 2023 in Albuquerque, through your attendance at a Trustee visit to your Area, in service as an At-Large member of one of our committees, or maybe, through submission of a résumé to serve as Trustee. We wish you peace and joy on your journey.

In gratitude,



Debbie L. G., Chairperson

**Board of Trustees, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.**