

2020

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SUMMARY

DREAMING BIG  
WITH 20|20 VISION

SOÑAR EN GRANDE  
CON VISIÓN 20|20

RÊVER GRAND  
AVEC UNE VISION 20|20



**60th Annual**  
World Service Conference 2020



# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2020 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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**"Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs."**

*2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual  
version two (2) [P-24/27], page 179*

## Concept Two

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



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The 2020  
Conference Summary  
is available in color online at  
al-anon.org in the  
Members section. Remember,  
you can enlarge the text  
by using the  
zoom button.



# PRE-CONFERENCE

## 2020 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference Staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for 2020.

Assignment	Panel 58	Panel 59	Panel 60
<b>Conference Committee on Trustees</b>	Jeffrey F., Chair, PA Phil G., KS	Wally C., Chair Elect, MP Barbara T., GA Katie W., OR Susan B., WIUPMI	Susan R., SD DeLynn H., AR Lori H., MO
<b>Literature Committee</b>	Marcia M., CA(S) Leah L., TN Theresa M., OH Sue G., ON(S) Kay M., TX(W)	Lynn B., BC/YK Claudia M., AZ	Linette L., AK Noah P., NH
<b>Public Outreach Committee</b>	Mintie G., MB/NWO Cheryl A., FL(S) Barbara H., RI	Samantha M., OK Jennifer M., MI Sheri S., ND Rick G., CO	Sharon B., WY Heather M., UT Clara C., NM/EP
<b>Conflict Resolution Task Force</b>	Sherry H., KY Cindy J., FL(N) Ann M., MI Rosanna H., CA(N)	Joanne P., VT Sharon F., AB/NWT Terry W., VA	Rae L., ME Marcia M., CT Nancy Jo W., ID
<b>Dreaming Big – Envisioning Our Future Thought Force</b>	Kim C., DE Claudette D., QC(W) Kay C., TX(E)	Carol S., MT Irene T., MA Melissa F., WV Donna S., NJ	Robin P., NV Emily D-C., NY(S) Tammy M., LA
<b>Using the Concepts in Personal Recovery Task Force</b>	Christine W., IL(N) Miriam B., IN Patti P., HI Idalia R., MD/DC Betty A., MN(S)	Fred H., MN(N) Anu B., NC/BDA Kathy D., WA	Bob C., SC Katy P., IA Bill H., ON(N)

## ONBOARDING TASK FORCES

Prior to the virtual/hybrid Conference convening, Conference members were invited to view three presentations in preparation for Conference week. These presentations allowed for the dissemination of some onboarding information to occur in stages.

### The Board's Goals for the Conference

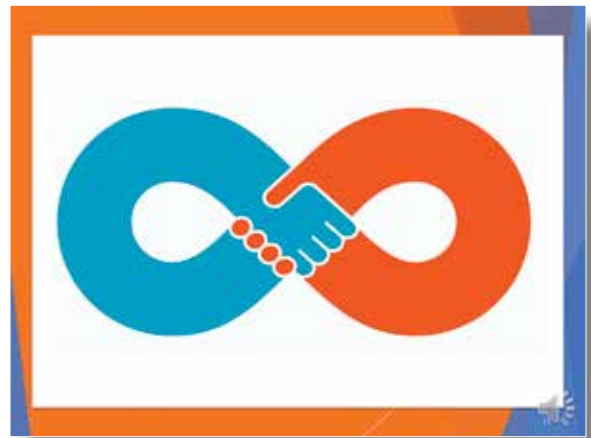
The Conference, Al-Anon's largest group conscience, will act in the spirit of unity and goodwill to assure that Al-Anon's world services are continually available to the Al-Anon fellowship:

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

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

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

Conference members reviewed the Board's Goals for the Conference by watching a short video. In the video, four Trustees presented the Board's Goals for the Conference in a fun, game show format. The contestants had clever names: Anna Nimity, Dee Tachment, and Nancy Newcomer.



### World Service Conference Etiquette

Conference members viewed a narrated World Service Conference Etiquette presentation. The presentation included mention of the following spiritual principles among others: integrity (starting and stopping on time), simplicity (stay on topic), and presuming goodwill (by practicing humility, harmony, and unity).



### Voting Procedures

Prior to the virtual/hybrid Conference convening, as well as during the virtual segment, Conference members listened to and viewed a narrated World Service Conference Voting Procedures presentation. The presentation reviewed electronic and open voting, methods to determine decisions, abstentions, routine motions, affirmation voting, and voting one's conscience. This presentation was in addition to the Conference Procedures document available to all Conference members.



# VIRTUAL SEGMENT



## CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Rosie M., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The Conference Chairperson remarked, "Welcome all Conference members to our first virtual 2020 World Service Conference.

"Our 60<sup>th</sup> WSC theme is 'Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision.'

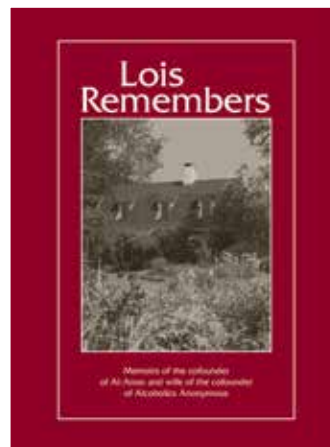
"Due to unforeseen extenuating circumstances affecting us all during this pandemic, we—all Conference members—will collectively have the privilege to collaborate and participate in a different format this milestone 60<sup>th</sup> WSC: an abbreviated virtual WSC during two half-day sessions. Your participation and ability to continue virtually revealed glimpses of hope and miracles.

"Our WSC theme this year affords us the opportunity to reflect on our past humble beginnings. Our first WSC was held April 21-22, 1961 in New York City as a three-year trial plan, with the purpose to be the voice of world AI-Anon and the permanent guarantee that our world services will continue to function under all conditions. In the opening session, Bill W. relayed, 'You will surely look back upon this day as a great one in the annals of the AI-Anon Family Groups.' In April 1963, the Conference was made permanent.

"In this pivotal moment, our 60<sup>th</sup> WSC in April 2020, we can reflect on the past, yet *dream big*, despite the current unforeseen circumstances that exist. This experience has revealed our resourcefulness, acceptance, and cooperation, while witnessing

demonstrated acts of kindness, and our willingness to make the needed adjustments so that our Conference can proceed. Even though we are disappointed by the inability to meet in person, I'm thankful for the technology in place to allow us to continue in a different format. We surely will miss the face-to-face WSC, physically greeting the new Panel 60 Delegates, returning Panel 59 Delegates, and saying farewell to the Panel 58 Delegates and exiting Trustees and Executive Committee members. Our primary purpose during this Conference is to ensure that our world services continue during all conditions and circumstances. We will act on behalf of AI-Anon as a whole.

"Let's collectively focus on the possibilities and avenues for growth, revealing our potential throughout our world AI-Anon while keeping our primary purpose in the forefront. Perhaps each Conference member was *dreaming big* when he or she said 'yes' to serve in this capacity, in this vital role within our links of service. You are all visionaries in your own right, as proven by your willingness, commitment, and resolve to serve our fellowship during this Conference, where the outcome of our conversations is of utmost importance.



"In *Lois Remembers* (B-7), Lois relays, 'Gazing at the sky on a bright starlit night, we are overwhelmed with wonder at the seemingly limitless universe. Our finite minds cannot envision its extent and complexity, much less the possibility of other universes beyond.' For me, the *20|20 vision* in our theme affords us the opportunity to formulate a *vision* for this new decade of 2020 and beyond by working towards removing barriers, being unafraid to venture, and challenging ourselves to discover new avenues for growth within ourselves and throughout our fellowship. The possibilities are endless. We just need to engage, embrace, and stretch our imagination, starting with our collective thoughts, ideas, decisions, and actions taken during this WSC.

"Let's intuitively reflect on the past while being present in 2020. I'm inspired by the privilege to participate, collaborate, experience, and fulfill this virtual WSC with all of you.

"The decisions attained will affect us all and culminate our actions affecting our members, today and into the future. So, let's *dream the big dream* and then find a way to attain it.

"Embracing our resolve and commitment during this Conference, humbly and gratefully tapping this gavel, I declare this *virtual* segment of our 60<sup>th</sup> WSC as *open!*"

## WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gail G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to our 60<sup>th</sup> World Service Conference (WSC).

"When the theme for this year, 'Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision,' was chosen, we had no idea just *how big* that *dream* was going to be or how fast it was going to be upon us! In the last few weeks almost everything in our lives has changed, including the format for our WSC. And now, here we are taking part in our first virtual/hybrid WSC.

"I love our theme, and I don't think it could be any more appropriate in light of what has transpired this year. Every time I read it, I feel this opening and expanding of my mind and my heart. It is a feeling of hope and excitement for what is to come, not only at this WSC, but also throughout all of Al-Anon during the upcoming 2020s and the ensuing years. We are mapping a new course in Al-Anon history.

"When I attended my first Al-Anon meeting 46 years ago, I could never have dreamed that I would be here with you today taking part in our first ever virtual/hybrid WSC. I only came to find out how to keep him sober. I was not seeking help for myself yet, and I did not realize that my dreams had become so very small. I did not know what challenges lay ahead nor did I possess the foresight to see what possibilities might open up to me. At that first meeting I attended, I could never have envisioned being where I am today and all the gifts that were waiting for me inside the rooms of Al-Anon.

"Today, my hope is that each of you have received the precious gift of *dreaming big* with clear and insightful *vision*. I believe that we are all here to be part of the dream, and if we ever needed a burning bush, I guess it has been provided! As we begin the 60<sup>th</sup> WSC, we will be doing the very best we can. Our experiences will be different, and they may vary from person to person, but we will remember that we are all joined in the circle of our fellowship with Al-Anon love. Lois W. said that Al-Anon is a program of love, and everything we do is about love. Because of this, I believe today we will have the maturity and the willingness to *dream big with 20|20 vision*. Welcome to the first ever Al-Anon virtual World Service Conference."

## SEATING MOTION

After the opening of the virtual segment of the World Service Conference, a motion was brought forward by the Conference Leadership Team. Each year, a "Seating Motion" is presented, asking the Conference to approve the seating of certain people who could provide important information to the Conference. They may include representatives from other structures or additional Staff members or Volunteers.

Seating was requested for the following individuals:

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

**Niketa Williams**

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

### **Scot P.**

Associate Director—Digital Strategy, Al-Anon Member

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

Sue C., Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

The motion carried. See Motion #1 on page 62.

## APPROVALS

### 2019 Auditor's Report

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

Before discussing the Auditor's Report, the Director of Finance & Operations introduced herself to the World Service Conference (WSC) members, saying in part, "I have been with Al-Anon for three and half years, and this is my fourth World Service Conference. You may be aware that my position requires me not to be a member. However, I have learned so much about the program since starting. I came from a background in public accounting, where I worked as an auditor for a variety of nonprofits. The opportunity to work at Al-Anon has allowed me to pursue my goal of working for a nonprofit. I enjoy the feeling that we are helping many people find hope and recovery from the family disease of alcoholism."

Prior to the WSC, the Auditor's Report was posted to AFG Connects for all Conference members to review. A copy of the audit can be found on the World Service Office (WSO) website.

### **Independent auditors report**

On the first page of the report, the auditors attest their opinion about how we present and manage the organization's financial information. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. was issued an unmodified opinion, which is the highest opinion that can be given. It reads, "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

### **What is an audit?**

Auditors ask questions and confirm account and investment balances. They review payroll records, check stubs, and observe our internal controls. Lastly, they conduct inquiries to ensure no fraud has occurred. AFG, Inc. has used the same independent Certified Public Accounting firm for several years. The auditors' team of four people were on site for an entire week in January.

### **Statement of financial position**

Our assets are comparable to 2018 in most areas. The areas of improvement are our investments, which had significant growth in 2019. There was a slight reduction in property and equipment as our property and equipment had aged over the years and is being depreciated. We had an increase in intangible assets, which reflects the procurement of trademarks abroad. Our liabilities are comparable to prior year. Net assets increased, which reflects the increase in net income.

### **Statement of Activities**

Literature sales were about 54% of net revenue, contributions were 40%, and magazine and investment income make up the difference.

In 2019, total contributions showed an increase of 12%, which includes \$240,000 in bequests. Without those bequests, we would have fallen short of our budgeted goal.

Investment income (earned from the Reserve Fund) had a gain of \$1,155,000. 2019 reflected a good year in the market. Al-Anon continues to be invested in mature stocks and bonds. We have long-term relationships with our investment managers. The Finance Committee meets with the managers twice a year, and they provide monthly performance reports for review.

Literature sales and contributions alone do not fully support our work. A transfer from the Reserve Fund is needed in order to balance



the budget each year. Currently, the Reserve Fund is at eight months of operating expenses.

### Functional Expenses

Services for the program and literature distribution make up 67% of our total expenses. Program expenses include Group Services, Group Records, Outreach to Professionals, Conference, International Services, and Digital Strategies. General and administrative expenses are 33%, including the Finance, IT, Human Resources, and Administrative Departments.

### Notes to the financial statements

The purpose of the financial statement notes is to provide additional information to help a reader of the statements understand them better. Most of the information is required by accounting standards. Most of the information is consistent from year to year.

### Summary

We had a strong year for literature sales. Even though contributions exceeded budget, it was unbudgeted bequests that helped us achieve that goal. *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) is now available year-round. We delivered 11 strategies from the Strategic Plan. We allocated additional resources to technology and innovation.

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

- Why do we use a 401(k) instead of a 403(b) used by many nonprofits?

*A 403(b) is used predominately in government organizations and for teachers; they are different names for very similar programs.*

- You stated that 11 Strategies from the Strategic Plan were delivered, can we get a list of these?

*Key initiatives included delivering the first Annual Report in all three languages, automating many time-consuming email processes to ensure consistency in communication with the membership, offering AFA year-round, and creating a website content update schedule.*

- Members want to know suggested amounts on how much to donate to WSO; they want to know how the WSO is doing. Do you have suggestions on what to tell them, since contributions (not including bequests) came up a bit short last year?

*We can't budget for bequests, so it is important to continue to encourage groups and members to donate.*

- With regard to the Reserve Fund, is it required to transfer money to the General Fund if it is not necessary? My understanding is that four percent is automatically transferred each year.

*When we have a good year like 2019, we will transfer funds back to the Reserve Fund.*

- We know the goal is one year's reserve, but the WSO Reserve Fund is down to eight months, how low do we let it go?

*We make additional contributions to the Reserve Fund when we have surplus funds. There has not been enough surplus to transfer to increase it above eight or nine months.*

A motion to approve the 2019 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #4 on page 62.

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Vali F., Executive Director

The Annual Report was sent to all World Service Conference (WSC) members prior to the Conference with a message welcoming them to the newly redesigned 2019 World Service Office (WSO) Annual Operational Report. The Report includes WSO accomplishments and the progress achieved toward our Strategic Plan, which are undertaken on behalf of the fellowship and made possible by their contributions. Conference members were invited to review the Report and send their questions to the WSO prior to the Conference to be sure they had clarity on the material before the WSC.

The Executive Director began the session by providing an update to the virtual WSC on activities during the first three months of 2020 prior to opening the floor up for questions.

"Welcome to the Annual Report WSC agenda item—fondly known as the World Service Office—Our Work Continues. I'm grateful to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) for allocating this time when it is such a precious commodity this year.

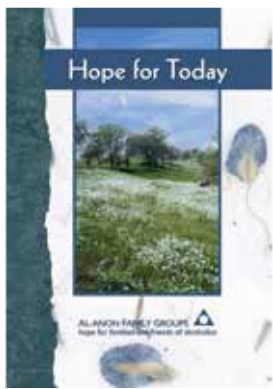
"For the last two years, the plan for this agenda item has been for each of our incredibly hardworking WSO Staff Conference members to take a few minutes to update you regarding how we are working to achieve our Strategic Goals regarding Members, the Public, and the Organization.

"Of course, this is not a usual year for any of us so instead of Staff presenting during this time, we prepared and posted 'Our Work Continues.' Since January, the WSO has:

- Kicked off the Alateen Recertification Process early, only to have to extend the deadline to August 15, 2020 due to the health crisis
- Completed the first review of 1,500 member shares for the NEW DAILY READER (working title), identified some missing topics, and reached out for more
- Continued and then stopped planning for the 2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation
- Began to reduce the backlog of outstanding French and Spanish literature updates, with the translation of both the *Alateen* and *Al-Anon Newcomer Packets* (K-18 and K-10)



- Expanded the Member Blog, posted the first in our video series from the Baltimore Al-Anon International, updated the *Public Outreach* Bookmark (M-76), and just last week launched *Hope for Today* (eB-27) as an eBook



- Registered 54 new electronic meetings
- Relaunched our LinkedIn page to provide professionals with data and quotes that cite improvement in client mental health
- Collaborated with well-intentioned Al-Anon members operating websites, applications, and electronic meetings who are posting CAL without permission so we can protect our copyright
- Registered groups in Mongolia and Mozambique and supported Lithuanian and Bolivian efforts to translate and reprint CAL
- Began translating the Annual Report into Spanish and French for the second year to achieve our trilingual fellowship commitment



- Shipped 158,400 copies of *2020 Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*
- Commenced the final stages of development and rollout of the new Al-Anon Mobile App—stay tuned for an exciting opportunity to participate in that process this week!

"Throughout this year and 2019, we have discovered—as no doubt you have as well—that the landscape of concerns and questions we are asked to address is becoming more complex. To meet this challenge, the WSO is continuing to delegate operational decision-making, within a framework of carefully defined service authority, to our three Staff leadership teams—the Strategic Leadership Team, Staff Management Team, and Staff Policy Implementation Round Table which you will hear us refer to as SPIRiT. This delegated authority helps us to achieve the principle described in Warranty Five—to 'always remain democratic in thought and action' at the World Service Office. It unleashes the wisdom expressed in *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) on April 19, 'the more varied the experience, the greater the strength and hope.'

"Through delegation, Staff were empowered to collaborate as we sought to help local members scrambling to move meetings temporarily to online or phone platforms *and* brainstormed a solution for allowing temporary electronic meeting information to be posted on the al-anon.org meeting search.

"Of course, sometimes gaining wisdom through a broader group conscience requires more time. Guided by Concept Nine and Warranty Three, these Teams debate the issues 'until a substantial majority can support every critical decision' and we pause before making decisions and answering questions that might result in 'harmful precedents or consequences.' We continue to appreciate your patience as we grow with you in understanding of our shared principles.

"I want to offer my deepest gratitude to the Staff who—together with the Conference Leadership Team—in *four very short weeks* transformed a World Service Conference agenda and plan that was eleven months in the making, while also personally dealing with the challenges of the pandemic.

"We have not done any of this perfectly. We have relied upon the slogan, 'Progress Not Perfection,' and sought the serenity described on page 80 of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-6), 'We can be fully ourselves and trust that, with the help of a Higher Power, we will be able to handle anything that happens.' We kept faith that members would 'presume goodwill.'

"Today it appears our efforts have paid off, and I would be grateful if you would extend to the WSO Staff—including the Tech Team who are off camera—your spirit hands of thanks."

## World Service Office—Our Work Continues

January through March 2020

"As the principal service center of the fellowship, the WSO acts in conformity with the wishes of the Conference. It publishes all Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Many functions and activities of the fellowship circulate through this office. It is the center, not the head; it serves, but does not control or direct. The relationship of the WSO to the groups is fully explained in 'Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service.'

Work at the WSO is done by a paid staff, some of whom are Al-Anon members. They take care of the huge volume of creative and administrative work involved in implementing the decisions of the WSC, as well as routine matters.

New groups are provided support in their early attempts to become established. Correspondence is maintained with the thousands of groups in the fellowship. Members all over the world are encouraged to form new groups."

## Goal: Members Serve Members, Meetings, and Groups

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Kerri K., Associate Director—International (responsible for AFG Records)

The Programs Department continued our work of supporting services to carry the Al-Anon message of hope to all in need. Since the Annual Report, the Department has remained busy with day-to-day communications and ongoing projects.

## **AI-Anon Members and Group Communication**

The Group Services Team oversees WSO activities related to AI-Anon and Alateen groups which includes supporting meetings and members, reviewing and approving revised Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, facilitating the Inmate Correspondence Service, collecting sharings and editing the *Alateen Talk* newsletter, and bringing the voice of Electronic Meetings into discussions at the World Service Conference.

Since the beginning of the year, Group Services has:

- Restarted interviews for the Group Services Specialist—Alateen (member) position. We hope to welcome a new WSO Staff member soon.
- Supported local members scrambling to move their meetings temporarily to online or phone platforms in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to adhere to AI-Anon principles. Local AI-Anon Information Services rose to the occasion and posted changes in meeting locations and platforms. The WSO explored ways to ensure newcomers could find groups in their community meeting on temporary platforms. It has been a learning curve for all.

In the first quarter of the year, the AFG Records Team focuses on welcoming and training new Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) and Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs). In 2019, Staff began experimenting with new procedures and used video conferencing for the first time. In 2020, the experimentation continued, and Staff turned static presentations into multi-part, on-demand video series that were available to new trusted servants in the first two weeks of the term—six to eight weeks earlier than in previous years.

These changes came about as the direct result of survey information collected by the WSO. The number of AGRCs and AAPPs who reported not receiving any transition assistance from an outgoing panel member was very high again this year. This finding reassured Staff that the effort to make training available online just after the first of the year was a wise investment. Staff continue to investigate innovative and timely ways to emphasize the importance of a transition meeting or training with the outgoing trusted servant.

## **Alateen Members, Groups, and Trusted Servants**

In January, Staff kicked off the 2020 Online Area Alateen Recertification. The early opening of the recertification window was part of a strategy to try to improve the rate of early recertifications. It was proving to be successful; three Areas had completed the process by the end of February. However, social distancing and shelter-in-place restrictions in March and April limited the ability of AAPPs to conduct required training. To provide AAPPs time to develop and implement new training plans, the Board of Trustees extended the recertification deadline to August 15, 2020.

- Nine Areas currently do not have an Area Alateen Coordinator.

## **Electronic Meetings**

The Group Services Team also provides support to the Electronic Meeting community and since the beginning of the year has:

- Launched the Electronic Meetings Newcomer email following suggestions from the Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community and discussions the online Electronic Meeting CMAs meeting with the WSO. Since the launch on March 16, over 70 emails have been sent.

- Supported continued Electronic Meeting registrations. As of April 6, 2020, we have a total of **306** registered meetings. That's **54** new electronic meetings since January 1—the most ever experienced. We now have 180 Phone meetings and 126 Online meetings, including seven Alateen Chat meetings. Phone meetings are available in English, Spanish, French, Russian, Polish, German, Italian, Greek, Danish, Farsi, and Icelandic. Online meetings take place on numerous platforms.

## **Facilitate Conference, Convention, and Fellowship Visits**

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

## **The World Service Conference**

The Conference Team communicates with Delegates, Area Chairs, District Representatives, and Past Conference Members in addition to being involved in the year-round planning and implementation of the World Service Conference, including preparing the annual *Conference Summary*.

In March—less than one month before the World Service Conference was to convene in Virginia Beach—CLT was directed by the Board of Trustees motion to revise the face-to-face Conference agenda in favor of an abbreviated virtual Conference—pertaining only to critical Board matters—the week of April 20, 2020. Based on the motion, most agenda items were to be conducted via AFG Connects or postponed until the 2021 WSC. Staff and Volunteers began working virtually non-stop to create a new agenda; organize the technology, and train the Staff technical support team (Tech Team) who will support the VWSC; organize web conferencing and online voting training for all Conference members—who include those completely comfortable with technology and those who don't like or feel comfortable with it at all; research how the WSO could ensure outgoing Conference members have the opportunity to say their goodbyes; and resolve the many outstanding arrangements regarding cancelled physical plans.

In early April, the CLT Subcommittee hosted its first virtual New Member Orientation Session for first time Conference members. Two Panel 58 Delegates briefly joined the web conference to share their experiences with being a first-time Delegate and giving a Delegate's report.

## **Impression – World Service Conference Theme Applied**

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

When the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) selected the 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) theme, "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision," in July 2019 based on ideas, words, and phrases shared by 2019 WSC Conference members, its members had no inkling how appropriate the theme would become for us all.

The theme was evident when an invitation to the Staff Management Team (SMT) to consider the Conference Agenda for possible Staff attendance was warmly welcomed. This invitation—which supports increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program—resulted in 11 Staff members being offered the opportunity to observe the 2020 WSC. Our WSO Staff dream big—they are committed to increasing their understanding of our organization and the World Service Conference, and how these relate to their WSO



Staff assignments. Unfortunately, Staff members will not be observing the 2020 WSC—except as part of the Tech Team—due to the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 World Service Conference is certainly transpiring very differently than I initially envisioned. Yet I am confident that—to the degree I adapt my 20|20 vision to my current reality, with the help of my Higher Power—the experience will reflect AFG, Inc.’s Mission by assisting Conference members in connecting and supporting each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.

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

On March 28, 2020, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, our friends at Alcoholics Anonymous made a difficult decision. The Chairperson of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous announced on A.A.’s website, “It is with heavy hearts that we announce the cancellation of the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, July 2-5.” The Executive Director spoke with the A.A. GSO to extend our comfort and to commit ourselves to continued partnership when planning for the July 2025 A.A. International Convention celebration in Vancouver, British Columbia begins.

### **Fellowship Visits**

Due to Covid-19, scheduled Area visits since March through June 2020 have been cancelled by the Areas who extended invitations for staff participation during this time period. Service arms can now invite WSO Staff and Volunteers to visit using an online form which streamlines the process for all.

## **Produce and Distribute Literature**

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

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

The Literature Team is responsible for orchestrating the process for developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) with the Literature Committee, for reviewing all reprint permissions for CAL, and for creating *The Forum* magazine monthly.

**2021 Calendar Quotations:** For the last seven years, the WSO has provided CAL quotations that could be used by service arms in fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. In March, the WSO posted 20 quotations for use in 2021 calendars on the Announcements community of AFG Connects. With this service, we provide easy access to CAL, one of our tools for recovery.

**NEW DAILY READER (working title):** A final request for sharings for this book was announced in the March issue of *The Forum* as well as *In the Loop* and on the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects. It listed 20 under-represented topics as identified in a detailed report to the Literature Committee from the writer/editor, after reviewing the 1,500-plus sharings received from the fellowship. Development of the first draft of the first quarter of the book was completed and will be sent to the Literature Committee for review beginning in May, on a regular schedule of 50 sharings per month. Development of the first draft of the second quarter of the book is underway. Our hope is that the book will be written, approved, translated, designed, and printed by July 2023, in time to be introduced at the Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Our goal with this project is to eventually provide a tool that can be a source of recovery for years to come.

The WSO is a trilingual organization and in 2020 has continued its efforts to expand the availability of CAL in all three languages. Since January, the Translation Team has:

- Updated and translated into French and Spanish the *Alateen Newcomer Packets* (FK-18, SK-18). As a result, the French pamphlets *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (FP-21) and *Facts about Alateen* (FP-41) have been updated from their respective 1999 and 2005 outdated versions.
- Translated and completely updated for consistency with the English version the *Al-Anon Newcomer Packets* (FK-10, SK-10).

## ***Impressions – Literature is a Busy Business***

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

I have the great pleasure of serving as the Associate Director—Literature at the World Service Office. I am the Staff Liaison to the Literature Committee as well as to the Area Literature Coordinators and Area Newsletter Editors. As part of my responsibilities, I assist the Literature Committee Chairperson in creating the agenda and minutes for the Committee’s quarterly web conferencing calls. I coordinate with the Literature Committee, freelance writers who are Al-Anon members, Policy Committee reviewers, and all others involved in creating new CAL, including the entire fellowship from whom we receive the sharings necessary to make it all possible. I also respond to between 150-200 correspondences a month from the fellowship and others regarding Al-Anon literature. I’m never bored, and my hands are never idle.

## **Goal: Public Attract New Members**

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals

### **Public Outreach to the Public**

In addition to supporting and expanding AFG, Inc.’s digital channels, such as our website and social media pages, the Digital Strategy Team is responsible for communicating with the public and media. Since January, the Team has:

- Expanded the Member Blog by publishing the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service as topics for sharing.
- Published the first member video from the International Convention in Baltimore “My sister is the alcoholic. Why do I need recovery?” as video on the WSO social media pages.
- Developed an automated email “Electronic Newcomer Kit.” This email contains short narratives from CAL and al-anon.org links which will be helpful to new members attending electronic meetings.
- Evolved a new communication planning strategy for facilitating the cultivation and curation of content to be shared with the fellowship through our various online and print channels, including *In the Loop*; AFG Connects Announcements; our social media pages (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter); and our magazines *The Forum*, *Le lien*, and *en acción*.
- Released the newly designed *Public Outreach Bookmark* (M-76) in January in all three languages.

## Public Outreach to Professionals

The Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals serves a twofold purpose at the WSO: To create awareness and increase utilization of Al-Anon and Alateen as resources for the families and friends of alcoholics receiving services from professionals and to motivate and encourage our groups and service arms to engage in outreach activities to professionals. Since January, the Team has:

- Begun collaborating with the Digital Strategy Team in planning the 2021 Al-Anon Membership Survey. The Survey is the only WSO tool that quantifies the effectiveness of our program to professionals, students, and researchers.
- Attended the Second International Conference Trauma and Addiction: Integrated Approaches to Attachment, Relationships, and Family Issues to acquire knowledge and provide Al-Anon Membership Survey data regarding subjects important to professionals.
- Collaborated with Digital Strategy to reactivate the WSO's LinkedIn social media page, posting articles using data from the Membership Survey and quotes from professionals that cite improvement in their clients' mental health.
- Created a Canada only version of the 2018 Membership Survey to support our Canadian professionals.

## Protect Al-Anon's Name

Vali F., Executive Director

Prior to her departure in February, the Interim Legal Assistant:

- Successfully collaborated with several administrators of websites, applications, and electronic meetings who were posting Conference Approved Literature without permission. Once the administrators were informed of the concern, each acted immediately to rectify the situation by either removing the posting or removing the app from app stores.
- Filed and received original copyright registrations for recent published CAL such as *Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents* (P-94) and *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships - A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Stories* (B-33).

## Goal: Organization Increase Global Availability

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

The International Team is responsible for communicating with and providing guidance to 37 General Service Offices, 13 Service Boards, and local meeting contacts in 70 other countries where Al-Anon has a presence. This update is a report of significant international activity since the first of the year.

## Global Fellowship Support

Staff have continued to support the growth of Al-Anon structures around the world by responding to requests for guidance in policy, finance, and the Traditions and by sharing the collective experience of the World Service Office.

Staff are happy to report that, for the first time, Al-Anon groups were registered in Mongolia and Mozambique. Significant developments occurred in Lithuania and Bolivia as well. After many years, a small

group of organized members in Lithuania reached out to the WSO to resume translation and printing of CAL. After several email exchanges, Staff met via video conference with members in Bolivia to help with the group registration and CAL reprint processes. Resuming communication and correspondence with existing evolving structures can be as important as making first contact with a new ones and Staff are grateful for the enthusiasm of these members in reaching out to the WSO.

## International Structure Events

The WSO is preparing for the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, scheduled to take place in London, England in October. Staff are coordinating with the Host Committee members of the UK & Eire Structure. Global travel restrictions have caused a postponement in opening registration, however, at this time, the event has not been cancelled.

General Service Structures have been impacted by public health restrictions designed to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Many physical offices have closed and moved operations to virtual platforms. Some General Service Conferences have been rescheduled and others may still need to be. Some Structures are considering reducing their agendas to accommodate meeting on a virtual platform. WSO Staff have experienced an exchange of ideas, caring and support, receiving as many hopeful messages as we have sent.

## Recruit, Grow, and Retain Staff

Vali F., Executive Director

During December 2019 and January 2020—following discussions with the Directors' Team (consisting of the Directors of Programs and Finance & Operations and the Executive Director)—and with the support of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director made the decision to transform the Events & Special Projects role into a new Associate Director—Administration & Strategies position. This AD position provides the WSO with increased Human Resources strategic capacity, a member perspective for Events & Special Projects team members, and oversight for trademark and copyright protection activities. The position also enables the Executive Director to delegate day-to-day operational and staff management responsibilities in favor of strategic, executive, and fellowship interactions. The new AD, who is a voting member of Conference, joined the first week of March along with our new Human Resources Manager.

January also brought the departure of our long-term Executive Administrative Coordinator. Several Staff members were able to quickly fill in the gap through promotion to ensure the seamless execution of the January Board Week. During the rapid position review, we identified the need to provide more Staff support to the Chairperson of the Board and the position was retitled Executive Assistant to the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board, perhaps the longest title now at the WSO.

To support the Strategic Plan Initiative to enhance trilingual communication, two additional French freelance translators were hired. One of them is a long-time Al-Anon member.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Directors and Human Resources Teams began meeting frequently to discuss how best to address the health crisis. Staff who were at greater risk began working from home nearly immediately. As the crisis continued, Staff who were able to work from home were encouraged to do so while essential Staff remained in the office as we continued to answer phone calls and correspondence and process literature orders. All were asked to conscientiously observe social distancing and a "liberal leave" policy was implemented to offer a respite for those remaining in the office.

## Manage Operations

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

The Finance & Operations Department—which consists of Accounting, Customer Service, Shipping, Publications, Translation, Information Technology, and Building Operations—provides support to the WSO and the fellowship. We like to think of ourselves as “behind the scenes.” Members often hear “finance” and think of the financial numbers or data. However, members are interacting with our Department when speaking with Customer Service regarding a contribution or receiving CAL that was shipped by our Shipping Team. Conference members who accessed AFG Connects are being supported by our IT department. While the Programs Department is charged with creating and executing the services that give voice to recovery, we are responsible for ensuring they have tools and infrastructure necessary to do so.

Since the Annual Report, the Finance & Operations continues to strive to execute and facilitate the day to day operations and understand the changing needs of the WSO. Here are some highlights of activity since compiling the 2019 Annual Report:

- Began translation of the Annual Report with an expected completion date of July 2020. This will be the second year the document has been translated in French and Spanish. This supports the Strategic Plan Initiative to enhance trilingual communication. We are striving to provide all communications in all three languages simultaneously.
- Started shipping the 2020 *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* January 1, 2020. Since that day, we have shipped 158,400 copies. The magazine is available all year long.
- Automated several new tasks were as result of the addition of the Advanced Process Automation module. Two examples are notification of AMIAS certification and automated order confirmation emails when literature is purchased.
- Processed 5,192 *Forum* subscriptions, 5,011 literature orders, and \$627,585 in contributions during the first quarter of 2020.
- Converted *Hope for Today* (B-27) to eBook format, including implementing a comprehensive electronic index, and released it on Amazon, Apple, Google Play, Barnes & Noble, and kobo.

### WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WSO Staff implemented enhanced sanitation protocols that enabled the WSO to remain open to service our members and those still suffering from the family disease of alcoholism while ensuring the safety of our employees.

We are grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the fellowship and thank each of you for that privilege.

#### Following the update, Conference members had these questions:

- Since other countries have to register to use Al-Anon’s triangle logo, does Canada also have to register?

*Canada is part of the World Service Conference Structure, so the answer is the same for Canada as for the U.S. More information will be forthcoming as we better understand the requirements.*

- The additions to the WSO website are wonderful. Is there a link that highlights new additions?

*There is a link on the Members page to “News from WSO,” where all new information and releases are posted.*

- Page seven in the Annual Report lists the bestselling books, can we get the actual numbers sold?

*We can provide that to the Delegates after the Conference.*

- I am very interested in how we are protecting our copyrights, especially with electronic meetings. It is great that you are not taking a confrontational approach. Are you having success with that?

*We presume goodwill with these meetings and individuals; most who violate copyrights are well-intentioned and are not aware that they are doing so. They are made aware of the violations and asked to make changes. The success rate has been very good.*

A motion to approve the 2019 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #3 on page 62.

The complete report can be found on pages 63-104.

## 2020 FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Cindy K., Trustee, Treasurer

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

The Treasurer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. opened the session: “My name is Cindy K., and I am a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. In addition to being the South Central Regional Trustee, I currently serve as Board Treasurer. Thanks to the fellowship for allowing me to be your Treasurer this year. I thank you for your emails in response to the Treasurer’s reports. We have had lively conversations!

“On behalf of the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees, I want to thank each Area, District, group, meetings, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), and Literature Distribution Center (LDC), International Structure, and member for your practice of spiritual abundance, unity, gratitude, love, and trust during 2019. You’ve set a wonderful example.

“I’m going to share about the role of the Finance Committee in the development of the Budget.

“The Director of Finance & Operations provided you with an overview of the Auditor’s Report on the financial condition of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for 2019. In a few minutes, she will present the proposed Budget for 2020.

“The Budget is part of the Finance Committee Report because it is reviewed by the Finance Committee during several months of development. It is reviewed as an overview at the November Finance Committee meeting, scrutinized carefully at the December meeting, and approved by the Committee at the January meeting. At that meeting, the Finance Committee recommended that it be presented to the Board for approval.

“The Budget is being provided to you now as information. Later this week at the Annual Board Meeting, the actual Budget will be legally accepted by the Board within its responsibility ‘To control the property and finances of the World Service Office (WSO) as described in the Bylaws.’ You can refer to the Finance Committee’s purpose and duties in the descriptive text of Concept Eleven in the *Service Manual*.

“As Treasurer of AFG, Inc., I am the Chairperson of this Committee. I also sit on the Executive Committee, Pension Committee, Compensation Committee, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

“The other members of the Finance Committee are the Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the



Executive Director, and a Volunteer member of the Board or the Executive Committee who is appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. This is currently the Chairperson of the Policy Committee. The Director of Finance & Operations is an ex officio member.

"We meet every month in Virginia Beach or by web conferencing.

"The primary function of the Finance Committee is to see that our WSO operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program (from the Finance Committee statement of purpose).

"The creation of the Budget began last fall as the Director of Finance & Operations worked with Staff to pull the numbers together. At the Finance Committee meeting in December, we dedicated most of our eight-hour meeting to reviewing the preliminary 2020 Budget details. We had an extensive discussion that included the review of recent trends and projections based on the best information currently available. We were informed about how some line items are being modified to more accurately reflect our current organizational structure.

"The Finance Committee recommended some changes and requested that Staff gather additional information for us to review at our next meeting. As a result, when we met in January, we were able to give our unanimous approval to recommend a Budget to the Board at the January Board meeting.

"Now, as members of the 60<sup>th</sup> World Service Conference, you are joining a conversation which began over 61 years ago.

"I see it as an ongoing conversation because our financial condition today is built on contributions and decisions that have been made over the years.

"Our future is dependent, to a great degree, on how we make provisions to provide services for those who have yet to find our fellowship and how we serve the needs of our current members.

#### **"Our financial affairs embody all of our Legacies:**

**"Concept Ten** reminds me that I don't have to know every single detail.

*"Each financial report we have reviewed and presented reflects a point in time. The quarterly Finance Update that comes with the Chairperson of the Board Letter keeps you informed of trends, but the Finance Committee has gone over the details each month, and you are receiving an overview.*

**"Tradition Twelve** reminds me that anonymity and confidentiality support my ability to trust.

*"The details of some line items in the Budget like specific salaries, vendors, member donations, and purchases are confidential. Although the Finance Committee asks for and receives explanations about some numbers, we have confidence in the work of the Directors to know they respond to those questions with discretion, and we trust their professional roles.*

**"Step Ten** is a reminder that I must evaluate the positives and the negatives on a regular basis.

*"For the Staff who create the reports and the Finance Committee members who regularly review them, budget variances are discussed in-depth and trends are easy to spot. This keeps us on track to reach informed decisions.*

"As members of the World Service Conference (WSC), we are one link in the chain of responsibility to review the information presented to us and raise questions as needed.

"By carefully considering our actions, we are *dreaming big in 20/20* in our attempts to help move Al-Anon and Alateen further into the electronic age and attract those in need of the hope and help we can share while continuing to respond to the needs of current members.

"We are always taking steps to be fiscally responsible even when we are *dreaming big!*"

### **Statement regarding the current pandemic**

Gail G., Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Treasurer introduced the Chairperson of the Board, who made the following statement:

"Good afternoon, Conference members. Before beginning the 2020 Budget presentation, I wanted to assure you that through its Finance Committee, the Board of Trustees is frequently working with Staff to understand the ever-evolving impacts of the pandemic on AFG, Inc.'s financial situation and operating budget. In its legal authority, the Board is authorized and has the responsibility to 'see that our World Service Office operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program.' The Board can review and approve changes to the Budget, as necessary. However, at this moment, we do not yet have enough data to make those changes so the Director of Finance & Operations will review the yet unmodified budget. She will refer to areas where some changes have already been implemented."

### **Presentation of the 2020 Budget**

The Budget presentation, questions and answers, and the Budget itself had been posted to AFG Connects so that Conference members could review this information before the Conference began. Before presenting the 2020 Operating Budget, the Director of Finance & Operations presented some background on the Budget process and how it is approved.

"We begin working on the Budget in October each year. The Budget isn't just prepared by me, but by all the stakeholders in the Budget process. Stakeholder requests flow to the Programs, Finance & Operations, and Administration Directors for consideration.

"We establish timelines to allow for review and discussion at each step. We formulate the Budget internally and then present it to the Finance Committee for their review. We make any suggested changes prior to presenting it to the Board of Trustees in January. The Budget is presented to WSC members for review in April. During the year, the Budget to actual is reviewed every month during Finance Committee meetings, and if needed, a revised budget is presented during the July Board meeting. Most important is the oversight that is provided for the budget. The Budget is constantly reviewed during the year. Any variances are explained and accounted for.

"Each year, we prioritize program and organizational financial goals. We prioritize Strategic Plan goals based on the direction provided by the Board of Trustees. We review current year income and expenses and compare them to the current Budget. We analyze variances and discuss what happened during the previous year. We develop a draft budget—we determine costs (expenses) needed to reach organizational, program, and strategic goals. We also project income based on current revenue activities and any new activities in the upcoming year."

### **Presentation of the 2020 Operating Budget**

The Director introduced the presentation by saying, "The Budget presented today is a deficit budget. Our projected revenues collected will be less than our operating expenses.

"Revenues were projected to be consistent with 2019; although, given the current pandemic situation, we are anticipating our revenues to be lower. However, right now, we do not have enough data to make a reasonable projection. We will review this in July as part of our normal operating procedures, where we will amend the Budget.

"We reduced expenses where costs were flexible, such as international travel. The employer portion of the pension benefit was reduced by one percent as well. We have some fixed costs that are consistent each year, and you will see increased printing and postage due to *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* being sold year-round."

#### **Estimated Income**

"The 2020 operating budget lists the 2020 preliminary budget, 2019 revised budget, and 2019 audited actual numbers. Net Literature sales are projected to be \$2,900,000, which is slightly lower than 2019. Again, we will adjust literature sales once we have more accurate data about the impact of the current pandemic. In 2019, net literature sales exceeded budget by \$64,400, which was a great year for sales, especially considering we did not release new literature.

"Contributions are projected to be \$2,000,000, which is slightly lower than the 2019 Budget. In 2019, contributions exceeded budget, but that was due to the large bequests we received. Without those bequests, we would have fallen short of the goal. We will continue to evaluate contributions once we have more data to review. We are always continuing to develop ways to contribute. We will have additional ways to contribute in the Mobile App, and the online store will be updated to allow for enhanced member use and ability to contribute.

"In order to fund specific projects and in line with their role, the Board of Trustees approve transfers from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund for specific purposes. There is a normal transfer for operations and there may be others to fund Strategic Plan initiatives."

#### **Projected Expenses**

"Several new initiatives are planned for this year. We are moving forward with a Mobile App. We plan to start the online store redesign after the summer.

"Labor costs are a large part of our total operating expenses. Those elements are salaries, payroll taxes, and employee benefits such as health and life insurance and pension contributions. In comparison to the 2019 budget, there is only a 1% increase. We continue to be consistent with nonprofit industry standards.

"Building Occupancy relates to costs to maintain the building, as well as depreciation, insurance, and utilities. Office services & expenses includes computer/technology/accounting software and website maintenance costs.

#### **Member Strategies**

"We are expanding technology by launching the Mobile App this year and enhancing trilingual communication. We have two translators on staff but in order to reduce the backlog of translated materials, we need to hire freelance translators to help in this effort.

#### **Public Strategies**

"We are performing a competitive analysis in order to identify potential threats to Al-Anon and making efforts to address our trademark and copyright violations. This is really important as we continue to provide electronic literature."

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

- We note increased revenue from magazine sales, is this from *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) or *The Forum* as well?

*When AFA became an inventory item, it increased both expense and revenue.*

- Public service announcement (PSA) campaign expenses went down in 2019, up again in 2020. Can you explain?

*There are two expense components for PSAs, distribution and production. The cost of production went down in 2019 because we only produced one PSA in 2019. We plan to produce two in 2020.*

- What portion of literature sales are from e-books?

*E-books are a very small portion (less than one percent) of literature sales.*

- Under 2020 operating budget revenues, you mentioned potential opportunities for revenue in the Mobile App? What are they?

*We will be selling subscriptions for the premium content of the Mobile App, as well as providing the opportunity to make contributions through the Mobile App.*

- How does the cancellation of the WSC affect total costs and the Equalized Expense?

*There were costs involved in cancellation, and we are still wrapping up the process to come up with final figures. The information will go to the Board before its July meeting.*

- Is the cost for translation services the same in the abbreviated WSC?

*The costs are less due to the shorter time involved.*

- Reference was made to the Strategic Plan goal to study threats from other organizations. Can you expand on this?

*We recognize that in today's world, members have many choices for finding answers/solutions to dealing with the family disease, unlike when Al-Anon first started. The Board has asked the Staff to get a better understanding of how other organizations are attracting members, to see if there are ways we need to evolve, to attract younger members particularly.*

- For trademark/copyright violations, are there legal costs?

*The general retainer for legal services we pay each year covers most of our legal needs.*

- Why do we list \$2,000 for Canadian office expenses when we don't have an office there?

*We do have expenses to maintain a Canadian mailing address, as well as mailing expenses and taxes.*

- Regarding the Equalized Expense, if my Area would choose to donate any refund back to WSO, can it be converted to contribution?

*Yes, it can be converted to a donation.*

- Will the Mobile App be in three languages?

*Yes, we are currently testing English; English, French, and Spanish will be launched simultaneously.*

- How will the update on the impact of the pandemic on the Budget be relayed in July?

*Information will be relayed through the COB Letter, which is posted shortly after each Board meeting.*

A motion to approve the 2019 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #6 on page 62.

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

## 2020 OPERATING BUDGET

		2020		2019
		Budget		Actual
<b><u>Estimated Revenue</u></b>				
Literature Sales less cost of printing		2,900,000		2,914,454
Contributions		2,000,000		2,186,645
Magazine sales		395,000		274,853
Investment Income		55,000		57,627
Reserve Fund transfers		293,160		-
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>		<b>5,643,160</b>		<b>5,433,579</b>
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>				
Salaries		3,232,914		3,094,684
Payroll Taxes		244,300		228,091
Employee Benefits		449,177		458,739
Total Labor Costs		3,926,391		3,781,514
Building Occupancy		278,200		276,198
Packing & Shipping (Net)		(10,000)		(46,178)
Postage		191,000	#	175,827
Telephone (Phone & Internet)		51,000		50,628
Stationery & Office Supplies		66,000		58,554
Office Services & Expenses		261,000		284,407
Repairs & Maintenance		17,000		14,693
Travel & Meetings		207,000		219,655
Direct Conference Costs (Net)		73,000		53,661
Conference Interpretation		25,000		21,553
Legal & Audit		71,275		70,750
Printing		187,000		101,061
Canadian Office		2,000		1,726
General services meeting		38,000		(1,006)
In-Office Volunteers		200		200
Membership Survey		-		-
PSA Campaign		101,400		68,192
Bank and Credit Card Fees		92,400		93,144
Miscellaneous		17,000		22,691
Postretirement Health Benefits		70,000		66,348
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>		<b>5,664,866</b>		<b>5,313,618</b>
Strategic Plan Initiatives		68,160		-
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)		40,000		35,442
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>5,773,026</b>		<b>5,349,060</b>



## 2020 OUT-OF-REGION SELECTION FOR REGIONAL COMMITTEES ON TRUSTEES

Cheré F., Trustee, Regional Committee on Trustees Selection Work Group Chairperson

Each Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates drawn by lot. The Work Group Chairperson explained the process for selecting the Out-of-Regional Delegates. She noted that each RCT would meet within several days to elect the RCT Chairperson and Alternate.

### The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE(S)
<b>US Southeast</b>	Phil G., Panel 58, KS Joellyn P., Panel 60, IL(S) Emily D-C., Panel 60, NY(S)	Katy P., Panel 60, IA Donna S., Panel 59, NJ
<b>US Northwest</b>	Lori H., Panel 60, MO Molly C., Panel 58, NY(N) Christine W., Panel 58, IL(N)	Heather M., Panel 60, UT Fred H., Panel 59, MN(N)
<b>Canada East</b>	Noah P., Panel 60, NH	Rosanna H., Panel 58, CA(N)
<b>Canada Central</b>	Marcia M., Panel 58, CA(S)	Patti P., Panel 58, HI
<b>Canada West</b>	DeLynn H., Panel 60, AR	Betty A., Panel 58, MN(S)

### RCT Training/RCT Caucus

Several days after the selection of the Out-of-Region Delegates for the RCTs at Conference, each RCT caucused via web conferencing to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. Also selected was an Alternate (from the Region's Delegates) who will assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required.

### The Chairpersons and Alternates for this year's RCTs are:

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
<b>US Southeast</b>	Barbara T., Panel 59, GA	Mary Jo Y., Panel 59, ALNWFL
<b>US Northwest</b>	Katie W., Panel 59, OR	Margaret R., Panel 60, NE
<b>Canada East</b>	Wally C., Panel 59, MP	Claudette D., Panel 58, QC(W)
<b>Canada Central</b>	Mintie G., Panel 58, MB/NWO	Bill H., Panel 60, ON(N)
<b>Canada West</b>	Joy F., Panel 60, SK	Sharon F., Panel 59, AB/NWT

## SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

### Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Jeffrey F., Chairperson, Panel 58, Pennsylvania

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

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

"The Nominating Committee meets during the October Board meeting. Using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for TAL and ECRPM. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates that the Nominating Committee has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided at the January Board meeting. At the WSC, the TAL and ECRPM candidates are given traditional approval by the Conference and may be elected by the Board at the Annual Board meeting following the WSC.

"In September 2019, we received nine TAL résumés and one résumé for the ECRPM. The nine members of the CCT were efficient in performing the work, which allowed us to meet the required deadline. We did have a few glitches during the process. Some files needed to be re-sent due to a problem with readability. Also, we had to verify and update email addresses from some CCT members. And, we worked through some issues downloading, opening, and submitting files. In the end, CCT members were diligent in making certain everything was handled correctly.

"Being a member of the CCT can be difficult. Due to our principles of anonymity and the confidential nature of the information we receive, we are a Committee that does not communicate. We cannot bounce ideas around or ask one another's opinion on what is presented to us. For the most part, we work alone and only have our Higher Power to talk to and ask for guidance with our work. I received an email from a member of the CCT which said, 'I'm thankful I do not have to do this too often. I found this much more difficult than when I do similar evaluations for my work. Please advise if there is something I have to redo or rethink.' My response to this statement was easy. 'I understand what you mean about how difficult this process can be. I would never tell you to redo or rethink anything you have done in this process. The only thing I will say is that if you are comfortable with your process for scoring, then you have to trust yourself and your Higher Power.'

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

"It has been my honor and privilege to serve the World Service Conference as the CCT Chair."

## Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmations

Lynette K., Trustee, Nominating Committee Chairperson

The Chairperson welcomed Conference members to this affirmation session. A presentation on the Trustee nomination and affirmation process had been posted on AFG Connects. Here is a summary of that presentation:

This year, you will continue a tradition of affirming Trustee candidates—as well as Board officers and members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). The tradition dates back to the finalization of the Conference after 1961 when the Board of Directors was converted to a Board of Trustees and a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed.

As the Concepts of Service were developing, the process for the World Service Conference to **affirm** nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees was established.

What follows are the steps taken to bring the nominees forward.

### Application Process

Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee résumés are solicited from the fellowship each year to fill three or more open Trustee at Large and three or more open Regional Trustee positions. Delegates and Area Chairs receive a letter from the Executive Director in January and in June.

Qualified members of the fellowship are provided the opportunity to review the qualifications for Trustee and complete the résumé form at al-anon.org. The form allows for completion over time.

For Regional Trustee applicants, the completed résumé form is sent to the Area Delegate. Candidates for Regional Trustee are selected through their Area process, which may require voting by the Area World Service Committee or Assembly, in accordance with Area autonomy. The Delegate submits the Area approved résumé for Regional Trustee to the WSO by August 15.

For Trustee at Large, the completed résumé form is submitted directly to the WSO, whose Staff notifies the Delegate from each applicant's home Area. Delegates are asked to confirm whether or not they have feedback about the applicant.

All Trustee résumés must be submitted to the WSO by August 15 of the year prior to possible election. Applicants whose résumés are received by the deadline are sent an additional written question.

### Review Process

The Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) receives the Regional Trustee résumés for its Region as well as the responses to the additional written question for review and ranking. RCTs consist of the Regions' Delegates and Out-of-Region Delegates who were chosen by lot.

The Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and the Nominating Committee receive the Trustee at Large résumés and responses for review and ranking.

The members of each Committee work independently and conscientiously to confidentially rate the applicants by September 30. The RCT and CCT Chairpersons tally the scores and rankings from each member and send their scoresheet to the WSO.

At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee combines their own independent review of the résumés and—considering the input from the RCT or CCT—select up to two candidates per open Regional Trustee and Trustee at Large position to join the Board at the January Board meeting for lunch and the interview process.

After the October Board meeting, the RCT Chairpersons notify all regional Delegates of the candidate(s) for their Region and the CCT Chair notifies the Area Delegates of the candidate(s) for Trustee at Large. RCT and CCT members are provided the opportunity to voice any objection to the candidates by December 15.

## Selection of Nominees

At the January Board meeting, the candidates are introduced to the Board. Each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their Al-Anon recovery and service experience before answering interview questions. Using this information, the Board nominates one member per open position.

### WSC Affirmation Process

At Conference, voting members are asked to give traditional approval to the nominees. Although the Board of Trustees is a self-electing Board according to the Bylaws of the Corporation, traditional approval by the entire Conference gives the Board the direction and voice of the fellowship.

All nominees receiving traditional approval may be legally elected at the Board's Annual Meeting. These Trustees will serve Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. as well as the fellowship as a whole.

Continuing the virtual WSC session, two members of the Nominating Committee presented a skit to illustrate the thoughtful and thorough process that the Trustee selection involves. The Chairperson then invited the Chairperson of one Regional Committee on Trustees, and the Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees to share about what it is like to review and evaluate the résumés, the process they used, and how many hours they committed to the process.

### Kay C., Chairperson, US South Central Regional Committee on Trustees, Panel 58, Texas East

"My experience as the Chair of the US South Central Regional Committee on Trustees (SCRCT) was very positive and an opportunity for growth. The SCRCT consisted of the Delegate members of the South Central Region (Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas East, and Texas West) and three Out-of-Region Delegates.

"As Chair of the Committee, my administrative duties consisted of providing the applicants' résumés to the Committee, compiling Committee members' scores and comments, and providing the Committee with information from the Nominating Committee and Board of Trustees. The total time spent on administrative duties was minimal, about two hours spread out over two months.

"As a reviewer, I knew both applicants personally, which made it a personal growth experience. To help limit my bias and keep to principles above personalities, I printed the résumés and marked out the names, and then I prayed and asked for God's guidance. After scoring, I set aside my results for one week, repeated the process, and compared my scorings. Some scorings were different, so I again prayed for guidance and reconciled the differences. I spent about three to four hours over two weeks for the review process.

"During the process, I had some general questions and suggestions about the Regional and at Large Trustee selection process, not the applicants, which I reasoned out with my assigned Trustee. By participating in this process, I am confident that through the collective wisdom of the SCRCT, the Nominating Committee, and the Board of Trustees that the best person for the South Central Region was chosen."

### **Jeffrey F., CCT Chairperson, Panel 58, Pennsylvania**

"Excited, overwhelmed, tedious, unsure, and alone are words that go through my mind when I think back to the first time I went through the résumé scoring process. I thought I was ready to read and score the résumés of 19 candidates for three positions because I had done the research. I had read many résumés in my professional life and was certain this would be the same. I was wrong.

"The process was difficult. I spent several hours scoring résumés. Due to the confidential nature of the information, one has to work alone without input or feedback. Although I was organized, went through the information, made notes, and referred to the information about the Board's needs, it wasn't enough. I needed additional guidance for one of the most important jobs I have done in service to AI-Anon. That's when I reached out for help from my Higher Power.

"Fulfilling, spiritual, relieved, satisfied, and confident are words that go through my mind when I think of the résumé scoring process now. I have found a sense of satisfaction from the many résumés I read and scored the last two years. With my Higher Power and the belief that I am being fair and honest, I can honestly say I am confident in what I have done and that the process works. I am truly grateful to have had this experience and to have been a part of this process."

### **Lynette K., Trustee, Nominating Committee Chairperson**

"Before looking at the Trustee applicant résumés for the first time, I prayed and asked my Higher Power for guidance. I carefully read each résumé and wrote down initial scores and comments based on my gut feeling. Then, I waited a few days. During those days, each time I thought about the résumés, I asked my Higher Power for help to do His will and not my own.

"Then I carefully reread each résumé again and adjusted the scores and comments. Then I waited a few more days. Once again, during those days, I prayed and asked my Higher Power for guidance. I reread all the résumés one last time and adjusted the scores and comments. Finally, I was ready to submit my results. During this part of the process I spent nine to ten hours reviewing and re-reviewing the résumés.

"As part of being on the Nominating Committee, I participated in a meeting that lasted eight hours with the majority of the meeting being spent on discussing the Trustee applicant résumés. At various times during that meeting, I asked my Higher Power for guidance. All totaled, I spent about 17 to 18 hours reviewing, re-reviewing, and discussing the Trustee applicant résumés.

"I truly believe that my Higher Power guided my decisions throughout the entire process."

The Nominating Committee Chairperson then continued with the Affirmation Process. "Today, you are asked to give traditional affirmation for the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, and the Board officers. A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority to be affirmed.

"Each Conference member may ask questions or state any facts which you have reason to believe were not known by the trusted servants who have participated in the nominating process and that are relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each of us take our responsibility seriously. Likewise, the Bylaws of the Corporation articulate the Right of Decision given to the Board to elect or not elect an affirmed nominee.

"The candidate selection process begins with prayer. Members of the various committees pray to their Higher Power for guidance before they begin reviewing the candidates' résumés. By the time a Trustee candidate is brought to the Conference floor, at least 30 trusted servants—a combination of Trustees and Delegates—have reviewed the résumés. In addition to the reviews, the candidates have been interviewed by the Board of Trustees. The Delegate of the Area where the candidate lives has had an opportunity to voice any concerns they have about the candidate. A lot of time, prayer, and consideration have brought these nominees to you. We ask that you respect that work and remember the spiritual principle of trust when considering whether the candidates are acceptable to serve on the Board of Trustees."

The electronic voting process was explained, and Conference members were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments about all candidates. Any nominees present were asked to step away from their computer during discussion of their candidacy.

### **The following Trustees, and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2020 WSC:**

#### **Trustees at Large:**

Therese (Teri) M., second three-year term  
Jeryl (Jeri) W., first three-year term

#### **Regional Trustee:**

Diane B., US South Central, first three-year term  
Cynthia (Cindy) M., US Southwest, first three-year term

#### **Board Officers**

Lynette K., Chairperson  
Rosa (Rosie) M., Vice Chairperson  
Catherine (Cathy) T., Treasurer

### **The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2020-2021:**

Debbie G., second one-year term, Chairperson  
Karen W-P., second one-year term  
Terry F., first one-year term  
Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

### **The Board announced the appointment of:**

Katherine (Kay) R., 2020-2021 Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson



## CLOSING SESSION

Gail G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Rosie M., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) was very different from previous Conferences. The unforeseen health crisis made change very necessary, and a “virtual/hybrid” WSC was the result. In closing the virtual portion of the WSC, the Chairperson of the Board shared the following:

“The 2020 WSC theme, ‘Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision,’ has taken a huge step to becoming a reality! I would like to congratulate you all, the Board of Trustees, for *dreaming big* enough to have the courage to undertake our first virtual WSC, the World Service Office (WSO) Staff who have worked tirelessly and nonstop these last few weeks in preparing for this virtual WSC, and to all the World Service Conference members for your participation, your perseverance, and your patience. We have come together in a new format, we have listened, we have ‘chatted,’ and we have fulfilled our legal obligations with the approval of the 2019 Auditor’s Report, the 2019 World Service Office Annual Report, and the 2020 Finance Committee Report. We have voted on the affirmation of nominees put forth to assure we will be in a position to carry on the work which began 60 years ago. We once again offered interpretation at our WSC and, with the aid of pre-Conference training sessions facilitated by our amazing Tech Team, we once again voted electronically (quite seamlessly!).

“Along the way, we have faced our fear of change, we have faced our fear of the unknown, and we have faced our fear of technology. Sometimes these fears can act as catalysts in bringing us closer together by fostering an atmosphere of caring, support, and empathy. I feel fairly confident in speaking for us all when I say, ‘I miss the hugs!’ but I still feel the love.

“Even though the work of the virtual Conference is concluding, the week is not over. More is happening on AFG Connects as the hybrid portion of this Conference continues. And, I would like to extend an invitation to all WSC members to join us on Friday for the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Annual Meetings.

“So, in summing up, I will say we did presume goodwill, we will never forget the 2020 virtual WSC, and I am truly thankful to have had the opportunity to share it with you. We are making history! We are living the *dream*! And don’t you just know that Lois and Anne are giving us a fist pump!”

The Conference Chairperson wrapped up the virtual meeting, saying: “This week, all Conference members have displayed resiliency,



tenacity, and the ability to conquer obstacles with triumphant results. Members of the virtual Conference displayed a spiritual tone, fortifying our unity and goodwill. With our combined efforts, we ensure that AI-Anon world services will continue to be available to AI-Anon members. Our participation enabled our group conscience decisions to be made and it will then become the beginning of conversations in your respective Areas.

"This unfortunate pandemic afforded us the opportunity to forge through with our plans to continue with this Conference in a different format. Culminating our virtual World Service Conference, I witnessed respect for each other, patience in our voting sessions, initiating a new method of cheering each other with our computer clapping hands, seeing you as you peered into the screen to greet each other and viewing the loving interchange among each other. It was inspiring. Your participation throughout this week and willingness to collaborate in this new format made it a reality, productive, and a success. Among other things, we went through the Regional Committee on Trustee Out-of-Region Delegate Selection Process; reviewed and voted on our Finance Committee, Auditor's, and Annual Reports; and acted on our nominating and affirmation process.

"Conference members, we have made history, and it will be recorded in the annals of AI-Anon Family Groups as having celebrated our first ever virtual/hybrid World Service Conference in April 2020. We can be recognized and perhaps remembered in the future as resourceful trendsetters and visionaries.

"We openly discussed opportunities and challenges, focusing on solutions. Our spiritual principles transcended into our Conference service roles during our virtual/hybrid World Service Conference. We each grasped our conversations with much enthusiasm, harmony, and responsiveness.

"I think none of us ever imagined that this day would arrive, yet, 'Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision' is what occurred. Our Higher Power had a different *vision* for us, provided us the tools to *dream big* and provided us a different format to utilize in 2020. We thank the WSO Staff, Conference Leadership Team, Board and Executive Committee members for your support and hard work in this effort to help us have a platform for our Conference and to the Conference members for your willingness to participate in a new way.

"We convey a heartfelt thank you and feel so much gratitude for all that has transpired with your contributions. To all Delegates, we wish you much success in sharing the Conference message to your members. I now close this *virtual* segment of our 2020 World Service Conference!" With that, the Chairperson tapped the gavel to close the *virtual* Conference.

# DISCUSSION SEGMENT

## CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Thirty-four Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) were submitted by the deadline—19 were submitted by Panel 58; nine were from Panel 59; three came from Panel 60; two were submitted by Trustees; and one was from Staff.

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) reviewed the 34 CAIs to determine whether any could be resolved using the *Service Manual* or explained by the WSO administrative Staff. As a result, nine topics were omitted.

The CLT presented the remaining 25 topics as submitted; similar topics were *not* combined. Prior to Conference, members were invited to vote for the eight topics that were most important to them. This approach is designed to identify the natural grouping of overall priorities.

All Conference members had an opportunity to share their thoughts on the two topics that received the most votes. These sharings took place on AFG Connects.

### Topic:

How is Al-Anon going to reach new members in the 21st century and the millennial generation?

### Why this CAI is important:

The average age of Al-Anon members is 56-60 years old. If we continue doing the same things, Al-Anon Family Groups will struggle with difficult times. It is important for Al-Anon to explore new ways to reach out to potential members.

### Conference members responded:

- The Mobile App is a very important step in attracting younger people. Producing it is one thing, but increasing its visibility is another. I don't know what our plans are regarding the subscription cost for the premium content, but pricing needs to take into consideration that getting people to try it is paramount.
- We need to collaborate better (develop/increase collaboration) with A.A. through public outreach efforts at the local, District, and Area levels.
- Developing “how-to” skits, scripts, and training sessions/videos for our Areas, Districts, Information Services, Public Outreach Coordinators, and members could lead to more year-round public outreach by all of us.
- Run PSAs on game apps or other electronic media that young people frequent. Make sure that local A.A. intergroups have Al-Anon meeting information. Make information available to colleges. Encourage Districts and Areas to do more than distribute *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) for public outreach (although this is a great tool). At the Al-Anon International Convention, have a “young people’s meeting” or a panel of younger members. Have young speakers at Area or District functions.
- New members are *new*. It doesn’t matter what age someone is when they come into Al-Anon. Constantly repeating that the average age of a member is 56-60 seems to be disrespectful and irrelevant. People come into Al-Anon when their lives have been affected and they learn about Al-Anon—the two circumstances *intersect*. If a newcomer who is 55 comes into Al-Anon and is constantly hearing how we want new, young people, why would they stay?

People who attend electronic meetings are Al-Anon members, yet we are creating a separate class of members who are not part of our World Service Conference Structure. If we want to “reach out” to new members, we have to stop creating structures that exclude.

Reaching millennials is a different topic. Do we understand how important intersectionality is to younger people? It strikes me as patronizing to imagine that I could have an answer for what someone else should want. If Al-Anon wants to *attract* young people, how are we asking them?

- We need to ask the young people. I came into the program younger, at age 40, but I am now older. I can’t say what is attractive to the younger generation today. It would make sense to ask the young people who are in the program what keeps them in and what might bring others who need it into the program. I know that a philanthropic and social change mindset is much more of a focus for younger people.
- Having a Mobile App is definitely a great way to make Al-Anon and meetings accessible to younger generations. Given how popular I see Instagram is with younger people, I wish there were something like that—a community where anonymity could be preserved, but also community fostered—thinking big!
- Instant availability to online meetings is a must. This generation is not going to wait; they fly through their cell phones and tablets to get the information they are looking for immediately. The term, “Al-Anon,” has to be present on these platforms, and there needs to be enough information to inspire individuals to search or use the associated links. Potential members do not process ideas like I do or have. Getting these folks to look at our posters or online articles is one thing, getting them to a meeting, online or face-to-face, is another hurdle. These folks are highly motivated, highly tech savvy—the now generation. With a couple of clicks on their phones, the results they are looking for are there. We need to be able to meet and match this demand from the technical era kids.
- Here are some ideas:
  - Talk to younger members
  - Be more inclusive (pronouns, sexuality, etc.)
  - Address that some Conference Approved Literature language may seem outdated to young people
  - Make the transition from Alateen to Al-Anon less “scary”
  - The public service announcements (PSAs) give good information. Is it possible to make PSAs that are done in a “gaming” or “anime” style? Younger people may relate to them, and they would not need to be remade as often
- Encourage and publicize the formation of more Young Adults in Al-Anon meetings (open to any Al-Anon or Alateen member). Young adults have a different set of concerns, e.g., raising small children, getting or completing an education, or career training. Young Adults in Al-Anon meetings could also make it easier for Alateen members to transition into Al-Anon.



Younger people have much more confidence in themselves, and they are in the workplace striving to do their best. They want a quick fix—the best and most effective. I envision the importance of working very hard on the “Goal: Public” of our Strategic Plan: “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.”

The younger generation prefers social media and is much more inclined to go to online meetings. I think it is very important that we work very hard to include online meetings at the same level as face-to-face meetings.

- I would like to look at this from a slightly different perspective, and that is *name recognition*. Many times, when talking to random people who clearly are qualified and need our program, I discover that they have no idea what Al-Anon is. A.A. has name recognition; Al-Anon does not. Somehow our contemporary culture has skipped over us. Think about how many times in movies and TV we see A.A. meetings portrayed and then think of how many times our meetings are portrayed. Maybe looking at this from a meta-view can help us see what we need to add to what we already do to reach both potential members and younger members.



- As far as I can see, we have not been standing still. We have pretty good *20/20 vision*. We are reaching new (younger and older) people with a variety of methods: print (AFA), social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), digitally and electronically (296 meetings as of February 25, 2020 on various platforms), and our new Mobile App.

So, this might be where the *dreaming* part comes in. In the parlance of today, we are going to be slammed! Are we ready for this new influx of all kinds of people? Are our servers ready? Are we fully staffed, and are our current service positions filled? Are the links of service in place? Do we need to (quickly) develop new links of service for the electronic meetings?

We've gotten pretty good at public outreach. We have built it, and they will come. It's the membership outreach that I dream about. How well do I care about the people that are already here, who have heard the message but may need some encouragement and support to take the next step? How well do I care about the newcomers, who have heard the message but are overwhelmed? How well do I care about myself?

- We have strong foundations in place for reaching out to *all* potential members. We are forward-thinking in incorporating digital strategies into our public outreach while continuing to use tried and true methods. Name, or brand recognition, is one of the keys to ensuring potential members know we exist which is why I believe using our professional name, Al-Anon Family Groups, and our triangle logo are key for our Mobile App.

Reframing our goal may be a key. The language of the CAI, “...Al-Anon Family Groups will struggle with difficult times,” is similar to the strategy to “identify potential threats from other organizations.” Both are fear-driven. To what “difficult times” does this refer? Financial difficulty—fear we can't pay the bills or that our ample reserve is not large enough? Or that we aren't diverse enough to be all things to all people? Al-Anon is enough for the members and the potential members that need what we have to offer. Al-Anon is for those that want it, not those that need it.

- The millennial generation's world is tech-savvy, immediate, and they demand answers and help now. The development of an app is critical to our survival as an organization. I believe that, without it, we will eventually become irrelevant. Social media platforms offer Al-Anon the best opportunity to reach the next Al-Anon generation. What is concerning is how this new outreach approach will be in-line with our Traditions and Concepts. I believe we will have to seriously look at our Traditions and Concepts, respectfully, as our foundation, and, realistically, as we face this new world.

Our processes for making a change in Al-Anon are often cumbersome, laborious, and emotionally-charged. In the race for supporting the sick and suffering, we are sadly lagging. Al-Anon has slowly grown over the years to accept people who are different. This remains a challenge today. I say that as a woman of color in this fellowship. I have been made to feel (on occasion) that people who look like me are not welcome here, and it is 2020. The next generation of Al-Anon is very different, very diverse, and has no patience regarding the lack of inclusiveness. Our media and outreach must reflect this, or they will not come.



## Topic:

Our Envisioned Future sees Al-Anon being a global organization with barrier-free access to the program, how do you see this manifesting?

### Why this CAI is important:

Today, approximately 40% of our groups exist outside the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. This percentage does not even include electronic meetings, which are without geographical limitations. These groups and meetings are growing, while our face-to-face groups seem to be getting smaller. The creation of an actual worldwide group conscience is not only desirable, but imperative. All voices must be heard. How to make Al-Anon a truly global organization is a difficult task, with many visions. Input from the Conference can only further this goal.

### Conference members responded:

- For the WSC to be barrier-free would require changes to the AFG, Inc. Bylaws in the US and Canada, and to the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter. While these are tasks that would need to be performed, they cannot be taken lightly. So, if we threw out all the “legal” problems and cost of such a program, what would I envision?

I envision the new WSC as being similar to a United Nations meeting, where representatives of all countries are sitting in a room, everyone has a translator, and we discuss how we can carry the message of hope to family and friends of alcoholics, support ourselves as a fellowship, and conduct the business of Al-Anon. Who would sit at the table? All of the US Delegates, Canadian Delegates, Bermuda, General Service Office (GSO) Delegates, Evolving National Structure Delegates, Board of Trustees (BOT), and World Service Office (WSO) Staff. Some of it may be digital, but a lot has to be face-to-face to get it to work. The love and exchange of ideas are just not the same over a computer screen as in person.

The WSO would then be an office for all countries with a multinational office(s) with the BOT being from regions of the world.

I can easily envision (bar there are no legal issues) adding Latin American Delegates, Australian, New Zealand, and European Delegates to the WSC with voice and vote. I can also envision a discussion about changing the Area boundaries in the US. Electronic meetings would develop a service structure or a method to send a representative(s) to the meeting.

I would see us starting by establishing a task force with WSC Delegates (past or present), electronic meeting members, BOT, WSO Staff, GSO Delegates, and GSO Staff to chart out a plan.

- I would like to spend more time looking at the concept of a global organization (like we’re doing now) and ask, “How can we strengthen our Areas and move forward on other plans at the same time?” We have some *big dreams*. A friend of mine tells me to decide based on the rewards, not the risks. I like that. We can move based on faith, not fear.



But there’s a second part to our theme: “with 20|20 Vision.” It reminds me of the words from page 210 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) [P-24/27]: “For Al-Anon, prudence is a middle ground, a channel between fear on the one hand and recklessness on the other. Prudence creates a climate of harmony, effectiveness and consistent spiritual progress. These Warranties express the wisdom of taking thought for the future based on lessons of the past. They protect us against needless errors and the natural human temptations of wealth, prestige and power.”

Can we find that middle ground? I am grateful for all the voices I have heard this week. I know our combined wisdom will serve us well.

- Might we consider that the repeated concern over how hard it is to fill service positions signals a need for us to adapt to a changing reality and a changing world?

The *vision* I resonate with urges us to open our minds to a more fluid (my word) service structure and to a Conference that has robust, worldwide participation, with representatives from electronic meetings and every country and developing structure in the world. Such a *vision* of what Al-Anon could become takes my breath away. It’s an envisioned future I can get behind!

- The stronger that our present Structure is, the better it will be able to adapt to more inclusion. That means the groups need to be connected, the face-to-face groups as well as the electronic meetings. The electronic meetings could be divided into something called Districts, alphabetically, by language usage or some other filter. Then they could elect officers from the Current Mailing Address (CMAs) of the groups and have virtual District meetings. This is where the connection is hard for me to see. Could these CMAs and District Representatives (DRs) attend the Area meetings in the Area where they live? The reporting would be difficult with too much information. If the Seventh Tradition is put into practice, there would be funds to use for travel so that the Districts could be divided into our Areas. They could travel to the Area meetings or attend electronically.

I feel that we still need to encourage face-to-face meetings, but the trend seems to be heading to the devices. If we can connect these virtual meetings, it might be a model for gradually connecting the world.

- I began considering this question by considering what types of barriers might be a block to people being involved in Al-Anon because, ultimately, it comes down to individuals across the globe who need us, to be able to join with us, because we need them, too. I found that these may need to be addressed:

- Physical—this is everything from accessibility for the physically disabled, to are there ways to get there, to whether they have access and equipment to join in online.
- Geopolitical—can people join in regardless of location or politics? In some places, there may be barriers to travel, or suspicion that we are a subversive organization that fosters independent thought. Different political leaders may discourage organizations that aren't government affiliated.
- Cultural—are there barriers to some people meeting or speaking with each other? Are there culturally defined norms that are at odds with our spiritual principles? Are there cultural biases against lifestyles, appearances, self-identities that would result in people feeling unwelcome?
- Religious—are there expectations that members will have a specific religious perspective, and those who do not are "outsiders"? Many of the meetings in my Area meet in church buildings, and we explain that we are a spiritual program, not a religious one, and that the churches have rooms available and cheap rent. But is that counteracted by using a prayer from a specific religious tradition during the meeting?
- Language—this may be the least concerning barrier as translation programs become more and more instantaneous and accurate.
- Generational—consistently treating people with respect and compassion, whether older or younger, and recognizing that different people work the program differently.
- Attitudes—the ever-present "we've never done it that way before" may be the most damaging of all, and there is always the idea that needing outside help is weak or unnecessary. "I don't understand it, so it must be bad" is a factor, too, as is a lack of understanding of the disease concept.

The bottom line is that we must be willing to meet people where they are, not where we are.

- Although the idea of a global structure seems enticing, it seems to me that until we can accomplish unity and inclusion among the many groups, Districts, and Areas in the WSC Structure, we may be biting off more than we can chew. We need to be a healthy Structure before we can go global and extend our hand to others. What would we have to offer? We could help other structures globally to develop, but how would we help them stay involved in the links of service if we can't do that for ourselves at this time. If we venture into a global structure, I think we run the risk of spreading ourselves too thin. A Higher Power is here to save the world—not Al-Anon.

As long as our membership continues to dwindle, we need to confront that problem and not use global Al-Anon as a diversion.

- My *vision* is a traditional body of all the service structures, GSOs, and evolving structures to discuss and form a truly global Al-Anon group conscience. Much like our World Service Conference, Delegates from structures all over the world could meet in person or electronically to be "the voice of worldwide Al-Anon" and create a truly global group conscience.

I can foresee the need to create a multinational corporation, with a board of trustees, with the legal power to manage the worldwide structure's funds and services and to have the legal authority to protect Al-Anon's name worldwide, basically filling

the same role Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. does for the WSC Structure.

There is a myriad of practical issues relating to representation, voting, and financing of this global structure. We do not even know if service structures in other countries share our *vision* of one global structure. As the world gets "smaller," and we learn to participate with those with different languages and cultures, this envisioned future seems not only possible but necessary.

- With the challenges we've faced in recent months and how we've come through them, I can't help but feel we are ready to move forward with planning a way to accomplish this goal. With technology today and spiritual principles supporting us, I believe it is time to move forward. I do recognize there are all kinds of differences in people/groups around the world, but there are ways to overcome those challenges if we just practice and apply our program. Everyone should have the opportunity to find the help I have found in Al-Anon, and I believe we have the tools to do this. I truly believe that the energy spent on this topic will make our entire organization stronger and be of benefit to every Area.

I agree with the idea of beginning with thought forces and task forces to address this particular question of how to truly become a global organization. We need to include members outside of the US and Canada. We need their input and ideas. I envision a structure around the world like we have through the WSO with groups, Districts, and Areas.

- I'm having difficulty envisioning what a global organization may look like, let alone decide that's the way forward. We have discussed technology and the rapid pace of our younger generations who use the communication tools available to them, much faster than most of us. I do not believe this will change as we will always be a step or two behind as we take the time to look at whether we even wish to take the next step. At this time, our Al-Anon program is global, do we want the organization to be on that level, or do we want to support those structures similar to what we do today?

A number of considerations impact barrier-free access to Al-Anon, such as language, culture, the continent we live on, funding, and time to invest in this program. Today, when I think of barrier-free, it is access to literature, the WSO, my Area, and so on; but as a new member, their barrier-free is different. They wish to have immediate access to information on the disease of alcoholism and how to get help for themselves and their families.

- We have to start by taking care of what we already have:
  - We have to release everything coming from WSO in all three languages simultaneously.
  - Once we have French and Spanish on the same standing as English, we need to expand into other languages that already have meetings.
  - We need to remember that the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) is our home for any type of worldwide group conscience expression—this already exists! The IAGSM could work toward fully integrating international service structures into a truly World Service Conference with the rest of us. We should invest in this.



We need to *dream* big things into existence:

- We must expand our electronic availability to match the current culture to ensure barrier-free access. We need to invest financially in current platforms and keep up with them as they change.
- WSO's cooperation with international AI-Anon structures—we need to support the WSO financially to enable the WSO to assist other countries when they are ready to create their own GSOs, when they need assistance, and when they request WSO presence at their service conferences. What a privilege.

This is only the beginning of the conversation...may it *explode*.

- Maybe it is time to seriously rethink our global structure by cultivating a platform that reaches out with barrier-free access. We just experienced this process with our virtual World Service Conference. I see a blending of face-to-face and electronic connections—a true hybrid process. When COVID-19 appeared, we stepped up to the opportunity to test this, and it worked, and we see this as a reality.

I also love that we are thinking of the barrier-free access and are currently using electronic platforms to have meetings.

More to be revealed. I am grateful that I am experiencing ground-level solutions to make this real.

## ELECTRONIC MEETING WORK GROUP (EMWG)

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson

The report of the Electronic Meeting Work Group was posted to AFG Connects, and Conference members were invited to share their comments over a 24-hour period.

The Chairperson began the presentation by introducing and thanking the Work Group members. This report is an update on the activities of the Electronic Meeting Work Group over this past year

### Evolving Relationships

The World Service Office (WSO) has been hosting annual conference calls with phone meeting Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs) since 2015. Due to growth in the numbers of both phone and online meeting registrations, a conference call was held in November 2018 with all the electronic meeting CMAs to see how the WSO could better support the meetings. Both the phone and online CMAs requested more frequent business meetings and conference calls.

The Electronic Meetings community on AFG Connects was created in January 2019. All online and phone meeting CMAs have access. Starting in April 2019, the Group Services Team of the WSO has held bimonthly conference calls with the online meeting CMAs. Phone meeting CMA conference calls are held quarterly.

The electronic meeting CMA conference calls cover a number of topics, including:

- Use of resources on al-anon.org to support the electronic meetings and resources to welcome newcomers
- Use of the Traditions to resolve conflicts in electronic meetings
- Starting new electronic meetings on new platforms
- How to verify and update electronic meeting information

One topic that gets discussed frequently is service. Electronic meeting service positions vary. There is usually a “tech” person to help people navigate accessing a meeting and sharing in a meeting. Some meetings have a Greeter. There are also traditional service positions like Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. Electronic meetings hold regular business meetings. Service is an important part of recovery for electronic meeting members.

Safety in meetings is another common discussion topic. Use of the “Let’s Talk about Safety in AI-Anon Meetings” service tool has been extremely well-received. The challenges being met by an electronic meeting depend on the platform being used. Phone meetings may have verbal disruptors, and email meetings may have text disruptors. The conference calls provide an opportunity for the electronic meetings to share solutions so that the focus of the recovery meetings is *recovery*.

Lastly, sponsorship is often discussed. Some electronic meetings keep a directory of members who are willing to serve as Sponsors. Sometimes the topic of an electronic meeting is sponsorship, but there are limitations, as someone on a call once pointed out, “There is nothing like a real hug and someone to wipe your tears.” Most members will agree that these same issues are shared in their home groups, Districts, and Areas.

### Protecting the AI-Anon Name

The descriptive text of Warranty Four of AI-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service on page 218 of the *Service Manual* states, “It has been said, ‘AI-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience—all except the AI-Anon name itself.’ ... We simply request that the public use of the AI-Anon name be avoided by those who wish to avail themselves of AI-Anon techniques and ideas. In case the AI-Anon name should be misapplied, it would be of course the duty of our World Service Conference to press for discontinuation of such a practice...”

In the world of internet and social media, accomplishing Warranty Four is a challenge. Well-intentioned AI-Anon members are more and more frequently using social media to create meetings and share information and create mobile apps which use copyrighted or trademarked AI-Anon materials. What most don’t understand is that using the trademarked AI-Anon name without WSO approval, even with good intentions, reduces our ability as an organization to protect our name from use by those who seek to profit from it.

The trademark challenge began with the long-held understanding that electronic meetings, starting with the phone meetings, served a public outreach rather than recovery purpose. As our understanding of the purpose of online meetings evolved, so did the need to educate and encourage meeting registration. Registered AI-Anon electronic meetings are given the authority to use the AI-Anon name and logo trademarks.

As the number of registered electronic meetings increased, electronic meeting members were feeling compelled by their commitment to do the right thing. Talking to each other and reasoning things out with one another, the WSO and electronic meeting CMAs were able to correct our guidance regarding posting the AI-Anon Legacies—now, only meetings that sign the annual Conference Approved Literature (CAL) reprint license are allowed to post them. We also worked with our attorneys to determine if we could allow more extensive postings of CAL to be permitted. Unfortunately, copyright law does not support this. We’ll continue to explore.

Early this year, we realized we likely needed to revisit the understanding of authority and responsibility for using and protecting AI-Anon trademarks and copyrights across the World Service

Conference (WSC) Structure as well as for electronic meetings. In the meantime, we continue to encourage those online meetings which have not yet registered to do so and to ask all Al-Anon members to refer those looking for electronic meetings to [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) rather than to browser searches, which return non-registered meetings.

### Challenges of Electronic Meetings

This last year, electronic meetings were faced with:

- Potential changes in Federal Communication Commission (FCC) regulations, which could impact availability of free conferencing applications;
- Dominance and rotation of leadership issues both for phone and online meetings; and
- Technical issues with online platforms.

In light of its clearinghouse role, electronic meeting members and newcomers visiting our meeting search often contact the WSO for answers.

Our Staff can help support members through the electronic meeting registration process. Additionally, Staff members host CMA conference calls to discuss pressing topics and the evolving understanding of how electronic meetings can best support our primary purpose. We are constantly gaining experience, strength, and hope that we can share.

Where we are unable to assist is resolving technical issues. Much like face-to-face meetings must work directly with their facility manager when issues arise with access or location conditions, so too do the electronic meeting hosts need to work with their platform manager to address technical challenges.

This is one of the reasons the WSO is developing the AFG, Inc. Mobile App. Through this we will be able to offer a confidential online meeting platform for facilitating electronic meetings that we can support.

Currently there is no easy way for electronic meetings to give and receive contributions. The only way to effectively contribute today is via Al-Anon online contributions, which presents a challenge if the members would like their contribution to be credited to their electronic meetings.

Members attending face-to-face meetings have access to group-purchased CAL to read during their meetings. Electronic meetings do not have a way to “pass the book around” for reading. They either have to rely on members who have individually purchased CAL to read from it or risk copyright violation by pasting images of CAL in group chats so others can participate in reading.

Electronic meetings were also not able to provide newcomers with any takeaway information such as the *Al-Anon Newcomer Kit* (K-10). The Electronic Meeting CMAs requested something for newcomers in an electronic form. Based on this feedback, the EMWG recommended that Staff create an automated email with newcomer information. The new email in English is live and can be requested by visiting [al-anon.org/welcome](http://al-anon.org/welcome). Translation will follow.

### Electronic Meeting Statistics

As of February 25, 2020, worldwide there were 215 English-; 42 Spanish-; 20 Russian-; five French-; three German- and Polish-; two Italian- and Greek-; and one Danish-, Farsi-, Icelandic-, and Portuguese-speaking meetings. That is a total of 296 meetings of which 180 are phone meetings and 116 are online meetings. In the first two months of 2020, 60 new meetings were registered.



On the map, meetings sharing the languages listed above are marked in dark blue, making it clear that the electronic meeting community carries the message of recovery to members worldwide.

### Closing Thoughts

A Work Group member new to electronic meetings shared the following. “It took me a while to feel a part of the meeting. I only shared a couple of times. It was like that when I first went to face-to-face meetings too. What I have been very encouraged by is the consistent recommendations by members to also attend face-to-face meetings.

“I noticed in my home group that we never mentioned electronic meetings even when we shared with the newcomer. So, with a little experience behind me, I decided to share with the newcomer about the importance of going to meetings. I also told them where to find electronic meeting information.”

We would like to suggest that you bring the topic of electronic meetings to your next business meeting. Find out if the members know where to find information about meetings in general. Please tell them not to use a web browser to search for meetings but to go to [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) to connect to registered meetings. Speak to your Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs) and Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) about including information in the same way as the face-to-face meetings in their publications and on their websites.

### Conference members offered comments on AFG Connects, which are excerpted below:

- Great presentation! So amazing, but not surprising, that Conference had already been discussing these topics this past year. What a spiritual experience to see how our Higher Power knew what we would need to discuss. I have been recommending, encouraging, and informing our fellowship about electronic meetings and have participated in a few to get a “feel” for them myself. I have been planting seeds in our Area the last two years about expanding our use of technology in my Delegate Report. This will be my top presentation to share with our Assembly. I can’t wait to hear about the Mobile App—so exciting!

I really like the automated email with newcomer information. It is very informative and gives a newcomer the same information that would be given at a face-to-face meeting. It was put together very nicely. Thank you for such a great job.

- I suspect that, after quarantine is over, we will see the growth of permanent electronic meetings from the ranks of those face-to-face meetings that moved online temporarily. The material presented here helps to increase my understanding of how the electronic meetings operate. I will take what I am learning here

and make a special appeal to the AIS/LDCs in my Area to include electronic meetings in their listings going forward.

- This presentation answered many of the questions that I have encountered since we have been presented with the necessity to connect electronically. I appreciate the emphasis on protecting our program from dilution and misrepresentation. Thank you for a very pertinent and informative presentation. I am excited to share the information with my Area.
- Thank you for all your hard work, not only on this presentation, but in all you do, to support the electronic meetings. Thank you for showing us the spiritual principles that guided you in your work with electronic meetings. Your presentation includes a wealth of information, and I can't wait to share it with my Area. I especially liked the discussion regarding trademark and copyright, the Mobile App, issues facing electronic meetings (and how they are the same issues faced by face-to-face meetings), and the new electronic newcomer information.

During the quarantine, I have attended electronic meetings in various formats. I found the WSO site easy to navigate, and I was able to locate a number of registered meetings that fit my schedule. All the meetings I attended were excellent, and I intend to continue to supplement my face-to-face meetings with electronic meetings after the quarantine ends.

- I absolutely love the idea of developing an AFG, Inc. Mobile App. I look forward to hearing more about that in the future. I think that an app could assist in reaching a younger age group who might prefer online meetings even better if supported by the WSO. Think of all the possibilities.
  - What a timely topic, not only for the age we're living in, but as the lead-off topic of the first virtual/hybrid WSC.
- I have been attending many weekly face-to-face meetings for many years, so I never really considered the evolving beauty and necessity of electronic meetings—I didn't think I needed them. In that respect, I had my tunnel vision working overtime. Maybe that's one of the reasons many of the people in the meetings I attend are like me.

Thank you for helping to open our hearts and minds to the *bigger vision* of possibilities and challenges of a new horizon for our fellowship. This is the perfect lead-in to the rest of the discussions to follow. I can't wait to report this to my Area!

- Thank you for an outstanding job! I have followed the EMWG carefully over the last three years, and I see a huge amount of work being done, progress being made, and new possibilities being formulated. You all are amazing!
- When I got back home from last year's Conference, I was excited about the journey I believed we were on with electronic meetings. Not only for our spiritual AI-Anon meetings, but for the business portions as well. Prior to the pandemic, most were afraid to try an electronic meeting. How quickly things have changed. I am hearing discussions in a few of the larger centers of the Area, that, when this ends, online meetings may very well become a permanent fixture as an alternative to those who are unable to get to a face-to-face meeting. Registration of these groups is important to ensuring the proper understanding of copyright laws and use of the AI-Anon name so that CAL is widely available and discussed at these meetings.

- I have been planting the seed in my Area of the possibility of electronic meeting availability while thinking to myself, "I have got to start looking into this." I wasn't sure where to start. Little did I know that I would learn the ropes quickly! Tradition Two comes to mind here for me.

Several months ago, I asked a younger Sponsee how she felt about service work and possibly becoming a Group Representative. Her reply was, "If you want a single mom to attend Area meetings, please make them available electronically!"

I must say that I am enjoying attending electronic meetings in my District, and in other Areas. As I have to drive 30 miles to attend meetings on a regular basis, I now envision using electronic meetings not as a replacement, but as supplemental after the quarantine is over.

- How beautiful to see the timeline and be reminded that "time" is not an ugly word. *Evolving relationships* really spoke to me. It implies a desire and a need by both. Throughout this clearly presented progress report, I observed welcoming, listening, learning, and nodding. My own experience confirms how important that was for me and all the relationships around me. In my Area's temporary electronic meetings, every member has shared his or her gratitude. Some members are making more meetings than ever. Members who moved away are sitting in again. I eagerly look forward to this evolving relationship and a hybrid WSC.
  - I am so excited to see, hear, and try the new Mobile App! What an opportunity for AI-Anon. It is interesting to me that all three challenges discussed in the presentation—contributions, newcomers' packets, and access to CAL—have all been brought up as concerns within my Area. I appreciated the direction regarding searching the WSO website versus a browser search—duly noted!
  - What a fabulous presentation! You answered every question I might have had about electronic meetings. I now believe that by embracing this technology we're ensuring the future of AI-Anon. I find especially exciting all the possibilities that will open up thanks to the new Mobile App!
  - I appreciate the work that has gone into the Electronic Meeting Work Group. The automated email with newcomer information is inviting, informative, and presents AI-Anon professionally, but with heart. I hope Alateens are being considered as the Mobile App is finalized.
- I understand about the increased use of social media, that new electronic meetings may be registered, and how information may be shared that is copyrighted. What I do not understand is how newcomers will know the difference between the electronic meeting experience and the face-to-face meeting experience if they have never attended one of the latter? Could there be a way to have a *skeleton* electronic meeting that offers the Opening, Closing, Steps, Traditions, and Concepts and explains the proper use of our electronic literature? Could we provide a simple and direct way to contribute electronically to a meeting as an individual contributor?



- I agree that electronic meetings are an excellent means for:
  - Connecting members or potential members to group meetings that are within their District but too far to drive on a weekly basis
  - Allowing more trusted servants to attend Area World Service Committee (AWSC) and Assembly meetings when their locations or family schedules make it difficult to attend in person
  - Conducting thought force, task force, and committee meetings that are more personal in nature and easier for brainstorming and sharing ideas, experiences, and information
- This report brought to light some perspectives that had not occurred to me, like service positions and electronic meetings as public outreach versus for recovery. This path is how we will be able to reach younger newcomers, like the millennials. Electronic meetings can break down barriers like geography or handicapping conditions. On the other hand, I'm in a rural state with a high poverty rate, and access to the internet, or even cell service, is unavailable for many people. I'm looking forward to sharing the automated email with newcomer information. I would like to explore how these members could be involved in service outside their groups, since service has been such an important part of my recovery.

In early March, I wrote myself a note at my Regional Delegates Meeting to go to an electronic meeting. Now, just a few weeks later, I'm hosting my home group's temporary online meeting! I think the timing is right for our groups to be open to getting detailed information about electronic meetings.

## TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES



### TASK FORCE: REACHING & UNIFYING RURAL & LARGE GEOGRAPHIC POPULATIONS

Betty A., Chairperson, Panel 58, Minnesota South

Materials for this presentation were posted on AFG Connects, including a report, a sample survey about connections to the District and Area, and a "rap" song to celebrate the presentation. After viewing the presentation and answering the survey, Conference members were asked to share their comments on two questions.

For about ten years, from 2008-2018, the World Service Conference (WSC) had several conversations about how to unify and bring together groups that are in rural communities and/or separated by large geographical areas (e.g., mountains, desert, open land, etc.). In

2018, the WSC asked that a Task Force be created to provide tools to help the Areas connect the groups in rural communities and/or large geographical areas. The Task Force is made up of ten Delegates, one WSO Staff member, and one Trustee.

The Board of Trustees gave the Task Force a three-step charge:

1. Conduct a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process among the members of the Task Force to determine what is currently known about this topic and what remains unknown.
2. Create a survey tool for Areas with rural groups and/or groups in large geographic areas to use to determine what members and groups need and want in order to be more included in and connected to the links of service.
3. Create a presentation to stimulate our discussion today that proposes plans of action to connect members and groups through the links of service in rural and large geographic areas.

So, let's briefly talk about the KBDM process and how we created the survey tool before we get to the rest of the presentation.

By answering the KBDM questions individually and then discussing our answers, we identified challenges that we thought were critical in connecting groups with the links of service at the District and Area levels. From this list of challenges, we created a survey. We believe our *identified* challenges to be common to most Areas in our World Service Conference Structure. These identified challenges included lack of financial resources, lack of time to commit to service, a lack of awareness of the links of service, a lack of desire to be connected, geographical distances that separate a group or District from other service arms, and lack of internet resources. Of course, there are other challenges of which we are not aware.

This background brings us to the actual survey tool. We developed a one-page survey based on our KBDM process. The survey has eight questions with the target audience being groups and/or group members. The purpose is to gather information about challenges that keep groups and groups members from being connected to the Area. We want the member completing the survey to quantify the value or importance of being connected beyond the group level—we avoided giving examples to allow for free thought. We also included two open-ended questions to allow for the "unknowns" to be revealed. We included a question asking for willingness to participate in an electronic business meeting. This survey is a tool. Feel free to add additional questions to gather information that is pertinent to your Area.

Conference members were asked to take the survey and then post their answers to the following questions:

**Now that you have reviewed this survey, can you come up with a strategy or plan of action for implementing the survey in your Area?**

- I plan to share this presentation and survey with my fellow officers/coordinators and collaborate on a strategy for using the survey in our Area. Although my Area has several urban centers that are easily accessible by members who live there, there are many Districts that are remote, rural, and cover large geographical areas. We have been struggling with the issue of reaching them for many years. I am confident that this survey, or a similar one, will be a useful tool for us.

- We will probably give it a try in an online format. We will also snail mail it to the places that we know do not have reliable internet or phone service. I am hoping that we can learn how to do the breakout sessions electronically in the future and get answers that way. Thank you for this excellent report and the survey tool.
- It's the people who don't normally attend service meetings that I want to reach. Perhaps sending this to all the Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs)/Group Representatives (GRs) in the Area might be most effective. Of course, it's always more fun to do these exercises with others, so maybe we could ask attendees to bring an AI-Anon friend, along with a covered dish, to the next District workshop.
- I think my first step might be to connect with every District Representative (DR) and all the groups in the six Districts that do not currently have DRs. We have a terrific Group Services Coordinator who I hope to be able to call upon to contact all those people. Some of the groups in the "dark" Districts have a CMA with an inactive phone number, or only a street address, so it will take some footwork. But I'd like to honor the links of service as much as possible. I'd like to get a survey in the hands of every group and find out the best way to contact as many group members as possible. I think the survey is worthy of us doing the footwork to disseminate the questions and the answers when they are available.
- We are having our first virtual Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meeting in a few weeks, and I hope to present the survey there. We can adjust the questions together if the group conscience determines.
- I am on a Task Force that will be using our theme of "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision" to develop a mission statement and goals for our Area. I will present this survey to the Task Force. One of our goals will likely be to consider how to reach and unify the members in the rural and more populated parts of our Area. Having only four active Districts out of 13 and many groups without GRs, we will have our work cut out for us, but I am excited to be part of this endeavor.
- I will be addressing using this survey with my Area officers. While my Area is not one of the largest, we do have some rural parts within the Area that struggle with internet connection. One rural District in the extreme southwest of the Area had not participated in an AWSC or Assembly meeting until recently when a past DR from an active District moved there. During this time of meetings moving online, there has been a large number of people from all over the Area participating in meetings that are not in their physical location. I suspect many will continue this practice after we reopen our face-to-face meetings. I think this rapid adaptation to online meetings will go a long way to reaching those separated by distance and by technological limitations.
- We have a Membership Outreach Action Committee and have discussed re-districting, rotating AWSC and Assembly meetings more than we have in the past, and using electronic meetings to reach out. I believe we can use the current situation, which has members connecting via internet and phone meetings, to develop a plan to use our new skills and connect with our quiet and distant members. I hope to present this information to the AWSC and/or Assembly to motivate members to move

forward with a *20|20 vision* (plan). A vision without a plan is just a daydream.

• Strategies for my Area:

- Unveil the survey idea at AWSC and Area Assembly to gather support; if the Area agrees, make the electronic survey available to all on the Area website
  - Offer a workshop presentation that could be electronic or in-person
  - Work with DRs, as this is often a broken link in the chain, to ensure more information is being delivered to GRs
  - Ask each group with a GR to adopt a local group(s) without one
  - If the goal is to connect *unconnected* people to the District and Area, we have to get the message to the unconnected people and have an organized plan to do so and to track the data
- I think it's important to get the tools to the members where we can possibly get answers—the group members and Districts. Instead of having members mail back the surveys, I would ask for time during the meetings to complete them. Of course, this would be an undertaking for a committee of dedicated members to complete the work and visit groups. It can be done.

- We will be having a virtual Assembly soon; this has really encouraged the Area to reach the population of people who were previously unable to physically be present. We had people register that we hadn't seen for four or five years.

Another reminder for survey dissemination is to not forget the groups that do not have a GR and to be sure to include the CMAs for those groups. This also has been a useful tool in learning that some CMAs are no longer current.

It may be important to remind the DRs to visit their groups, and, if they are not able to visit, then a phone call will do. I think it's about communication and reminding those who care to be a CMA and GR that they are not alone and do belong to the greater group conscience of AI-Anon Family Groups.

**Are there any questions to add that are specific for your Area?**

- Some members taking the survey will wonder: What is an Area? What is an Assembly? To what am I being connected? Why do I need to be connected?
- I think language may be a block for non-English-speaking groups. In my Area, group finances and isolation are the greatest contributors to groups not being represented at the District and Area levels.
- A question about equalizing the distance and cost for those Districts that feel left out and forgotten. I think some people will want to know how we can reach rural populations that don't have any meetings. A few questions that focus on how to practically reach those populations with meetings and what the *individual* is willing to do would be prudent for my Area.
- I believe we will know what additional questions to ask when we see the results of the survey and what Areas and/or Districts are able and willing to do to assist some of the groups and Districts who do not participate. One never knows what could come when you reach out to offer your hand.

- Have you heard group members speak about service as an aid to recovery? Have you ever considered doing service beyond the group level? What have you noticed about the impact filling such a service position has had on your group?
- Does/has your group meet electronically? Were these meetings helpful to you? Would you like to learn more about service in AI-Anon? Would you like more information about GR service? Would you like more information about DR service?

Traditionally at Conference, after hearing the feedback on Thought and Task Force presentations, the Chairperson of the Board has asked for next steps. Since this year's Thought and Task Force presentations were posted on AFG Connects, the Chairperson of the Board, after Conference, asked, "Where does the Conference want to go with this? What actions if any need to be taken?"

In response to the Conference members who answered the questions:

The Board thanks Conference members for all the feedback. Due to the number and depth of comments received, the Board will need time to consider the comments and have a discussion at the July 2020 Board meeting before any conclusion can be reached.



### THOUGHT FORCE: FEAR OF CHANGE

Ann M., Thought Force Chairperson, Panel 58, Michigan

In 2019, the Thought Force was given the following questions to consider:

- What tools of the program help us in overcoming our fear of change?
- How does our fear of change affect our unity and our growth as a fellowship?
- What changes can we make, consistent with our Legacies, to aid us in overcoming our fear of change?

The Thought Force was charged with having a thorough discussion on this topic, discussing what can be done to help members and the links of service overcome their fear of change and completing a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to determine what is currently known about this topic and what remains unknown.

The Thought Force provided a skit, featuring AI-Anon members with names like Farrah Fearsome, Nancy No Change, and Olive Opinionated, to illustrate the various ways that AI-Anon members may express their fears. A discussion of "Fear of Change" leads each member to examine his/her own fears, and the group reaches consensus that they all have tools to help them, and that continuing to explore Fear of Change is a good idea. The skit suggests a Thought Force explore the idea of creating a service tool or piece of literature on the topic.

### How does our fear of change affect our unity and our growth as a fellowship?

Change has frequently been unwelcomed and accompanied by fear. Some members do not welcome change; some relate to change as a negative thing. Some members do not have the experience of having time and space to acclimate to change. Some members feel hopeful with change. These feelings are neither right nor wrong, good nor bad. They are part of our personality and our humanity. When given time, we are often more accepting and can even be willing to participate.

Fear can paralyze us. Fear can become a coping mechanism—a coat of armor that is easy to slip back into. Fear keeps some of us from speaking up, or from doing anything until someone else encourages us. For others, fear compels us to feel we have to take care of everything. We do nothing or we do everything. The inability to trust others to be there for us can keep us living in our own isolated world.

### What tools of the program help us in overcoming our fear of change?

Those of us who practice service in AI-Anon and work with Sponsors know that we will not be alone, that help and encouragement are both freely given. Our Legacies provide guidance for all of us to support each other wherever we are. There is abundant literature and a World Service Office (WSO) Guideline for most aspects of service and the service structure. The *Service Manual* and the WSO website continue to evolve to offer assistance in understanding the fellowship and the outside world.

Our Traditions emphasize unity, civility, being open to others, and considering the beliefs and opinions of others without preconception. There are several tools (including the *Using AI-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* [K-70]) that help us apply our Traditions to the dynamics of change.

Our Twelve Concepts of Service help to ensure that service responsibility is clearly defined, that all members are heard, and decision-making is fair. They also help us to trust that these same principles will guide other members in service. Using the Concepts in working together gives many of us the missing piece of guidance that we have lacked all our lives—a blueprint of how to be independent yet connected, to be responsible while also trusting others, and to set aside our fear as we depend on a "power" greater than ourselves in service.

### What are the changes we can each make that are consistent with our Legacies?

- Stop to re-group with the Serenity Prayer if discussions get heated.
- Encourage people to share about their fears. Refer members to Conference Approved Literature readings on fear. Take a Step Four Inventory on fear. Encourage meeting topics on fear.
- Live our slogan, "*One Day at a Time*," and take baby steps.
- Use the "Three Obstacles to Success" to keep track of ourselves. Talk less. Practice unity. Think before sharing. Be more courteous and think positively. Keep it moving.
- Reach out for help and encouragement. Iron out the bugs by talking with each other and reasoning things out.
- Trust that a Power greater than ourselves is in charge and will help "right" the ship if we've made mistakes.
- Have willingness. Know that fear is a messenger that may appear when we are approaching something that makes us uncomfortable. We each can accept that message with equanimity.



and look clearly at the fear. (Often when we look things in the face they disappear.) We do not have to do this alone.

- Use the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service on the fear to help us to get past it. Work with a Sponsor.
- Recall that change is inevitable. Nothing stays the same. Practice these principles in all our affairs.
- Listen with attention while keeping an open mind. Place principles above personalities and focus on spiritual principles. Presume goodwill on the part of others. Be willing to take the time necessary to allow conversations and discussions to evolve. Be willing to help create a culture of trust within our fellowship—trust ourselves and others, including our trusted servants.
- Practice Step Eleven: focus on strengthening our relationship with our own Higher Power. Remember that this relationship will be the foundation of whatever perspective we bring to a situation that may include change. Be flexible in our meeting structures to allow for workshops, small group discussions, and skits to address our fears in loving ways. Keep in the forefront recovery, unity, and service—our three Legacies.
- Practice humility. Our Higher Power often speaks through others. Practice open communication. Take personal responsibility. Mind our own behavior. Study and use the tools of awareness, acceptance, and action. Use “I” statements when sharing and keep the focus on ourselves. “Let Go and Let God.”

Conference members were invited to share their thoughts on AFG Connects, considering the following questions:

- 1. What do members get out of their fear? How does fear keep us from progressing?**
- 2. Do members have more fear of the unknown when they are new to the program? Or when things are changed in the meetings? Or when they change what they are doing in recovery? Or of accepting more responsibility, or helping others? How can we get more insight into this?**
- 3. How could we address Fear of Change in a way that could be positive throughout the fellowship?**

#### **Conference members responded:**

- This presentation and skit go hand-in-hand with a tool like a service handbook, as recommended in another Thought Force presentation. If we ever create one, I hope this is in it. It sounds like a fun and educational way to help us learn how to use our Legacies around this topic.
- I think we can address the fear of change throughout the fellowship by following what is suggested in our Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing, “Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another.” Talking to one another is a great way to lessen fear and to develop trust among members. KBDM has been a useful tool to remove the fear of change as everyone gets a chance to voice their opinion. The idea that we are not alone, and that the God of our understanding is with us every step of the way makes walking through change better. Trial periods also lessen fear of change. I can do anything for one year or even three years, knowing the “change” can be revisited or changed at any time.

- We can let newcomers know that we were fearful at first too but are so happy to have made that huge scary walk into our first meeting. We can help a new member learn that, even though change can produce fear, it can bring amazingly effective change into our lives. I was happy to see this particular fear of change be included in the presentation because newcomers are the future of Al-Anon.
- The older I get, the more in my life changes. Some are good and others take much longer to accept. I have learned through this program that I can accept change, as long as I am willing, pray for my Higher Power’s guidance, and reason things out with someone else. Fear is a paralyzing feeling that will eat its way through me, if allowed. I know that in my program, I still struggle with things until I become aware, accept it (which takes a while for me), and plan an action to overcome it. We need to listen to others; share our experience, strength, and hope; and use the Al-Anon Legacies to move forward.

Communication is a big part of overcoming fear. Working together to help others feel comfortable and to see another aspect of the fear can help acceptance that fear can be good thing and with our Higher Power directing us, we can plan an action that will release the fear. That sounds easy, but in Al-Anon, it is always a work in progress, not perfection.

- What a great job by the Thought Force. You have raised an exciting and thought-provoking topic in a manner that makes us honestly examine our fears and what blocks us individually and as trusted servants. Today, Al-Anon faces challenges that are different than they were five, ten, and certainly 60 or 69 years ago. We cannot address our current issues, let alone those facing us in the future, by doing what we’ve always done.

When I open my mind and heart to change, principles such as inclusiveness, diversity, trust, and love can guide my actions. As in my recovery, a balance must be maintained, and the Traditions, Concepts of Service, and Steps guide me in seeking my Higher Power’s will for Al-Anon and me.

- These are wonderful tools, and I will share them with my Area. Fear of change is one of alcoholism’s greatest minions; this program for me has made me realize that things cannot and will not get better without change. And should I fail? I’ve learned that there is no failure. Instead, I have been given another opportunity for growth. “Progress, not Perfection”: some of the best words I’ve ever heard!
- Thank you for this thoughtful and revealing presentation. So much work, and it is much appreciated. Your skit covered all levels of fear that we all have experienced. I look forward to presenting this skit at future Assemblies. The presentation was also spot on and reminds me when fear enters my thoughts to breathe in faith and breathe out fear.
- My comment is to remove the focus on the *fear* of change. I would rather have a service tool or piece of literature on *change* and how members respond to it.

Everyone has experienced change in the last few weeks. I know that my response to the pandemic has been tempered by the spiritual and practical tools that Al-Anon has given me. Using these tools has allowed me to move with greater ease from an emotional place of fear of change (getting sick, dying, financial ruin from not working) to a place of living “One Day at a Time,”

one minute at a time, in gratitude and appreciation for the health and hope I have today.

Traditionally at Conference, after hearing the feedback on Thought and Task Force presentations, the Chairperson of the Board has asked for next steps. Since this year's Thought and Task Force presentations were posted on AFG Connects, the Chairperson of the Board, after Conference, asked, "Where does the Conference want to go with this? What actions if any need to be taken?"

In response to the Conference members who answered the questions:

The Board thanks Conference members for all the feedback. Due to the number and depth of comments received, the Board will need time to consider the comments and have a discussion at the July 2020 Board meeting before any conclusion can be reached.



### THOUGHT FORCE: IDENTIFYING WAYS TO LOOK AT SERVICE IN RELATION TO ROLES, TERMS, AND POSSIBLE ROADBLOCKS

Miriam B., Chairperson, Panel 58, Indiana

The report of the Thought Force was posted to AFG Connects, and World Service Conference (WSC) members were invited to share their comments over a 24-hour period.

From Al-Anon's beginning to the present, a common theme in worldwide Al-Anon is involving members in service. We hear various reasons why members feel they can't do service. As we have evolved as a fellowship over time, members appear to be increasingly resistant to serving. We're wondering if aspects of our service and organizational structure, including the length of service positions and workload, may be barriers to our members' willingness, commitment, and ability to serve.

The WSC has frequently addressed this concern in various forms. However, this trend continues. Perhaps it's time to consider new ways of envisioning service.

The Thought Force answered the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions in order to identify ways to look at service in relation to roles, terms, and possible roadblocks. They then discussed new ways to look at service roles and terms of service. Several possible strategies were presented:

- Groups could take a "Group Inventory" to focus on service in the group. Districts could hold discussions to get input, and Areas could take an "Area Inventory" focused on service opportunities.
- A big idea would be to inventory the fellowship!
- A service workbook or another type of service tool, such as interviewing members in service, creating a how-to video that outlines the service structure in a simple way, and offering suggestions on how to break down service positions into smaller responsibilities would be helpful.

- Service arms could create teams to assist coordinators, such as an "Alateen Team" to assist the "Alateen Coordinator" or a "Technology Team" to assist the Web Coordinator.
- Another idea would be to encourage Areas and Districts to hold workshops on writing trusted servant position descriptions for the Area, District, and group levels. The descriptions could encourage the current trusted servant to serve as a Service Sponsor to the incoming trusted servant.
- Using technology would open a lot of doors. Assembly meetings could be held electronically, which would allow members who may not have been able to serve to participate. Today there are several kinds of messaging, social media applications, and ways to meet, such as via Skype, Vimeo, and WhatsApp.



Conference members were asked to respond on AFG Connects to the following questions: **What are some new ways to look at service roles and terms? What are some possible roadblocks?**

#### Conference members responded to the discussion questions:

- The idea of a more targeted inventory at all levels of service is a great idea. I created an evaluation form for the Delegates Report last year. I received a lot of feedback. I like the idea of "teams" of people. I always try to get as many people involved in service as possible. With everyone becoming more comfortable with expanded technology, it will be easier to work with people across the state or the country. Our members in Area World Service Committee (AWSC) service positions write their "procedures" as to how they accomplish their work in their position. That has been especially helpful to District Representatives (DRs) who don't do everything exactly the same.

Roadblocks—We are coming up on elections, and I will hear people grunt, "Three years?" If they are interested and don't know what will be happening in their life, we encourage them to commit to one year at a time and see how it goes. Most of them complete their term.

Is it time to reconsider the three-year commitment? One advantage would be that it would involve more people, quicker.

- My comment relates to conducting Assembly meetings electronically—with the social distancing requirements of the current pandemic, many Areas are on a steep learning curve to make technology their friend in enabling meetings to take place. I believe that a positive spin-off of our present circumstances will be to expand our abilities and views of how service in Al-Anon can take place.
- There is a distinct difference between relief and recovery, and we may need to focus on emphasizing that difference more often. Recovery involves all of the Legacies, not only the Steps.

The Steps are very inward-focused, while the Traditions and Concepts bring the outside world into focus in a healthy way, and the safe way to practice those interactions is through service. I suspect that we ignore the fact that our recovery is multi-faceted, and that a full and fulfilling recovery is the result of working all the Legacies. Service is an intrinsic part of my recovery journey. Our groups, and our members, may need to be reminded that sticking with the Steps and the daily readers may bring relief, while including the Traditions and Concepts, which results in service, is, for many, how our program becomes a way of life.

- I recently rejoined the workforce. Many of my colleagues are almost 40 years my junior. I have had to learn new ways of working and collaborating. My group works in teams, they use software and technological aids that support teamwork. Each team member has a defined area of responsibility and works well in that area but being part of a team and having time to discuss and collaborate with each other is an essential part of how we work. This may sound like nothing new, but what is new is that the younger members view being a team member differently than I do. It is part of who they are.
- Introducing new technology would go a long way in bridging the gap to future new generations of AI-Anon members. One of the roadblocks to service is how members perceive service. We need to be positive and energetic when talking about our service roles. I have to confess that I don't always find service easy, but I only convey this to my Service Sponsor and Sponsor. No one wants to do service if it seems negative or not fun. Perception is everything!
- I like the idea of an inventory to identify the most important service needs. Most Areas and Districts are following a template of service roles that match the World Service Office (WSO). Starting from scratch to identify local priorities could lead to different conclusions about what service roles are actually needed. Pros and cons of how this could impact the links of service should be considered.

I'm not sure that three years is required to learn all there is to learn about every Area and District service role. Maybe District roles only need to be one year? Or maybe coordinator terms could be shorter? Changing terms of service could decrease the individual burden/commitment but would require Areas and Districts to find volunteers more frequently.

- Possible roadblock: Some Areas have extremely rigid requirements for who can serve (years of membership, previous experience, not also serving in other roles, etc.). In some cases, these requirements have hamstrung the Area and prevented the election of qualified, willing members. Questions to consider are: What are the spiritual principles behind the requirements? Can these principles be articulated? Are they widely understood? Why were the requirements created? Do they serve the Area or harm it?
- With regard to terms, if we strictly follow our current guidelines and the "World Service Handbook," we have too small a pool from which to fill our positions in my Area.
  - Opening up positions and term limits to more members runs the risk of both having longtime members staying too long and newer members coming in without the necessary background.

- With shorter terms, will individuals still gain the experience necessary to allow successful progress at the Area level?

Doing positions as teams, alternate Group Representatives (GRs) and DRs could alternate which meetings to attend; Area Coordinators can form teams with District and AI-Anon Information Service (AIS) members; Committee Chairs at all levels can fill their committees to help with their assigned duties, etc.

- New ways to look at service roles and terms
  - Encourage the use of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) to help Areas help Districts. Perhaps a WSC Task Force could create a skit or a PowerPoint presentation that allows the principles of knowledge, mutual trust, creativity, autonomy, and participation to guide the discussions about service. Again, include this language in the *Service Manual* so that it doesn't turn into a rule book.
  - Encourage what works in Areas and encourage them to be flexible and experiment with new ways of doing things.

Some roadblocks I see:

- As a longtime member, I have to say we are often the biggest roadblock. Perhaps we could develop an inventory tool for longtime members to take so that we can examine our own motives and blind spots?
- Centralization of authority is a roadblock. Even the perception of it. Continue to clarify the WSO as a clearinghouse and keep defining "clearinghouse" so that members continue to let go of the idea that WSO will tell us what to do and how to do it.
- Focusing on correcting people's terminology, ways of sharing, and whether or not they are "right" is a roadblock. Spiritual principles begin with me: tolerance, inclusivity, presuming goodwill.
- I think both formal (interviews) and informal sharing (simple, but intentional conversations) of the gifts of service with any member of AI-Anon is vital. The more we share our experience, strength, and hope with others, the more contagious service can become. Healthy rotation is important; we need new blood! I love the idea of Area inventories and a survey for the entire fellowship. I think we have to be cautious as we explore teams and shortened terms. I am hesitant with these ideas as they might short circuit the gifts we yield in service. Lastly, I think using technology (our new reality) could simplify and streamline service and is definitely an asset.
- I believe if we are not talking about service at the group level, we have missed the opportunity to plant the seed for new blood in the service ranks. We also need to embrace digital technology to reach all groups for training. It appears to be the best way to offer it to the most people.
- My experience: when members can demonstrate their enthusiasm for their current and past service positions and have an opportunity to share about how important it was, and still is, for their spiritual growth, other members become activated and much more interested in doing service. Consider offering more opportunities for members to share about their service experience, strength, and hope.



### Expanding on the ideas of forming coordinator teams

1. Doing a service role removes the fear of doing it, so it can be important for coordinator team members to actively experience the role. It makes good sense to ask the members of the coordinator support team to think about being backups for the coordinator, in case the coordinator needs to step down. These people will then become primed (trained) to step up into that coordinator role for the next rotation.
  2. Coordinator teams remove pressure on coordinators, thereby decreasing the fear of doing a three-year term.
  3. This concept could also apply to some of the District and Area officer positions. The Area's alternate Delegate, officers, and AWSC members are already on the Delegate team.
- I like the idea of a visual aid about the roles and responsibilities of various service positions, emphasizing the links of service. What I perceive happening is that people contact WSO, but not their GR, DR, Delegate, AWSC member, etc., so the need for service positions gets diluted.

Create staggered terms so that the entire AWSC is not new, similar to the World Service Conference and the Board of Trustees.

Examine how the Delegate and officers are elected. Is it really necessary that the Delegate be a past DR? If this requirement was removed or modified, a staggered term of DRs could be elected for an Area so that there is continuity and help. Instead of the DR requirement, maybe years of service at the Area level or beyond the group level (e.g., AIS Chair) should be more important than having been a DR.

- In my personal experience, sponsorship has been the answer to so many of the challenges we see in our fellowship. How do we retain members? Sponsorship! How do we encourage active service for more members? Sponsorship. How do we inform our members in service? Sponsorship and service sponsorship.
- As WSO has grown over the years, we see efforts by the Board, Executive Committee, and Staff to evaluate procedures with the aim of simplifying and streamlining, while staying true to our spiritual principles. Can we do the same thing with our service structure?

Many of us have felt the wisdom of maintaining the three-year service term. It takes two years to learn the job and gain confidence, and the third year to effortlessly serve and pass it on. And while it's helpful when an Area can depend on people serving a complete three-year term, it's not always feasible. Having alternates and/or committees could fill this gap. Using technology might enable trusted servants to stay connected and meet their service commitments when not being physically present.

- Rotation of leadership seems so important, people must step down to keep groups, Districts, and especially Areas healthy. I believe that rotating from one position to another is not spiritually healthy. Stepping down without sticking around to help is not healthy either. How can AI-Anon encourage healthy rotation of leadership while embracing the knowledge of those who have served in the part?
- The presentation questions were good ones as far as service position length of term and increased workload of the service position. Is this issue squishing creativity within the service positions?

I have a thought that with the generational change happening, are we still keeping the service roles locked into the old way of doing things? Electronic meetings are increasing and ways to communicate through technology are increasing, our service positions as we know them today may not fit that structure anymore. Maybe the way we have the service positions structured doesn't appeal to the newer generation's way of thinking. Have we thought to reverse the process and have a position of strategic creative officer (or something like that) at our Areas that come up with a new process or an improvement to the way we currently do business to bring our fellowship into the new decade?

Traditionally at Conference, after hearing the feedback on Thought and Task Force presentations, the Chairperson of the Board has asked for next steps. Since this year's Thought and Task Force presentations were posted on AFG Connects, the Chairperson of the Board, after Conference, asked, "Where does the Conference want to go with this? What actions if any need to be taken?"

In response to the Conference members who answered the questions:

The Board thanks Conference members for all the feedback. Due to the number and depth of comments received, the Board will need time to consider the comments and have a discussion at the July 2020 Board meeting before any conclusion can be reached.

# OUT OF CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS



## 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

We hope you will join us in celebrating Al-Anon's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021!

The WSO is planning an anniversary banquet to be held on Saturday, April 17 from 7:00 - 10:00 pm at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York for our celebration. Tickets (price to be determined) will go on sale early next year and will be sold on a first come, first served basis (500 guests maximum).

The 2021 World Service Conference, during which Conference members will visit Stepping Stones, will close on Friday, April 16, 2021 prior to the celebration on Saturday evening.

Anniversary attendees wishing to visit Stepping Stones while in the area for the banquet must contact Stepping Stones to check availability for a Monday through Saturday 1:00 pm tour and make a reservation, as walk-in tour visits are not permitted.

We look forward to celebrating Al-Anon's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with you!



## 2023 AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

We invite you to meet us in Albuquerque, New Mexico from June 29 through July 2, 2023 to celebrate Al-Anon's Seventh International Convention!

Our daytime sessions on Friday and Saturday will include Book Studies, Next Picks, Panels, Speaker Meetings, Table Topics, and Workshops in addition to fellowship activities in the Hospitality Area.

Which sessions would you like to attend?

### **Book Study—Small meeting/circle of chairs/not recorded**

This meeting includes taking turns reading a paragraph or two at a time out of a preselected piece of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), followed by sharing on what has been read.

### **Next Pick—Small or medium meeting/circle of chairs/recorded**

This meeting is composed of a moderator introducing the topic with a brief sharing (3 – 5 minutes) before picking the next person to share on the topic. Then, that person shares, and picks the next person, etc.

### **Panel—Small, medium, or large meeting/theater style seating/recorded**

This meeting consists of three preselected members giving a "mini-talk" (12 – 15 minutes) on a particular topic before opening the floor up for member sharing or questions.

### **Speaker Meeting—Large meeting/theater style seating/recorded**

This meeting features one or two preselected members who share their story for 50 minutes (one speaker) or 40 minutes each (two speakers).

### **Table Topics—Small meeting/banquet table/not recorded**

This impromptu session includes ten people or less who gather at a table, select a topic from a list of suggested topics, and hold a sharing meeting.

### **Workshop—Small or medium meeting/theater style seating/recorded**

This workshop features preselected members presenting an interactive session that focuses on a particular topic.

Our friends in A.A. will join us by holding daytime A.A. meetings on Friday and Saturday.

In the evenings on Friday and Saturday, as well as on Sunday morning, we—Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members and guests—will all join together for the Big Meetings where we'll hear speakers share their stories. We'll hear family stories, talks from members who live outside the World Service Conference Structure, and spiritual sharings.

Mark your calendar—we look forward to seeing you in Albuquerque!

## INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

John McL., Trustee, Chairperson  
Jean L., Trustee, Co-Chairperson  
Gail G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Lynette K., Trustee  
Kerri K., Associate Director—International  
Marsha W., Director of Programs  
Vali F., Executive Director

The report of the International Coordination Committee (ICC) was posted to AFG Connects as part of the hybrid World Service Conference (WSC).

### About the ICC

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

The ICC was formed in 1978 as an avenue of communication to support international growth and to perpetuate worldwide unity of Al-Anon and Alateen. The ICC is an active team. As an advisory committee, it makes recommendations to the Board about issues that affect Al-Anon worldwide (e.g., translation and reprint policies), visits to and communication with evolving structures, and participation in international service meetings. The ICC meets three times a year during Board Weeks and additionally via web conferencing. The Committee reviews Al-Anon activities and policies as they relate to those individuals, groups, and service arms outside the World Service Conference Structure. The Committee hears updates from Staff about activities in other structures.

A “structure” is a network of groups and local service arms responsible for organizing Al-Anon services. The World Service Conference Structure is composed of state, provincial, and territorial Delegates from the United States, Canada, and Bermuda as well as WSO Staff and Volunteers. Many other structures exist outside of this service area.

A structure can have paid or volunteer staff or a mix of both and has an elected service board that consists of Al-Anon members. Some structures provide almost all the same services as the WSO; they have a Board of Trustees; Executive, Policy, and Finance Committees; and have an annual conference of Delegates. These are national service structures. Other structures are evolving to this level but may only provide selected services, have a small Board without any committees, or may only provide services in a limited area.

The ICC supports the growth of structures worldwide by considering first-time requests for translation and reprint permission, by providing input on international site visits, and by coordinating and participating in international service meetings.

The ICC coordinates the biennial IAGSM. This is a meeting for structures that have a national service office, also called a General Service Office (GSO). Each one of these structures is eligible to send two Delegates to the meeting. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates. It encourages the growth of service structures while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of Al-Anon Traditions. It also represents an expression of a worldwide group conscience. Ultimately, this supports the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amid cultural and language differences.

Zonal Meetings are structured, organized service meetings that are less formal than the IAGSMs. Attendance is open to national and evolving service structures. This means that a structure does not have to have a GSO to attend. Zonal Meetings are an opportunity for service structures and the WSO to meet face-to-face, hear reports, exchange information, and strengthen our mutual connections. They are hosted and attended by structures in Central America, Europe, and South America.

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

- The descriptive text of Concept Eleven in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* details the primary responsibilities of the ICC.
- The al-anon.org website includes an International tab with more about the different kinds of structures supported by the WSO. The content of these pages is now reviewed annually under a process created in 2019 to advance the Goal: Public of the Strategic Plan.
- The website has an archive of *IAGSM Summaries* dating back to the first one in 1980.
- *World Service Conference Summaries* include reports of IAGSMs, Zonal Meetings, and international trips. These can be found on the al-anon.org website.

### European Zonal Meeting

Gail G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board  
Kerri K., Associate Director—International

The European Zonal Meeting was held in Adkaran, Slovenia on September 20-22, 2019. Twenty-seven Delegates from 17 structures attended, as well as two representatives from the WSO.

Al-Anon started in Slovenia in 1989 and there are 35 registered groups. It registered as an evolving service structure with the WSO in 2010, and it became a GSO in 2016.

Participation in a Zonal Meeting is relatively open. Delegates must be elected to attend on behalf of their structures, but the structure itself can be an evolving one or an established one. Each structure is eligible to send two Delegates, but there is only one vote allowed per structure. The two Delegates must confer and agree before casting their one vote.

You may wonder what the Delegates are asked to vote on, given that they do not create policy or have a budget to spend on program services as each structure operates independently. One constant on the agenda is time for discussion of matters that affect the meeting



itself and how it will function. The design and planning of the meeting is the duty of the participating structures.

Representatives from the WSC Structure attend as a resource; they participate fully in the discussions, but do not take part in voting.

The Board Chairperson shared, "After a long day of travel to Adkaran, and being assigned a host for our stay, we had supper together in the dining room and everyone who was present was invited to attend an Al-Anon sharing meeting. The service meeting started the next day with registration and coffee, followed by the welcome information and introductions. This was an exceptional exercise to be a part of as the 2019 European Zonal meeting was attended by 32 participants from 17 countries and 18 structures speaking 14 different languages. In this photo you will see that our room was laid out in the shape of a triangle.



"The theme of the meeting was 'Embracing Changes' and many of the topics related closely to that idea, such as understanding and using modern communication to conduct Al-Anon business within and outside the fellowship. The Associate Director—International provided information about the WSO's website and social media platforms and shared about forming an Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG). One very interesting session was about adhering to Warranty One and Tradition Seven in cashless societies and what the general financial health of each structure was. Many Delegates shared that they have had prolonged deficits that forced their GSOs to reduce services, such as office hours; eliminate services, such as telephone lines; or adapt in other ways, such as moving to a less expensive neighborhood. One Delegate shared that her structure had too much money as the result of not having enough members in service. In other words, they literally could not spend their money fast enough because there was nothing to spend it on and no one to take responsibility for service roles. Many GSOs are learning to manage their literature differently so that they don't have so much cash tied up in inventory.

"There were three sessions designed as questions and answers on key topics such as starting Alateen groups, public outreach, and copyright protection and sales restrictions for CAL. The last of these continues to be a hot topic and not an easy one to solve, but this service meeting provided a valuable opportunity for the WSO to hear concerns and to share about our responsibility to protect our copyrights and trademarks. We have to work hard to ensure broad understanding of the reasons behind the policy."

The Associate Director—International continued: "We agreed that being able to participate in the European Zonal Meeting was immensely valuable. It was an incredibly productive weekend for all the participants. One of the most valuable outcomes is being able to establish or improve working relationships with people. So much of what we do on the International Services Team is about cooperation and mutual support between myself, as a representative of the WSO, and members of staff or service boards in other structures. There are direct improvements in communication among all of us as the result of participating in these service meetings. Earlier this year, I had my first conversation with a member in Lithuania who was able to contact me through the Delegates from Latvia who had attended their first Zonal Meeting last year."

## Ibero-American Zonal Meeting

Rosie M., Trustee

Marsha W., Director of Programs

The Ninth Reunión Ibero-Americana de Servicios Al-Anon (RIASA) was held October 26-27, 2019 in Mexico City, Mexico. The theme was "Linking Service Experiences in Ibero-America."

The Trustee representative introduced the trip: "This Zonal Meeting provided an opportunity for service structures to meet face-to-face, hear reports, exchange information, answer questions, and strengthen mutual connections. The goal for the WSO representatives was to attend on behalf of the WSO, provide support, participate in workshops, answer assigned questions, and answer general questions while collaborating with each structure present.

"When we arrived in Mexico City, two members were waiting outside the security checkpoint holding up signs with the Al-Anon symbol and our names written on them. It was so thoughtful of them and made it easy for us to find each other, and then we were on our way to the hotel in downtown Mexico City. We had dinner that night with a Trustee for the Mexico GSO."

The Director of Programs continued: "Our first day started on Saturday at 8:00 am. Over the next two days there were discussions and presentations on the following topics:

- Linking Service Experiences in Ibero-America
- From Mexico with Love
- Literature
- General Service Offices as Service Centers
- Going Back to Basics
- The Structure's Spirit
- Effective Communication between Structures

"In highlighting the workshop titled, 'The General Service Offices (GSOs) as Service Centers,' the presenter talked about one of the primary purposes of a GSO is to meet the day-to-day service responsibilities of Al-Anon Family Groups on a national level. Through this discussion it was determined that because of their size there were various duties, responsibilities, and areas of focus for the GSOs participating in this discussion.

"Some highlights included:

- Peru's representative shared they are in the process of restructuring to ensure continued services on behalf of groups. They have one paid staff member, a General Secretary who is called the Executive Director. This individual does not have voice or vote during business meetings. The structure of the

office does not include an Executive Committee; however, the members of the Board of Trustees continue to support efforts to maintain services and the business on behalf of the service structure.

- **US and Canada** representatives, in relating to the roles mentioned, advised that the WSO Executive Director originally started out with the title of General Secretary. This position does have voice and vote within the World Service Conference Structure as described in Concept Twelve. The WSO, as a part of its responsibilities as a worldwide clearinghouse, services groups anywhere in the world where there is no service structure. It was explained that once a country forms a national service structure, i.e., GSO, the WSO relinquishes this responsibility to that structure.

- **Ecuador's** representative shared their GSO had the problem that some groups within their structure did not want to register or belong to the structure. It was suggested that having one-on-one conversations with these groups about the advantages of registering with the GSO may be helpful in educating the membership. Sometimes members do not understand the value of a service structure and why it matters that the group has a connection. The hope is that they will begin to understand the importance of keeping the flow of communication going from the service entity to the group and from the group to the service entity.

- **Mexico's** representative related how they have campaigned to have groups understand the value of having a connection. One of their ways to strengthen the groups is to ensure the groups have Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in the meetings. Their theme used to support this idea is 'AI-Anon Spoken Here.'

"The takeaway from this discussion was to help all understand that each is focusing their efforts to strengthen their service structure to ensure that the AI-Anon message of hope is available through their various service responsibilities and communities.

"In addition to Mexico, who accepted the responsibility of organizing and hosting this meeting, the attendees represented were from Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, and the World Service Office.

"Each time I have an opportunity to attend a Zonal Meeting, I am always in awe of the work and dedication of those I have the privilege of meeting. I always leave excited and encouraged because I've experienced the demonstration by those in attendance that AI-Anon is in good hands in their communities. Although I may not speak the language, I know the language of love and our message of hope will prevail!"

The Trustee wrapped up the trip report, saying, "On our last day of meetings it was decided that the next meeting would be hosted by Peru, and Mexico agreed to be the alternate host. I was very excited and humbled to be a part of this Ibero-American Zonal Meeting."



#### **International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)**

In October 2018, the Delegates to the IAGSM accepted a proposal from the UK & Eire Structure to host the 2020 event. While the ICC is responsible for planning this event, the ICC works closely with a volunteer GSO who serves as a host. As hosts, they are a valuable source of local information. They propose a meeting venue, meals,

and accommodation. They also plan a visit to the GSO and a closing dinner. The Associate Director—International coordinates the logistical arrangements with the host committee.

For the first time, IAGSM Delegates are asked to book their travel through WSO's travel agent to save time and resources and simplify reimbursement. Registration is open through August.

#### **International Voice and Vote at WSC**

Shortly before the 2018 IAGSM, one of the Delegates submitted a letter proposing an item for discussion. The letter provided a description of the current makeup of the WSC and the other entities that exist to give voice and support to countries outside of the WSC Structure. They include: Zonal Meetings, the IAGSM, the ICC, and GSO Representative participation at the WSC. The letter to the IAGSM noted that the IAGSM is not a decision-making body—it only makes recommendations to the ICC—and that International Representatives participate at the WSC with voice, but no vote. The conclusion drawn from this was, "The current form of representation and rights of the international groups runs counter to our principles of equality, democracy, and protection of minorities as set out in the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties and is contradictory to much of the commentary on these in our literature."

There was little advance notice for the conversation and no conclusions were reached during the 2018 meeting. It was agreed that the conversation should continue in 2019, via AFG Connects, and at the 2020 IAGSM. Accordingly, a framing document was written, and the GSOs were asked to conduct a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) discussion and share their results with the ICC. Fourteen General Service structures participated (out of 36). The ICC completed the questions on behalf of the WSC Structure. The deadline to respond was November 30.

The ICC met in December 2019 to review the responses. Steps had been taken to redact the names and other identifying information from the responses that were submitted so that each ICC member was looking only at the information provided without knowledge of who had provided it. The Committee members commented on the spiritual benefits they received from observing this practice.

One conclusion that was drawn from the responses is that many of the structures want to have the opportunity to participate more directly in decisions that affect them. Another conclusion was that there does not seem to be a common understanding among the structures regarding how representation works currently. There may be opportunities for the ICC to better inform AI-Anon members within and outside the WSC Structure about how this works. It is also clear that many structures value their current level of autonomy.

The Chairperson described the next steps to be taken: "After reviewing the responses, Committee members discussed what to do next. We took two different approaches: one set of actions for the ICC, and one set to recommend to the General Service Structures. We shared the redacted responses on AFG Connects. We encouraged the structures to take time to translate them and discuss them among the members who had participated in the previous discussions. We will resume the discussion at the IAGSM in October.

"For ourselves, we needed to figure out if we had any responsibility to follow up on the ideas that were presented in the KBDM responses and, if so, how? To help us answer that, the ICC met prior to the World Service Conference to think through the question: How do we improve communication with the international structures (not just GSOs) while maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of our own work? By 'our own work' we mean the work of the WSO and the Board.

"Additional updates on this continuing conversation will be provided through the ICC."

## Ongoing Work of the ICC

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

In 2019, the WSO brought new functionality to the online meeting search at al-anon.org. Namely, it created a feature to search for meetings in countries outside the WSC Structure. In an extremely simplified explanation of what was done, each meeting was identified on a map, that location information was assigned to the meeting record in our database, and, as a result, it became searchable on the website. Do not mistake the simplicity of this explanation for simplicity of the project. This was several months' worth of work for several very smart people. Many groups were mapped this way, but there are many that could not be mapped because the addresses lacked sufficient detail or had too many characters to be able to accommodate them. In 2020, the focus of this project will be to request the help of the international structures in finding the unmappable meetings.

The WSO is also engaged in an ongoing effort to improve the quality of other records. For example, we implemented a semi-annual survey to capture changes in information for offices, Board members, IAGSM Delegates, and other international contacts. The AFG Connects communities were inventoried to verify that they had the correct membership.

The WSO is reviewing and revising the International Services web pages at al-anon.org.

Staff maintains correspondence with members all over the world through email, phone, social media, and web-based technology.

Though one international trip was planned for 2020, as reported to the Conference, this was not included in this year's budget. 2020 will be a planning and preparation year for a future international trip.

## Closing Remarks

John McL., Trustee, Chairperson

"This is the end of my second three-year term as Trustee, and I was asked to share my thoughts on the ICC. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve as ICC Co-Chairperson in 2018 and Chairperson in 2019. I have met many wonderful Al-Anon members from GSOs around the world and had the privilege of working with other Trustees and Staff from the WSO. Answering the KBDM questions along with members of GSOs on the topic 'Representation, through voice and vote, for international groups at the World Service Conference' was a unique spiritual experience. When I think about the WSC exploring how to include members of other structures, I am instilled with hope. With my 20/20 vision, I foresee the WSC and GSOs working together to strengthen Al-Anon and build upon its strong existing base.

"Delegates to the WSC represent about 60% of the total number of Al-Anon groups worldwide. The other 40% of groups are represented by trusted servants in their own structures, either in General Service Conferences or on service committees. Conference members are asked to consider Al-Anon as a whole when making decisions affecting policy, budget, literature, and other topics. The Conference is informed about the needs and viewpoints of other structures indirectly, through the ICC. That is not the same as hearing the voice of the fellowship directly from all structures.

"We are moving in a direction of being more inclusive at home and in the world. The more voices we can listen to, the more people we can expand our circle of hope to.

"We need to continue to *dream big*, to use our 20/20 vision to open our minds and hearts to other structures, and to be of service to the people who are waiting to hear our message of hope. Once we envision the future, there is no turning away from it. As soon as we step out of our comfort zone, a new world opens before us. I know we have the courage to change the things we can. I also know we can change them.

"As I step down from my position as Trustee at Large, I know that I am leaving Al-Anon in good hands. These are the same hands that guided me to stand for every service position I have held. These same hands reached out to me with their help and guidance to assist me in my recovery from a lifetime of living with and loving alcoholics.

"Thank you for allowing me to be of service to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups."



## ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT

Delegates received an invitation and an Event Request form to consider hosting the 2021 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event *if their Area hadn't already hosted one*. The information included all they needed to know about hosting a Road Trip! event.

*During a Special Board Meeting in early June, the Board of Trustees, after thoughtful, spiritual consideration, and keeping in mind the Board's fiduciary responsibility to AFG, Inc., made the decision to cancel the 2020 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event and postpone the event to 2021. The discussion centered around the current financial situation at the World Service Office (WSO) and the current realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*The 2021 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event will be held in Cleveland where the 2020 event was to take place. Therefore, the Board will not be accepting any applications for the 2021 Road Trip! event. Delegates were encouraged to apply for the 2022 Road Trip! event when the application process opens in 2021.*



## SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Phil G., Panel 58, Kansas, Chairperson  
Barbara H., Panel 58, Rhode Island, Co-Chairperson  
Leah L., Panel 58, Tennessee, Secretary

"In the spirit of 'Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision,' the Sharing Area Highlights (SAH) leadership team has adapted our plan for the pre-Conference SAH Session. We want to carry forward the traditions of the past with a new approach to fit within the virtual Conference experience that is our current reality.

"We found it ironic in 2019 that the Delegates selected were probably the three most introverted Panel 58 Delegates to serve as leaders for one of the most interactive sessions of the pre-WSC events. Now looking back with *20|20 vision*, we can also recognize how influenced we were by our Higher Power as we began to think about our approach to fulfilling this responsibility in 2020. We were guided then to center our session around the first SAH pictorial directory with no conception whatsoever that the Conference might not be physically together this year.

"We are pleased to share the outcome of this inspired idea with you, and very much want to thank all of the Delegates from all three panels who participated by responding to our request to share your Area Highlights and a digital photo. Without your participation, this would never have been possible. So, while we will not be physically meeting each other this week, through your participation in Sharing Area Highlights, we will be able to put faces with names and voices.

"The interactive activity we had planned was to have a time of mixing and getting to know each other by asking three questions of each other and letting you add that information to your directory for each Delegate. We invite you to interact virtually, through emails, phone calls, or other means, to answer these questions.

1. What was your first service position in Al-Anon?
2. What has been your favorite service position, besides Delegate, and why?
3. What are you going to do when you finish your term as Delegate—either personally or in Al-Anon service?

"So, without further ado—please accept this gift of love and hope from your 2020 Sharing Area Highlights leadership team. We wish us all a great WSC 2020 as together we *dream big with 20|20 vision*. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service."

The Sharing Area Highlights document, with Delegate photos, was posted to AFG Connects, and Delegates were invited to share on the three questions presented. Here are some of the responses:



### What was your first service position in Al-Anon?

The most common response was Group Representative (GR), followed by Group Literature Chair, Alternate GR, Group Secretary, Group Treasurer, setting up chairs, and hospitality. Other positions mentioned were chairing a meeting, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) committee member, greeter, speaker, newcomer, Alateen Group Sponsor, Group Chairperson, and District Treasurer.

### What has been your favorite service position, besides Delegate, and why?

- My first Area level service position was Group Records Coordinator. It is definitely my favorite position since I met and got to know members from all over the Area. I learned the geography by traveling all over the state, pouring over maps to assign Districts, and notifying the service arms. I learned more about WSO than that it stood for the World Service Office. Most importantly, I became aware of how all the Legacies related to my recovery and my life.
- Being a GR for my home group has been by far the biggest recovery changer for me. It opened my eyes to diverse ways of thinking, showing up and modeling the Traditions in a way that was new to me. Going to Assemblies was like going away to college, then bringing my experience back to my meetings and District to let others know there is more recovery within when we're willing to leave the comfort of what is familiar and safe behind.
- My favorite service position was Area Archives Coordinator. It allowed me to use my organizational skills to sort through the archives and display them at Area events. It was very interesting to see the history of Al-Anon and to be part of preserving it for future generations.
- My favorite service role is a real split between being Area Chairperson and Alateen Group Sponsor. As Chair, I learned so much about the importance of the minority voice and really listening in service. As an Alateen Group Sponsor, I am so inspired watching the program impact our teens so quickly and seeing lives change. They teach me about being all in and pure honesty.
- My favorite service role was A.A. Liaison. It was a dark time for me when I needed to learn forgiveness, not only for the alcoholic but also for myself. I spent three years with a group of alcoholics, not being able to take care of or fix them; they helped fix me and are still a part of my recovery family.
- I have not experienced a favorite service role thus far. I have been an informal greeter to newcomers, Group Treasurer and Literature person, GR, and DR. In each role, I have learned invaluable lessons about myself and grown in love and acceptance of myself and others. I have learned to apologize for my mistakes and laugh at myself. The support, love, and acceptance I have received from fellow members as I served have helped me heal and grow in many ways. This was *their* service to me, and I am forever grateful for that love. That service—member-to-member and member-to-newcomer—is, to me, the foundation of my program and my most important service opportunity.
- It is a toss-up between Area Outreach Coordinator and Alateen Group Sponsor. I just loved seeing the teens "get it" so much faster than the adults. They seemed closer to the truth or maybe they just didn't have as much armor to remove. I loved the creativity of our Outreach Team. We accessed the state's public

licensed professionals' database to create a mass mailing for two Districts, reaching over 3,000 professionals that were likely to contact potential AI-Anon members and a Google map showing all the professionals near each AI-Anon group in the Area.

- My absolute favorite position was Area Group Records Coordinator. It fits into my skill set. I like detail and organization, and it gave me a good outlet for my perfectionist tendencies. I learned so much about my Area and the big picture of worldwide AI-Anon. It also got me hooked on service at the Area level.
- My favorite service position was AI-Anon Information Service (AIS) Liaison. We had had someone in our District who held the position for over 20 years. She wanted to retire but didn't want to let go. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about the Traditions and the Concepts in action. Thank goodness for my Service Sponsor. It was also the first position I ever held where I knew that when my term was over, I would be rotating out (after a partial term and then a full term). I learned why the rotation of leadership was so important for the survival and growth of our program and particularly its service arms--not to mention the literature (my first love).
- My favorite position was DR. I've held the position twice in two different Areas. Although I was terrified to accept the position the first time. It really challenged me; I was fairly young in the program, and I was open to learning about all manner of AI-Anon. When I accepted the position the second time, I had been in AI-Anon much longer, and although I still had my challenges, I was much more confident about working the program. At any rate, both positions taught me a lot about the minority opinion, patience, and tolerance.
- GR has been my favorite position prior to being Delegate. I loved continually being on the lookout for things I could bring to the group to help members better understand the program, do outreach, etc. Of course, only in hindsight did I realize that the person I helped the most was me. I was like a sponge trying to absorb as much as I could, so being GR provided me the vital "water" I needed to expand my knowledge.
- My favorite was Area Literature Coordinator. I loved the act of hauling books to Area Assemblies. I loved setting up the literature table displays and appreciated all the help from members to pack and unpack the CAL. Not only did this help me get to know about the literature itself, but I got to know members from my Area with great conversations about the program and literature, and lots of laughs too.

#### **What are you going to do when you finish your term as Delegate—either personally or in AI-Anon service?**

- In my Area, the expectation for the past Delegate is to attend Area World Service Committee (AWSC) and Assembly meetings for the next three years to mentor the new Delegate. Some have taken on other Area positions, but I don't intend to at this time. I have held many Area positions, and I want to see some of our newer members step up in the Area roles. We always invite all of our past Delegates to these meetings, and they have volunteered for thought forces, task forces, and committees. They bring a wealth of service experience to our meetings.
- What will I do once Panel 59 is over? I expect I will embark on a new career. After ten years in my current one, I am ready

for a change. When I was elected as Delegate, it signified the slow exit from my work—a natural ending. I will personally be *dreaming big* once 2022 arrives. As far as AI-Anon service goes, I will enjoy the title past Delegate at Area events, and beyond that...who knows?

- Hopefully, finish moving into our new place and get a garden started. I will be an Area officer as a past Delegate, but whether to take on another position or just be a member with a home group will become clearer over time.
- I would love to have a balance between my personal life and service. The tradition in my Area has been to serve as Area Chair, then Delegate, then immediate past Delegate. Past Delegates tend not to be fully utilized in my Area. I have learned so much being Delegate. I have not been Chair. Our Chair position carries a lot of authority and responsibility. I would love to see my Area practice Concept Eleven and share the load. I once heard, "If you want to make a change, do it from the inside." I have been praying about this and am still unclear, and my motives are sometimes murky.
- After Delegate, I look forward to being a past Delegate and will stand for the next Area position that scares me the most, for me doing what I fear most gives me the most growth.
- In my Area, the traditional service progression is for the immediate past Delegate to serve as Area Chair. This requires a vote at Assembly and is not guaranteed but has occurred in our most recent term elections. I will see what HP decides. Of course, I will need to stand for the position—I have no thoughts on that at the present. In my personal life, this pandemic has been nudging me to be more interested in gardening and expanding our flower gardens. As a retiree, I have plenty of time for that—and even more at the present!
- Our Area does not have any set position for a past Delegate, so a year off of the AWSC will do me well. I've always wanted to take on the role of District Archivist, so I will probably stick my name in for that.
- I am not sure yet. I still plan to remain active as a past Delegate at our Area Assemblies for sure, serve as a Sponsor, and active in my group. I have found I cannot be still with my program. I need it more today than ever before.
- In my Area, the outgoing Delegate is asked to stand for Area Chair. I'm uncomfortable yet willing to grow.

I am going to plan an actual vacation with my spouse. It's been on hold since my election as Delegate as I have spent most of my vacation time either at the Regional Delegates' Meeting or the Conference. I will also work with our local AIS/LDC Board in some capacity—it's where my heart is, making sure anyone who wants to find AI-Anon in my city or the surrounding area can find it, and that our literature is readily available for those who want it. I am not sure yet if it's my Higher Power's will for me to stand for Area Chairperson. I reckon we'll see in November. My heart is not in it at this point, but we'll see where my feet lead me.

- I will become the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP). It was voted on a few panels ago that this would be the job of the immediate past Delegate. I am not looking forward to this position.

- When my Delegate position is complete, I plan to take a little time for myself. I just retired, and my husband will be retired by then. I plan to spend some quality time with him as he's been so supportive and willing to take a back seat when I fulfill my commitments. I will still be active in Al-Anon, but will take a role with fewer responsibilities for at least a short time!
- My husband and I are going to take a very long cruise. And I want to spend lots and lots of time with my grandson. And I'm going to be willing at our October Election Assembly to listen to that HP of mine. Because, no matter what my plans are, HP's are always better.
- Our past Delegates have set a wonderful example by being available day or night as mini Service Sponsors, and I plan on continuing that trend once I finish my term as Delegate.
- Although I have never wanted to be Area Chairperson, I find that I am considering standing for the position for the next three years. After serving as Delegate, I am encouraged to present myself with another challenge as an Area Chairperson to try to implement some of the ideas that I have learned at Conference and the thought/task forces I've been part of.
- I have been Group Treasurer, GR, DR, Convention Chairperson, and now Delegate (in addition to navigating through a divorce) in my six years in Al-Anon. It seems I was always serving out someone else's remaining term when no one else was willing to stand. My Higher Power (probably along with my ego) kept telling me, "You can do it." Being Delegate has so humbled me as to how much I don't know. All that to say that, right now after being Delegate, I most want to take a break—not from meetings or sponsorship, but from holding an office. I have a second grandchild arriving in July. I have a wonderful loving friend I want to spend more time with. The program has taught me to live "One Day at a Time" and to seek my HP's guidance in these matters, so who knows what I will actually do—certainly not me!
- I am not sure I know what I am going to do. Circumstances change quickly in life, and I often find that my plans change also. If I had to guess, I will probably continue in Alateen service and hope to continue to serve as a Service Sponsor. Personally, I'm going to travel a bit more, run a lot, and relax a lot!

## TEAM REPLACEMENT TASK FORCE

Cindy K., Trustee, Chairperson  
 Marianne B., Trustee  
 Jean L., Trustee  
 Marsha W., Director of Programs  
 Bob H., Webmaster

**Charge:** Design an innovative, flexible event that provides an opportunity for Trustees and Staff to connect with members and engage in shared leadership with Area members and present at the October Board Meeting.

TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) Events replaced the Regional Service Seminars (RSS) and the motivation of TEAM Events was to reinvigorate members' participation in service. In addition, the original premise was that World Service Office (WSO) Staff and Trustees would chair the Area's first event, and the Area would then keep it going with additional events they would develop and be responsible for chairing. This did not happen with TEAM and, as such, created an unsustainable situation, both in capacity and financial resources for the Staff and Trustees.

The Task Force has met by web conferencing. Below are some highlights of the discussions and findings.

1. Reviewed the results of a gallery walk conducted at the July 2019 Board of Trustees meeting.
2. Agreed a survey was needed for further feedback regarding the Delegates' experiences with TEAM Events. Thirty-five responses included additional insights.
3. Planned to continue gathering information and seeking further clarification from the fellowship for a clearer path of direction by holding conversations on AFG Connects.

It is clear members enjoy interacting with the WSO Staff and Trustees at events. Members also love the personal sharings, workshops, and breakout sessions. What isn't clear is whether the Areas want to develop and chair their own events with Staff and Trustee participation. The Task Force looks forward to continuing its charge.





## WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE (2021) ANNOUNCEMENT

The dates selected for the 2021 World Service Conference are Monday, April 12, through Friday, April 16, 2021. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Sunday, April 11, and depart on Saturday, April 17. The Conference will be held at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York.

All Conference members will visit Stepping Stones on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. There will be a limited number of spaces for guests on a first come, first served basis (ticket price for guests to join us is TBD).

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



## WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE THEME

Conference members were invited to listen to and view a narrated Theme PowerPoint presentation before sharing their suggested words, phrases, and ideas for the 2021 World Service Conference on AFG Connects.

In the past, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) decided on the theme and presented it to the Board of Trustees. Several years ago, the CLT began inviting all World Service Conference (WSC) members to make suggestions for the theme.

The Conference theme lays the foundation for the tone of the WSC. It encourages members to use the Legacies of the AI-Anon program to empower members to success in service. Many of the breakouts, discussions, and agenda items build from this. Even the three-minute talks by the outgoing panel of Delegates may build from this. So, the theme *sets the stage*. The Conference theme keeps us all moving in the same direction.

# SHARING OURSELVES

## BEING OF SERVICE TO AFG, INC.

### Trustee Qualifications

Jean L., Trustee

The actual requirements are not complicated, and I'm sure many of you know at least one person who would qualify. The requirement that would affect current Delegates is that you must wait until two World Service Conferences (WSC) have passed after your term ends to consider serving in this capacity. I did not have to consider this as I have never been a Delegate. As I have served this year, I have found this is a very common misunderstanding, so let me be clear. You do not need to be a past Delegate to be a Trustee. Several Trustees currently serving have not been Delegates.

So, what else is required? You must be an Al-Anon and/or Alateen member for ten consecutive years and are not nor have ever been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). You need to have service experience above the group level. Personally, I have found that every service position I have had has prepared me for this position. I have shared that being the Area Chair was the best training ground for me to prepare for this position. This also helped me meet another requirement which is having an understanding of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. Prior to applying, I participated in a book study of the *Service Manual*, which I would recommend. That helped me gain a broad perspective of Al-Anon policies, which is also a requirement.

If you do decide to apply to become a Trustee and are selected, you will be required to resign any and all service positions above the group level, and believe me, you will want to because you will be busy. You will also need to become certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) so those qualifications are also required. Finally, if you are applying to be a Regional Trustee, you must live in that Region and will need to follow that Region's process for applying.

So, I ask you today to please encourage those members you feel are qualified to apply. Had it not been for some Delegates who encouraged me, I would not be here today, and for that I am grateful.

### Duty of Foresight

Norm W., Trustee

In 2018, the Board, along with the Executive Committee and senior Staff, created our current Strategic Plan, to guide Al-Anon into the future. I am currently the Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Group and chaired a task force to assist the Board in prioritizing Strategic Plan Objectives. I have also served on the Executive Committee and the Board's Strategic Planning Oversight Work Group.

Concept Nine tells us: "In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership." In order to meet this charge, we must be visionary leaders, trying to focus on leading AFG, Inc. into the future to guarantee that Al-Anon will be available to help our grandchildren and their children.

In his renowned treatise, "The Board's Duty of Foresight," Jeff De Cagna states, "For associations to survive and thrive in a time of constant change, their leaders need to develop a clear-eyed and disciplined focus on the future. The duty of foresight is a responsibility that boards must embrace now."

I have learned that we must focus on shifting demographics, evolving technology, multiple cultures, languages, generational differences, and transformations in how members and the public receive information in making our decisions. To me, this was a daunting and overwhelming task.

My epiphany was, as the Alateens tell us: "Together We Can Make It." Our collective knowledge is greater than the sum of our parts. In accordance with Concept Five, when we listen spiritually to each other, together we are able to make visionary decisions and accomplish what we could not alone. By applying spiritual principles, collectively we are able to carry out our Duty of Foresight.

Another important insight I have gained is understanding my role as a Trustee. The Board's role, pursuant to our Duty of Foresight, is to see what needs to be addressed, to define the challenges Al-Anon faces, but not the specific means to meet them. The implementation is the role of our wonderful WSO Staff. The Board may identify a need, for example, to better communicate with younger and potential members. The Staff develops the potential solutions, the how best to carry this out. The Board is responsible for the allocation of financial resources, which suggested path to follow. Through collaboration, we are able to accomplish what would be impossible alone. Again, "Together We Can Make It."

### Time Commitments

Cindy K., Trustee

As a member of the Board of Trustees and the current Board Treasurer, I continue to be amazed at the willingness of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Volunteers to commit their weekdays, evenings, weekends, and vacation time to travel to attend quarterly Board meetings, and monthly Executive Committee meetings, and participate remotely in weekly or monthly committee, task force, thought force, and work group meetings.

When thinking about submitting my résumé to serve as a Trustee, my thoughts did not go to a monthly commitment for travel. The Board meets quarterly, right? I also did not think about the weekend commitments for participation in Area assignments, or weekend conference calls, or the time it takes to read all the monthly and quarterly reports. There was no way I could have planned for that, since I did not have firsthand knowledge of what those commitments would mean. What I heard and read on the résumé was that I needed to plan for about 20 hours a week. "Heck, I can do that," I said to myself.

In my head, 20 hours looked like a couple of eight-hour days with a couple of more days for another four or five hours. Not so. There are days when I am trying to connect with Delegates in the late evening to discuss the Chairperson of the Board Letter because they work. There are days when there is an evening conference call for a work group or task force for which I am a member. There are days when a conference call starts at 7:00 am Central Time and ends at 4:00 or 5:00 pm so I do not have to travel to Virginia Beach for the Executive Committee meeting. There are days when flights get crazy, and I do not get home until o'dark-thirty.

I could not have possibly known what this service position needed for time commitment, but as it turns out, *I can do it!*

I have said this many times, recently, but I would like to say it again. Service is the rent I pay for my recovery. I cannot possibly give back to the fellowship what the fellowship has given to me. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve you.

## Board Mentors

John McL, Trustee

As a new Trustee before your first Board meeting, you are given a Mentor, someone to answer your questions about being a Trustee. First year Trustees room with their Mentors, unless their Mentor is not of the same gender. Sharing a room with a Mentor opens numerous opportunities for guidance during Board meetings. Your questions can be answered while the information is fresh. The answers help during the next day of meetings.

Being a Mentor opened me up to sharing about things that seemed obvious to me, as well as finding answers to things that were new to me. Often at the end of a day full of meetings, talking things over with a Mentee was helpful for both of us. Sometimes the Mentor and Mentee are on the same committees, work groups, task forces, or thought forces, which also helps to build a bond of trust between them. Mentorship is not confined to just Mentor/Mentee relationships. Trustees guide each other through new assignments. We ask those who served before us on committees and so forth for help. I found that Trustees are always willing to share their experiences with other Trustees.

In addition to mentor relationships between Trustees, we also act as liaison to Delegates we are in contact with following the posting of the Chairperson of the Board Letter each quarter. Here again, a dialog often begins. Sometimes as a Trustee, I have an answer to a Delegate's question, sometimes Delegates have answers to my questions, and sometimes I ask other Trustees for help in answering a question.

As a result of the constant exchange of guidance as a Mentor, Mentee, or liaison, I have been able to accept opinions that don't always correspond to my own. I have gained insight into how others work their programs, and how I can work my program better. I have found that others often have suggestions that work better than what I was thinking. Most of all, I have gained friends through the trust that was built working together.

When I listen, I learn. When I share, I learn. When I open my heart, I welcome others in. These are lessons Al-Anon has shared with me over the years. Being a Trustee Mentor and a liaison has reinforced them.

Thank you all for allowing me to be of service to the fellowship.

## Committee Assignments

Lynette K., Trustee

Each year, all members of the Board of Trustees get the privilege of being assigned to serve on various committees, thought and task forces, and work groups. This past year, I have had the opportunity to serve as the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. When I was asked to be the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, I had no idea how much I was going to learn, how much I was going to grow, and the difficult decisions I would have to make. The descriptive text of Concept Eleven, in the Twelve Concepts of Service section in the *Service Manual* says the Nominating Committee "makes recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services." Wow! When I read that, I wondered if I was up to the task of being on the Nominating Committee let alone chairing the Nominating Committee. I knew from past experience that I would be able to do it as long as I brought my Higher Power with me and asked for help along the way.

I quickly discovered that much of the work of the Nominating Committee is confidential and very spiritual. When considering the

résumés for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, Board Officers, and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) members, I spent many hours reviewing, re-reviewing, thinking about, and most importantly praying for guidance from my Higher Power. I trust that the other members on the Nominating Committee did the same.



At the October Nominating Committee meeting, we discuss the Regional and Trustee at Large résumés and the ECRPM résumés. This past October, the meeting started with a reading about Tradition Two from *Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions Illustrated* (P-60) pamphlet. This reading reminded me about the unseen member that is at every group meeting and that I had a responsibility to be open-minded and to place principles above personalities. Some of the discussions were difficult. Thank goodness, we took breaks during the meeting which I used to reconnect with my Higher Power so that I would be better able to do His will instead of my own.

Like all the service positions I have held, being on the Nominating Committee has allowed me to walk through my fear and grow in ways I never could have imagined. I am grateful to have been given this opportunity to serve on the Nominating Committee.

## Concept Seven

Terry F., Trustee

While Concepts Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine, specifically address the role of the Board of Trustees, Concept Seven clarifies the legal rights and responsibilities of the Trustees. The Trustees in part are charged with the Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience, and Duty of Foresight. Concept Seven relates directly to the Duty of Obedience which includes adhering to laws and regulations: Complying with financial responsibilities, tending to legal issues, adhering to the Articles of Incorporation, and obeying Al-Anon's Bylaws. The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the corporation and, along with members of the Executive Committee and employed Staff, has a fiduciary responsibility to the organization of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Concept Seven allows for the balance of the Conference to have Traditional rights and responsibility over program matters and policies affecting Al-Anon as a fellowship, and the Board of Trustees to have rights, responsibilities, and care for the legal and financial best interests of Al-Anon, the organization. While the Conference tends to the needs of the fellowship, the Trustees of the Board tend to the needs of the organization. As a director of the corporation, while I'm on the Board, and in accordance with the Bylaws of the corporation,



I, as a Trustee, assist in appointing the Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations; electing other Board members; and protecting Al-Anon's copyrights, trademarks, and name. As a director of the corporation, I help ensure Al-Anon's future, forward movement and strategic positioning, partially by exercising the legal rights granted to the Board.

When I came onto the Board, I did not clearly understand the legal role and responsibility of the Board. Nor did I truly understand the difference between the organization and the fellowship. I did not know about the need to hire an audit firm or lawyers to protect our trademark in other countries. I did not know about approving the World Service Office (WSO) budget so that services can occur, and salaries be paid. I did not know there was an investment philosophy or a need to encourage discussion of safety in meetings. I did not know about the initiatives of the Board's Strategic Plan. Wow. What an awesome responsibility and honor! Knowing that our Higher Power works in partnership through the Conference, the Board, the fellowship, and the organization, the spiritually principled and the legal, both...remain in good hands.

### Concept Eight in Action

Karen W.-P., At-Large member of the Executive Committee

The first time I visited the home of Lois and Bill, I was told it was okay for me to sit at Lois's desk. I tried to imagine how Lois and Anne were able to keep up with the correspondence in the early days. Lois reached out and asked for help. We continue to reach out to do the same thing, while staying current, updated, and refreshed. Now, today, look at us. Some of the daily work is the same as when we first started, but there is so much more. The World Service Office (WSO) Staff and our Board of Trustees spend a lot of time strategically planning so that we will continue to grow and will be recognized as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected by the disease of alcoholism.

Concept Eight: "The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees." The Executive Committee is comprised of three volunteer Al-Anon members, the Executive Director, one voting member of the administrative Staff of the World Service Office; the Chairpersons of both the Finance and Policy Committees; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who serves as an ex-officio member.

There is a lot of work to be done in order to serve our growing membership. Concept Eight allows the Board to form an Executive Committee to oversee the work of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. during times when the Board is not available or is involved with other matters. The day-to-day work has to continue to get done by the paid WSO Staff.

It is my pleasure to currently serve on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly. Each member brings a unique set of skills to the work of the Committee. I am working on listening for understanding before I jump in and say my part. Sometimes, I find that my part doesn't need saying. Practicing Concept Eight helps me to trust. I believe trust is the spiritual principle that drives my actions with the work of the Committee and at home.

Concept Eight reflects the growth of Al-Anon and the need to delegate authority and responsibility—just as Lois did in the beginning. I had no idea that 17 years later I would be able to serve on the Executive Committee. I am grateful for the program.

### It's More than just a Building

Sue C., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson

Well, I would argue that it *is* just a building. The heart and soul of Al-Anon are not in the bricks, or wires, or windows, or server room, or sprinkler systems. Although those are important and they are our business on the Committee, I believe the heart and soul of Al-Anon is just where our Service Structure says it is. It is in the members who sit in the seats and at the keyboards of Al-Anon meetings across the world. To me, the building is like the envelope that covers and protects the people who carry the message. With a real envelope, the message is inside and the envelope surrounds it with an address for its destination. So . . . it *is* just a building. But to me, it is a very special building that is not equal to others. It is special because the work inside it carries the profound message of hope to people who are suffering from the disease of alcoholism worldwide—people just like me.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) oversees the management and care of the building in Virginia Beach by coming to the site twice a year for an inspection followed by a meeting. In that meeting, we are ensuring that the building is well maintained, self-supporting, and that no problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Now, I would like to recognize the WSO Staff who do an excellent job of monitoring the building and taking care of it. They have always responded with information and professional action that tells me our building is in very good hands. In addition, WSO Staff has helped tremendously with the financial management of our escrow account so we have not had to ask for a deposit to the escrow for three years now. With regard to problems of property and prestige, I imagine if the building did start to interfere with our primary spiritual aim, we might consider selling it and leasing another. Since the core of Al-Anon is in its members, we will be okay if that happens. We will still carry the message and we will still have recovery, unity, and service. Fortunately, I don't think that's going to happen because of the way ECRPM and buying the building was structured by the group conscience. Through participation and rotation of leadership, the building is in good hands and the fellowship is too.

### THE BOARD'S GOALS FOR THE CONFERENCE

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

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

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

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

## Goal 1

John McL., Trustee

In preparing to write about Goal One, I looked back to 2004, my first year as a Delegate. On a good day when I look at things, I look at myself first. True, I am by far the biggest problem in my life. In 2004, I admit that I was not the most spiritually developed person at Conference. I had my share of problems which clouded the way I perceived others. Being at my first Conference scared me, and when I get fearful, I don't think clearly. I didn't think my Area made a good choice in sending me to the World Service Conference. I didn't believe enough in myself that I could be successful. The things that happened that first year changed my perceptions. With the help of my Sponsor and my Conference Mentor, and with guidance from other Delegates and from Area officers and coordinators who were willing to share their experience, strength, and hope, I slowly came out the fog that had enveloped me. I began to understand that my Area trusted me to be responsible in my role as Delegate. My Area did not expect me to be perfect, only human.

Initially, my fear of failure blinded me to the love, acceptance, gratitude, goodwill, trust, and unity that were behind the turmoil of the three years I was on Panel 44. By the end of my term as Delegate, I was much more open to spiritual development. In addition, by working the program harder, I began to take better care of myself. I started practicing yoga and having annual health checkups. Within a few years, I was meditating almost daily. These practices continue to this day. Al-Anon, yoga, and meditation ground me. They keep me focused in the day, which is always full of wonder and beauty.

I believe the spiritual tone of the Conference is a reflection of the spiritual well-being of each one of us. I believe when we reach out to one another with honesty, trust, understanding, and love, we are putting Al-Anon's core principles into action. When we treat each other with equanimity, and open our hearts and our minds to one another, we strengthen the unity of the fellowship. We are fulfilling the responsibility that our Areas and our members have entrusted us with—the guidance of this program that has changed the lives of so many people. We are not alone, and we are working together to bring Al-Anon into the future with the spiritual guidance each one of us brings to the Conference floor.



I will close with a quote from *As We Understood* (B-11) page 231. "The Twelve Steps have allowed us to see life with a new vision, to realize that we are able to live happily and sanely today, and that God's will for us is to make a contribution to the peace of other people who are traveling this path with us."

## Goal 2

Joyce B., Trustee

For me, the spiritual principle connected to this Goal is responsibility.

Responsibility begins with the Al-Anon Declaration, "Let It Begin with Me." It's tied to leadership, which is "the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal." ("What Is Leadership?" by Susan Ward) We have a responsibility to work together, to participate by sharing our ideas, including the minority opinion, and to support the decision of the group conscience.

We all come to Conference with ideas and experience. We also bring our personal Al-Anon recovery. Both our ideas and experience affect the individual roles we fulfill at the World Service Conference (WSC).

Delegates bring the viewpoint of their Areas. Administrative Staff are paid employees of the WSO, some of whom by virtue of the Staff roles they fill are voting members of the WSC and therefore must be Al-Anon members. All Staff bring their expertise gained by working at the WSO and willingly share that knowledge with Conference members. The Board focuses on its legal responsibility to oversee Al-Anon's funds and services. The Executive Committee is mindful of its legal authority granted by the Board to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the WSO.

Even though we have different roles and experiences, all Conference members are equal in their responsibility, and each member has one vote.

At the Conference, we have an opportunity to keep an open mind and add to our thoughts, ideas, and experience. Sometimes that means letting go of some ideas and being open to new ideas. Sometimes, it means listening and pondering. It's all a lengthy conversation and a process that takes time and patience. We all ponder in different ways. Some of us like to talk about it, others like to take their thoughts to their Higher Power, and others are quick to make a decision.

With input from Delegates, Volunteers, and Staff, ideas are discussed about what we are doing today that's working, and what may no longer be working as we look at the need for possible future services. The ultimate responsibility for the Board is to listen and follow the lead, requests, and suggestions of the WSC, while staying within the Traditions and doing the work of the Board. This is the Board's primary purpose.

Interestingly enough, this goal even impacts my personal life. My husband and I often share ideas that are like part of a KBDM discussion. Our questions

include why we want to do whatever it might be, what if we don't do it, and whether or not we can afford to do it. This discussion process takes time. We talk, take time to think, and talk again. We give ourselves as long as we need to reach a consensus.

Just as we at the WSC have a common goal of wanting Al-Anon and Alateen to “always be there” “when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help,” we may have different ideas about how that should look and how that should happen. By coming together at Conference to discuss our ideas about the future of Al-Anon, we're providing guidance to the Board and the WSO about services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. We Conference members can feel confident that we've played a part in preserving the future of Al-Anon Family Groups throughout the world.

### **Goal 3**

Terry F., Trustee

The WSC is composed of Area Delegates, Trustees who are the chief service arm of the Conference, Executive Committee, Administrative Staff, and representatives from other countries. The ratio of the voting Conference members is designed to be two-thirds Delegates to one-third Staff and Volunteers. Delegates and all other Conference members are trusted servants of worldwide Al-Anon. The Conference cannot mandate or govern the Al-Anon fellowship which it serves. It represents the Al-Anon membership but does not rule it. Two-thirds vote of all attending Conference members is binding on the Trustees and any related corporate service. The Conference makes final decisions on policy matters.

The Board and the WSO are service arms of the Conference, a part of the whole fellowship. The roles of Conference members differentiate between the legal rights of the Board versus the traditional rights of the Conference.

The role of the Delegates at the Conference is to acquire a clear and comprehensive picture of our worldwide fellowship to bring back to the groups in the Areas, to participate and vote, guide the Board, share concerns, and gain vision in order to learn about the past and guide the future.

The purpose of the Conference is to be the guardian of Al-Anon's world services and Twelve Traditions; be a service body, not a government; act for Al-Anon in the carrying out of its services; be a vehicle by which Al-Anon can express its views on policy and note any deviations from the Traditions; make the group conscience available for all of Al-Anon; be a practical means by which the group conscience can speak; and be the voice of world Al-Anon and a guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions. The Conference protects Al-Anon against a service breakdown. It makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters, thus making it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon's

harmony and survival (excerpts from the *Al-Anon Service Manual*).

When I was at the WSC as a Delegate, I came to understand that I was there to consider and vote on issues for Al-Anon as a whole, not just my Area. I also came to understand better my role as a Delegate, the role of the Trustees, and the World Service Office (WSO). Before coming to the Conference, I believed the Delegates were the most important members at the WSC. However, I saw at the Conference that all Conference members played important, though at times different, roles. The roles were differentiated to address traditional matters—affecting the entire fellowship, something all Conference members as Al-Anon members addressed; from administrative matters—affecting the clearinghouse of the WSO delivering services; from legal matters of the Board—affecting Al-Anon the organization. We all had a part to play, and each of us in our roles was to do our part, but only our part. We had to trust each other, and our Higher Power, and not engage in double-headed management of each other's roles and responsibilities.

As I have now been attending the WSC as a Trustee, I continue to value the part each Conference member plays through our Higher Power in our discussions, deliberations, and decisions. We seek to gain clarity and understanding in all discussions, so we may effectively participate in the discussions, vote with clarity on the issues, and communicate the Conference discussions and decisions impacting the fellowship back to the members. I feel our Higher Power's presence as we presume goodwill of one another and strive to have our choices lead to a positive and profound impact on Al-Anon now and into the future. I am so deeply honored to share this journey towards Al-Anon's future with all of you!



## DELEGATES (PANEL 58)

### Rosanna H., California North

When I first read the Conference Theme, "Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision," my first thought was, "I'm not a dreamer, I'm a planner!" After further contemplation, I discovered I am a dreamer and a hoper, but I focus on and love the planning: the action needed to make a dream become reality.

I began this service journey hoping and dreaming to provide greater support and encouragement to the members already in the rooms: my Sponsor calls this In-Reach. I had been reading *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) before my first World Service Conference (WSC), and sending home email reflections during Conference. The distance from Northern California to Virginia can feel vast, and I wanted my Area to feel connected.

It was bittersweet as I read this book on my flight back to my home. Because of my Conference experience, I identified with passages in a way I was unable to before Conference. What I knew was: describing my Conference experience was equivalent to describing an earthquake verses experiencing an earthquake. In that moment, I knew the majority of members in my Area would get to experience Conference solely based on how I showed up. To this end, I have occasionally pretended to have the poise, humility, and confidence of a Trustee.

My hope has been to share the trust, enthusiasm, and out-of-the-box thinking I feel from Conference with my Area to help us be better servants, to encourage collective willingness when trying something new even if we didn't have it figured out, and to better understand, recover, and serve alongside our Spanish-speaking members.

Is my dream aligned with Al-Anon's primary purpose? Yes. Have I been successful in bridging the distance gap and carrying the WSC spirit to my Area? I don't know. Like my life, some dreams take consistent and persistent attention before the results are known. Still, we dream and hope because we have faith in ourselves and our purpose.

I continue to pinch myself in amazement for the opportunities that my Higher Power has provided, and I'll keep serving until someone brings out the hook. My hope has been to say yes to everything that was and is available to me while I am a Conference member. I want and have no regrets.

With great joy and respect, I say, "I'm so grateful to serve with all of you. This has been more than a dream come true."

### Marcia M., California South

I'm still amazed to be standing here sharing my service journey with you. When I started Al-Anon, I couldn't speak without crying. I looked at those of you doing service within the group and thought, "there's absolutely no way I could do that!" However, you knew service was the key to my growth. You lovingly pushed me to take a position so I would, "keep coming back." With considerable reluctance and fear, I volunteered for the easier jobs. I now understand that each new service position came at a time when I needed to move forward with my recovery, as well as distance myself from the crazies of alcoholism. It was so much healthier for me to focus on what I could change by making a positive difference doing service than to obsessively worry about the alcoholics in my life!

I finally found the courage to do service beyond the group. This only happened because you kindly dropped the opportunity in my lap saying, "I know you'd be good at this!" My reply was always, "You're

kidding me, right? I'm not ready for this!" Eventually it occurred to me to turn my service journey over to my Higher Power and simply do the next indicated thing. I needed to trust that I wouldn't be alone, and there would always be members supporting me who have been on this journey before.

My most significant service journey nudge came when I was finishing my second year as a District Representative. My son was visiting from Colorado, and it was an extremely emotional visit due to the intensity of his alcoholism. While he was here, I received a call from a detox center informing me that my 26-year-old son was already showing signs of liver failure. That afternoon, officers from the California South Area called to ask me if I would consider being the fourth Interim Alternate Delegate. "Are you kidding me?! You obviously have no clue about the emotional chaos that's happening on my end!" Was this call a coincidence, or God's way of remaining anonymous?

I can now review my service journey with increased clarity. I will be forever grateful that you encouraged and supported me on each step of this amazing journey. I know we will continue to support each other to *dream big with the 20/20 vision* that comes from simply doing the next indicated thing.

### Kim C., Delaware

I got lost in the dark disease of alcoholism. Unable to breathe, alone, and without anywhere to go, I had been led, door opened, and literally pushed into my first Al-Anon meeting. I don't remember much, but I sensed something. I had no name for it. From the dark, I lifted my eyes and hope winked at me and took my hand. She smiled and said, "I'm so glad you're here, Kim. You keep coming back." And I did.

Her hand was my need to be loved. My need to be anywhere but home led me to service. Her vision saw what I could not. I was happy to just get in the car. I've had many surprising joys and even my first belly laughs because of getting in that car.

My own glimpse of "Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision" came in a spiritual widening of Me to We the year Alateen turned 50. Our District was hosting a party. My Sponsor volunteered me to organize the banner activity. After all, I had been the Convention Banner Chair that year. Oh, my goodness, right? It took months to complete. I couldn't see how. Yet, I heard my voice say, "okay." In my unsafe neighborhood, I prayed, asked for help, and leaned in. With supplies set up, I stood back and watched. Six Alateens came together on an idea. They surrounded the banner in a familiar circle and colored. As they colored, they shared, and each one signed the back. Later, one teen shared her vision. She saw a convention with this banner displayed and an Alateen by her side. My untold part was in it.

Later, I'm sitting in my first World Service Conference barely breathing and reminding myself that I belong. Garbed in party hats, Al-Anon was certainly not standing still. We, the trilingual Conference, were putting love into action. I was happy to go for the ride...in a bus off to Stepping Stones. Brain and butt tired, I welcomed the break to my grandparent's house. Not what I expected. Then, that moment happened. Sitting at the kitchen table, reaching out for another's hand, hope and despair of all those who came before, those to come, and those out there filled me with *20/20 vision*. I'm not afraid for Al-Anon's future. *Dreaming big* is simply widening the circle. It is what we learn to do in service.

### Cindy J., Florida North

"Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision," it is a dream to be here and a dream come true. I came into Al-Anon as a young person, with a fistful of small dreams and experiences, most of them rather painful.

I was introduced to a new way of life. When I heard you say at the end of meetings, "you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you," I was pretty sure you were all lying. That was my felt experience of love.

When you said I could participate in service, I was pretty sure you meant I could serve you and give of myself until I was empty. That was my felt experience of service.

When you said that I could surrender, come to believe, turn my will and my life over, take a fearless inventory, share, be willing, humbly ask, make a list, make amends, admit I was wrong, improve my relationship with God, and practice these principles in all of my affairs, I was pretty sure you were offering an impossible dream. That was my felt experience of dreams and hopes.

As I stand here today, I can tell you that service work in Al-Anon is a *vision* of love in action. I have learned how to love myself through the felt experience of this fellowship and a Higher Power. I have experienced great fear, failures, and moments of intense pride and joy. I now know that this is service, and it is love in action.

Now that I am near the end of an amazing three-year journey, I can tell you that my felt experiences of love, of dreaming, and of service are fundamentally different. Today, I know that kindness, responsibility, love, leadership, and respect are foundation stones of Al-Anon service, and I get to practice them too. I know that offering myself in service is not about me giving until I'm empty, but about me opening up to being filled with experiences, love, unity, faith, and friendship. I have learned that mutual trust is not only possible, it is constantly growing in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Standing here in 20|20, I am so grateful for the clear *vision* and *big dreams* you have all given to me so freely, as I move on into my life ahead. It is going to be amazing.

### Cheryl A., Florida South

When I came into Al-Anon, there was no *dreaming big*. The only thing that I had was nightmares of my loved one dying. I came into the rooms for one person, then realized I had many people who helped me into the rooms of Al-Anon. Never did I imagine the journey that I would be taking from that day forward. That was the start of *dreaming big*.

When I heard the words serenity and sanity, they did not compute in my mind. What are these words everyone keeps using? What I found out is that I could be restored to sanity. How could I be restored to something that I discovered I never had? What an eye-opener for me!

Soon after becoming a member of this phenomenal family, I got into service by becoming a Group Representative. That was the start of my real recovery. I was able to meet new people who were not in my group meetings while attending District meetings and Assemblies. Listening to others share experience, strength, and hope brought me to a new level of understanding of the Al-Anon program and of course working with a Sponsor. This is when I started to learn who I am. What a shocking and amazing revelation this was!

One of the startling revelations for me was learning that I do not need another person to make me whole. More importantly, another was finding the serenity and sanity which had been unavailable to me in my other life, the one before Al-Anon.

Being Delegate was something that I had not aspired to. I thought I didn't have what it takes, and I could not write a report to convey what I learned at the World Service Conference. I felt intimidated. One day being by myself, I heard my Higher Power say, "Yes you can and need to stand for the position of Delegate." Now that I am finishing my third year as Delegate, I am saddened in a way to see this end but also looking forward to seeing what is ahead of me for the future.

Today, I can *dream big with 20|20 vision* as I am now undertaking something that has been missing in my life and that is to go to college. I started in January. That would never have happened without the help and love from this program and all the people who have helped me on my journey.

### Patti P., Hawaii

I am the daughter of and parent of two alcoholics, and I can say that with clear 20|20 hindsight. My home and family looked fine, but there were big chunks of important stuff missing. That engagement that supports you as you learn who you are and find that place to stand and speak—that was missing.

It was my grandson's drinking and drugging that finally brought me to Al-Anon. I had gone to a few meetings years earlier, but frankly I was too blind and miserable to see the lifeline that was extended. When I was living in the day-to-day chaos of a family affected by alcoholism, it was impossible for me to see the choices available to me. My vision narrowed down to a tiny window through which I saw mostly endless coping with chaos.

When I returned to Al-Anon, I was fortunate to attend a Parents meeting, a room full of parents sharing their experiences, giving support, and even laughing. It felt like coming out of a fog and seeing for the first time in years.

I began to see options, to believe that I could actually create the life I wanted. One of the women at that meeting asked me if I would be interested in standing for Group Representative (GR). I hadn't the slightest clue what this entailed, but I admired her recovery, and of course I said yes. Being a GR in California South is very different from being a GR in Hawaii. I never imagined I would actually meet our Delegate, let alone be one.

Hawaii has been a blessing of service. It has been in the years of service here that I have experienced the loving support and acceptance that we give to one another. The trust that I can stand up and accept a job I have never done before and know that those who have gone before me are there if I need to ask for help that I can ask for help. It has been in Al-Anon service that I have learned to stand on my own ground, speak with my own voice, and see.

Service is the practical exercise of my program. In service, we have the opportunity to work alongside people who work this program with all their hearts. One cannot help but grow in this environment.

Mahalo.

### Christine W., Illinois North

I'd like to start by thanking my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, for allowing me to be directed to such a program as Al-Anon! When I came into Al-Anon, I was affected by the disease of alcoholism. Through this program, I've been given the opportunity to work on myself spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally. I learned very early that the key to personal growth comes from consistency in putting this program to practice. At my home group, we study the Three Legacies: Recovery through the Steps, unity through the Traditions, and service through the Concepts. Through this study,

I've expanded my understanding of the Legacies and put them to use in my daily living. As I look to Al-Anon worldwide for my continuous growth, I'm certainly "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision" for the future of Al-Anon and myself!

These three years as Delegate have been a spiritual experience that I will always cherish. It has enlarged and intensified my view of the Legacies. I am forever filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve at this level.

I would like to thank the members from my Area for electing me, supporting me, and believing in me to represent them at the World Service Conference. I would also like to thank all the Delegates and Conference members for sharing your experience, strength, and hope for the past three years and for staying true to our primary purpose!

As I continue to deepen my relationship with my Higher Power, it is vital to my recovery to touch base throughout the day with God in order to be connected and aware of His presence in my daily walk. In *Reaching for Personal Freedom: Living the Legacies* (P-92), it states, "Listening more intently to the will of a Higher Power helps us open ourselves to higher levels of serenity and personal fulfillment." (pg.117) I look forward to being of service to this life changing program for a lifetime!

### **Miriam B., Indiana**

When I walked in to my first Al-Anon meeting in 1986, my *vision* of the world around me was far from 20/20. It was clouded with anger, resentment, and self-pity. I had grown up in an alcoholic home and then married into alcoholism. I was painfully shy and had no self-esteem. By the time I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, I didn't know who I was or what I even wanted out of life. I just wanted to know how to get my husband to stop drinking! After the meeting, a girl my age sat down beside me and offered me the greatest gift I could ever receive—her experience, strength, and hope.

Through the unconditional love shown to me, I gained confidence and self-esteem, and for the first time in my life I felt like I belonged. My *vision*, that was so clouded before, was now becoming clearer. I had hope, and I could *dream* of a better life for myself. I didn't realize it then, but now I know that I was being nurtured into doing service work. I was willing to do anything to help. I started by setting up literature and making coffee. Then, one day my Sponsor signed me up to chair a meeting. I was full of fear and self-doubt, but she told me that I would not be alone, and I would always have support of Al-Anon members in whatever service work I did.

With each service position I took, my circle of trust broadened to where I stand today—before you. Somewhere along my journey I dreamed of being Delegate for my Area and now my term is almost coming to an end. But, for me, it is not the end of my Al-Anon journey, it's only the beginning of where my Higher Power wants to take me from here.

This year's theme is about *dreaming big*. The first thing that I envisioned when I read it was the world and how Al-Anon has grown since its beginnings, but that how so many more people can benefit from this wonderful program. And why not *dream big*? Dreams give us hope for the future, and Al-Anon's future looks clearer to me more now than ever.

### **Phil G., Kansas**

After five stents and a heart attack, it took yet another trip to the emergency room with cardiac stress, lying on my back with two alcoholics looking at me from the foot of the gurney, asking if I was finally ready to try Al-Anon for me to finally surrender. I had resisted for many years, sure that those old ladies would never understand what it was like to be a gay man living in a world greatly impacted by alcoholism. Fortunately, I attended my first meeting four days later and have not looked back.

I quickly found a Sponsor because that is what you said I needed, and he was emphatic that my first assignment was to start doing service. He explained that it would be making coffee at every meeting he signed up to chair. Then, he signed up to chair every meeting in town for the next few weeks. When I look back with *20/20 vision*, I know that not only Al-Anon, but service in Al-Anon, has saved my life.

It has been those lessons and the guidance of so many trusted servants who continued to encourage and support my service journey that led me to find my way to serve as the Kansas Delegate. I arrived in New York in 2018 humbled by the support and faith entrusted in me. I found a whole new network of trusted servants who were ready to encourage me through this next chapter. I quickly understood the theme, "Al-Anon—There Is No Standing Still!" literally from early morning to late night. I returned to Kansas with new appreciation for what our Higher Power can do when we dare to dream of the possibilities and seek the solutions. The 2019 theme, "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone," challenged me to get out of my introverted comfort zone and grow. What an honor to be part of the history as a Delegate for the first trilingual Conference.

As we *dream big with 20/20 vision*, my hope is that we continue this 60-year conversation with the same courage to dream as our founders did. I am grateful and continue to be humbled by all that has been afforded me through this journey in service, and I hope we all continue to dream of the next opportunity to serve Al-Anon.

### **Sherry H., Kentucky**

I never *dreamed* I would be in Al-Anon. I first heard of Al-Anon in the '70s. I came to you when I was 38 years old in the '90s. I am the granddaughter of two alcoholic grandfathers, and the daughter of two adult children of alcoholics. I am the victim of a drunk driving accident at age ten; my grandmother died that night from internal injuries. Today, I am able to use that tragedy to identify and share experience, strength, and hope with others. In fact, that was one of the connections with my Sponsor from the start.

Divorced twice, I met *him*! After a few years, his alcoholism had become apparent. My vision was still blurred by control and anger. I had tried everything on my own. Then one day, God sent me an angel (an ex-con and member of A.A. disguised as an Employee Assistance Program staff member). Of course, he "sent me" to meetings; even though "nothing was wrong with me."

I found a Sponsor. Even though I didn't like women, she and my Higher Power walked me through the Steps and healed that in me. I never *dreamed* I would have so many beautiful women in my life today. She and other trusted servants encouraged me in service from the beginning. I believe they had a vision and saw something in me that I didn't see in myself yet.

Several years into recovery doing service in Alateen at 44 years old, I had given up the dream of being a mom and grieved never having children. I felt that God had given me Alateen members to serve,



and I loved teenagers. My husband never wanted to adopt, but God changed his heart. Nine months later, in November 2001, we were on a plane flying to Ukraine to adopt. We met seven-year-old Anna. We were told that both of her parents were alcoholics. I thought, “she’s the one.” We know about alcoholism! We became a family in recovery Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A.

This led me to move from Alateen service to other areas of service: Group Representative, Alternate District Representative, DR, Host Committee Chair for a TEAM Event, Area Archivist, Area Alateen Coordinator, and Delegate. I love serving this fellowship!

My dreams and prayers for Al-Anon/Alateen are that they will be here 100 years from now and that I can share what I’ve learned from this experience to encourage others in service and their recovery.

### **Mintie G., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario**

When I started my term as Delegate, I wondered what God would have in store for me. I had just turned 65, married 42 years with three adult children. I had 22 years in Al-Anon, and I was steeped in service eager to share my precious program with Sponsees and excited to have coordinated Area public outreach for six years.

Al-Anon had given me the ability to focus on myself, examine my life, discover who I am, be released from my old limiting beliefs, and be transformed. By 15 years of Al-Anon, my husband had taken notice and expressed his desire to join me. So, I hooked him up with meetings and a Sponsor. I was happy to pass it on.

Finally, we would share this loving program. What more would God want to do with me now? I was excited to start my term as Delegate and couldn’t even imagine the gifts God has given. Fortunately, I was in the practice of consciously staying close to God, aligning my intentions with God’s will, and trusting that a divine plan was unfolding.

I knew we would have challenges with an all new Area World Service Committee (AWSC). We needed to work together to review our Area Handbook to clarify large portions.

What I didn’t anticipate was my 36-year-old daughter estranged herself from me and cut off contact. I also didn’t anticipate that my husband would get a lawyer to file for divorce while I was away at Conference. I had a granddaughter arrive, and I was not invited to be part of that celebration.

I never experienced anything so painful in my life. By the grace of God and the love of this fellowship, I made it through the hardest days of devastating heartbreak—overwhelmed with sadness, pain, and disbelief. This was my reality. With your support, I was able to accept that I was powerless over all of it. I stayed close to God. I felt reassurance that God was leading me and peace that God would take care of me. In spite of the sadness, I have more faith than ever before. I didn’t know that God would intervene so dramatically in my personal life while I served as Delegate. God has my life and is revealing what I need. God knows my path. I will trust Him.

### **Idalia R., Maryland/District of Columbia**

When I walked into Al-Anon, I certainly was not *dreaming big* about anything. My *20/20 vision* was focused around all the alcoholics in my life. As an adult child of alcoholics, I certainly was not encouraged to dream about anything. The only dream I had was that when I got to be of age, I would get away from all these crazy alcoholics and sick people. But you see when I ran, the first thing I took was myself with all my “isms” and all that I had learned in that alcoholic home.

So, when I walked into the rooms of Al-Anon, I was angry, bitter, depressed, and suicidal. I certainly did not know alcohol had

affected me, the non-drinker. I did not get into these rooms because I had a dream to be a Delegate. It started gradually when you all said to keep coming back and that you were going to love me until I learned how to love myself because, you see, I was looking for love in all the wrong places. It never occurred to me that the greatest love of all was inside of me. However, the women who took me under their wings had a dream for me that I certainly did not see at that time, but they did.

My first service job was cleaning ashtrays. How could they give me such a service position when I didn’t even smoke? They did. From that job, I was promoted to room cleaner-upper, then to literature person, Treasurer, and then Group Representative.

These women were on a mission. They had dreams for my future in Al-Anon. They knew that if I got busy, I would get better. You see, I was still caught up in the “Why me?” and “Look what they did to me.” You know, that victim dream. They knew that if I started *dreaming big*, I could create my own vision on how I could be a grateful member in Al-Anon and not just a grateful member of Al-Anon. I became more involved in the Area and made new friends outside my group. Today, I know that when I *dream big*, my *20/20 vision* becomes clearer, and I no longer carry the weight of being a victim. I can be free to be me and love myself the way that my Higher Power intended.

### **Ann M., Michigan**

Being a Delegate has been an experience full of humility and service. I think I was born to serve. Back in second grade, I raised my hand when the teacher asked, “How does each sentence begin?” She called on me. I answered, “Ann!” With her puzzled look, I went on to give her examples. “Ann, get me a diaper. Ann, set the table. Ann, bring up the stuff from the dryer. Ann, get me another diaper. Ann, what sounds good for supper? Ann, pick out a fruit from the fruit cellar.”

I can totally relate to the part in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-8) book about Step One, explaining how many of us shouldered major responsibilities. As I got a little older, I became more responsible. Some of it was asked of me. Some of it was assumed by me. That’s how I saw life.

Life got chaotic as an adult, as I looked for that one more thing I could try to control or stop his drinking. That inner scream was growing. I had a coffee cup of the “Peanuts” character, Lucy, who was screaming. That was me.

I found myself in therapy for staying in a bad relationship. I found myself in Al-Anon for his drinking. One of my first insights from my Higher Power was noting that I was in therapy and in Al-Anon over the same person. *Him!* However, as my eyesight improved, I was there for me.

In my own recovery, the biggest moments have been when I work to gain a new look at an old incident. I first take responsibility for being at that place with that person. I take responsibility for what I did and for what I didn’t do. Today, with *20/20 vision*, I am responsible for only my part.

Service continues to be a big part of my life. Working with other District Representatives, coordinators, and officers has been a big part of my recovery. I remember my first *wow* moment when I went to an Area meeting and someone was giving a report about an upcoming state convention. “This is where things happen!!” I think I began *dreaming big* that day.

I want peace in all the Districts, I want all teens who need Alateen to find it, and I want to see all of you in Detroit.

## Betty A., Minnesota South

When I received the invitation from the Conference Leadership Team to give a Three-Minute Talk focusing on the 2020 Conference theme, “Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision,” I immediately remembered that prior to recovery, I was unable to dream at all due to the chaos that comes with the family disease of alcoholism. It wasn’t the only thing alcoholism took from me—it also stole my reality, my happiness, and any kind of God in my life.

In desperation, I came through the doors of Al-Anon kicking and screaming and clutching my halo with an odd mixture of superiority and inferiority all mixed confusingly together—just look what the alcoholic had done to me. Al-Anon absolutely saved my life by giving me back my power to see my part in the family disease of alcoholism. It allowed me to dig through the garbage of my life, to find myself, and most of all, to dream again.

Al-Anon helped me to grow emotionally and spiritually, as I came to have a vision of what my life could be, if I turned it over to a Power greater than myself. With my Higher Power taking care of my life, I was free to be of service to others. Dreams helped me to see future possibilities and spurred me on to pursue those dreams realistically. Today, I have ideas and dreams that I’ve never thought possible, and, I don’t just dream—I’ve been given what I need to go after those dreams, and I have.

My first Sponsor told me that my answer to service is always “yes.” Whenever I stand for a position, I’m positive I can never do it right—I’m not good enough or smart enough. I forget that my Higher Power can make something good out of anything, and He has. Service helps my program growth to flourish, and I get healthier.

My hope is for everyone who needs us finds us—there’s so much more that we can do. In this program, we have the ability to push our borders out further to help those who are still living in the problem instead of the solution.

My *vision* for 20/20 is: The sky’s the limit, throw the net out farther, widen the scope, *dream big*, and pray a lot. My Higher Power doesn’t hold me back—that’s Him beside me, cheering me on.

## Molly C., New York North

I think my *biggest dream* as a kid was to become a schoolteacher. I loved reading, history, art, and even homework, however, that dream ended when I dropped out of college.

By the time I walked into Al-Anon, I had no dreams. I just wanted the darkness and pain to stop. I didn’t know what was wrong. Everything felt wrong, but I could not see what it was. As I listened at meetings, I heard others tell pieces of my story and identify things and feelings in my life. I began to see. I could see how I was reacting and behaving. I know Al-Anon saved my life.

I began to realize that I was a dangerous, aggressive driver. I parented unfairly when I was really angry with my spouse. I was blind to these behaviors. I became a better driver, parent, and spouse.

If you can’t see where you are, you have no idea where to go or what is possible. Al-Anon meetings are like putting on a pair of new glasses. Under my Higher Power’s guidance, I see things about my life that I couldn’t fathom on my own. I pursued a teaching degree, and after a few years admitted it was not for me. And that was okay.

Now, I can ask myself what I want and do the footwork to attain it. I can *dream big*, take risks, and set goals to get there. I must verbalize it at a meeting, then it will become possible. I have proven this to myself.

I traveled with my best friend and family to Italy. In an Al-Anon meeting before the trip, I talked about wanting to see the artwork of

a particular painter in Florence. No one on the trip wanted to go to the gallery, so I went with 12 complete strangers to the gallery to see paintings and art by others I’ve read about my whole life. It was one of the most joyous days I’ve ever had. I still get chills thinking about it. None of this would have been a possibility without Al-Anon.

Knowledge and wisdom come from working with caring people. In Al-Anon, I can *dream big* and find solutions with the input of the members of this great fellowship. I am so blessed to have a home, a loving family, and a stable supportive home group.

## Theresa M., Ohio

Even considering this topic, and how to apply it to my life since becoming a Delegate, brings forth an ongoing character defect of always seeing the cons first. That fear-based approach to life with all its perfectionistic tendencies is deeply embedded in my psyche. I have progressed enough that when I am with others, I now can catch their enthusiasm. But then, I sometimes go overboard with impossibly grand ideas. Using principles of humility and prudence, our program allows me to come back to a middle ground—a clearer vision of what is probable as well as what may be possible in both the near term and the future.

I believe the suggestion to try six meetings before deciding to continue in Al-Anon is what attracted me the most when I came into these rooms. That allowed me time to make a truly informed decision. This reminded me of how I enjoyed doing experiments in chemistry: One does the research, makes a hypothesis based on that experience, performs the experiment, and then evaluates the results. I see parallels with allowing myself to *dream big* both for myself personally and in all areas of my program work.

This year, we have moved to a senior living community. I needed to *dream big* with a clearer view of what we wanted and needed. I needed to look forward with an open mind at the aging process and to be mindful of my husband’s view. We have no children of our own and realized the importance of arranging for some additional support as we get older.

After seeing the various experiences (both good and bad) of our parents as they aged, we began looking for a place over ten years ago. We gathered information about different facilities in many states. We even considered retirement on a cruise ship. Talk about a grandiose idea!

After much investigation, we selected the community where we are now. After six years of being on the waiting list, we are now getting settled. Leaving friends and neighbors, after 40 years, is not without some sadness. However, I can still keep in touch through phone, email, and social media while making new acquaintances and friendships in our new surroundings. The continuing contact with my ever-enlarging family of choice keeps me grounded in the reality—allowing me to experience both joys and sorrows of this changing circumstance in my life.

## Sue G., Ontario South

Listening for the past two years to the third-year Delegates share their messages, I did not fully appreciate the significance to look back and reflect on the impact the position of Delegate had given me.

This experience has truly been full of gifts. Gifts, I discovered that were not always pleasant. However, I do know that there is no gain without pain. I learned I am not a detail person when it comes to reading. I would rather skim over an item and get the gist rather than read the details. I can also be irresponsible and procrastinate.

So, I began to look at our World Service Conference (WSC) theme "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision," and wondered how it could apply to me and my negative and positive attributes.

Deciding how important an item is, when I have been given it to read, and making a conscientious effort to read the details, will help expand my knowledge and productivity regarding the issue.

I have put off getting involved in much of the technology and communication that is available today. Things like Twitter, online meetings, Instagram, Facebook. "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision" encourages me to step out of my comfort zone and make a plan to tap into some of these areas. To me, in my little corner of the world, "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision" means making sure I aim high with expectations of myself and my Area.

"Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision" means looking to the future of my Area. There are many remarkable members in Ontario South who could help create a healthy and prolific future Area World Service Committee (AWSC) for our Area, and I plan to encourage them to consider taking on officer roles.

Developing a list of questions to ask prospective coordinator candidates prior to having the positions filled, may help encourage a more creative and complete group of coordinators.

I know the technology components for future WSCs include "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision," and I will support our incoming Delegate in this new venture by sharing my experience, strength, and hope.

The future of Al-Anon is a high priority for me. I want this vital program to be available for the many people out there who are still suffering from this cunning and baffling disease. So, I will continue "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision."

### Jeffrey F., Pennsylvania

My life was a blur when I decided it was time to attend my first Al-Anon meeting. I had walked away from my marriage six weeks earlier believing it would be the answer to all my problems, but I was still confused and unsure as to where my life was headed. I had lost everything, and my hopes and dreams for the future were shattered. That October night was the first step in bringing a sense of clarity into my life.

I had been attending the same Monday night meeting for almost a year when someone asked me to attend a different meeting with them which met on Wednesday night. I had never considered attending a meeting somewhere else, but I was willing to be there for a friend. This meeting was very small, and something was different from Monday night. I couldn't tell what the difference was, but I kept going every week.

Several months later, I was approached by an individual I had seen once before at that meeting. I found out later she was the District Representative (DR). She asked me if I would consider becoming their Group Representative (GR). I immediately said "no" as I took three steps backward. The last thing I needed was the responsibility of a group. Later that night, I realized the group's difference was the lack of information the members were receiving. I spoke with the GR for my Monday night meeting to learn what a GR did and made a decision to stand for the position. This was the beginning of my journey in service.

Service has been a gift to me. It has helped me with my own personal recovery as well as allowing me to give back to the program. I will say I was probably more surprised than anyone to hear the words, "I would like the opportunity to stand for Delegate" come from my mouth when asked if I was willing at our Assembly. I didn't

think I had the time or ability for the position. But I have also heard it said that sometimes our Higher Power speaks through us when the time is right. I think about all that I lost in my life, but then remember what I have gained because of Al-Anon. I have new hopes and dreams, and I will continue "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision."

### Claudette D., Quebec West

Several years ago, my life was a mess. I didn't smile much, and I was so unhappy. My husband's drinking destabilized me, I didn't know what to do to stop him, and I became irritable and often unreasonable. My vision of life was not very clear.

In June 1983, an Al-Anon member attracted me, and I went to my first meeting where I heard people share their experience, strength, and hope. It gave me confidence and hope. I took the suggestion to attend the Beginners' Meeting. The First Step was a huge relief for me, understanding that I had no control over the alcoholic, it was a disease. I realized that the only control I had was on my recovery. My vision became clearer.

I wanted to be happy and enjoy life again, even though my husband was still drinking. Quickly, I wanted to know what the secret was to be like the members I used to meet at meetings. I chose a Sponsor, and she guided me in my journey with our Three Legacies, and I realized that service was part of my recovery.

In the spring of 1994, Quebec West hosted a Regional Service Seminar in Ste-Adele. I was very impressed to see all the Volunteers and Staff from the World Service Office so dedicated and attractive. Since I became involved in service, one of my positive experiences has been to lead the Beginners' Meeting. It is so very important to give them hope that their lives will change even if the alcoholic is still drinking. Newcomers are the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.

"Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision"—I am *dreaming* of continuing to grow in my recovery, being involved in service, and helping the new trusted servants in my Area. I dream that Al-Anon Family Groups will be present in all communities around the world in order to be able to help people who suffer through contact with an alcoholic. I hope that with these dreams, my *vision* will be 20|20 for the for the rest of my life.

### Barbara H., Rhode Island

Before Al-Anon, my dreams were for everyone else. I didn't know how to dream for myself. I came to Al-Anon to get the alcoholic sober. *Those crazy women* didn't tell me how to do it. I was insane and didn't know it. As I stopped managing and the alcoholic left, I wanted to crawl in a hole and die. I didn't know where he ended, and I began. Without him I had nothing.

It was Al-Anon that saved me. I could no longer use the alcoholic as an excuse for my life. I had to acknowledge all that I had done; I washed the alcoholic's clothes without soap because I needed to punish him, not because he didn't help pay the bills. He didn't participate in the kids' school events because I didn't tell him about them, not because he was too drunk to remember. My caretaking is destructive because it takes away from the people I care about. My kindness unchecked will kill you, and I will be resentful that you are not grateful. Al-Anon has taught me to have reciprocal relationships that enhance my life, not become it.

When I started in service, I told myself I was to give back what was given to me, which in part is true, although, in reality, without an alcoholic, I had no life. I had no social skills or healthy relationships.



### What service has taught me:

- I am not alone
- I can be friends with an alcoholic without wanting to fix or kill them
- Control is an illusion
- I am not responsible for another person's happiness
- I let the people I love suffer their own consequences
- I have my own voice
- You don't have to like me
- I defeat fear by facing it
- I am a good person for who I am, not who you want me to be
- I don't have to have blind obedience to belong

Dreams are the things that I hope for even though I'm afraid to want them. *20/20 vision* is seeing things through the lens of reality, not denial. I am blessed, God does for me what I can't do for myself. I have people in my life who love me enough to tell me the truth. It might not sound like much; but, I couldn't have dreamt for anything more.

### Leah L., Tennessee

Having recently been diagnosed with diabetes and changing my eyeglasses twice in the last ten months, I am acutely aware of the impact of blurred vision. It's difficult to read, either in print or on the computer, and it's hard to drive, particularly at night when I'm someplace I've never been before. So, I make sure I take my medication as prescribed, try to eat properly, and walk as much as I can.

It's a lot like that for me in the program. When I do the things I can do to keep my program in-line—meeting with my Sponsor regularly, reading Conference Approved Literature (CAL) daily, attending several meetings each week, working with others, and incorporating the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in my daily life—I am able to see life's situations more clearly. I can see hope and find help when I need it. I can dream!

When I'm able to see things clearly, I dream of a world where everyone who *wants* Al-Anon can have it. There are lots of healthy meetings everywhere, something for everyone. But my *big dream* is that everyone who needs Al-Anon can find it when they're ready. With the *20/20 vision* I gain from faithfully working the program, I can see that the way to make these dreams come true is for me to continue participating in Al-Anon public outreach at every opportunity, and showing up and participating fully at meetings. In addition, I will continue working with my local Al-Anon Information Service to ensure we continue to have CAL readily available in our community and that meeting information is kept current. I can also be available to those Area officers and Delegates who come after me to share experience, strength, and hope as I continue to be of service after this term.

You don't need new glasses to see your *big Al-Anon dreams* come true—you just need to keep doing what you're doing and invite others along on the journey.

To the Panel 59 and Panel 60 Delegates, I say, "Thank you for continuing the quest for *20/20 vision*." And, to my fellow Panel 58 Delegates, I ask, "Won't you continue on this path with me? I can see the very best is yet to be."

### Kay C., Texas East

When I first came to Al-Anon 27 years ago, my vision was cloudy about 100/100. I had no dreams, just nightmares that revolved around how to end my marriage—some legal, some not. As if getting rid of him would solve my problems. Luckily, I was "sentenced" to Al-Anon by the out-patient treatment center where my husband attended sessions.

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting, my vision started to clear. It was slowly at first, and then rapidly as I got a Sponsor. I worked the Steps and began my service journey. My service journey started out by opening the door to the meeting and making coffee. Eventually, I got involved in service outside of the group, and my vision got stronger, but I had blinders on so tunnel vision was the best I could do.

My tunnel vision was apparent when, as a District Representative (DR), I went to an Area World Service Committee Meeting (AWSC) and Assembly where all I saw was control, lack of inclusion, and dominance by people who had been in service a long time. Wrapped up in ego, self-pity, and control, I showed them by leaving during the evening session, driving five hours back home, and saying no more service for me!

However, I got a new Sponsor who encouraged me to try service outside the group again so that I could work through my perceptions, practice new behavior, and practice the principles of our Legacies in a safe environment. With my stronger vision and my great Al-Anon tracking skills, I found the Area Assembly. Lo and behold some of those same people were present that were at the AWSC/Assembly I left those many years ago. However, with clearer vision, those same people looked and acted different! Could that be a coincidence? I think not!

As I grew in service, by participating in Area positions and events, my blinders have fallen off, and my vision has improved! In fact, through participation in the World Service Conference (WSC) and the excitement brought to the WSC by the Executive Director, the Board of Trustees, and Staff my *vision* is nearly *20/20*. Now, I see a whole new horizon and lots of adventure with my newfound vision. My dreams are that we become even better communicators and a close-knit worldwide organization that offers hope to the friends and family of alcoholics through electronic and other media.

### Kay M., Texas West

When I arrived at Al-Anon, I didn't plan to stay. I only came because I had a recovering alcoholic in my life, and I needed to know how to change him. That was my dream, *change him!*

It took a while for me to see that I was the one who needed to change, but my vision was cloudy in that respect. I had no idea that Al-Anon would give me a new and purposeful life—that it would become my passion.

I never imagined I would get deeply involved in service and one day become Delegate. In fact, I almost didn't stand.

At the time of our elections, both my husband and father were fighting cancer. I didn't know if I could be the Delegate my Area deserved given the difficult family situation I was facing. My dreams had grown bigger thanks to the program, so I put my name forward and turned the results over to God.

On the day I boarded the plane to attend my first World Service Conference, my father was hospitalized. His condition quickly deteriorated, and he went into a coma while I was at Conference. My father, who was my hero, died three days after I returned home.

Last year, I faced my own health issue. A routine test revealed that I was at *high risk* for getting breast cancer. So, two days before heading to my second World Service Conference, I met with my doctor and made the decision to schedule a double mastectomy upon my return. This proactive step seemed a better alternative than spending the rest of my life running from cancer.

Though my Delegate journey hasn't been easy, it's been rewarding. I've been blessed with precious friendships and grown through service to my Area and the worldwide fellowship. I've experienced the humbling outpouring of love and support from my Al-Anon family during my most difficult times. I've witnessed the dedication of those who work every day to carry our message of hope. I've felt the excitement of our trusted servants as they participated in the first trilingual World Service Conference (WSC). I'm grateful to have played a small part in moving Al-Anon forward.

Thank you to Panel 58 for sharing my journey and thank you to Al-Anon for giving me a life I could never have imagined. It has been an honor to serve.

## INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

### Guy D., France

"Hello friends, I am Guy. I'm well and happy to be with you." This is how I have announced myself in my Al-Anon group for 22 years.

To be honest, I didn't always say, "I'm well." When I discovered a hidden bottle of alcohol at home, and when I realized that my wife had an alcohol problem, I was devastated. Alcohol at home meant all the misfortunes in the world. I saw a very dark future, I was confused. That wasn't the reality, but it was what I felt.

At the same time, a phrase came back to me, that I had heard on the radio more than 20 years before, "When you are close to an alcoholic, even with the best intentions in the world, you may not behave well." I wanted to prevent my wife from drinking, it was just a question of working at it. So, I called Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) right away. They would know what to do. The A.A. member who answered the phone told me to contact Al-Anon, and he put me in touch with his wife, who was a member. That very evening, I attended a very bizarre meeting. People took turns to speak on an unbelievable subject: serenity. But, what did that have to do with my wife's alcoholism?

I was afraid it was a cult, but at the same time, I felt enormous, human warmth and great compassion. I shortly found a group closer to home and attended despite my worries. In this group, there was much human warmth too. I was encouraged to "Keep Coming Back," to read the literature, and to make phone calls if I felt bad. All of this helped me a lot when, in the months and years that followed, the situation at home significantly deteriorated.

I even found help in the Serenity Prayer. I, who refused any notion of God, ended up accepting the possible existence of a "power greater than myself," which could help me.

A few weeks after my arrival, there were elections where, despite my reticence, I was appointed Group Treasurer. That evening, I left with the group's cash. I was dumbfounded by the confidence the group had in me. I thought, "If they trust me so much, it is up to me to deserve it."

Every year, I took service positions, first in the group, then in the region, then with the organization of our Convention, and now, finally, at the national level, on the Board. Al-Anon has given me so many benefits, that I want to help make them available to all those who suffer from the alcoholism of a loved one.

Al-Anon France was created in 1962. In 2005, there were 215 groups. Today, there are 150 for a population of 67 million. If we had the same proportion as America, we would be 30 times larger. Our Structure is fragile because of its small size, the many small groups, and the proportion of elderly members.

Two years ago, due to financial limitations, we had to change premises and terminate the contract of our only paid employee. The Board created new committees to cover the work of the employee, sought Al-Anon members to take up service positions, and sought ways to simplify administrative tasks. Today, this system is operational. We are aware that it is fragile because it is based on members' enthusiasm and the need for service rotation.

Each year, our Conference has around 30 members: Delegates from 15 Regions, Committee Chairs, and the Board. Working on the planning for the fellowship with the other Delegates is a powerful experience for each participant. The last Conference decided on creating Al-Anon meetings via video. A video meeting is now operational weekly, with around 15 members including some newcomers.

The Conference and the Board of Directors take care to respect the Traditions and Concepts and to apply the processes set out in the *Service Manual*.

To be honest, I must say that it is not always easy for a Structure like ours to know how to interpret the *Service Manual*. Whenever the World Service Office (WSO) is mentioned, we often wonder if this means the global service structure, or if it applies to a Service Structure such as ours.

In the same vein, France asked a question about representation and the right to vote for International Delegates at the World Service Conference (WSC). I am delighted that you have invited me, I am truly grateful. However, I wouldn't have the right to vote. The reason is that this Conference is represented by the World Service Conference Structure, so it's normal that I don't vote.

However, for the subjects which also concern groups outside of this Structure, should there not be, in addition, a gathering of Delegates from all the zones to debate and vote on the subjects which concern us all?

I bring you the warmest regards of the fellowship in France, which is enormously grateful for the help and encouragement that we receive from the WSC, your Board, and the WSO.

### Luz G., Mexico

Hi, my name is Lucy, and I am a grateful member of Al-Anon because I have family members who suffer from the disease of alcoholism. I bring you love and greetings from the Al-Anon members in Mexico.

Before I came into the Al-Anon program, I was in a depression crisis. I used to feel very confused. I lived in constant anguish and desperation. I didn't know how to make decisions, and I didn't want to live. At that time, I lived with my alcoholic husband and my four children: three teenagers and a little girl who was five years old.

I came into my very first Al-Anon meeting on January 14, on my mom's birthday, which is why I remember it. Since that moment, I knew I arrived at the right place. Somehow, my heart understood everything that was shared in that special place.

I had been asking the God of my understanding to show me a way out of my hopelessness, and He led me to Al-Anon. There was emotional abuse in our home. My husband's behavior was always a source of confusion for me and my children, but by attending my Al-Anon meetings, I understood that his attitudes were of an alcoholic person.

I hoped Al-Anon would save my marriage, but it didn't. I felt devastated for a long time. When it was clear that my marriage had ended, I instinctively knew that if I didn't remain in the program, I was destined to keep going with the same behavior that kept me in that emotional whirlwind for most of my life.

Al-Anon has taught me that I always have options and that I am never tied to any situation. I have found friends and family in Al-Anon members. Service was my lifesaver. I can honestly say that I have grown up in Al-Anon. I learned how to be myself in a place where I am accepted as I am.

My relationship with my Higher Power has become deeper in a way I never thought it could be. I don't feel alone, and I know that when I am afraid, He is next to me, supporting me. I love knowing that there is always something to learn. There's always a reason to keep going.

Through the years, my decision to enter the doors of an Al-Anon meeting has led me to many places I could never imagine, like this big honor of sharing as an International Representative of my country with this World Service Conference.

Nowadays, I am part of the Board of Trustees in the General Service Office (GSO) in Mexico, working hard with responsibility and love for our worldwide fellowship to grow.

Al-Anon in Mexico is growing constantly. Currently, we have 38 areas distributed in six regions; 3,361 groups, from which: 2,454 are Al-Anon groups, 259 are Al-Anon Adult Children groups, 440 Alateen groups, and 208 institutional.

Our GSO has 16 employees, including the manager. Our Association is registered with the Tax Administration Service under the condition of tax exemption for the distribution of our publications.

The Finance Committee makes an annual project to encourage the members to contribute. The online group records are working.

We are creating and updating the support materials for service. The National Project of Healthy Groups has already been working for two years with very good results. It consists of two Trustees that visit one area from each panel.

In March, we held our 46th Conference Assembly of National Service in Mexico City with an attendance of 38 Delegates, Board of Trustees members, Executive Committee, Selected Committees Chairpersons, and Staff members.

The Al-Anon/Alateen Regional Seminar of Service, Region 3, was held in the city of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco July 26 – 28, 2019. It was a total success with an attendance of 4,000 people.

Every year in September, we carry out the "National Week of Meet Al-Anon/Alateen" all over the country, it is an intense labor of public outreach.

To celebrate the anniversary of our beloved GSO, we held the 21st Simultaneous National Congress with the participation of all the areas of the country. Each area sent a present to our office.

On October 26 and 27, 2019, we had the privilege of having the 9th Ibero-American Zonal Meeting of Al-Anon Services in our country. The theme was: "Linking service experiences in Ibero-America." We had participants in attendance from Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, as well as the USA, as our special guest. Mexico was the host.

I wanted to share this news from our GSO in Mexico, as well as a piece of my Al-Anon story. I'm grateful to God and to you for giving me this gift of sharing with the WSC.

## SPIRITUAL TALKS

### Rosanna H., California North

I suspect there are very few of us who, just after entering the rooms of Al-Anon, thought, "Oh I am so looking forward to owning all of the harm I've caused, and I can't wait to presume goodwill toward everyone, loving you in a very special way is one of my goals, and serving as a member of the World Service Conference is my greatest service aspiration!"

When I came to you at the suggestion of my therapist, all I wanted was to save my alcoholic marriage so I could have a happy home life. I had been married to a man whose drinking had been bothering me for nearly 18 years. We had been married for 11 of those years.

It was never my dream to be here. And if you told me at my first meeting what was in store for me in the coming years, I never would have believed you or returned the following week. Today, I am humbled and honored to share how Al-Anon has changed my life.

I grew up in a home where alcohol was not abused by my parents or siblings. The *isms* of the family disease were so subtle in my childhood that I could not see them even after being in Al-Anon for a few years. I recently learned my dad may have been raised by a parent with a drinking problem. So as the saying goes, "The holes in my head fit the spikes in my husband's head," and today, I'm grateful I married an alcoholic because if it weren't for him, I would never have found you or the life I now get to live.

Here's what I learned in my childhood:

- Attention is given when I've done something wrong. To avoid attention, aim for something between perfect and mediocre, anything less than mediocre will draw attention.
- Expressing anger only drew attention, so stuff that feeling.
- Look for the silver lining in every situation because being disappointed or sad were unmanageable feelings just like anger.
- Adults don't have to admit mistakes.
- I must be stupid because though he never said it, my dad spoke to me as if I was stupid whenever I made a mistake. Mistakes mean I'm stupid.
- God is angry and punishing, like my dad.
- I can't always be first, there are others to consider.
- If you're going to sing or play an instrument, you'd better be good.
- Share what you have.
- Think of others first.

I was a self-reliant, generous, considerate person with low self-worth and self-esteem when I got married. I didn't trust myself or anyone else. But if I followed someone's advice and things went wrong, I was ready to blame them for my circumstances. I did not know how to take responsibility for my life because it was easier to play the victim. I was fluent in "victimese."

My ego was inversely proportional to my humility, and I had a lot of bark, but no bite or boundaries. My marriage and home looked good on the outside: We were college educated parents living in our own home on my husband's salary while I drove our two beautiful children to modeling jobs.

What you could not see was the physical, emotional, and verbal abuse I tolerated and dished out. The "college" style of drinking continued beyond college, and I saw my husband as a weak-willed man who chose alcohol over his family. My worth was wrapped up



in how well my family looked, and he was making us look bad. I felt responsible.

Guilt was a tool that was effective on me, so I tried my best hoping it would be effective on him.

We knew how to save money. To this day, my exact nature is to add a bit of water to any can I open and swirl it around to get all of the bits. We did not go on fancy trips or buy new cars. As time went on, I had no interest in spending money on a vacation only to be isolated with two small children and an adult who needed looking after. Poor pitiful me.

In our book, . . . *In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You* (B-15), it says the disease of alcoholism needs denial, secrecy, and isolation to exist. These behaviors were thriving in me.

When I finally came to the door of Al-Anon—I say, “door” because I only attended one meeting a week for eight years—I had no interest in spending more than one and a quarter hours per week with you people. “No, I don’t want to attend your fellowship event. I have six siblings, and we laugh, hang out, and I can fellowship with them. Plus, you don’t seem like a fun group of folks and I have no intention of spending a Saturday night with you, let alone a whole weekend.” “No, I’m not interested in your Higher Power thing, I’ve got the God of someone else’s understanding. He’s not very approachable or nice, but I only talk to Him during emergencies, and I’m working on staying spiritually stunted, so no thanks.”

When you read the Steps, I asked you if I could bypass Steps One and Two and go straight to Step Three. I could not identify with surrender or trust, but I knew about God. You told me I could work the Steps as I wished but the Steps were in a certain order for a reason. When I talked about my problems, you said, “You can be right, or you can be happy.” I said, “When he admits I’m right, I’ll be happy.” When the Group Representative for my home group shared what was needed or what was happening in my District, Area, and beyond, I decided it had nothing to do with me or what I wanted for myself. I would slowly drift into wondering what I would do after the meeting, or wonder what the alcoholic was up to at home, or I would wonder if my kids were safe at home.

Divorce was for people who didn’t try hard enough, and if you loved someone, you stayed. But I saw how others in Al-Anon were able to maintain successful marriages, and I hoped for that for myself. I made a decision to try and have a healthy marriage with the father of my children rather than taking my unhealthy behaviors into a new relationship. That hope would not last long.

When the hunting rifle came out one drunken night, my kids and I moved out. I tried to believe the kids and I were safe once the gun was out of the house. I had kept all of us in an unsafe environment because, even though I was not happy, I did not want to be financially self-supporting. Though I knew my husband loved me and our children, there was no one but me to protect them from any harm that may come. I could no longer deny the problem, I had grown an Al-Anon backbone, and I was ready to face an unknown future believing we might die if I didn’t do something different.

During that time away from home, I learned that I could love someone and not want to be with them. I learned to set boundaries for myself and that I could be afraid and make a choice that was independent of that fear. It was easier to pretend my husband suffered from Alzheimer’s or Tourette’s than from alcoholism. So, I listened to you and attended an open A.A. meeting where I could hear the pain from others what my husband was unable to articulate for himself. I learned how to start having compassion.

With one and a half years of one meeting per week and maybe Steps One and Two under my belt, my husband, likely while drinking, gave himself too much insulin, went into a coma, and died six months later. I knew my problem was not my husband’s drinking but the alcoholic system I grew up in. I knew I belonged in Al-Anon.

But I thought you would kick me out if I didn’t have an alcoholic in my life so, “yes, I’ll find another one!” I wanted to keep coming back because I had found a place where no one tried to fix me, where I could take as little as I wanted until I was ready to surrender to a loving God that did not look or sound like my dad, where I could learn to start living a life that was based on spiritual principles that I chose, not those of society. Where I could learn to feel all of my feelings, even anger and sadness and not make them my Higher Power. Where I could learn to ask for what I wanted instead of dancing around the topic hoping you will pick up on my inferences and give me what I wanted without my having to take responsibility or become vulnerable by asking for what I want.

When he died, I knew he was a great man whose true spirit had been veiled by the disease of alcoholism. I learned that life was short, and if I wanted to be happy, I’d better start loving myself today because tomorrow is not promised. I’d hate to waste my last day on earth not liking myself, that I no longer get to talk to myself in a way that my Higher Power wouldn’t talk to me. And I wanted to start having fun. And I found him six months later.

He was adventuresome, creative, and brought excitement wherever he went. I lovingly called him, “The Bedazzler” because he could add a sparkle to any story he told. He would tell stories of his adventures in a way that made me wish I was there. I realized I often was there but didn’t recall the experience with such color.

He was big and strong and in the event of Armageddon or a zombie apocalypse, I knew I would be protected. We had a plan!

He had 13 years of membership in A.A., and I was scared and excited to begin a romantic relationship using recovery tools. I fantasized about being the recovery power couple. I was able to begin making amends to myself and my husband. But, I once again was feeling unhappy in this relationship because my rescuer’s feet and mouth were not lined up. I remembered the words from a 1988 share in *The Forum* magazine that a longtime member shared with my home group, “When you stop trying to get from people what they can’t give you, you can begin to enjoy what they have to offer.”

And it worked, sort of. I accepted who he was and who he wasn’t, mostly. I was not happy he was not as available as I wanted him to be, so to punish him, I decided I would start going to a second meeting. “No, I’m sorry I’m not free on Tuesday nights anymore. I have a meeting that night!” Also, someone had asked me to speak at an annual weekend event and someone else suggested I serve as GR for my home group. My thought was, “I’d better hurry up and get some recovery!”

I was elected as Alternate GR for the last five months of a panel and attended my first Assembly which was an election Assembly. I saw trusted servants practicing our Legacies, speaking their minds in a loving way, disagreeing, then getting along after the meeting. “What’s this about?” I wondered. I was hooked on service after that.

I continued to work my Steps and had a life altering experience while working the “Values” section of *Blueprint for Progress, Al-Anon’s Fourth Step Inventory* booklet (P-91). I learned I did not share the same values as my boyfriend, and like him, my feet and my mouth and heart were not lined up. I realized that I was settling with unacceptable behavior in order to keep him and other people in my life instead of living by my values. My boundaries reflect my values, and if I choose to live by my values, I will find happiness and contentment. I may be alone, but I’ll likely be happy.

He continued to make promises he could not keep. Today, I do not believe he was consciously lying. I think he really wanted to keep his promises but was spiritually unable to. I also learned the difference between being in the program and being around the program. Our relationship ended soon after I started asking for what I wanted.

I had a fear of looking stupid in front of the GRs and had many *come to Higher Power* moments as a District Representative (DR) as I learned to surrender my need to control or know what's coming next. In my Seventh Step, I asked my Higher Power to help me be more responsible, honest, tolerant, understanding, and humble. I called it my spiritual dress, and I asked to wear it every day. Serving as DR was where I learned how to wear that dress and make amends to my siblings, parents, and myself.

In my Step work, I learned that I was a "bandage parent." That is, I was focused on stopping the emotional bleeding, but did nothing to address the bigger wound. I learned how to make an investment of time, prayer, and patience to resolve issues. This meant I might not feel good right away, but I knew the gift of peace was mine if I stayed connected to doing my part and letting my Higher Power do His. In the early days, all of us lacked respect for me because I did not want to make them upset, or I felt sorry for them because they lost their dad. I get to make amends to my kids when I lovingly say, "No, you are not permitted to behave that way in my home," or when I say, "I want to know you better. Are you open to talking more often?"

I have made amends with my parents as well. My dad has suffered from dementia for about three years. On Tuesdays, I go to my parents' home, my childhood home, to fix dinner for those who care for my dad and spend time with him and my mom. My visits have given me an opportunity to challenge the beliefs I created as a child. I never knew my dad had a sense of humor or that my mom has a high pain threshold. It does not matter if my dad recognizes me, but he often does, and I am filled with joy when I see him knowingly smile at me. I've shared little of my journey with my parents. When they've asked, "Why do you keep going there? Your husband is dead?" I said and say, "There are things that I get from and give to Al-Anon that help me live a happy life." Thank you Al-Anon for this wonderful life.

### Cindy J., Florida North

My name is Cindy, and I'm a very grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. I am so humbled and honored to share with you. As a Delegate and a member of Panel 58, this is my last World Service Conference (WSC). These past three years have been exciting, enriching, and eye-opening—a great way to connect with our Conference Theme: "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision." Because Al-Anon has truly opened my eyes: My inner eyes, spiritual eyes, and loving eyes. I can approach my life with dreams, joys, and a sense of hope. Al-Anon has given me this new vision, and for that I'm truly grateful.

I stand here with gray hair. I have life experiences to share and a sense of purpose regarding recovery from the family disease of alcoholism. But when I came to Al-Anon, I was a young person, 25 years old. I came because when the man I was dating told me he was an alcoholic, I thought that was very romantic. He mentioned a "booster club for wives" that I could go to while he was at an A.A. meeting. I jumped at the chance, hearing only the word "wives." Every week, I sat in a small room with a few really old people—everyone over 50—and I listened, and I learned.

My *dreams* and my *vision* in 1983 were small, muddled, and facing backwards.

As for my dreams, I wanted to get away from my small town, to get out of my house, and to be different from my parents. I wanted several things that I was sure would make me very happy: to be married and have kids so I could do it right; to have a job that would allow me to make enough money that I'd never have to fight about it; to live far away from the South, because I wanted to be in snow, and I wanted to burn firewood to stay warm. And mostly I wanted to love and be loved and never have to worry that it would be taken away.

I could go on with the list, but I think many of you know it. It's a familiar list when you grow up in an alcoholic home.

As for my vision, it was muddy—I had no idea I was living in an alcoholic home. I sat in those Al-Anon meetings in the early '80s wondering how this man I had just started dating had affected me all these years when I hadn't known him. All the issues members were talking about sounded just like my house: random violence, manipulation, massive and painful control, saying one thing and meaning another, systemic dishonesty, hiding and secrets, acting like everything was fine, trying to make sure everyone liked me, and feeling like everything was my fault. I just thought this was normal.

The men and women in Al-Anon talked and listened. They asked me questions, and they answered mine. They were, I am sure, the kindest people I had ever met. They didn't judge me, and I didn't even know such a thing was possible. I was judging the heck out of them. I was suspicious and arrogant and pretty certain I knew everything. Even the things I didn't know, I still had strongly held opinions about. And I also knew how hard it was to work at getting people to like me. So off to work I went. I got a Sponsor, went to meetings, and volunteered for service. I threw myself into Al-Anon headfirst. But I'm pretty sure my eyes were closed.

In the '80s, I worked through the Twelve Steps and my Al-Anon program without living with active alcoholism—I was focused on my family of origin, and how the generations of alcoholism had affected us all. I talked about my mother issues with my Sponsor until she probably wanted to stab her ears. But she was so gentle, patient, and kind. She left me with several very important pieces of wisdom that I carry with me today. She encouraged me to memorize the words of the Steps. She told me that if I did that, when my life got crazy, then these would be the words that would float up to the top. She was so right. When my life gets overwhelming, I find that the words admit, powerless, turned over, care, God of my understanding, exact nature, willingness, humbly asked, made a list, and practice all come to my mind. These words remind me that there is a spiritual program under me that always provides solid ground to stand on. No matter what.

She also helped me see a great truth about acceptance: That I may well be right about something, but it is usually irrelevant. In my family, *being right* conferred some type of authority for control. However, she showed me that *being right* had only to do with me, and whatever opinion or "right belief" I had about someone else is simply irrelevant. My job was to accept the reality of what was happening. I didn't have to agree or approve. But accepting the reality of its existence would allow me to stay with my own program of recovery. That continues to this day to be a bedrock of my spiritual journey.

In the '90s, my husband of ten years relapsed, deciding he wasn't an alcoholic any longer. There are, of course, particular details, but that's not my story. What he thought or how he perceived himself is his story. What happened for me is that I began to work an Al-Anon recovery program in the midst of active alcoholic drinking. That was a whole new world. There were days when I forgot every single thing I'd learned for ten years. I just wanted the pain to stop. I just

wanted him to change. I just wanted it to go back to what it was before. I just wanted someone to help me. I just wanted someone to love me. It was so hard to focus on myself and imagine being serene. I fell into old habits of self-protection and isolation. I disengaged with so much in my life—all the while telling myself “I’m really good at this detachment thing.” I went to meetings, did service, read the books, but I felt like a shell of a person. I had no *dreams*, and my *vision* was laser focused on his getting sober again.

To this day, I believe living with active alcoholism is one of the hardest experiences in a human life. Alcoholism creates an environment of hopelessness and despair. It is heavy and dark and seemingly endless. And when it was happening, I found it *so hard* to practice a program of recovery. I could barely do it, and I know I did it with anger, resentment, self-righteousness, and self-pity.

On Christmas Day 2000, our family experienced one of those rom-com-horror movie days where everything fell apart. It was full of yelling, accusations, tears, and great fears. It was full of embarrassment and humiliation. It was full of anger. It was enough. The next day, I told our kids to pack up some toys and that we were going to a hotel. My husband came and asked me to sit down before I left. He said that he is an alcoholic. I did not find it romantic at all and am pretty sure I said something that wasn’t very nice. He went to an A.A. meeting that day, I went to a hotel. He celebrated 19 years of sobriety this year. Again, he has his own amazing story. It’s not mine.

When he got sober, I got really angry and came face-to-face, eyes wide open, with the complete destruction of dreams, fantasies, and life as I knew it. My life was coming into *20/20 vision*, and I did not like what I saw.

As I began to work the Al-Anon program in the new millennium, I was working a very different program. I began to feel deeply that the work that needed doing was my own. I had to open my eyes. I had to “Live and Let Live.” I had to “Listen and Learn.” I had to be willing to see, look, and accept. I could not choose denial and soothing fantasies about how it could be one day. I began yet another round through the Steps, working harder, more honestly, and with life experiences that opened me up to these spiritual Legacies in a deep and meaningful way. My husband and I ended up separating, divorcing, and then remarrying. That’s a very simple way to describe a complex and difficult time. It was a time of vulnerable reliance on the Higher Power of my Third Step. I did not know where our choices were leading us, but I knew without a doubt I was being led and guided.

In the 2000s, our family experienced the generational perspective of alcoholism as all three of our daughters found their way to A.A.—each one before she was 21. Again, that’s a pretty simple way to describe a complicated, dark, and difficult part of our family path, but I know it is one that all of you can relate to. The feelings of fear and despair as a young person comes in close contact with the dangers and degradation of alcoholism. I found myself working the Steps yet again with a new vision, a new way. As if I had never seen them before, the Legacies began to open before me, thus bringing a clearer sense of guidance and purpose. Concept Seven was extraordinarily helpful as my children became adults, and I was led to examine what my role actually is in their lives—now much more traditional, and much less legal. I began my own relationship with this transformation—and I had clear vision as to why it is so important. My service work had been preparing me all along.

And, service is where the path of my Third Step surrender has always led me: different kinds of service, different ways to participate in service, different ways for me to see service. Mostly with a growing clarity that service is for me and my recovery. If someone else is

helped, that is due to God’s presence in the world, my actual service work is for me.

In 2010, I took on an Area service position as a TEAM Event Chairperson. It was a life-changer. Now, I not only felt a deep sense of support and clarity for my own life, I also began to participate in a much *bigger dream*. I discovered that I really am part of a worldwide fellowship, and I could actively add my dream to the *big dream* of hope and help for people affected by alcoholism. My life expanded through Area participation as Treasurer and Chairperson, and for the last two and a half years I have been privileged to serve as Delegate. The dreams continue to grow and to manifest. I have learned so much and have gained so much from the experience. My relationship with my Higher Power is clearly the foundation of my daily life. That Eleventh Step works if I work it. I can trust that I am not alone, and I can risk new ideas, behaviors, and experiences. With my eyes kept firmly on the Higher Power in front of me, I can participate in unfamiliar ways in an abundant world. I’m not afraid of risk, and I am not so focused on the fears that can pop up out of my own past. Instead, I can clearly see the loving work of a Higher Power, and I find it more comfortable to *dream big*.

Participating in the 2018 Conference enveloped by the energy of a revitalized WSO, including a visit to Stepping Stones, was a huge dream come true. I belong here. Participating in the 2019 trilingual Conference was another dream come true. I watched an unfolding of love and acceptance like I’ve never seen before. Participating in Al-Anon’s worldwide fellowship through technology and social media continues to illuminate a *big dream* of connection and love. Now, having this opportunity to pause and reflect on the idea of “Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision” is one of the great gifts of this Delegate experience.

I often hear about our three-year rotation of service that we don’t know what we’re doing in the first year, we gain knowledge in the second year, and then when we finally know what we’re doing, we have to leave. That’s not my experience. In “Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision,” I know that my first year here at Conference was an opportunity to see wisdom in action—I saw and felt the fruits of the Serenity Prayer in the love, hard work, and dedication of everyone around me especially the WSO Staff and Volunteers. In my second year, I saw and felt the serenity granted by a willingness to surrender to a Higher Power as new ways of doing things brought a wider and deeper understanding to participants through simultaneous interpretation. This serenity was deepened as we explored ways to include other parts of our international service structures opening up the *dreaming* and the *vision* to include our whole world. And this third year, I find myself looking for courage—to continue to change the things I can. I am finding this third Conference to be filled with opportunities for courage: courage to speak, courage to listen, courage to remember, and courage to imagine. This courage I can and will take with me as I move on to another service position—opening up this incredible Delegate opportunity for someone else.

*Dreaming big* is now something I get to do because of Al-Anon Family Groups, because of the Legacies which guide me into a relationship with a Higher Power, and because there are so many loving people who are willing to “keep coming back.” I can now participate in really *big dreams*.

*20/20* provides me with the opportunity to remember that my vision and clarity come from this program. From the Legacies, from the service work, from the practice encouraged by Twelfth Step. If I keep my eyes focused on my Higher Power and the program of recovery that this amazing group stewards so carefully, then I know I can *dream big with 20/20 vision* for the rest of my life.



## WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) TAKEAWAYS

Delegates and other Conference members were asked to post to AFG Connects their “takeaways” from the virtual/hybrid WSC including the topics they would be covering in their reports.

- For me, the top takeaway from the 2020 virtual/hybrid WSC is the smiling faces I saw in our web conference calls. Everyone was obviously happy to be there, grins were plentiful, and even laughter broke out when technical or procedural difficulties arose. Of course, I have nothing to compare it to as I am Panel 60, but what a friendly place!  
Another takeaway is the thoughtful and brilliant commentaries on the Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs). Being given 24 hours to reason things out, being able to read other sharings and think about them, and understanding there would be no criticism of one another helped in keeping the focus on the task at hand. The amount of program knowledge offered was staggering.
- Change can be fun. The 24-hour discussions on AFG Connects were excellent; I would like that to become part of the Conference. Some face-to-face interaction is necessary to collaborate and make sure the minority opinion and more of the new Delegates are heard. I think it was too easy to hide and not participate on AFG Connects and in a virtual setting. The takeaways I will share are finances, highlights from the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG), the Area survey, and the thought force presentations. I will challenge my Area to think outside the box and see if we can do things differently with regard to service positions and how we do business. Al-Anon Family Groups is strong, vital, flexible, and growing. Al-Anon members are resilient, positive, and collaborative. I will share with my Area that electronic meetings are no longer a hope for the future. They are here, and they are us. Service is changing, and there is room for everyone. Let us work together to create a place where we can offer hope and help to families and friends of alcoholics.
- My takeaway from this Conference is that I am humbled and grateful to be a part of Al-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 of the knowledge that was shared in the discussions on AFG Connects, but I did miss the in-person *feel* of Conference. I appreciate that we are all in this together with Al-Anon's best interest at heart.
- There were so many great sharings and ideas to use that will provide opportunities to make changes in my Area. The week showed me that sharing with others and reasoning things out provides me with options that I would not have considered. I am so blessed to be part of this wonderful program with all of you.
- I will pass along both the CAIs and discussions as these pertain to my rural Area. The survey will be given as a challenge to the District Representatives (DRs) and Group Representatives (GRs), and they will be returned by end of summer for discussion at our Area World Service Committee (AWSC) in October. My Area wants to know what the budget was and now is, what the forecast is for 2020-2021, and what the group contribution amount is to balance the budget. I will convey

how well this virtual/hybrid Conference went. The electronic meetings will be of interest. When the pandemic hit in my Area, there were no electronic meetings. Now, most groups are doing phone or web conference calls.

- My presentation will include information about the virtual/hybrid Conference, the Trustee elections, the \$304 average cost per group for services, the task and thought force presentations, the financial status of the World Service Office (WSO), and the use of AFG Connects as part of the Conference.
- This Conference was very challenging for everyone, but the WSO worked really hard. All Delegates were trying to do something new with a *20/20 vision* regardless of the challenges. Everything together made the WSC a complete success!
- The virtual presentations were so thought-provoking that it made my head hurt. It's difficult for me to think outside of the box, so the sharing will be helpful. At our Area Assembly, I will use my Mentor's suggestion to keep my report simple. I will briefly speak on who participates in the WSC and what perspective they bring. I will share the Finance Report. Lastly, I will speak on the issues discussed including sharing about the Mobile App.
- My takeaways can change day-by-day as my loving Higher Power reveals more. I take away the practice of trust and goodwill. I will share with my Area gratitude, excitement, and possibility—hope. Pulling off a virtual/hybrid WSC on such short notice was an amazing feat of the WSO. I feel it was the best thing to do to keep everyone safe. The task forces did an excellent job in their work and in presenting the information. Our organization is strong with great goals and a forward-thinking Strategic Plan. I missed discussing the topics that could not be fit into the timeframe allowed.
- I feel grateful that we had a WSC rather than it being canceled. I am concerned that this first virtual/hybrid WSC may set the precedent for future virtual/hybrid Conferences to include limited agendas.
- It takes a fellowship, each one of us. Each one of us needs to donate when we can, serve when we can, share honestly when we can, *dream big* when we can, pray and meditate when we can, bring along someone newer than us when we can, listen to someone who's not crazy in the same way on the same day when we can. We all have it in us to help Al-Anon, with the aid of our Higher Power. It's a worldwide effort. I have a piece of it, and I need to own that piece.
- The virtual experience was certainly different from what it would have been otherwise. I realize why it was necessary to vote on the “bread and butter” issues during the brief virtual sessions; I found the voting quite tedious. It seems that what had to be cut out were the “fun” experiences. I intend to report to the Assembly highlights from the Audit and Budget Reports, the thought and task force recommendations, and the CAIs and the Delegates' responses to them. I will ask the DRs and GRs if they would be willing to carry out the surveys since our Area has many rural and large geographic populations.
- I found that it was a tiring week, similar to the face-to-face WSC. I had that same sadness when the Conference was closed, I didn't want it to end. I found the experience trying at times, but I am very grateful that it was not cancelled. I

focused on what I was given and not on what was not provided. I am presuming goodwill that I was provided with what was necessary at the Conference this year. Through it all, I learned that I know more than I give myself credit. I am so grateful for what the program has taught me.

- Experimentation with electronic voting during the previous Conferences, along with excellent pre-Conference training in 2020, made for effortless and smooth voting this year. Our trusted servants in Virginia Beach pulled the 2020 WSC together in one month! They certainly were able to *dream big with 20/20 vision*! Sharing newly gained insight and information with my Area will be exciting. I will share highlights of the Electronic Meeting Work Group, thought forces, CAIs, and Budget Report. All these topics are timely and contain information that will guide my Area to *dream big*.
- I am conflicted, because if all of the gifts I received during the Conference were in a physical form, there would be no way I could carry them all—way too heavy! There were things that I found uncomfortable or didn't like, but I can still find value in those things; they too must come with me. Sharing this unique experience can be done in many ways. Though I miss the face-to-face encounters that have been the hallmark of AI-Anon, I am grateful to say I am content with this extraordinary week as a whole. I have a greater understanding of my role as a Delegate and, most importantly, my role as a member of AI-Anon.



- While the virtual Conference was essential for conducting Board business and provided vital information for our Areas, my favorite part of the week was the hybrid Conference. The 24-hour response period on AFG Connects allowed for thoughtful, substantive, and often visionary comments that were grounded in experience and steeped in the Legacies. By the end of Conference, I came to see this year's CAIs, thought forces, task forces, and work groups as creating one integrated and inspired whole. If we can strengthen our Areas' links of service, we will be in the best position to create one integrated global structure. (See Strategic Plan 2022-2024, Goal: Organization, "AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.") Further, to become one global structure we will need to attract a more diverse membership with respect to language, age, culture, sexuality, and ethnicity.
- I would like to say that it was an honor to attend another WSC with everyone. I am not thrilled with the nature of electronic *anything* compared to sharing physical space, but the spiritual tone and principles of AI-Anon were as unmistakable electronically as they were last year in Virginia Beach. Thank you to all involved for making that a reality.

## 2020 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

**MOTION #1 – (89 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 3 voids) – CARRIED**  
That the following persons be seated at the 2020 World Service Conference.

**With voice, but no vote:**

Niketa Williams

Director of Finance & Operations, Non-AI-Anon Member  
Scot P.

Associate Director—Digital Strategy, AI-Anon Member

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

Sue C.

Chairperson, ECRPM, AI-Anon Member

**MOTION #2 – (89 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 voids) – CARRIED (Rescinded by Motion #5)**

To approve the 2019 Audited Financial Report.

**MOTION #3 – (84 yes, 5 no, 0 abstentions, 3 voids) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2019 Annual Report.

**MOTION #4 – (91 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2019 Audited Financial Report.

**MOTION #5 – (91 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED**

To rescind Motion #2.

**MOTION #6 – (90 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED**

To approve the 2020 Finance Committee Report.



# 2019 WORLD SERVICE OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT



Al-Anon **Family** Groups  
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics



# GREETINGS & THANKS

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

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

**Vali F.**, *Executive Director*

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**T**his year 47 World Service Office (WSO) Staff, 16 members of the Board of Trustees (BOT), and the three At-Large members of the Executive Committee—along with countless other volunteers—offered their considerable skills, talents, and experience to accomplish the responsibilities of the WSO to support the fellowship and attract those in need to our rooms—both face-to-face and electronic. In 2019, the WSO's focus expanded beyond its significant ongoing tasks—daily interactions with members, the public, and professionals; planning for annual and periodic local and international fellowship events; and production and distribution of literature—to progress the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives established by the BOT in 2019, in shared leadership with senior WSO Staff and the At-Large members of the Executive Committee. This Annual Report seeks to provide our membership a glimpse into the significant accomplishments of the WSO Staff and Volunteers in our mutual effort to achieve our Core Purpose and Mission.

Highlights for the year include the Board's follow-up to the 2018 World Service Conference (WSC) discussion and enduring member requests for native French- and Spanish-speaking Delegates to be able to participate in the WSC. Guided by the Board's 2018 Motion, WSO Staff organized the first trilingual WSC in 2019, enabling unilingual French- and Spanish-speaking members to represent their Area voices for the first time. Our trilingual members were further supported by the first-time release of the 2018 WSO Annual Report in all three languages.

Taking the lead from the response which was generated by the Mega Issue presentation at the 2019 WSC regarding a hybrid Conference, the BOT undertook the work of exploring solutions that would allow Board Week to be shortened by one calendar day without creating the necessity of working extreme hours. With the utilization of technology, the Board will hold its first hybrid Board Week in January 2020.

Much work has been done to upgrade our website and provide easy access for anyone seeking information or help. A new WSO Volunteer page has been created on the website and contains requirements and résumés for WSO volunteer positions. As electronic meeting registration has grown, changes have been made to provide more information about these valuable resources to existing members and newcomers alike. The creation of quarterly business meetings between WSO Staff and the Current Mailing Address (CMA) members for the phone meetings, and bi-monthly business meetings for the online meetings has enhanced Staff and electronic meetings understanding of how these meetings have and will continue to serve our fellowship.

The Trustees, as always, were excited to connect with their assigned Delegates following each Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter being posted. These calls have continued to offer great value as the Delegates carry the voice of the members to the boardroom and their participation enriches one more process of unity.

As the Chairperson of the Board, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and the Executive Director, we stand in awe of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) Volunteers' willingness to commit their weekdays, evenings, and weekends—and even take vacation time from jobs—to travel to attend quarterly Board meetings and monthly Executive Committee meetings and participate remotely in weekly or monthly Committee, Task Force, Thought Force, and Work Group meetings. We share gratitude for the dedicated Staff members who apply their professional skills to producing successful events, contacting professionals, answering member questions, and designing beautiful, recovery magazines and literature. Their mutual commitment ensures AI-Anon Family Groups are always there for those who need our program.

# 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)

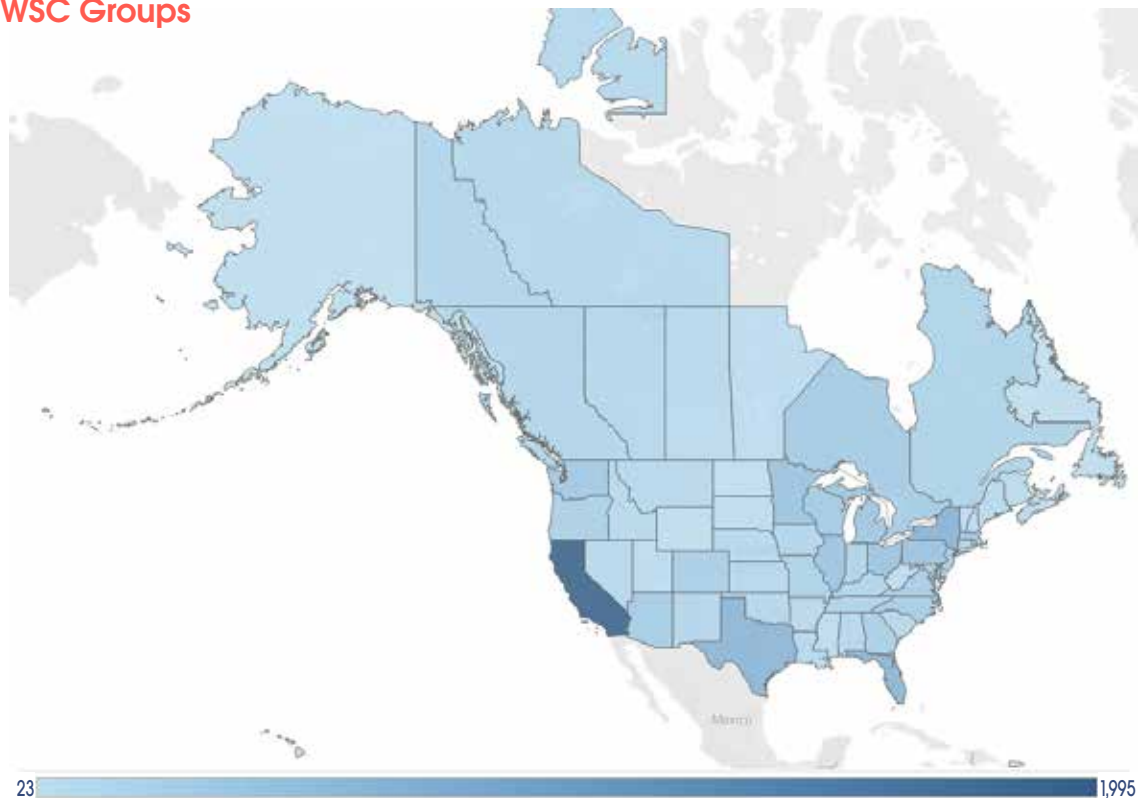
- **Goal:** Members AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.
- **Goal:** Public Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.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



WHO WE ARE

## 2019 Global Al-Anon Family Groups' Statistics

### WSC Groups

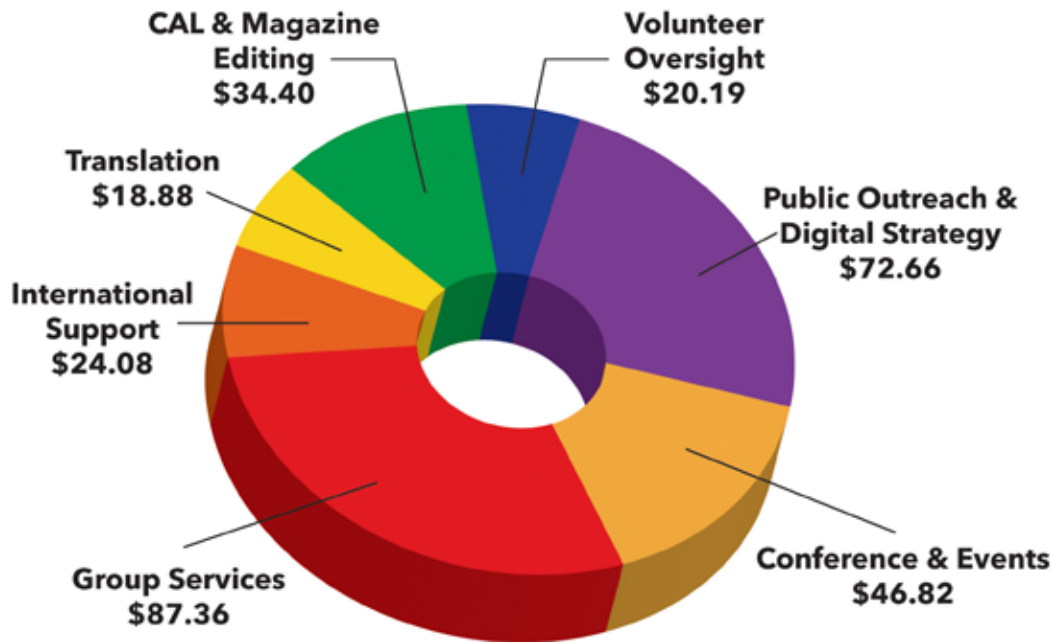


### Non-WSC Groups

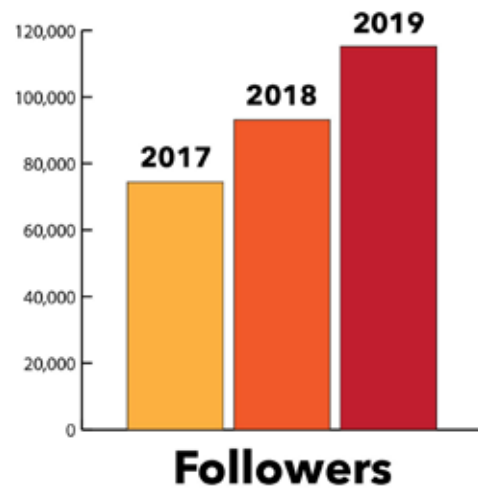
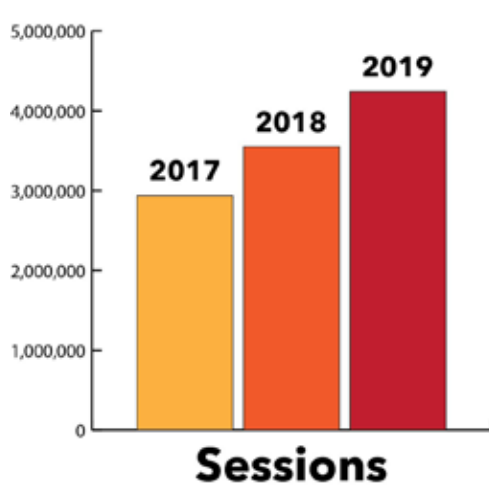




## Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Groups



## Website Sessions, Meeting Searches, Social Media Followers



Between one Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, three conventions, five “Proactive Trustee Visits,” six TEAM events, and 16 Area Assemblies, Trustees of the Board, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the WSO Staff were grateful for the opportunity to visit and experience the wonderful hospitality and fellowship of members in Areas across the WSC Structure.



## Conference Approved Literature Volume

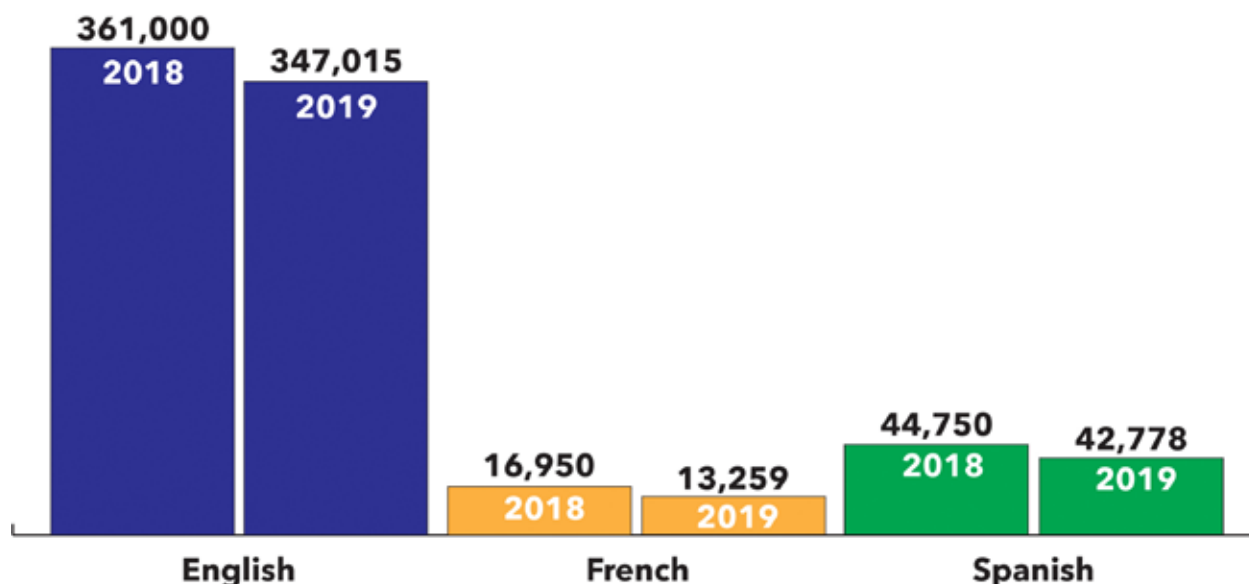


## Top 10 Best Selling Books/Booklets of 2019 - English





## Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



## Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally

The WSO oversees the process for granting permission to Al-Anon's international service structures to publish AFG, Inc. copyrighted materials. Publications in English, French, and Spanish are considered "reprints" while publications in all other languages are considered "translations." This is because the WSO is the exclusive publisher of CAL in English, French, and Spanish. Structures wishing to publish in those languages reprint WSO publications whereas other structures are granted permission to translate from English to an authorized language.



In 2019, the WSO processed 92 requests to translate or reprint CAL.

Of these, there were 52 requests to translate CAL into five different languages.

## 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. 2019 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.

### Serve Members, Meetings, and Groups

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

**Scot P.**, Associate Director—Digital Strategy

**Christa A.**, Group Services Specialist—Members

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

**Bob H.**, Webmaster

### AI-Anon Members and Group Communication

In 2019, the Group Services Staff continued to answer significant volumes of member inquiries by phone and email related to these common themes: crosstalk, resolving group concerns, group bank accounts, how to welcome newcomers who express a family member problem other than alcohol, service participation by AI-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), gender neutral language in service materials, dominance and lack of rotation of leadership, use of the Alateen name at events that are not connected to an Area, and “Let’s Talk About Safety in AI-Anon Meetings.”

WSO Group Services Staff offered resources to guide the conversations and encouraged members to utilize service tools in addition to the *Service Manual* to discuss matters in a principle-based manner. By applying the Traditions and Concepts, talking to each other and reasoning things out, an informed group conscience can be reached to benefit the group or meeting. Group Services Staff continue to provide articles to *The Forum* and *In the Loop* that focus on the “How to” as it ties into these common themes.

### Supporting Members Communication with a Members' Blog

References to AI-Anon principles and spiritual principles in recent years led members to request the Literature Committee to create a piece of CAL on AI-Anon’s spiritual principles. The Committee determined that the spiritual principles are open to each member’s own interpretation, thereby the concern was raised about identifying an “absolute list” of spiritual principles. So rather than creating a piece of CAL, the Committee proposed a blog be developed to allow members to share on the spiritual principles.

Discussing this topic in the context of the Strategic Plan, WSO Volunteers and Staff recognized it was important to help members become more aware and more comfortable using online resources. One Strategy that the WSO Volunteers and Staff believed would accomplish both objectives was to create a Members’ Blog on al-anon.org. The blog would create a free online resource for members to share on various topics as well as the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service.

The first topic published on July 22, 2019 was “Spiritual Principles,” and it generated 32 comments from members on the topic. A new topic was published each month. Starting in January 2020, the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts will be published as topics. Members can comment on any current or past topic as well as any of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts anytime next year.

## Updating Open and Closed Meeting Terminology

The meeting type designation to describe whether a meeting was open to visitors or closed to attendance by members only, often confused members and newcomers. At their April 2019 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved new wording consistent with the Al-Anon spiritual principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The new language was designed to be clear to new members and more welcoming to both new and potential members. To support the change, the field name "Meeting Type" on group forms was replaced with the term "Meeting Attendees" and the new options "Families and Friends Only" or "Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome." Additional information about the decision is available at <https://al-anon.org/pdf/Apr19-policy.pdf>.

The change was rolled out in phases as it impacted many WSO service tools, including the Al-Anon Group Records Form, the Online Group Records application, and Al-Anon Annual Update Sheet. Members' feedback about the new terminology was overwhelmingly positive and AFG Records experienced a higher volume of changes to Meeting Attendee, as groups were eager to have the appropriate information reflected on their group records.

While this information clarified the meeting attendees for Al-Anon meetings, a question arose as to whether the same terminology applied to Alateen groups. The Alateen portion of the "Policy Digest" of the current *Service Manual* clarifies that Alateen meetings are only attended by Alateens and certified AMIAS/Alateen Group Sponsors assigned to the Alateen meeting. Therefore, it was agreed the Meeting Attendee designation did not apply to Alateen meetings.

## Alateen Members, Groups, and Trusted Servants

**Area Alateen Coordinators:** The Alateen Coordinator Web Conference call for Panel 59 was held on February 9. The various resources available and location of information to make the service position successful were reviewed. The PowerPoint presentation shared during the call was posted on AFG Connects. A particular emphasis was placed on understanding Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) in preparation for the annual Area Alateen Recertification. The web conference call with the incoming Area Alateen Coordinators was attended with a 61% participation rate (19 of the new 31 members). Staff reviewed the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees with the Coordinators, the various service tools available, and the importance of the AFG Connects platform to share information.

The AFG Connects platform discussions were varied and included the following topics:

- How to conduct AMIAS training
- How to support Alateens transitioning to Al-Anon meetings
- How do Areas perform background checks?
- Transgender teens at Alateen overnight (conferences) events – how to create a registration form
- Alateen meetings in schools – are they successful? Who are the resource people in the school?

All Area Alateen Coordinators are now welcomed by an email automatically sent by the new Advanced Processing Automation (APA) module. Use of this technology has significantly streamlined processes for Group Services and AFG Records, allowing information to be received by the Area Alateen Coordinator in a timely manner at the time of election or appointment mid-panel.

**Area Alateen Recertification:** The 2019 Area Alateen Recertification presented a major challenge this year. It was noted on June 21 that 56 Areas had not yet completed the recertification, which is due on June 30 at 11:59 pm Eastern time. Multiple reminders were sent to the AAPPs. A review of the data entered in the database revealed some major concerns:

- Alateen meetings in some Areas did not have certified AMIAS attached as Group Sponsors.
- Areas did not seem to understand the criticality for active Alateen groups to have certified AMIASs attached to the group.
- AAPPs appeared reluctant to inactivate Alateen meetings as they did not want the Alateens to be affected.



- While some Areas had updated all their AMIAS, they had not updated the Alateen groups impacted by inactivated AMIAS.

The Area Alateen Recertification period ended on June 30 with 12 Areas remaining incomplete in their recertification. AFG Records created an individualized Area report of the names of remaining AMIAS that were not cleared and the Alateen groups without AMIAS attached to them. Each Area (Area Alateen Coordinator, AAPP, and Area Delegate) was sent this report and notified via email as to the consequence of an incomplete Area recertification. Areas were offered an extension until 11:59 pm Eastern Time July 1 to update all records.

WSO made follow-up phone calls to these same trusted servants prior to the close of business. Upon returning to work on July 2, there continued to be two Areas outstanding. These Areas were again contacted and all records were updated by 1:00 pm.

AFG Records and Group Services Staff were concerned about the increasing trend of Areas failing to meet the deadline. They held follow-up meetings to discuss all these issues and identify ways the message can be conveyed of the importance of the completion deadline for the Area Alateen Recertification. As a result, the Recertification training was revised, a longer open window was established for Recertification, and an "on-Demand" tutorial to navigate the Online Group Records database was created.

Nine Areas have submitted updated Area ASBRs for WSO review. Five Areas were able to present the ASBR to their respective Assemblies for approval.

The *Alateen Service e-Manual* posted on al-anon.org was reviewed and revised for content. The document is fully interactive with links to all available resources on al-anon.org.

The *Alateen Newcomer Packet* (K-18) was made available in a new format and in three languages.

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

The AIS and AIS/LDC Annual Update was mailed to 161 entities with 97 responses received (60%).

### **Inmate Correspondence Service**

It has been quite some time since information from Al-Anon members serving the Inmate Correspondence Service was updated. In November, Group Services sent 110 letters to Al-Anon contact members to gather information on the status of the Service. As of December, 41 members had responded (37%). Sixteen letters were returned to WSO and those members were placed in a no mail status for the purpose of the Service. Twenty-five of the 41 respondents informed us they do not currently have an inmate to correspond with but remain interested in participating.

This Service falls under the vacant position in Group Services and will be a primary focus once the position is filled.

### **Electronic Meetings**

Electronic meeting registrations continued to grow. At the end of 2019, there were a total of 252 registered electronic meetings: 106 online and 146 phone. There were an additional 38 meetings registered since the 2019 WSC. Registered online meetings continue to be held in a variety of languages and are displayed on al-anon.org.

Updates to the Electronic Meeting Registration/Update Form have improved clarity and provided the option to register new Electronic Meeting platforms. Since the online version of the registration form was released on al-anon.org, the number of registrations has increased significantly suggesting members find the online form much easier to use to register with WSO.

The al-anon.org online meeting list was completely revamped to display the updated meeting attendee language, whether the meeting is licensed to display CAL, and what language is spoken. A filter was added to the search for platform type and day of week. This update has been well received by the online meeting members.

The al-anon.org phone meeting information display was also revamped to include the new meeting attendee language, the name of the phone meeting, and the WSO ID number. The WSO ID was added to support phone meeting members honoring Tradition Seven, providing them the ability to tie contributions to their meeting. At the suggestion of a phone meeting member, a predominant anchor message was placed on the top of the Electronic Meetings page to assist users in finding the Phone Meeting listing, which is displayed at the bottom of the page.

The CMAs to the electronic meetings were fully incorporated into the AFG Connects Electronic Meetings community launched in January 2019. This community has since hosted many robust conversations. The welcome email for newly registered electronic meetings was revised to include the AFG Connects information to encourage CMAs to access the community for experience, strength, and hope as quickly as possible after registering.

**In addition, a total of eight separate business meetings were conducted via web conference with the online and phone CMAs covering the following topics of discussion:**

- How to conduct business meetings
- How to abide by the copyright and trademark policy for the display of CAL in the online meeting
- Understanding the permission process to display CAL
- How electronic meetings fit into the service structure and if another service title or position is needed to incorporate the expanded role of the electronic meeting CMA
- Updates on a recent FCC ruling that could potentially close free conference call lines where phone meetings take place
- Review of supportive service tools for electronic meetings
- How to create a meeting format to be used for a phone meeting and the resources on al-anon.org

Group Services Staff were asked to provide experience, strength, and hope when one of the original phone meeting lines announced that it would be closing permanently, affecting 47 registered meetings. This necessitated members of each meeting to decide where to hold their meeting once the line closed. By year-end, all except 12 meetings had updated their meeting information with new conference call information. Consistent with WSO procedure when problems were reported regarding the availability of face-to-face meetings, these phone meetings were removed from the al-anon.org meeting list display since the listed number was not in service. The CMAs for these meetings were informed that their phone meetings continue to be registered and that the WSO would redisplay their information once working dial-in information was provided.

Throughout 2019, Staff and the Electronic Meeting Work Group prioritized creating a community for Electronic Meeting attendees and supporting meeting growth through improved communications with the WSO, an endeavor which has met with success. Use of Al-Anon principles during the Electronic Meeting conference calls, email communications, and phone calls has been pivotal in having all voices heard with integrity and respect. The 2020 WSC theme of “Dreaming Big with 20 | 20 Vision” feels very relevant when it comes to the tens of thousands of Al-Anon members attending meetings on the phone and online.

### ***Impression – Growth and Connection through Electronic Meetings***

***Lynette K., Chairperson of the Electronic Meeting Work Group (Trustee)***

Being on the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) for the past two years has given me a different and truer perspective about electronic meetings. I thought electronic meetings were just a “stepping stone” for people, a place to get introduced to Al-Anon before they started attending face-to-face meetings. I could not have been more wrong. Electronic meetings are continuing to grow in numbers and membership not only in the WSC Structure but around the world.

One of the duties of the EMWG is to make recommendations to the BOT as to what electronic meetings need. What better way to figure out what electronic meetings need than to ask them? WSO Staff hosts calls each quarter with the CMAs of the phone meetings and every other month with the CMAs of

electronic meetings. EMWG members attend the calls. We use the information gathered from the calls to make recommendations to the BOT so electronic meetings can continue to help the families and friends of alcoholics.

Another duty of the EMWG is making recommendations to the BOT on how to incorporate electronic meetings into our service structure—one of our more exciting duties. The conversations around this topic gave me a slight sense of what it might have felt like for members in the early days of Al-Anon as they were having conversations about how to form our current WSC Structure. I know that a Higher Power has a plan in place. I can't wait to see the innovative proposals that will come from the EMWG.

## **Facilitate Conference, Convention, and Fellowship Visits**

**Vali F.**, *Executive Director*

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

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

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

**Kerri K.**, *Associate Director—International*

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

**Gail G.**, *Chairperson of the Board (Trustee)*

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

**Joyce B.**, *Chairperson of the Proactive Trustee Visit Task Force (Trustee)*

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

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## **The World Service Conference**

In January, the Board made a motion “to approve additional text to the Conference Procedures Booklet as presented by the Conference Leadership Team.” The revisions, which include adding a brief section about “Documents Received Prior to Conference” that describes why certain documents are marked confidential, as well as defining the term “abstention,” and giving examples of how abstentions affect the vote count, support one of AFG, Inc.’s Core Values, “Transparent: sharing process, content, and information.”

Prior to Conference, Area Delegates were introduced and trained in using a travel platform that aided in eliminating Conference travel confusion and ensuring accuracy of purchasing flights for Conference. As this platform was hosted by the WSO, there was no initial out-of-pocket airfare expense for which the WSO needed to reimburse Conference members.

As Conference Leadership Team, Board of Trustees, Policy Committee, WSO Staff and Volunteers continued supporting AFG, Inc.’s Core Value of transparency by providing more content and information prior to Conference, all Conference members benefited from increased access to knowledge and resources. An illustration of this was posting the Finance Committee Report and Preliminary Budget for Conference members to review before coming to Conference, which included an opportunity to ask questions in advance. The Finance Committee Report was one of the routine motions originating from the BOT that required approval by the Conference each year.

Voting members of the 2019 WSC (Delegates, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and voting members of the WSO administrative Staff) approved major revisions to the “Alateen” policy text in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Setting policy for Al-Anon Family Groups is an extensive process that begins with an individual member, group, or committee; moves through the WSO Policy Committee for thorough discussion and proposed wording; is recommended to the Board of Trustees for review and approval, before finally being presented to the WSC, where each policy requires a two-thirds vote for approval by the entire Conference. The same procedure is required for major revision and amendments to existing policies. (To read the Alateen policy text discussion, see page 56 of the 2019 WSC Summary (P-46), <https://al-anon.org/pdf/P46-2019-web.pdf>.)



A French-speaking and a Spanish-speaking Delegate benefitted from attending Al-Anon's first trilingual WSC, which was held in April. All of the Conference sessions were simultaneously interpreted orally from English to French and English to Spanish and vice versa, which made it possible for these Delegates to successfully participate in Conference. This resource was approved by the Board of Trustees in support of providing barrier-free access to information.

At the end of Conference, a Delegate shared, "I am excited to take back the Finance Report, which is infused with spiritual principles and transparency. The experience of being in a room with the rumbling of interpretation reminded me that this fellowship was worldwide."

### **Impression – Preparing for Conference**

*Karen W.P., At-Large Member of the Executive Committee*

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When I went to my first WSC, we didn't use computers and really it was not that long ago. The decision to use computers had to come from the Conference members, and I was happy when things got organized to move forward with this decision.

I remember my first Conference Notebook. It was so big that after a few days, I stopped carrying it back to my room. I left it in the Conference room. The Notebook was beautifully put together, but it was heavy. At the end of each Conference, there was the challenge of how was I going to get the Notebook home in my luggage. The transition to computer was easy and delightful.

I was not present for hand-voting at Conference: We were given a "clicker" to vote. This system was not without a few problems, but I learned at my Area Assembly that voting by hand can take a lot of time away for the agenda. I understand that beginning last year, voting occurred by computer or our cell phones. Perfect.

The Conference Packet with the schedule has also helped to get us where we need to be and on time. The Conference App has added a way to communicate and a way to create memories.

Another change that has created goodwill is the online form for submitting a presentation to the Executive Committee. As a member of the Executive Committee, I can say that it is our desire to give constructive feedback and to make suggestions of ways to enhance WSC presentations.

### **Impression – The Conference Experience**

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

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It was an honor to be present at the first trilingual WSC. I got to experience the presence of my Higher Power when listening to the heartfelt gratitude shared by the Delegates who would not have been able to attend Conference if there was no interpretation available.

One goal for the Conference, the spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action, was accomplished by the Conference members through their respectful listening of differing opinions, especially minority opinions, willingness to cooperate and share ideas freely, and the ability to trust the process and know that each person there was being guided by a Higher Power.

Another goal for the Conference, the Conference will understand the purpose of the Conference and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions, was accomplished through sometimes painstaking discussions. A vote was never taken on any matter until everyone had their questions answered and was clear about what was being voted on.

At the end of each day, time was given for any unanswered questions or reflection. This was the Conference members' opportunity to get clarification on anything that had been discussed. I will never forget the feeling of gratitude and humility I had the first time I walked into the room where the Conference was being held. I could not believe I was there! I feel privileged that my Higher Power allowed me the opportunity to attend and participate in the largest group conscience of Al-Anon Family Groups.

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

**Norm W.**, Chairperson of the Policy Committee

**Terry F.**, Chairperson of the Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is committed to ensuring that all policies are in line with Al-Anon's Traditions and spiritual principles. The Policy Committee includes all members of the BOT, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the WSO administrative Staff. The Policy Committee meets quarterly prior to the BOT meeting, and consults electronically between face-to-face meetings, regarding text suggested by various Task Forces in preparation for more discussion, decision, and vote when appropriate, at the next quarterly meeting. "To arrive at answers that are consistent, loving and helpful takes time and patience, both on the part of the individual or unit seeking clarification and on the part of the WSO Policy Committee" (Introduction to the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies", pg. 83). The Policy Committee is always conscious when doing its work, of its responsibility to guard Al-Anon's world services through its discussions and decisions. It is also always aware of its responsibility to the WSC and the fellowship. The Policy Committee and the Policy Committee Thought and Task Forces have worked hard throughout the year. It is exciting that so many policy items will be presented to the next WSC for decision and vote.

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

In support of our 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," the WSO provides a communication platform, AFG Connects, for trusted servants to talk to each other and reason things out. In 2019, Area Chairs, District Representatives, and current and past Conference members, including Area Delegates discussed topics such as Area Officer eligibility, Past Delegates attending Assemblies, Tradition Seven beyond the meeting, Area reimbursement policies, and selling CAL at Assemblies.

The fellowship was invited to learn how the WSO is sharing Al-Anon's message of hope and help ensuring that when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen will always be there via a notification of the simultaneous posting on August 7, 2019 of the 2018 World Service Office Annual Report in English, French, and Spanish. This first-time translation of the Annual Report provided universal access to information regarding the work of the WSO, as well as supported the Board's desire to enhance trilingual communication. <https://al-anon.org/pdf/AnnualReport.pdf>

To assist with the numerous communications to Conference members, the WSO Conference Team created the 2020 WSC Syllabus, which is a resource that provides a summary outline of the documents and other pieces of information Conference members will be receiving (and when) in the months leading up to the Conference.

### **Indexing Topics of Interest for Our Members**

Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) discussions have taken place at Al-Anon's Annual World Service Conferences since 1976. The purpose of the CAIs is to give all Conference members an opportunity to submit and select topics of concern that affect Al-Anon groups and members worldwide for discussion at Conference. Although the process for submitting topics as well as the name and format of the session(s) have changed over the years, Conference members discuss many of the topics that were on the agendas of past Conferences.

Following an invitation to evaluate the Chosen Agenda Items Process, one of the Conference members suggested the creation of a Chosen Agenda Items Index, which the WSO acted upon. The Index, which is a helpful resource for all Al-Anon members, is available on [al-anon.org](https://al-anon.org), and provides universal access to tools for recovery in a user-friendly format that includes links to the applicable *World Service Conference Summary*.

Find out what members of the 2014 World Service Conference shared about service participation by clicking here: [https://al-anon.org/pdf/P46\\_2014\\_web.pdf#page=45](https://al-anon.org/pdf/P46_2014_web.pdf#page=45).

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

Building on the positive responses received from members who attended Al-Anon's 2018 International Convention regarding the various types of daytime sessions offered in Baltimore, the WSO's Convention Planning Team for Al-Anon's participation in A.A.'s 2020 International Convention (2020AAIC) created a program including the following types of daytime sessions in Detroit: Book Study, Next Pick, Panel, Speaker Meeting, Table Topics, and Workshops.

In support of the Board's Strategic Plan priority to enhance trilingual communication, French- and Spanish-speaking International Convention attendees who participate in Al-Anon's daytime sessions will have opportunities to hear Al-Anon speakers share their stories as several Speaker Meeting sessions will include simultaneous interpretation.

The Chairperson for the 2020AAIC Al-Anon Welcome Committee, formerly known as the Host Committee, was selected and began the process of selecting Welcome Committee officers and subcommittee chairs.

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

### **Sharing Leadership through TEAM Events**

A TEAM event is a partnership between an Area(s) and the World Service Office (WSO), with the aim of providing an opportunity for Al-Anon and Alateen members to learn more about service and the Al-Anon program. The Area and WSO Task Force work together to plan an agenda of workshops and presentations that address the Area's specific needs and expand members' understanding of our worldwide fellowship. TEAM events are sponsored by the Area(s) and the WSO. The WSO Task Force is comprised of a voting member of WSO Staff, a WSO Volunteer, and one of either the Chairperson of the Board (COB), Chairperson of the Executive Committee (COE), or Executive Director (ED).

There were six TEAM events in 2019—two in Canada and four in the United States (Maritime Provinces, Quebec East, Nevada, New York South, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina). Presentations—many of which were created through shared leadership between WSO Task Force members and the Area—were well received. Feedback indicated attendees particularly enjoyed the interactive sessions which provided the opportunity to reinforce understanding through discussions and breakout sessions.

In 2019, after much study, discussion, and input from Staff, the Board of Trustees made the decision to discontinue TEAM events and to explore new ways of encouraging member, Staff, and Volunteer interactions. The Board announced at the 2019 World Service Conference that "in deciding next steps, we will use the experience gleaned from the Regional Service Seminars and the TEAM events, as well as what we have learned from Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect as models." The Board has created a Task Force, made up of WSO Volunteers and Staff, charged with exploring ideas for the future.

## ***Impression – The TEAM Experience***

*Cindy K., Member of the Board of Trustees*

I have had the distinct pleasure of attending two TEAM events in 2019; one in New York South and one in Pennsylvania. My heart swells when I remember the hospitality, shared leadership, welcoming dinners, lively conversations, loads of questions, and warm greeting from the fellowship.

About 100 members attended the New York South TEAM, including many attendees and Past Delegates from surrounding Areas. The COE shared the "Abundance and Our Twelfth Step in Action" presentation, focusing on "Accomplishing Al-Anon's Mission with Your Help" as well as her personal story. The Director of Programs shared her personal story and participated in a panel titled "Inclusivity in Expanding Our Membership." As a part of the panel, the Director of Programs provided an overview of the statistical information from the 2018 Membership Survey. I shared my personal story and presented detailed information on the search for new Trustees.



Pennsylvania had 130 members in attendance from both the host and surrounding Areas. The Area and WSO hosts shared leadership in discussing “Overcoming Fear in Service.” Two Trustees presented the “Abundance/Spiritual Giving” PowerPoint. Pennsylvania and the WSO teamed up again to share on the topic of generous, abundant giving. The title of this session was “You Can’t Keep It Unless You Give It Away.” I presented detailed information on searching for new Trustees. Following the Trustee presentation, we returned to talk about “Handling the Three Obstacles,” with a panel discussion. The Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals shared, in such a poignant way, her own background and experiences.

At both TEAM events, attendees loved the pictures of Directors and Staff. They loved putting a face with a name. I feel the fellowship wants and needs that personal connection with Directors, Staff, and Volunteers! I feel there was a better understanding of the gift of abundance and the need for qualified applicants for Trustees!

### Participating in the Strategic Plan “Proactive Trustee Visits” Initiative

In October 2017 as part of the Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees decided to proactively contact Areas which had not recently received a visit from a WSO Volunteer. The Board offered these Areas an opportunity to have a Trustee visit at WSO expense. The Strategic Plan initiative was referred to as “Proactive Trustee Visits” and had a two-fold purpose. To help Board members personally connect with Areas to help their members recognize how important they are to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. To share with Areas how they are served and supported by the Board of Trustees and World Service Office.

The following Areas were visited in 2019: Virginia in May; Alaska, Ontario North, Ontario South, and Wyoming in September—it was a busy month for members and Trustees! Comments from attendees have been mostly positive and support the Board’s perspective that the Proactive Trustee Visits have been beneficial and successful in achieving their purpose.

### Impression – Reconnecting with the Areas through Proactive Trustee Visits

*Brief Snapshots from Members of the Board of Trustees*

**Alaska:** Overall, members were very appreciative of my visit and grateful the WSO sent a Trustee to participate in the Assembly. Conversations and workshops at the Assembly generated ideas for future Area business including addressing the eligibility for Area Officers and Coordinators and brainstorming topics brought up in the workshop. It was such a privilege to travel to Alaska and meet loving members of our fellowship.

**Virginia:** This was the first Trustee visit to Virginia in many years. (The Director of Programs did attend to provide a personal sharing a few years ago.) The overall experience of the Assembly was quite enjoyable and informative. The enthusiastic response and current Delegate suggestion that she would seek to invite the Associate Director—International to a future Assembly indicated we had achieved the Proactive Trustee Visit initiative’s objective of encouraging connection with the WSO.

**Ontario North:** There were approximately 50 attendees with 28 voting GRs. About 35 people stayed for my presentation, “Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. – Who we are and what we do.” I had audience participation throughout the presentation, and I thought it was well received. After the presentation, I told my story. From the comments I received, I think many realized that Trustees are members just like they are. I stressed the importance of service and of having a Service Sponsor. These points had also been stressed earlier by the Delegate.

**Ontario South:** The Assembly members seemed excited to have a member of the Board of Trustees visit. They were encouraged to learn that we are all “human” members just like them, and they appreciated the willingness to tackle the difficult topic of dilution of the program. Personally, I’m thrilled to have had the opportunity to talk with the members, hear their concerns, and share these back with the Board. Overall, I believe the purpose of the Trustee initiative was accomplished with this visit.

**Wyoming:** Over the course of the entire weekend there were approximately 30 attendees, which included four past Wyoming Delegates. The Area officers were very pleased with the turnout. They usually do not have that many attending Area meetings. I returned home exhausted and energized all at the same time. It was exciting to be able to connect with Al-Anon members in Wyoming and share with them about the WSO Staff and Volunteers. No one could remember the last time a Trustee had visited Wyoming. Many attendees were grateful for this visit. I am happy to report that Wyoming Area Al-Anon is strong and thriving. Thank you for the opportunity to visit Wyoming!

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

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect! 2019 continued to be well received by both the Area that hosted the event, the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee who participated in the event. Members of the fellowship have traveled from all parts of the US and Canada to attend Road Trip! Part of the huge success is that the entire Board of Trustees and Executive Committee are all present in one location. Delegates may have experienced this at WSC, but members of the fellowship seldom have this opportunity and have expressed heartfelt appreciation. Members also expressed a deeper understanding of how the Board and WSO work on behalf of the worldwide Al-Anon.

### **Participating in Area Events**

Staff was invited to attend six Area events in 2019. Staff was able to attend Conventions in Washington, Tennessee, and Oklahoma; and Area Assemblies in Illinois, Virginia, and Missouri. The Executive Director was able to attend the Iowa Assembly on her way to the 2019 Road Trip! in Seattle.

In addition to sharing their personal stories, Staff were asked to do workshops or presentations at some events on topic ideas—usually generated by the Area—that supported Area service interests. Presentations at two Assemblies focused on WSO interactions with AFG international groups, evolving structures, and General Service Structures. Additionally, Staff gave participants at one Convention a workshop that featured a tutorial on the al-anon.org website and an overview of the various WSO support services available for the membership. Area feedback indicates the information presented by Staff was educational and informative.

Staff has always and continues to find these visits are not only energizing for them but extremely valuable as an opportunity to interact with local members in the fellowship and understand their needs more directly.

### **Impression – Gaining Insight through Fellowship Connection**

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

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The WSO Volunteers wish to convey thanks and appreciation for the generous hospitality and enthusiasm which has been demonstrated by members during Trustee visits throughout the year. These events provided the opportunity for conversation and the flow of information and ideas to take place with Al-Anon members throughout the WSC Structure. The Trustees always came back excited to share their reports from the Assemblies and Area events they participated in. Gaining insight and knowledge of our vast World Service Conference Structure showed us where we have been as a fellowship (the history of many Areas), and where we need to grow. It shows us the need for clear communication and the importance of our responsibility of foresight and long-range planning in an ever-changing society. These visits allow the members to see that Trustees really are Al-Anon members and they allow the Trustees an opportunity to offer support and information to the members.

## Produce and Distribute Literature

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

**Claire R.**, *Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals*

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

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

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

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

**Mark S.**, *Magazine Editor*

**Marianne B.**, *Trustee Liaison to the Literature Committee (Trustee)*

**Jean L.**, *Trustee Liaison to The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC)*

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## Conference Approved Literature

Al-Anon's latest piece of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), the *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81), was introduced to the fellowship as a companion piece to the still-popular *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-12). It applies Al-Anon principles to preparation for the end of the day. The response to this adaptation of an article from *The Forum* has been overwhelmingly positive.

A writer/editor was selected to work on the NEW DAILY READER (working title), a book given conceptual approval by the World Service Conference in 2014. A timeline for the work was developed and the first milestone, reading and evaluating all 1,587 sharings submitted so far, has been completed, as well as presentation of a detailed report to the Literature Committee. Development of the first draft of the first quarter of the book has commenced.

Three separate "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" articles about the development, revision, and discontinuance of CAL were published, respectively, in the May, June, and October issues of *The Forum* magazine to help provide members with a better understanding of the CAL process.

For members' convenience, the "Request for Reprint" form used for seeking permission to reprint limited excerpts from Al-Anon's copyrighted material is now also available as an online form at [al-anon.org/reprint-permission](http://al-anon.org/reprint-permission). Also for 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 Staff.

The Trustee Liaison to the Literature Committee gave a presentation about CAL as a part of the Board's "Road Trip!" this year in Seattle, Washington.

Two Board of Trustee motions were made that pertained to literature. One was "to discontinue publication and distribution of the piece of Conference Approved Literature *If Your Parents Drink Too Much* (P-22) effective May 21, 2019, and to advise the Literature Distribution Centers to do the same." The decision was made after receiving communications from professionals and members dismayed by stereotypes within this comic book.

The other motion directed Staff "not to proceed in the development of printed publication of a piece of Conference Approved Literature based on member sharings published in past issues of *The Forum* which was given conceptual approval at the 2015 World Service Conference (Motion #6) due to concern about its lack of appeal to members and therefore its financial feasibility." The project itself has not been canceled, but other methods besides printed publications are being explored for sharing these articles that members consider to be "the best of *The Forum*."

## 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 and is published monthly. *Le Lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazines are the French and Spanish versions of excerpts from *The Forum* and are published six times a year. The magazines included sharings from members in a variety of relationships with alcoholics and are designed to provide recovery both in meetings, as well as between meetings. Those sharings were evaluated and scored by At-Large members on the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC).



The Committee continued to meet four times a year via conference call to discuss the status of the magazine and any concerns that readers may have. An article appeared in this year's *Forum* outlining the work of the FEAC. It was intended to inform members of the work the volunteers do for the magazine in light of the fact that many members were unaware of their existence and hard work. The Committee has continued reviewing and scoring 50 member sharings for the magazine every month.

A brief *In the Loop* article outlined five reasons why groups should subscribe to *The Forum*, as groups no longer receive monthly copies of it.

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 that 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 edition of *In The Loop*.

### **Alateen Talk**

*Alateen Talk* is a quarterly publication consisting of Alateen and AMIAS/Alateen Group Sponsor sharings. It is mailed complimentary to each registered Alateen group worldwide and is available by subscription. It is notable that in 2019 subscriptions increased by 25% from 1,773 to 2,218. All subscribers are in the United States and Canada at this time.

*Alateen Talk* celebrated a major milestone in 2019: 55 years of the newsletter publication! The edition was highlighted with the varying newsletter banners that have been published over the years. An additional issue was dedicated to the 18th anniversary of *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26). For the first time in *Alateen Talk* history, sharings were received by Alateens from Russia and Mexico! Trusted servants in those countries translated the sharings into English before forwarding to us. The Publications Team designed each newsletter by using mostly member submitted photos and drawings as well as some stock photos to illustrate the content. These graphics complemented the overall theme of sharing hope and recovery in an energetic and colorful way.

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

*Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* is Al-Anon Family Groups' annual public outreach magazine that aims to familiarize families and friends of alcoholics with Al-Anon and to highlight the importance of family recovery from a relative or friend's drinking. Professionals provide the AFA magazine to clients and patients as an aid in dealing with alcoholism and as a means of referral to Al-Anon.

In 2019, Staff collaboration resulted in an increased number of members' sharings for the 2020 issue of the AFA magazine. Various types of relationships between members and alcoholics as well as the intergenerational nature of alcoholism in families were featured to educate and appeal to families of alcoholics who were unaware of our program and have not yet attended meetings. Articles written by two addiction psychiatrists and a pediatrician identified the importance of changed attitudes and behavior of family members. Ongoing participation in the Al-Anon program was encouraged through the reoccurring themes in members' stories about how they overcame their fear of attending meetings, felt welcomed, and shared other positive experiences at their first meetings.

The three components in the public outreach magazine—basic information about Al-Anon, articles by professionals, and members' stories about benefits of Al-Anon—made AFA magazines a welcomed resource at offices of professionals, facilities, and public places in local communities.

Previously, AFA was offered for sale twice a year and required members and professionals to purchase in advance of their needs. In 2019, in an effort to expand public outreach to families and friends, the decision was made to offer the magazine all year. This approach ensured members and professionals have access to the magazine whenever needed and in all three languages. To support this change in availability, pricing for the AFA magazine—starting in 2020—was simplified to \$8 for 25 copies, plus relevant shipping charges.

## 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 2019, 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.” Working with health care and media communications professionals, the WSO sought to explore, expand, and update its public outreach and communication approaches to ensure 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.

### Attract New Members

**Claire R.**, Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals

**Scot P.**, Associate Director—Digital Strategy

**Mark S.**, Magazine Editor

**Cathy T.**, Trustee Liaison to the Public Outreach Committee (Trustee)

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### Public Outreach to the Public

#### Public Service Announcements (PSA)

A conversation between WSO Staff and the long-standing PSA vendor provided some insight as to the effectiveness of delivering Al-Anon’s message of hope. Specifically, the Al-Anon story approach requires the viewer/listener to experience the entire PSA to understand how life was before Al-Anon, how they learned about Al-Anon, and how their life is since Al-Anon. There are so many distractions today that make receiving the message even more difficult. So with the support of the WSO Volunteers and the Public Outreach Committee, Staff created a new script based on the 20 Questions. The PSA used images representing a diverse population along with questions taken directly from the three 20-Question pamphlets. The overall impression of this new direction has been very positive.

The 2019 campaign consisted of the new 20 Questions format and existing Al-Anon story format, Christina. (The campaign will extend into 2020.) Overall airplays for this campaign were higher than last year, much to do with members’ willingness to reach out to stations in their locations and ask them to play the PSAs. The WSO continued to receive requests from members each week to send the PSAs to various radio and TV stations across our Structure. Airplays for each PSA will be measured and—using special website addresses and unique toll-free numbers—for the first time Staff will be able to track which version generates the most web visits and calls to the meeting line. These statistics will help drive creative decisions going forward.

### Public Outreach Service Tools

The *Al-Anon Family Groups Welcomes Gays and Lesbians* (S-70) pamphlet was discontinued and existing inventory destroyed. Literature Distributions Centers were also asked to discontinue making the pamphlet available for purchase and distribution by members in their communities. This decision was taken following discussion by the Executive Committee about negative comments received from members and professionals. They indicated the pamphlet title and the lack of stories from members with bisexual, transgender, or other sexual orientations (LGBTQ+) left an impression that Al-Anon Family Groups was exclusionary. The WSO Executive Committee asked Staff to prioritize development of a new service tool reflective of the LGBTQ+ communities.

The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) and Public Outreach Committee held preliminary discussions at their respective meetings about the fellowship’s awareness and utilization of existing outreach tools for racial minorities. The limited distribution figures of *Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Native Americans/Aboriginals* (S-67) and *Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome African Americans, African Canadians and All People of Color* (S-68) pamphlets indicate that local organizations outside of our meeting rooms are not receiving our tools designed to appeal to minority communities.

Staff added a note to the *Best of Public Outreach* online to inform the fellowship that the posted version contains some outdated links and references and direct them to visit [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) for current information. The service tool continues to be available on the WSO website because of its informational value regarding public outreach activities.

WSO Staff briefly reviewed some of the Public Outreach service tools to ensure they were still relevant in today's everchanging landscape. The *Public Outreach* Bookmark (M-76) was low on stock. Staff revised the bookmark to include a smiling family running outside with the quote beneath it saying "We found HOPE in the midst of an overwhelming situation."

For the past couple of years, WSO Staff has been producing memes (images with text) to attract the non-member/potential member on WSO social media platforms. Text has included stats and quotes from Al-Anon magazines and Conference Approved Literature (CAL). In 2019 members' comments from the social media pages, anonymous quotes from members who answered "Do you have any comments about the benefits you have experienced as a member of Al-Anon?" and anonymously submitted member responses to the "Benefits of Al-Anon" question on the 2018 Membership Survey were reviewed and scored by the WSO Public Outreach Committee's newly formed Social Media Workgroup. Approved quotes became a new source for social media memes. This approach created current, fresh content that portrays the positive aspects of recovery offered in the Al-Anon program.

### **Impression – Impact of New PSA**

#### **Member, Anonymous**

"I was in the car on the way to work when the radio station I was listening to went to a commercial break. I heard, 'Do you worry about how much someone drinks?' and, by the time the ad ran, I had pulled over to the side of the road. I was shaken. I could not wait to get to the office to call the radio station that aired it. I asked them how to get the recording, and they gave me Al-Anon's number.

"The PSA was really good, right on target, and I wanted my son's wife and kids to listen to it. Both my sons are alcoholics, and my wife and I have been dealing with one crisis after another for years. My younger son has a really bad problem. After a particularly nasty incident at Thanksgiving two years ago, my wife and I finally went to an Al-Anon meeting. Here we are in November, and I hear this ad! Coincidence or not, but I want my daughter-in-law and grandkids to get help."

### **Public Outreach to Professionals**

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

Increasing professional awareness and client referrals to our program is vital to reach the families and friends of alcoholics. The relaunch of the WSO's LinkedIn social media page in the fourth quarter improved the WSO's ability to provide news and timely information simultaneously to professionals unfamiliar with our program and those already utilizing Al-Anon as a resource. Evidence-based data from our 2018 Membership Survey and quotations from members or professionals have been utilized to illustrate the benefits of Al-Anon and the value of professional referrals to clients. Video clips from the professionals speaker panel—"Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends"—at the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention were also included in the WSO's "soft" LinkedIn relaunch. New or updated electronic meeting pages are often "soft" launched—e.g., without announcement—to provide the opportunity to ensure the page is working as designed.

#### **Networking with Professionals**

Staff added new events sponsored by national non-profit organizations to federal government agency meetings, e.g., the US government's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and National Recovery Month Planning Meeting, and the biennial Issues of Substance Conference sponsored by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, to increase outreach with professionals. Staff learned how school counselors and psychologists, and marriage and family therapists identify and address children, youths, and families affected by a relative's addiction to alcohol.





Staff attendance at these events provides the opportunity to speak to presenters and attendees in a personal manner. Families of alcoholics have a human voice when represented by a person.

Staff noted the amount of attention and reference to the topic of alcoholism and its effects on children and families as well as the drinker at professional conferences were not as prevalent as the focus on opioids and other types of substances.

## Protect Al-Anon's Name

**Vali F.**, Executive Director

**Kerri K.**, Associate Director—International

**Erin Keavney**, Interim Legal Assistant (Non-member)

## Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet

Based on research undertaken by the Electronic Meeting Work Group—then a Work Group of the Policy Committee—and a recommendation from the Policy Committee, the Board of Trustees at its April quarterly meeting, prior to the WSC, approved a motion “to direct the Office to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the Al-Anon name, pursuant to the 'Electronic Meetings' portion of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' section of the 2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27). Following this direction, Staff began the process of cataloging violations to the Al-Anon and Alateen trademark identified by members, Staff, and Volunteers. By mid-year, over 30 violations ranging from mobile apps and unregistered social media groups using the Al-Anon name and or logo to websites not linked to Al-Anon service arms posting excerpts from CAL were cataloged.

Despite having access to general counsel who provides intellectual property support as part of a monthly retainer agreement and a trademark attorney engaged to register the Al-Anon trademark internationally, it became evident existing administrative Staff could not undertake the effort necessary to investigate ownership, communicate our concerns, and address continued violations. After discussing the situation with colleagues at the A.A. General Service Office—who employ a full-time paralegal—Staff asked the Board for approval as part of the Strategic Plan Organization Goal initiatives to contract an experienced, intellectual property paralegal as a trial to pursue the violations, create templates for responding to future violations, and identify the scope of ongoing work. The Interim Legal Assistant started in November and has already successfully collaborated with members both within and outside the WSC Structure who have cooperated based on an informed understanding of the need to protect our name, as identified in Warranty Four.

## International Copyright Protection and Accessibility

Since the late 1960s, AFG, Inc. has granted permission for Al-Anon structures outside of the WSC Structure to reprint and translate Conference Approved Literature (CAL). This process is administered by the WSO. For many General Service Offices (GSOs), and the WSO, sales of CAL are a necessary source of income for maintaining self-support. For AFG, Inc., it is critical to protect CAL copyrights domestically and internationally. Given that copyrights are generally granted on a national level, out of necessity AFG, Inc. has adopted a policy that prohibits any given country from selling copyrighted CAL outside of this protected area. In other words, prohibits the country from selling outside its national borders. This policy exists for all countries with reprint or translation permission and it helps to protect AFG, Inc.'s copyrights.

The need to protect this valuable intellectual property must be balanced with the need to fulfill the primary objectives of the WSO, one of which is to prepare and distribute CAL. People, goods, and services are more mobile than they were in past generations, increasing the expectations that AFG, Inc. will act similarly to other global organizations. The WSO routinely receives requests from members and groups seeking to use CAL in ways that are not supported by the policy and increase the difficulty for AFG, Inc. to monitor and enforce its rights. Examples include:

- Groups that conduct themselves in something other than a given country's official language, e.g., Polish-speaking groups in Germany, who want to be able to purchase literature in the language of their choice regardless of the geographic location of their meeting.
- Members who prefer electronic formats to paper formats.
- Members and groups who want their service arms to stock and sell CAL in a variety of languages to meet the needs of a diverse, multicultural membership.

In 2019, efforts focused on research in two primary areas. One was in the area of book publishing operations and how the WSO could increase the global availability of existing CAL. The other was in talking with the global AI-Anon community to understand the needs and wants of the fellowship, AI-Anon service arms, and the WSO. AFG, Inc. continued to seek advice from its attorneys regarding how these needs can be met through licensing of its trademarks and copyrights. The WSO continued its monitoring efforts where reprints and translations have been made. This was part of an ongoing responsibility to determine if additional trademark protection is needed to ensure that CAL can continue to be available to the broadest possible audience.

### **International Trademarks**

Re-registration of the three AI-Anon trademarks (AI-Anon, Alateen, and the AI-Anon (triangle) logo) continued in 2019 for countries where AI-Anon literature is translated and reprinted. The following registrations were completed and received: India, Japan, Paraguay, and South Africa. Trademark registrations were also received for the AI-Anon and Alateen trademarks in Slovakia while the AFG (triangle) logo is currently pending at the Slovakian trademark office.

### **Goal: Organization**

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

The Board of Trustees, Executive Committee Volunteers, and WSO Staff worked closely throughout the year to support AFG, Inc.'s Goal of having one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program. Several coordinated efforts resulted in achieving significant progress toward the Goal.

## Increase Global Availability

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

**Kerri K.**, *Associate Director—International*

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

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

**John McL.**, *Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)*

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### Global Fellowship Support

Combining the skills of Staff from multiple Departments, in 2019 the WSO was able to fulfill a long-held desire to include “international meetings” in the al-anon.org online meeting search. For the purposes of the project, this included any meetings registered with the WSO that occur outside of the WSC Structure. The project kicked off in the first quarter and used a phased approach to implementation. In August, at the completion of the second phase, more than 550 meetings plus dozens of national and evolving structures had been added to the meeting search. Unfortunately, technical limitations existed that prevented 100% of WSO-registered meetings from being added to the search. Additional phases of the project will attempt to improve on this outcome. In the meantime, the number of groups included in the search has continued to grow because as new meetings registered, new requirements ensured that the necessary information was collected at the time of registration. Prior to this, members seeking information about these meetings were required to call or write to the WSO to access the information. This project expanded access to resources by making meeting information available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on a platform that enables users to view the information from anywhere in the world, in their own languages and time zones.

Adding “international meetings” to the al-anon.org meeting search is one example of how Staff and the Board worked together to prioritize resources to benefit the global fellowship. Another was through efforts to provide support to evolving structures. Support took the form of providing technical assistance in completing meeting registration or reprint permission forms; clarifying roles and responsibilities of service workers; understanding the Traditions and Concepts of Service; beginning outreach to professionals, media, and the public; authorizing first-time requests for reprint/translation permission; or explaining policies. New and evolving structures encountered policy questions as often or even more than in the WSC Structure. These related to translation, finances, Alateen, group registration, websites/social media, anonymity, and other topics.

The goal of the International Team and the International Coordination Committee (ICC) is to provide the information, resources, and shared experience that new and evolving structures need to be successful. In 2019, three evolving structures sought assistance with establishing a service board, one of the first steps in forming a national structure. They were Bolivia, Czech Republic, and Latvia. The Russian Federation was an established evolving structure that progressed this year to forming Finance, Policy, and Executive Committees for the first time. After a long period, Turkey resumed communications with the WSO and launched a significant effort to translate and print more than ten books and pamphlets.

Connections to national service structures were strengthened through ongoing communications with elected leaders and paid office staff alike. WSO Staff and ICC members were kept informed, through verbal or written correspondence, of activities of General Service Conferences and General Service Boards for many national structures including Australia, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, UK & Eire, Uruguay, and others. When asked, Staff and the ICC provided assistance and shared experience. Much was gained on the part of WSO Staff and ICC members, as well, as the result of being a part of the global fellowship.

### International Structure Events

Zonal Meetings are structured and organized service meetings for countries outside of the WSC Structure. Attendance is open to national and evolving service structures. Zonal meetings offer an opportunity for service structures and the WSO to meet face-to-face, hear reports, exchange information, and strengthen our mutual connections. They are hosted and attended by structures in Central America, Europe, and South America and occur every second year.



## Participating in the European Zonal Meeting

The first of the 2019 Zonal Meetings took place in Ankaran, Slovenia September 20-22. The theme of the meeting was Embracing Changes. There were 32 Delegates in attendance representing 17 national and evolving structures. Although individually the Delegates spoke 30 different languages, the mutually agreed upon written and spoken language for the meeting was English. Kerri K., Associate Director—International, and Gail G., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, attended on behalf of the WSO.

### Discussion topics included:

- Modern Communication (Inside and Outside the Fellowship) — The discussion focused on the use of electronic media for communication with service volunteers and the public. As the structure using the greatest variety of electronic media, the WSO was asked to share its experience first. Delegates contributed similar sharings of what did and did not work for their members and public audiences.
- Advantages and Obligations of a Legal Structure — Discussion was held regarding registering as a legal structure; the types, the advantages, and the challenges. Delegates shared on adapting to changes in local laws and the effects on AI-Anon. The topic of legal literature and licensing was raised and the WSO was able to supply information on the process.
- Concept Twelve/Warranty One — Delegates shared about the strength of their structure's financial position, methods of conveying the needs of the service structure to the fellowship, and accepting and supporting the group conscience.
- Know-how on Public Outreach — Delegates shared information and concerns. WSO shared on using PSAs on radio and television, publishing the yearly magazine *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, and maintaining a strong position on Google. Poland shared that AI-Anon had been invited to its parliament to take part in a conference about organizations that help with the problem of alcoholism.

The 2021 European Zonal Meeting will be held in Essen, Germany.

## Participating in the Ibero-American Zonal Meeting

The purpose for this meeting was an opportunity for service structures—with the WSO as a resource—to meet in a face-to-face setting to report service activity that has occurred within their respective structures since the last meeting in 2017. Through this platform structures exchanged information, answered questions, and strengthened their mutual connections. This meeting took place in Mexico City, Mexico and was hosted by the AI-Anon General Service Office for Mexico in October.

WSO participants to this event were Board of Trustee member Rosie M. and Director of Programs Marsha W. Although WSO participation for this meeting was limited to voice and not vote, both representatives participated in workshops, answered assigned questions scheduled within the program, and answered general questions while collaborating with each structure present.

The two-day meeting was the ninth Ibero-American Meeting. In addition to WSO's participation, other countries present were Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, and Uruguay were originally scheduled to come, however, all were unable to have representation present for various reasons.



**Workshop topics included the following:**

- Linking Service Experiences in Ibero America
- From Mexico with Love
- Literature
- General Service Offices as Service Centers
- Going Back to Basics
- The Structure's Spirit
- Effective Communication between Structures

The 2021 Ibero-American Zonal Meeting will be hosted by Peru.

### **Missing the Opportunity to Participate in the Central American Zonal Meeting**

The Central American Zonal Meeting was hosted by El Salvador on November 13-15. Unfortunately, WSO Staff and Trustees were unable to attend due to unavoidable schedule conflicts. Staff researched technological solutions that might have enabled remote participation, but none were feasible. Staff was learning more every day about how to improve services and communication using technology, but have not yet mastered the skills to achieve meaningful participation that does not create an unreasonable burden on behalf of either the hosts or the participants.

### **Impression – Connecting with the Worldwide Fellowship**

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

Attending a Zonal Meeting is an inspiring, heart-warming experience and has convinced me that these meetings are essential to the future growth of AI-Anon. Sitting at the table with the European Delegates and listening as they provided a brief rundown on what was happening in AI-Anon in their respective countries was an experience I will never forget. A lot of the countries have had AI-Anon meetings since the 1950s and '60s, but several are much newer to AI-Anon.

The Delegates, even those that were newer members, exhibited such knowledge, insight, and passion for their structures and AI-Anon as a whole that the sharing of experience and information was amazing. Many are facing challenges of coping with the changing laws in their countries. Most are experiencing the concerns of the "cashless" trend of today. The literature was a huge obstacle both in terms of translation and licensing to sell within borders.

One of the many highlights for me was meeting the two participants from Latvia. AI-Anon was founded in Latvia in 1991 and has ten groups. One of the participants has been an AI-Anon member for two years; the other is a member of an online international AI-Anon meeting and they came to the EZM because they saw the need to break the isolation of AI-Anon in Latvia. They wanted to get information on starting Alateen meetings. These members were an inspiration and hearing them say the Serenity Prayer in their language was an emotional experience tying us all together. I will forevermore carry them in my heart knowing that we are all members of the *worldwide fellowship of AI-Anon*.

### **Impression – Collaborating as a Trilingual Organization with our Spanish-Speaking Neighbors**

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

It was an honor, blessing, and very exciting opportunity to attend the Ibero-American Zonal meeting in Mexico City alongside Marsha W. of the WSO, where we collaborated with our Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking neighbors and countries such as Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Mexico. I was in awe and very inspired to witness the shared sentiments throughout this meeting by all in attendance.

The International Delegates displayed their commitment, responsibility, and loving encouragement of one another and their passion for their structures and our Al-Anon fellowship. It was very evident through their sharings and reports and I was very inspired and mesmerized by their dedication. Their common vision included wide and varied interests, challenges, and items of importance within the neighbors of the Ibero-American countries. One common challenge within all the countries was their literature, reprint, printing costs, and sale within their borders. Another important and shared challenge was their communication with each other, with differences in time zones, platforms, etc. AFG Connects was relayed and displayed to them as a tool during this meeting and they were very excited.

The International Zonal Meetings were of utmost importance in providing an opportunity for International service structures and the WSO to meet face-to-face to strengthen our mutual connections. Language was not a barrier but a heartfelt connection of collective thoughts and ideas. We patiently waited while the individual thoughts and ideas were collected. Each could see the challenge for our Spanish-speaking neighbors, trying to communicate in another language other than their own, for example, Portuguese, yet, their ideas were conveyed beautifully. For myself, I listened in Spanish and simultaneously translated into English as I was taking my notes. To me, this was a collaboration in action by all attendees. It was a tear-jerking moment when the translator found a picture of his Delegate grandmother on the walls of the board room. I'm very grateful for the opportunity, more than words can express, to have this glimpse and experience of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon as it is a reality—Al-Anon members from across the globe, our neighbors, peers and friends, all with the same common bond that unites us.

### **Facilitate Access to Our History**

**Claire R.**, *Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals*

**Joe T.**, *Archivist*

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The WSO's archival software was upgraded to the latest, cloud-based version. The Events & Special Projects Team helped to facilitate the project. The Archives Team was fully satisfied that existing data on local servers had been transferred and could be successfully searched and retrieved from their new cloud-based storage locations. The implementation included ten workflows configured to eliminate or reduce the need for any Staff intervention when loading high-volume documents, such as Board and Executive Committee minutes, into the archives. The standardization of naming involved in the workflows will also improve Staff's ability to retrieve and disseminate archival data for Staff, WSO Volunteers, and the fellowship.

### **Recruit, Grow, and Retain Staff**

**Vali F.**, *Executive Director*

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In 2019, the WSO Staff turnover rate was 27% percent, which is slightly higher than the 26% percent average reported by our local payroll provider. One significant departure was the Events & Special Projects Manager. In accordance with WSO procedure, Staff roles are revisited whenever an individual leaves the organization as requirements can shift rapidly as the WSO strives to meet the needs of the evolving fellowship and environment. Additionally, two-thirds of the Group Services Team changed in 2019 through retirement and a resignation to support family commitments.

Ten new Staff members joined the WSO throughout the year and a new position—Programs and Digital Strategy Assistant—replaced the Programs Generalist position. This new role was charged with supporting both the Literature and the Digital Strategy Teams. For more than half of 2019, the WSO operated with an Interim Human Resources Manager. Hiring continued at year-end to find the right candidate for this critical position.

Our three Staff leadership Teams—Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), Staff Management Team (SMT), and Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRIT)—created early in 2019 operated throughout the year within the scope of their carefully-defined service responsibilities, supporting Strategic Planning, Staff management, and Policy implementation respectively.



The SLT participated in a leadership workshop and utilized those skills as it undertook a rapid-paced effort to draft proposed Strategies in support of the AFG Strategic Plan for the Board of Trustees's consideration for 2020. The SLT has operated most of the year with only six members given the absence of a permanent HR Manager.

The SMT expanded its purpose to include recommending and approving WSO procedures. As part of its revised mandate, the SMT discussed data captured over a ten-month period regarding incoming call volumes and origins to the WSO phone lines between 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm. As a result of this discussion—recognizing the data confirmed that volumes during this timeframe were extremely low and did not support a long-held belief that these calls primarily originated from the west coast—the SMT gained consensus from the Executive Committee to adopt 8:00 am to 5:00 pm as the WSO phone hours starting in January 2020. This decision will help the WSO recruit and retain qualified professional Staff, since the 9:00 am to 6:00 pm shift was a deterrent for many candidates.

Members of SLT introduced facilitation tools from the leadership workshop to the SPIRiT agenda, helping that Team increased its ability to more efficiently address the long list of complex AI-Anon Policy implementation questions.

### ***Impression – Evolving the World Service Office to Meet Changing Needs of the Fellowship and Organization***

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

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Today's WSO functions with a dynamic and evolving workforce with opportunities for continued personal and organizational growth designed to meet the needs of our fellowship now and into the future. The office work environment demonstrated the heart of the Strategic Plan's Core values: adherence to our Legacies, equality, respect, and integrity in interactions between Staff, the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the fellowship as a whole. Transparency was achieved through weekly Director Reports, communication with the fellowship through the various communities on AFG Connects, and the multitude of daily emails and phone calls. There was opportunity for growth in positions through continuous review and audit of what is needed—how can those vacancies best service the needs of the Strategic Plan now and into the future. The open-door policy for all Staff offered the opportunity for building trust, clarity, and unity. Yearly evaluation for needed training, up-to-date technology, and equipment ensured a healthy future not only for our Staff but for our WSO as a whole. Our future is bright and evolving in a positive direction due to the work of our Staff.

## **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***

A record of Area trusted servants was maintained in the WSO database, including Area Delegates, Area Chairs, Coordinators, and District Representatives. Members holding these positions gained access to AFG Connects, which provided a platform for discussions with peers from other Areas and resource documents useful for their position. New trusted servants received a welcome from the WSO at the beginning of their term introducing them to their new position and providing their AFG Connects login credentials. Creating these welcome emails has been a time-consuming and manual process involving multiple WSO Staff.

This year the WSO added a module to our database program called Advanced Process Automation for the purpose of automating repetitive tasks. So far the WSO has created 26 tasks to generate welcome emails, notify Area Alateen Process Persons of newly-certified AI-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, and provide a number of internal alerts. Already more than 1,100 emails have been automatically sent using this new productivity tool.

### WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety

Staff are valuable resources to the WSO. To ensure Staff well-being, the WSO improved our existing security system by installing cameras at key entry points. The new security system allowed activity to be monitored in and around the building for asset security as well as Staff and visitor safety. Panic buttons were installed within the building to silently alert the police in case of an emergency. The fire control panels were upgraded to ensure quick and expedient notification of a fire emergency.

An emergency response plan was developed. The emergency response plan mapped out protocol in case of an active shooter, natural disaster, or immediate evacuation. Most importantly, the emergency response plan allows for immediate communication and restoration of operations at the WSO as quickly and safely as possible. By implementing these new tools, the WSO has ensured the safety of its Staff and visitors to the WSO.

## Manage Our Budget & Financials

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

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

**Joan S.**, *Treasurer of AFG, Inc.*

**Cindy K.**, *Treasurer of AFG, Inc.*

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A total of \$5,375,953 in contributions, *Forum* subscriptions, and literature sales were received from members, creating a real impact within the fellowship through a combination of programs, literature, and new technology. Member support provided enhancements to meeting search database, secured Spanish and French interpretation at the 2019 World Service Conference, and launched exciting new public service announcements.

Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. More than 67% of total expenses go directly towards achieving the Mission of Al-Anon Family Groups. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provide customer service support, shipping, and financial support to maintain operations.

### **Impression – Investing in Our Future**

**Cindy K.**, *Chairperson of the Finance Committee and Treasurer for AFG, Inc. (Trustee)*

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Lois W. said, on more than one occasion, "There is no standing still in Al-Anon."

If you have gotten this far in reading this Annual Report, you can see for yourself Al-Anon Family Groups has been making great strides in accomplishing our Strategic Plan Goals. Because the fellowship has practiced the spiritual principles of abundance, trust, unity, and love with their contributions, the organization has been able to accomplish some important objectives!

I have been amazed at how the Finance Committee and Director of Finance & Operations, along with WSO Staff, have managed the financial aspects of accomplishing everything described in the Annual Report above. The Director of Finance & Operations and Accounting Manager monitor all expenditures with professional and practiced procedures.

Everything the organization does—from the day-to-day operations to implementing all kinds of new and exciting Strategic Plan initiatives—requires funds. As an organization and a fellowship, we cannot afford to stand still. There are many competitors for the funds that Al-Anon members provide for the fellowship's growth—from a daily designer coffee to other family recovery programs. We must keep our name in the forefront of the electronic search engines because that is how newcomers are finding us today.

Service is the rent I pay for my recovery but my donations are the gift I give the fellowship to assure Al-Anon Family Groups' survival. I can already tell my great-grandchildren will need what Al-Anon has to offer!

Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. for fiscal year 2019 may be obtained online at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org).

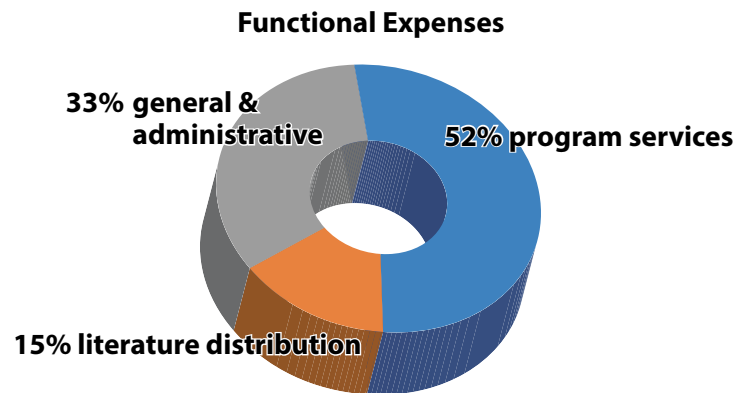
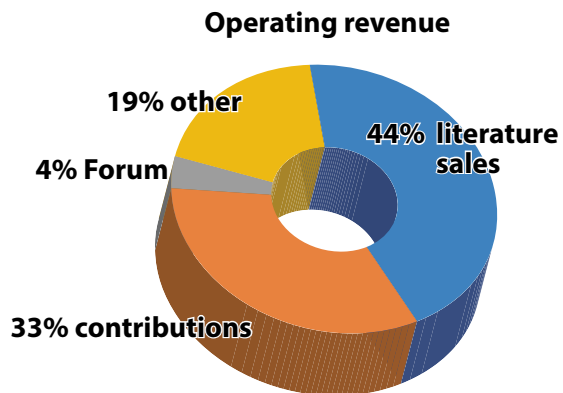
# OUR FINANCIALS



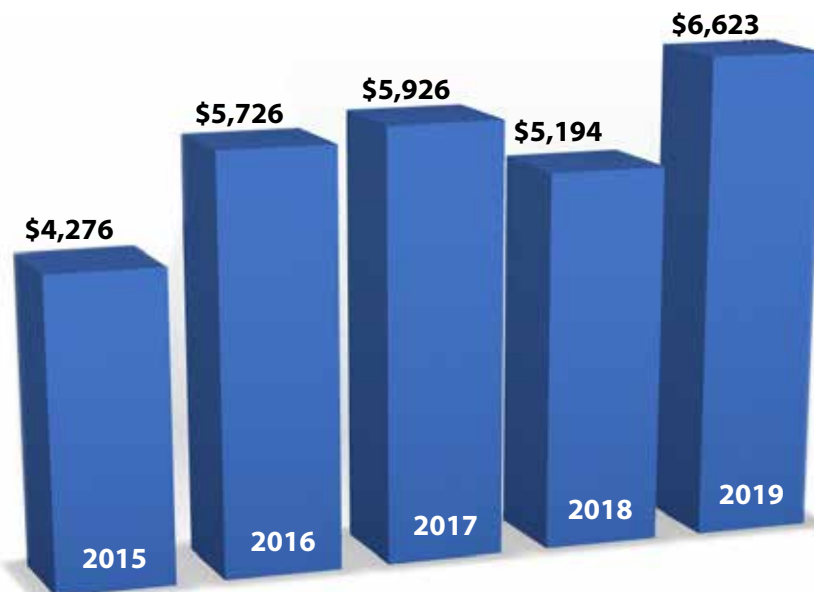
## Financial Highlights

Statements of Financial Position	2019	2018	2017
<b>Total Assets</b> (in thousands)	\$11,060	\$9,833	\$10,513
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>			
Total liabilities	\$1,531	\$1,387	\$1,867
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$9,529	\$8,446	\$8,646
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	\$11,060	\$9,833	\$10,513
<b>Operating revenue</b> (in thousands)	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Literature sales, net	\$2,914	\$3,194	\$2,771
Contributions	\$2,187	\$1,953	\$1,973
Forum sales	\$275	\$258	\$264
Other income, net	\$1,247	\$(211)	\$918
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>\$6,623</b>	<b>\$5,194</b>	<b>\$5,926</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b> (in thousands)	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Program services	\$2,865	\$2,731	\$2,830
Literature distribution	\$839	\$860	\$822
General & administrative	\$1,837	\$1,804	\$1,172
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>\$5,541</b>	<b>\$5,395</b>	<b>\$4,824</b>

Al-Anon FY2019 Revenue & Expense



Al-Anon's Five Year Revenue Trend (in thousands)



## Strategic Plan

### 2019 Strategies Update

#### *Staff Strategic Leadership Team*

A new Strategic Plan for AFG, Inc. was developed in 2018. At that time, Volunteers and Staff were resolute in the desire that the Strategic Plan would not be a list of activities to pursue, but rather a place to document 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 would lead to strategic actions in 2019.

Using the Concepts of Service as a guide, the WSO began 2019 with clarity about the differing roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Staff, and the Executive Committee. The Board, uniquely entrusted with administrative authority for Al-Anon World Services (Concept Six), would have the task of oversight. Their role would be to ensure that plans and actions (Strategies) developed by Staff would be appropriate, efficient, and demonstrate meaningful progress toward achieving the long-term Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Staff, who “often develop new plans and policies” (Concept Eleven), would be responsible for designing, implementing, and managing budgets for the shorter-term Strategies. The Executive Committee, having been delegated the authority to manage routine operations of the WSO (Concept Eight) and specific responsibility to monitor Strategic Plan progress (Board Motion), would serve as a valuable sounding board—part focus group, part support squad, and part governor—they would provide useful insights to Staff and their thoughtful suggestions would improve Staff planning.

Overall excitement about the process, enthusiasm for confronting challenges, and hope for the future brought many Staff ideas out into the open. In no time at all, such excitement had created a problem of abundance—too many opportunities and not enough resources. Over time and with frequent Board and Executive Committee conversations, Staff right-sized its ambitions to match more closely the WSO’s physical, financial, emotional, and spiritual capacity for accomplishing the Strategies. Though reality forced Staff to narrow the scope of original ambitions, in the end the WSO achieved more than any of us might have believed we were capable of.

The milestone achievements of 2019 included transitioning to a continuous publication schedule for the WSO’s outreach magazine for professionals (*Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*), adapting the online Meeting Search to include more than 500 registered meetings occurring outside of the WSC Structure plus registered evolving and national service offices, designing and testing a new database module that allowed automation of several manual processes for Customer Service and AFG Records Staff, inventorying and improving the content on all Al-Anon digital properties, translating the 2018 Annual Report into French and Spanish for the first time in AFG, Inc. history, expanding professional contacts by increasing Staff attendance at their conferences, improving communication with members by establishing an AFG Connects Community for Electronic Meeting CMAs, and expanding the use of technology by creating the Members Blog and initiating plans to develop a mobile app.

# OUR PROGRESS & PLANS

## Impression – Infusing the Strategic Plan in Every Decision and Action

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

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In Concept Nine, Bill W.'s essay on leadership tells us that the all-important attribute of leadership is vision. He goes on to say that ... "As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it." Page 197 – *2018/2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

The current Strategic Plan is a vibrant and visionary blueprint or roadmap which connects us, ensuring the work meets our primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics. It takes us from where we are today to where we want to be in the future. During this past year, the work of Staff, the Board, and Executive Committee have demonstrated how we continue to move forward by constantly asking ourselves key questions: Are our activities strategic in thinking? Does our thinking support our Envisioned Future, Core Purpose, Mission Statement, Core Values? Do our actions accurately communicate this message to the members of the fellowship and those still suffering who have not yet found us?

Our current Strategic Plan is a tool that provides guidance in fulfilling a mission with maximum efficiency and impact. Our current Plan fully articulates specific Goals and describes the steps and resources, including Staff and financial capacity, required to attain them; the data to support our findings and outcomes; and the process for evaluating outcomes and timely progress.

We have all learned this past year that new roads require review and maintenance to ensure the potholes are filled, possible detours are diverted or in some cases required while new construction is underway. Roadmaps become useless if not regularly updated. Roads change, environments change, construction can cause delays or perhaps an opportunity to take a route less traveled, one never considered or even dreamed possible.

One key to ensuring we have stayed the course has been keeping the work visible. Staff, Board of Trustees, and At-Large members of the Executive Committee have access to our Strategic Plan through a newly implemented software program that promotes daily communication and visibility to progress and outcomes. Visibility is offered to all visitors through placement of framed posters of our Strategic Plan in the Board Room, every conference room, and desktops throughout the office. During the 2019 WSC, Conference members were introduced to and enthusiastically received our new Strategic Plan. Conference members expressed confidence in the Staff, the Board, and Executive Committee that we are moving our fellowship forward in a spirit of unity and trust.

## 2020 Plans for the AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future

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

**Terry F.**, *Chairperson of the Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group*

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

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The Strategic Plan is connected to AI-Anon's Core Purpose and the Mission Statement and is the plan for how these will be carried out. The Board of Trustees strives to focus 80% of its work on forward-thinking and planning for the future. In 2018 the Board revised and fine-tuned the Core Purpose, Mission Statement, Core Values, Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives. Clarification was provided that the Board is responsible for the "what," the Strategic direction of AI-Anon Family Groups, and the Staff is responsible for the "how," the Strategies and action plans to accomplish the Goals and Objectives. With the use of the new technology program, the Board has visibility to all the Strategies which Staff are working on and is able to track progress as it transpires. At the October Board of Trustees meeting, Staff provided information on the resources, scope, outcomes and where applicable, the budget impact for the proposed 2020 Strategies with explanations on the boundaries around Staff capacity and budget. With the Board's approval, the 2020 Strategies being advanced will focus on enhanced trilingual communication, expanding technology through a mobile app, a competitive analysis to identify ways to help the public understand why



Al-Anon is the most effective resource for recovery for those affected by the family disease of alcoholism, and addressing trademark and copyright violations to protect our name. Of course, this is on top of all other work being executed on an on-going basis. With the guidance of the Board and the implementations by the Staff, it is exciting to see glimpses of Al-Anon's envisioned future becoming a reality.

As part of the Board of Trustees' responsibility for the strategic direction of Al-Anon Family Groups, in 2019 the Board began prioritizing the Strategic Plan Objectives for 2021, to allow Staff sufficient time to create Strategies and provide the Board information on the budget implications of the proposed Strategies. A Task Force was formed which provided the Board with information at the October Board, on factors for the Board to consider, in deciding which Strategic Objectives Staff will focus on implementing in 2021.

The presentation initially provided the Board a review of our Strategic Plan, to set the context for the Board's decision. The time frame for future-oriented Strategic thinking was discussed—an Envisioned Future is based on a vision for the next ten plus years; Goals are what can be accomplished in the next three to five years; and Strategies have a one to two year time frame.

Factors relating to shifting demographics, evolving technology, multiple cultures and generations, transformations in how members and the public receive information, and new digital competencies were also discussed. Information on developing trends—e.g., reduction in face-to-face meeting attendance, growth in international meetings and non-English-, Spanish-, and French-speaking members, increase in participation in electronic meetings, increased outside entity competition for members, fewer members volunteering for service and breakdowns in the links of service, continued pressure for online and social media presence, AFG, Inc.'s continuing dependence on sale of literature, with plateauing contributions and many others—were discussed by the Board.

The presentation also included a review of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions. The Board of Trustees was invited to consider an Objective's "Impact," the breadth of its importance, how essential it is. Another factor discussed was the "Consequence" of the Objective, measuring the "depth" of importance, how directly linked is it to our Mission and Core Purpose. The Board also considered the concept of "Immediacy." How important is it to accomplish this now? Finally, the Board was tasked with considering which Objectives offered the greatest return on financial and human resource investments.

The Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) was initially set up as the Strategic Planning Oversight Work Group (SPOWG). Historically, the Work Group was put in place to track the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Since then the Board has evolved with the recent revision of its comprehensive strategic plan, use of software, and the Board's transfer of responsibility and authority to the Executive Committee for reviewing the Staff's progress on the assigned Strategic Plan Strategies.

At the January 2019 Board of Trustees meeting, it was felt that this Work Group should have a new purpose and name, to help the Board focus more on forward-thinking and planning for the future. In April 2019, the Board approved a new name for the Work Group, the Envisioned Future Work Group. The Board also approved the following purpose for the Work Group:

*The Envisioned Future Work Group of the Board of Trustees of Al-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 Al-Anon's Mission.*

In July the Board of Trustees approved the following duties for the Work Group, to help effectuate its purpose, which have been incorporated into the EFWG's initial Guideline:

**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 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 new goal to lead the Board in visionary discussions on future-oriented topics, the initial discussion held with the Board, at its October 2019 meeting, was on the topic of: "What effect does 'culture, language, and non-binary gender identification' have on Al-Anon as it expands from its current demographic base"? In a very emotional, spiritual, and forward-thinking conversation, the Board of Trustees discussed the effects of the changing demographics, not only of Al-Anon members, but of those not yet reached. Conversation was held regarding the challenges and opportunities provided as the WSO reaches out and reaches into a variety of cultures, defined in part by language, national origin, non-binary gender identification, and generation. The Board members recognized that since alcoholism affects all communities, regardless of race, religion, or socio-economic status, the fellowship will continue to be confronted with the need to be able to welcome and accommodate different cultural, language, and spiritual needs and beliefs of these potential members.

Our ideal is set forth in the introduction of the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of our *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*; it states "Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races, and walks of life in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic." We focused our discussions on how to better make this ideal, a reality.

## International Reprints Matrix

### 2019 English CAL Reprint Permissions

#### Australia

<i>Just for Tonight</i> (Bookmark) .....	M-81
<i>Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships</i> .....	B-33
<i>Hope &amp; Understanding for Parents &amp; Grandparents</i> .....	P-94

#### South Africa

<i>Alateen Hope for Children</i> .....	B-3
<i>Just for Today Alateen</i> (Bookmark) .....	M-13
<i>Just for Today</i> (Bookmark) .....	M-12
<i>Detachment</i> .....	S-19
<i>Just for Tonight</i> (Bookmark) .....	M-81
<i>Has Your Life Been Affected...? (Alateen)</i> .....	S-20
<i>Paths to Recovery</i> .....	B-24
<i>Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships</i> .....	B-32

### 2019 Spanish CAL Reprint Permissions

#### Argentina

<i>En todas Nuestras Acciones</i> .....	SB-15
<i>Como ayuda Al-Anon a los familiares y amigos de los alcohólicos</i> .....	SB-32
<i>La intimidad en las relaciones alcoholicas</i> .....	SB-33
<i>Al-Anon es para hombres</i> .....	SP-1
<i>El enfoque de Al-Anon</i> .....	SP-45
<i>Esperanza y comprensión para los padres y los abuelos</i> .....	SP-94
<i>Un día a la vez en Al-Anon</i> .....	SB-6
<i>Un día a la vez en Alateen</i> .....	SB-10
<i>Valor para cambiar</i> .....	SB-16

#### Colombia

<i>Alateen solo por hoy</i> .....	SM-11
<i>Padrinazgo: Trabajando junto por la recuperación</i> .....	SM-78
<i>Paquete para el recién llegado a Al-Anon</i> .....	SK-10
<i>Sola por hoy</i> .....	SM-12
<i>Solo por esta noche</i> .....	SM-81
<i>¿Se molesta por la bebida de otra persona? Al-Anon es para usted</i> .....	SS-17
<i>La intimidad en las relaciones alcoholicas</i> .....	SB-33

#### Mexico

<i>Sólo por esta noche</i> .....	SM-81
<i>La intimidad en las relaciones alcoholicas</i> .....	SB-33



## 2019 Spanish CAL Reprint Permissions - Cont.

### Peru

<i>Manual de Servicio de Al-Anon y Alateen</i> .....	SP-24/27
<i>Abramos el corazon, transformemos nuestras perdidas</i> .....	SB-29
<i>Alateen: Examen del 4to. Paso</i> .....	SP-64
<i>¿Ha sido tu vida afectada por la bebida de otra persona?</i> .....	SS-20
<i>Oracion de la serenidad</i> .....	SM-26
<i>Intercambio amoroso para resolver conflictos</i> .....	SS-71
<i>En busca de la libertad personal—Los Legados en nuestra vida</i> .....	SP-92
<i>Declaración de Al-Anon</i> .....	SM-08

### Spain

<i>Sólo por esta noche</i> .....	SM-81
<i>La intimidad en las relaciones alcoholicas</i> .....	SB-33

## 2019 Translation Permissions

### Finland (Finnish)

<i>Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships</i> .....	B-33
<i>Just for Tonight</i> (bookmark) .....	M-81
<i>Hope &amp; Understanding for Parents &amp; Grandparents</i> .....	P-94
<i>Reaching for Personal Freedom</i> .....	P-92
<i>Paths to Recovery Workbook</i> .....	P-93

### Iceland (Icelandic)

<i>Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover</i> .....	M-78
<i>Al-Anon Spoken Here</i> .....	P-53
<i>The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?</i> .....	P-57
<i>Alateen's 4th Step Inventory</i> .....	P-64
<i>Information for the Newcomer</i> .....	S-4

### Italy (Italian)

<i>Al-Anon Basic Program</i> (wallet card) .....	M-7
<i>Just for Tonight</i> (Bookmark) .....	M-81
<i>Al-Anon Spoken Here</i> .....	P-53
<i>The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?</i> .....	P-57
<i>Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions Illustrated</i> .....	P-60
<i>Alateens Share with Adults in Their Lives</i> .....	P-67
<i>When I Got Busy, I Got Better</i> .....	P-78
<i>Seventh Tradition</i> .....	S-21
<i>Purpose and Suggestions</i> .....	P-13
<i>Al-Anon Sharings from Adult Children</i> .....	P-47

<i>Does She Drink Too Much?</i> .....	P-62
<i>What Happens after Treatment?</i> .....	P-81EF
<i>Troubled by Someone's Drinking?</i> .....	S-17
<i>Alcoholism, the Family Disease</i> .....	P-4
<i>Freedom from Despair</i> .....	P-6
<i>How Can I Help My Children?</i> .....	P-9
<i>So You Love an Alcoholic</i> .....	P-14
<i>What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?</i> .....	P-19
<i>Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?</i> .....	P-33
<i>Hope &amp; Understanding for Parents &amp; Grandparents</i> .....	P-94
<i>Anonymity (Table Card)</i> .....	S-9
<i>Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Adult Children of Alcoholics</i> .....	S-69
<i>Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021</i> .....	P-24/27

### **Slovenia (Slovenian)**

<i>Detachment</i> .....	S-19
<i>One Day at a Time in Al-Anon</i> .....	B-6
<i>How Al-Anon Works</i> .....	B-22
<i>Just for Today</i> .....	M-10
<i>So You Love an Alcoholic</i> .....	P-14
<i>To Parents of Alcoholics</i> .....	P-16
<i>Al-Anon Sharings from Adult Children</i> .....	P-47
<i>Information for the Newcomer</i> .....	S-4
<i>Alcoholism, the Family Disease</i> .....	P-4

### **Turkey (Turkish)**

<i>Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II</i> .....	B16
<i>Freedom from Despair</i> .....	P-6
<i>So You Love an Alcoholic</i> .....	P-14
<i>Three Views of Al-Anon—Alcoholics Speak to the Family</i> .....	P-15
<i>Sponsorship, What It's All About</i> .....	P-31
<i>Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism</i> .....	P-48
<i>The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?</i> .....	P-57
<i>Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions Illustrated</i> .....	P-60
<i>Detachment</i> .....	P-73
<i>Information for the Newcomer</i> .....	S-4
<i>Troubled by Someone's Drinking?</i> .....	S-17

## Board of Trustees Motions

Debbie G., *Chairperson of the Board of Trustees*

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

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The Board, in its legal, financial or oversight capacities, took action:

- to accept the 2018 Annual Report
- to recommend to the World Service Conference the seating of the following non-voting participants at the 2019 World Service Conference
- to approve the 2019 World Service Conference Agenda Topics as presented
- to approve additional text to the Conference Procedure Booklet as presented by the Conference Leadership Team
- to approve the BYLAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC. as amended
- to approve the BY-LAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS (CANADA) INC. as amended
- to eliminate TEAM events effective January 2020
- to approve the World Service Handbook Administrative Staff Language as amended
- to approve the text revisions to Concept Five as amended
- to accept two Regional Trustee nominees, two Trustee at Large nominees, the At-Large member for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and ECRPM
- to leave two three-year terms Trustee At-Large vacant for one year and to solicit résumés for the remainders of the terms through the usual process.
- accept the Quarterly Financial Statement (unaudited) of December 31, 2018 as presented.
- to approve the 2019 Preliminary Budget as presented.
- to approve the current Road Trip! event trial period be extended for an additional three years (2020 through 2022) and that the further recommendations be adapted as outlined by the Work Group
- to approve that the Board of Trustees maintains the Reserve Fund as is because it does not exceed one year's operating expense
- to approve IRS Form 990 as presented
- to approve the Policy Committee recommendation to the Board of Trustees to direct the Office to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the Al-Anon name, pursuant to the "Electronic Meetings" portion of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*.
- to approve the text of Concept Five as amended
- to approve the Update Communication Process to support Area selection of Regional Trustee Candidates Task Force's recommendation to distribute the training material to Delegates and Area Chairs on AFG Connects and include it in the Regional Trustee training packet starting in 2020
- to revise the Trustee Résumé to include a requirement to "travel independently without special accommodations"
- to approve the Revised 2019 Budget as presented
- to rescind motion #7 from July 2018 regarding cost of interpretation
- to approve a special project to provide professional interpretation, when required, to support Spanish- and French-speaking Delegates who attend the World Service Conference. The project will start in 2019 as a three-year trial, with the cost of interpretation to be transferred from the Reserve Fund
- to approve that the Equalized Expense amount for the 2020 World Service Conference be set at \$1,289.00 US (66%) and that the Full Cost for a Delegate to attend the 2020 World Service Conference be set at \$1,953.00 US



- to approve that the Equalized Expense for the 2020 IAGSM to be held in London, England be \$1,685.62 US (90%) per Delegate and the full cost for a Delegate to attend the meeting is \$1,872.92 US
- to recommend to the 2020 WSC a change to the portion of the Regional Trustee plan related to the process for electing Regional Delegates, Out-of-Region Delegates, Regional Committees on Trustees Chairperson, and co-Chairpersons, beginning in 2021
- to change the designation of the Regional Trustee Oversight Committee to Regional Committee on Trustees Selection Work Group
- to approve that Executive Committee members serve a maximum of three one-year terms.
- to approve not including an Open Board of Trustees meeting during World Service Conference, beginning in 2020
- to approve that, beginning in 2020, the Open Policy meeting occur once per Panel during World Service Conference rather than once a year, to occur the year when not visiting Stepping Stones or the World Service Office
- to approve the Staff's Recommended Process and Timeline for Members and Chairpersons of At-Large Committees
- to approve that WSO Staff has the authority to make housekeeping changes to update information in the Handbook and the descriptive text of the Twelve Concepts of Service and that the Board of Trustees is notified of the changes
- to approve the Board of Trustees Handbook Reimbursement Policy and Miscellaneous Travel / Trustee Operational Matters sections as presented
- to separate the current Board Handbook into a "Governance Handbook" and a "Board Handbook" and to approve the recommendations of the Board Handbook Work Group as amended
- to delegate the responsibility of updating AFG Connects Usage Policy at least annually to the WSO Staff, subject to the Executive Committee's approval
- to accept the letter of engagement of Dixon, Hughes, Goodman LLP for audit service for the financial year ending December 31, 2019
- to offer interpretation services to Quebec West for the projected 2020 Trustee Visit and to transfer the cost from the Reserve Fund
- to accept the Investment Philosophy as presented
- to accept the Investment Guidelines as amended
- to approve 2020 International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) theme: "Practicing Universal Principles with 20 | 20 Vision"
- to request the help of a professional to evaluate the Board's activities and use of time in serving
- to adopt and implement the Board Officer Skills and Résumé Form
- to accept the recommended process to address the Board of Trustees concerns
- to approve the following 2020 World Service Conference Theme: Dreaming Big with 20 | 20 Vision

## Executive Committee Motions

Paula B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

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 rescind the August 20-21, 2018 Executive Committee motion to approve translation of the Lois W. Memorial Issue of *The Forum* into Spanish and posting it in all three languages in 2019
- to approve the first sentence on page 303 of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6, B-14) be corrected to replace the word “decision” with “decisions”
- to cease selling and discontinue *Al-Anon Welcomes Gays and Lesbians* (S-70) immediately, to advise the Literature Distribution Centers to do the same, and to prioritize creation of a new service tool reflective in content of the current definition of the “LGBTQ” communities
- to discontinue publication and distribution of the piece of Conference Approved Literature *If Your Parents Drink Too Much* (P-22) effective May 21, 2019 and to advise the Literature Distribution Centers to do the same
- to extend the 2019-2020 PSA campaign to two years instead of one year
- to approve the redesign of the Public Outreach Bookmark (M-76, SM-76, and FM-76)
- to accept revised Guidelines for the Audit Committee, Conference Committee on Trustees, Policy Committee, Board of Trustees Handbook Work Group, Board Presentations Work Group, Conference Leadership Team, International Coordination Committee, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, Envisioned Future Work Group, Literature Committee, Public Outreach Committee, Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, Executive Committee, and Compensation Committee.
- to adjust the scope of the 2020 Strategies, subject to the approval of the preliminary Budget process
- to approve the recommendation to discontinue distribution, remove website links to the Social Media Guideline, and provide a specific explanation of removal to Districts and AISs

# 2020 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Trustees at Large

Cathy T.	John McL.
Lynette K.	Rosie M.
Terry F.	Norm W.
Teri M.	

### Regional Trustees

Cheré F., US Northwest	Gail G., Canada West
Cindy K., US South Central	Joyce B., US Southwest
Thérèse S., Canada East	Jean L., US North Central
Marianne B., US Northeast	

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Debbie G., Chairperson	Terry F., Policy Chairperson
Vali F., Executive Director	Karen W-P., Member at Large
Gail G., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)	Joan S., Member at Large
Cindy K., Treasurer	Claire R., Staff member

### NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Sue C., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson\*\*

## WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Vali F., Executive Director  
 Niketa Williams, Director of Finance\*  
 Marsha W., Director of Programs  
 Claire R., Associate Director—Professionals  
 Kerri K., Associate Director—International  
 Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies  
 Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategies  
 Sue P., Associate Director—Groups  
 Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference  
 Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

\*Non-member, non-voting

\*\*Non-voting

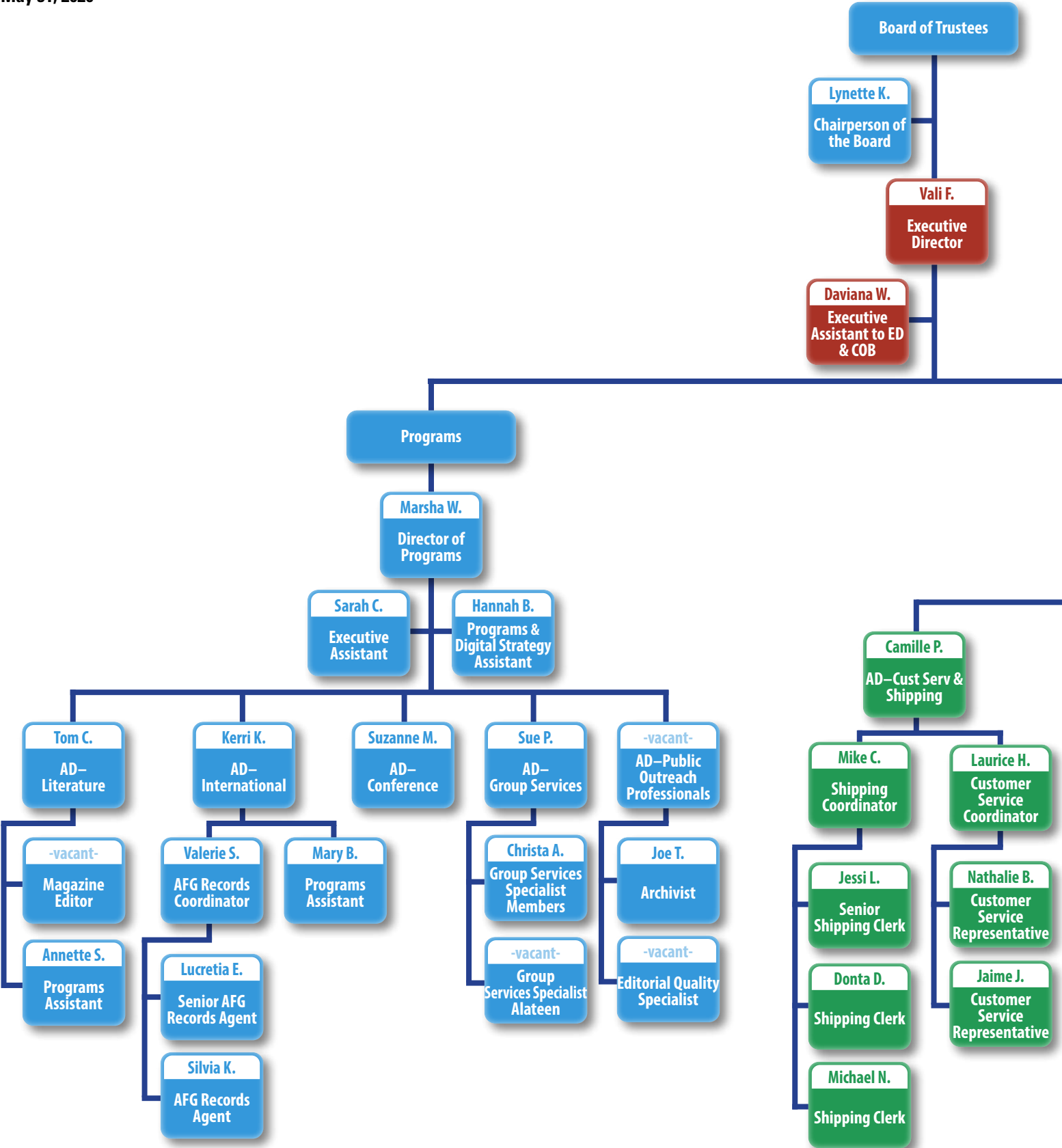
## AREA DELEGATES

Mary Jo Y., Alabama/Northwest Florida	Carol S., Montana
Linette L., Alaska	Margaret R., Nebraska
Sharon F., Alberta/Northwest Territories	Robin P., Nevada
Claudia M., Arizona	Noah P., New Hampshire
DeLynn H., Arkansas	Donna S., New Jersey
Lynn B., British Columbia/Yukon	Clara C., New Mexico/El Paso
Rosanna H., California North	Molly C., New York North
Marcia M., California South	Emily D-C., New York South
Rick G., Colorado	Angela D., Newfoundland/Labrador Area Chair
Marcia M., Connecticut	Anu B., North Carolina/Bermuda
Kim C., Delaware	Sheri S., North Dakota
Cindy J., Florida North	Theresa M., Ohio
Cheryl A., Florida South	Samantha M., Oklahoma
Barbara T., Georgia	Bill H., Ontario North
Patti P., Hawaii	Sue G., Ontario South
Nancy Jo W., Idaho	Katie W., Oregon
Christine W., Illinois North	Jeffrey F., Pennsylvania
Joellyn P., Illinois South	Maria V., Puerto Rico
Miriam B., Indiana	Johanne S., Quebec East
Katy P., Iowa	Claudette D., Quebec West
Phil G., Kansas	Barbara H., Rhode Island
Sherry H., Kentucky	Joy F., Saskatchewan
Tammy M., Louisiana	Bob C., South Carolina
Rae L., Maine	Sue R., South Dakota
Mintie G., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario	Leah L., Tennessee
Wally C., Maritime Provinces	Kay C., Texas East
Idalia R., Maryland/District of Columbia	Kay M., Texas West
Irene T., Massachusetts	Heather M., Utah
Ann M., Michigan	Joanne P., Vermont
Fred H., Minnesota North	Terry W., Virginia
Betty A., Minnesota South	Kathy D., Washington
Jennifer M., Mississippi	Melissa F., West Virginia
Lori H., Missouri	Susan B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
	Sharon B., Wyoming

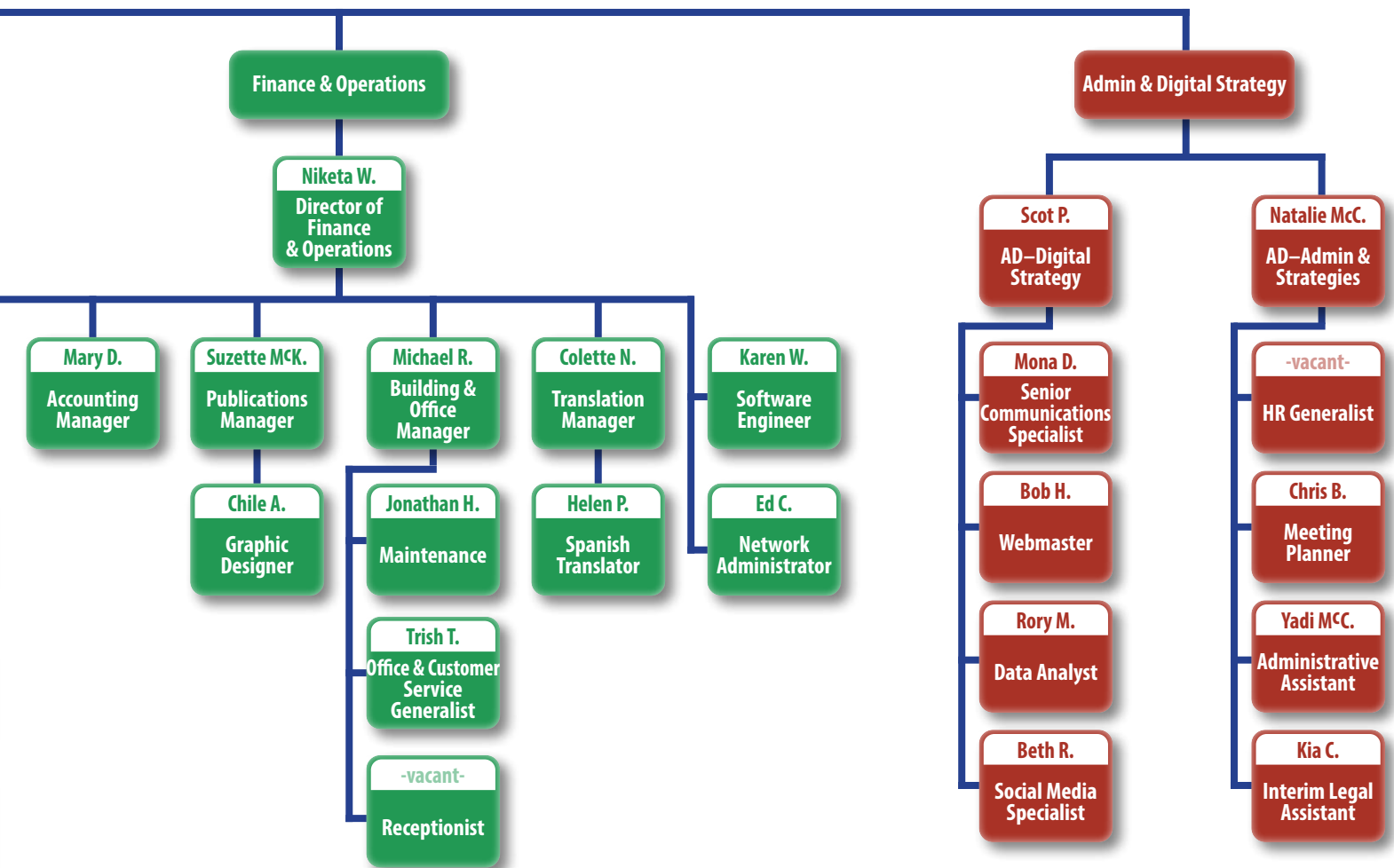


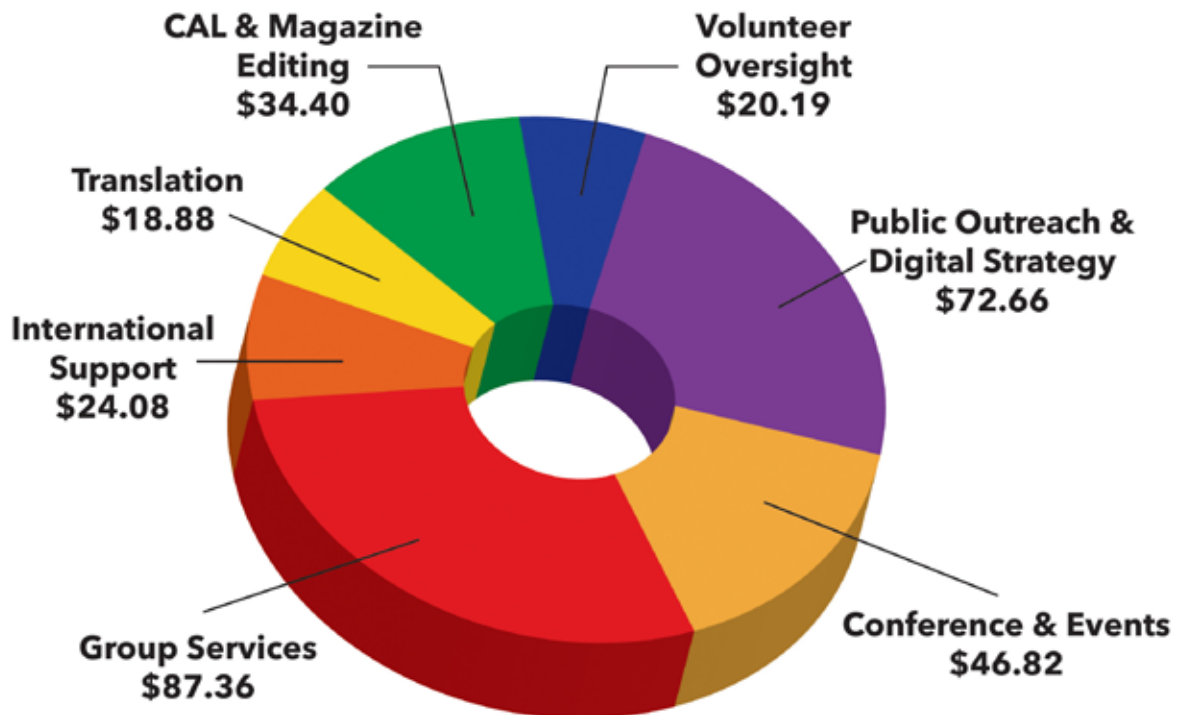
# World Service Office Org Chart

May 31, 2020



Confidential - Property of AI-Anon





### Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2019 - English



These excerpts are from the 2019 World Service Office Annual Report, which is available in English, French, and Spanish on the website.