

OHIO AL-A-NOTES

How has participation in service ended my feelings of isolation?

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Ginny C, Delegate

Getting into the rooms of Al-Anon broke a very deep isolation I had been in for years. No-body had known what was going on in my home. Gradually I felt I could share that—especially with my new-found sponsor. I had been told to try to say “yes” when service opportunities offered themselves. When I first said “yes” to service, it was to be the Alternate Group Representative. I found a ride to Columbus with a District Representative and others active in service. I didn’t even know what exactly the Assembly was. We had a good time talking and laughing all the way down to Columbus and back. This was the beginning of further breaking my isolation and broadening my horizons.

Each time I said “yes” to service, my world grew larger and I made more friends. Now I know Al-Anons all over the world. Participation helped me feel part of something even more than being just a member of a group. Being active in service beyond the group level has helped me feel I am part of something larger and more meaningful. Now that I have a worldwide view of Al-Anon, I see that I can be part of a mission to reach all friends and families affected by alcoholism. Instead of being alone in my isolation, I stand shoulder to shoulder with many others trying to achieve this mission. Al-Anon service gives meaning to my life and keeps me connected to others.

Theresa M, Alternate Delegate

After having that moment of clarity when I realized that I was “insane,” I found my way to Al-Anon via direction from the EAP program at my husband’s work. I had not only isolated myself from friends and family, I had isolated myself from my feelings and, dare I say, rational thoughts. I wasn’t in touch with anything except the “fact” that I was a failure as a person and a wife. After all, I had been completely unable to help him find happiness.

The EAP psychologist directed me to Al-Anon. Though the first one I tried to attend no longer existed at that location, I was desperate enough that I finally found the meeting that has been my home group for the past 28 years. (Since then I have always tried to make sure that updated schedules are available!)

Though I recognized that I needed help, I was worried about being asked to leave since I couldn’t positively identify my spouse as an alcoholic. I am grateful that no one stopped me from putting money in the basket so that I could “belong” from day one. I “secured” (so I thought) my place by becoming one of the “key persons” – arriving early to unlock the literature closet and set out the pamphlets. Volunteering at our LDC by stamping our address in the new pamphlets, showing up at the fall workshop and being at 5-6 meetings a week, led to my being asked to be a part of our next AIS workshop that spring. One thing has led to another in service as I followed the suggestion to never turn down an Al-Anon request for help. Every time I have responded to that request, I have had the opportunity to meet and identify with new people, enlarging my family of choice. I am no longer feel isolated from the rest of humanity and am better able to appreciate the joys and cope with the sorrows of “life on life’s terms.” Though I have a strong need for alone time to refresh myself, I know that love and laughter (and help with my thinking!) is available anytime I take the action of reaching out to ask for help or to offer help to others both inside and outside of my home group. For me service not only enhances my recovery, it is my recovery.

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2017 Dates to remember:

- Aug 12—Fall AWSC**
 North Congregational United Church of Christ
 2040 W Henderson Road
 Columbus 43220-2402
10:30 AM – Workshop – “Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service”.
 Ginny C, Delegate
11:30 AM – Picnic Lunch – Bring your own lunch and drink, and we’ll eat outside (weather permitting).
- October 14, 2017 Alateen Fall Rally**
 Clague Cabin,
 Clague Park,
 1400 Clague Rd,
 Westlake, OH 44145-2742
- October 28-29, 2017 Two-Day Fall Assembly**
 Embassy Suites by Hilton Columbus Dublin
 5100 Upper Metro Place
 Dublin, OH 43017-3384

www.ohioal-anon.org/calendar.htm

Judy A Treasurer

My home group is the Three Legacies AFG Study Group. When I became involved with that group about five years ago, I never really considered what the Three Legacies of Al-Anon meant. I understood the Steps as a way for my personal recovery, the Traditions for the health of our groups, but not so much about the third Legacy, Concept of Service.

Service for me was a gradual process, just as the steps. My service started when someone asked me to chair a meeting. I was afraid that I could not do that. However, someone in the group offered to be my co-chair. That gave me the support I needed. From there I continued to support the group by chairing future meetings, becoming treasurer, and eventually a GR. With each position I took, I found my confidence growing. I began to understand Al-Anon beyond the group level. Eventually someone asked me to go to Assembly with her. I vowed I would never go to another. It was confusing and seemed to resemble my past. I did not want that in my life again.

However, as GR I was required to read my Service Manual and go to Assembly meetings to vote. As a result, Assembly became less confusing, and I realized an important part of my growth. What I learned was that I have a voice, my opinion is important, and I can communicate with more clarity. I was also gaining more confidence.

I like keeping records and eventually became the Assembly Group Records Coordinator and am currently the Assembly Treasurer. At the 2014 Ohio Area Assembly we were electing officers and coordinators. I heard that we were a corporation and no one was standing for the treasurer position. I truly believed my Higher Power wanted me in that position. As I began to fill in the profile sheet I looked good on paper. I have a business background and have handled money for years. What I did not know was that I needed knowledge of the Microsoft Office program. I had none, so I found a software program to teach me Excel and mastered my fears and the program. God gave me courage to do what He knew I was qualified to do.

I have grown beyond my wildest dreams. Today I have more spiritually, gratitude, confidence, friendships, honesty, and love in my life thanks to this very special program. I also learned I can ask for help. Today I am working all Three Legacies of the Program and I have evolved into a better self.

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help—

let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—

Let It Begin With Me.

WSO website — www.al-anon.alateen.org/members

Toll free number **1-888-4ALANON**

Phil H, Secretary

I saw the suggested topic "Participation / Isolation" and wondered "What could I share about?" As it turned out, I can count on my Higher Power to give me what I need, rather than what I want. About a week after I started thinking about this, a topic at one of my regular meetings was "Intimacy!" As members shared, I was reminded that intimacy also means honest participation, rather than deceitful isolation. I isolate because I think I know better than my HP as to what is "right for me", and that starts me back down the "Stinkin Thinkin Highway". I need extra meetings, more conversations with my Sponsor and more reading of our Conference Approved Literature. On top of that, I have phone lists from my meetings, and I can talk with other members, to gain their experience, strength and hope. Don't misunderstand, though. There are times when I NEED to isolate, that "alone time", so I can meditate and not have my thought process interrupted. Practicing my program has helped me learn that I can be alone – but I don't have to be lonely. Being "intimate" with myself has taught me honesty in dealing with me, and to my surprise, I'm not really such a "bad person" as I thought I was after all. But I still need to be able to share my experience, strength and hope – and that's why participating in my meetings is also important. For me, it's not just "suit up & show up" – it's that plus "share around". Who knows – there just might be that ONE person who needs to hear what I'm sharing at that meeting. I know I've certainly been that "one person" many times as well.



The 2018 International Convention will have its own web site beginning September 2017

Al-Anon International Conventions are a great way to celebrate recovery, meet old friends, make new ones, and perform public outreach! Al-Anon's International Convention is held every five years; our next one will be in Baltimore, Maryland July 6-8, 2018. Al-Anon also participates in A.A.'s International Conventions.

Now is the best time to start planning your budget to attend. A few important things to consider:

1. Estimate your travel expense
2. Think about how many others you may want to room with
3. Plan on registering early for the lowest registration price
4. Total these items for a preliminary budget
5. Divide this number by weeks remaining to determine how much to save each week

Sharings from Districts

District 7 (In rhyme)

A couple meetings in our area are blessed to have Dee,
 Who made blankets and sold tickets for a one-dollar fee.
 One hundred percent of the money is going to the teens,
 To help with KOMIAC expenses and not to buy jeans.
 The blanket comes with pillows and a sack to carry it in.
 So, the lucky person will be delighted when they win.
 I heard two awesome Alateen leads this weekend.
 One at our Al-Anon Convention who brought us to tears,
 And another at our local picnic who said goodbye to fears.
 We love our Alateen members who will soon be in Al-Anon
 And will continue to keep the doors open when many of
 us are gone.

With Love, Merri G, DR 7

Notes from District 25 and 51

So far July has been a very special month in the Akron Canton area. On July 7th, we had a T.E.A.M. event called SOAR = Spirituality of Action in Recovery. Our Delegate Ginny was the chair for this event, and along with other members of Ohio Al-Anon worked with members of our World Service Office to present a day with mini leads, WSO presentations, workshops and a song! The day was a great one for recovery.

The day did not end as the Ohio area convention started late afternoon of the 7th.

The weekend was full of panels, workshops and leads for Al-Anon, Alateen and AA. Many of the participants took the opportunity to tour Dr. Bob's house and the Gatehouse at Stan Hewitt as part of their weekend.

Our ways and means room was filled with baskets that were donated from Area groups Many thanks to everyone that helped and worked this weekend and were a part of making it a great success!!

Jo S

District 6, 10 and 30 News

The Districts of Toledo will once again be hosting their annual Summer Al-Anon/Alateen Picnic on Saturday, August 26th, 2017 from 11:00AM to 4:00PM at Sidecut Park in Maumee, Ohio. Al-Anon members should bring a dish to share, with hamburgers, hot dogs, coffee and cupcakes being provided by the Districts.

There are walking trails along the Maumee River and around the lagoon. And a playground is within walking distance of the Pavilion for all the little ones in attendance! In addition,

We'll have lots of games for the teens and adults, such as Badminton, Cornhole, and Euchre. We'll be giving special attention to the Alateens, to commemorate their 60th Anniversary! We're all looking forward to a fun day of games, food and fellowship!

Betty H, DR 30

Miami Valley AIS - Districts of Miami Valley 23, 24, 27, 37, 41 and 57

MVAIS participated in the Levine Family Foundation Health Fair in April. While attendance was down a bit, there was a lot of interest in the Al-Anon display. We had several volunteers who helped that day, handing out literature & meeting schedules, and talking with people.

MVAIS also participated in the Clark State Community College Health Fair in Springfield this spring. Although a smaller event, it was still very well attended and we were located near the treatment center tables, so there was a lot of interest there too. We had several people from the various treatment centers stop by and pick up literature, and we offered to have speakers come and talk about Al-Anon with them.

Our Spring Round-Up was a lot of fun. District 24 hosted the event and everyone heard two excellent leads, especially the Alateen lead!

Coming up, in September, will be the Sinclair Collge Staff and Faculty Health Fair. While a smaller event at the same location as the Levine Family Foundation Health Fair, it's another opportunity to offer our message of Hope to the community - "Attraction, not promotion".

Public Outreach

Cindy and I are looking forward to **Addiction Studies in August 2-4 2017 in Columbus.**

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2018

Al-Anon's public outreach magazine. Please reach out to those who are suffering by placing a magazine anywhere in your community that is accessible to the public. Thank you for putting the Twelfth Step into action

Does your group have a copy of **THE BEST OF PUBLIC OUTREACH?** If not, a copy can be downloaded from the Members' website www.al-anon.alateen.org/members. The password is the name of your home group followed by afg.

Jane E Public Outreach

Elections and Appointed Positions available for Panel 58: January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020

Elections will be held at Fall Assembly 2017 – only GR’s vote. The following are just summaries of positions and requirements. For complete information on the following, reference our Ohio Handbook and By-Laws available at www.ohioal-anon.org/documents.htm

Members of the AWSC (Area World Service Committee) are: Assembly Coordinators, Liaison Members, Convention Chairman, Past Delegates, DRs, Area Officers, and Chairman of the Special Standing Committees, and have a vote at AWSC meetings.

Officers

For Area World Service Delegate, Alternate Area World Service Delegate, and Area Chairman:

Any District Representative, Assembly Coordinator active in their local district, or any Area Officer, is eligible for any Area Office, except that any District Representative or Assembly Coordinator who misses any two (2) consecutive Assembly and/or AWSC meeting in the three (3) year period between elections, without providing an alternate, is ineligible to run for Area Office at next election

- Delegate
- Alternate Delegate
- Chairman

Any Group Representative with three years active experience and three years attendance at Assembly meetings is eligible for the office of Area Secretary or Area Treasurer.

- Secretary
- Treasurer

Coordinators

Can be *any active member*, not necessarily a Group Representative or District Representative, elected at the Election meeting, to unify special services in the following areas:

- Alateen
- Archives
- Public Outreach
- Group Records
- Forum
- Literature

Special Standing Committees (not elected)

Area Officers will seek *volunteers or appoint* all Chairman and Committee members for the following:

- Budget
- Handbook
- Review
- Two-Day Fall/OAC Advisor
- Compliance Liaison
- Webmaster
- Registration

✦ **So look into your hearts, discuss with your group and your sponsor and your service sponsor, and consider what position your H.P. is asking you to do!** ✦

S.O.A.R. (TEAM)

Ohio’s first TEAM event, Spirituality Of Action in Recovery (S.O.A.R.), was very successful. Those that attended were excited by the various workshops and presentations. Especially noted was the newfound awareness that those people that work at W.S.O. and are Trustees are Al-Anons just like us with similar histories and struggles. The workshops done in conjunction with Ohio Al-Anons were Spirituality, Action, and Recovery. We learned how underlying the procedures we follow are many spiritual principles. In our Action workshop, we moved about the room and wrote out actions we can take to become more active in our programs and in our communities. In the Recovery workshop, the presenters sang a song “Get in the Car” about how getting active in service outside one’s group makes us happier and healthier. The presentation on Abundance pointed out how W.S.O. provides a wide variety of services (Program Services: Groups, International, Conference, Public Outreach-Media and Public Outreach-Professionals, Literature, Administration, and Business Services). Our contributions include support at the grass roots level including financial support. We examined “what keeps me from thinking abundantly?” and how to tackle our fears using the program.

Sharing on sponsorship

From Sandra F., Past Delegate

A Service Sponsor?

Do I really need a **SERVICE SPONSOR**? Actually, Yes, I do. When I started my beyond the group level journey, there was no one in my home group who had ever been a Group Representative and my recovery sponsor had never been a GR either. Sooooo, no one could tell me exactly what I was supposed to do. Someone said they thought you have to go to some kind of business meetings and share what you learn. About two months after becoming the GR for my home group the District Representative came to visit our meeting and after the meeting we chatted for a while. He suggested I find the four books (we now call them the **Al-Anon- Alateen Service Manual**) and read them. That night, I asked him if he would help me figure out how to be a GR. That is the night I got my first Service Sponsor. I could call him any time and ask questions. We even traveled together to Area meetings. How much wisdom he had! When he retired as the DR, I was elected to the position. He continued to be my Service Sponsor until I moved back to Ohio.

In Ohio, I did not have a Service Sponsor again until I became the DR for my District and started going to Area World Service Meetings. I met a lady from Toledo and we became instant friends. She helped me with Area stuff and being a DR in the Ohio Area. I am grateful she was there to help me with the transition to a new Area. She was my Service Sponsor until I was elected to an Area Position she had never held. She told me I need to have a Service Sponsor who had held the Area position before for assistance and guidance.

This is when it occurred to me in service I need the experience, strength, wisdom, and assistance from someone who has been in service longer than I have been in service with firsthand knowledge of my current position.

I still have a Service Sponsor who has had the position I currently have. She is someone who is empathetic, knowledgeable about the Area, and always seems to know how to help me.

Announcement: We learned at S.O.A. R., the T.E.A.M. event on July 7th, the members' website for AFG will be up-dated soon.



In 1957, the World Service Office (WSO) registered the first Alateen group and within a year there were 45 groups registered. Alateen adopted the Twelve Steps and adapted the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon to fit the needs of teenaged children of alcoholics. Today there are almost 900 Alateen groups in the World Service Conference (WSC) structure which includes US, Puerto Rico, Bermuda and Canada. There are also approximately 700 Alateen groups in other countries.

How will you, your group, your District, and/or your Area celebrate Alateen's 60th Anniversary? We invite Alateen members, Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), and Al-Anon members in general to celebrate this milestone by supporting Alateen. Contact your District Representative, your Area Alateen Coordinator or other Area trusted servant to start the conversation!



The WSO has further expanded its Social Media outreach by creating an Alateen_WSO Instagram account. Please help us with our Public Outreach efforts by following and liking Alateen_WSO posts on Instagram. You can help spread the word of the Al-Anon/Alateen message of hope to teenagers affected by someone else's drinking who may not have heard about the support that Alateen offers.



Al-Anon is now on Instagram in Spanish & French

Al-Anon is now on Instagram in Spanish and French. Members are invited to follow and 'like' our posts. Please remind members to protect their anonymity on social media by not making comments or using screen names that would reveal their Al-Anon membership, i.e. @alanonbob.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Send all **GROUP DONATIONS** to:
 AFG OF OHIO
 PO Box 524
 Columbiana, OH 44408-0524

Every Registered group in Ohio will receive a free copy of the Al-A-Notes at their current mailing address. Paid subscriptions are for individuals or for extra group copies. If you are not receiving a copy three times a year, check with Group Records or the Alternate Delegate.

Please include your **Group's ID number**, including the *District number*, on the check and whether a "plea donation" or "group donation"



We are on the Web
www.ohioal-anon.org

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