



# Al-Anon Family Groups

## Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

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## STRATEGIC PLAN



### CORE PURPOSE

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

### MISSION STATEMENT

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



### CORE VALUES

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



### 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.



### April 2019 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear fellow Al-Anon members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board letter is to share with you some of the highlights from our 2019 World Service Conference (WSC), along with updates from the Board of Trustees' Quarterly Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Board. You will also find updates from our outgoing and incoming Policy Chairpersons and a finance update from our outgoing and incoming Treasurers. Along with these, we will also be posting updates from our outgoing and incoming Conference Leadership Team (CLT). I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to all who have shown exceptional dedication and provided phenomenal service to our Al-Anon Family Groups throughout this past year.

**WSC Trilingual Interpretation & Voting** The 59th World Service Conference was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 13–17, 2019, and it certainly lived up to its theme: “Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.” For the first time ever, this Conference was a truly trilingual Conference, with French and Spanish interpretation being provided, allowing non-English-speaking Delegates to attend and thus honoring our spiritual principles of inclusivity and participation. This is the first year of a three-year trial that was approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2018. Following in this line, we were provided with a presentation of the two new PSAs by Scott P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy, World Service Office (WSO). Each PSA was shown in English, French, and Spanish. The public service announcements have been posted on AFG Connects under WSC Members.

This year at the WSC, we also experimented with a new method of voting that uses browser-based software on our electronic devices. After several attempts and with the technical aide of Staff members, we became quite efficient at it (sort of). Or, at least we learned we would need to arrange for better internet connectivity next year.

**Electronic Meetings** The Electronic Meeting Work Group put forth a presentation outlining the tasks that they had completed. These included hosting a conference call with Current Mailing Addresses of registered electronic groups, updating the Electronic Meeting Registration Form and accompanying instructions to allow electronic meetings to choose from multiple platforms, circulating a survey of electronic meeting members regarding a name for the meetings, and creating an AFG Connects Electronic Meetings Community. Other topics included anonymity in electronic meetings, different types of Facebook groups, Facebook instant messaging, and social media platforms other than Facebook.

Following discussions during the April Policy Committee meeting, the Policy Committee made a unanimous recommendation to the Board of Trustees to direct the WSO to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the Al-Anon name, pursuant to the electronic meeting policy in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). The Board of Trustees, in their legal authority, unanimously approved the recommendation. The Board then informed the WSC members that approval was given to draft a letter that would be sent to Facebook/social media groups that are hosting Al-Anon meetings. The letter would invite these groups to register their meetings with the World Service Office so they could continue using the Al-Anon name or logo. Our Policy Digest suggests that the WSO is the public outreach vehicle for Al-Anon Family Groups; we do not support other entities creating public outreach social media spaces because that is the role of the WSC Structure or GSO Structures’ links of service, thus excluding groups and individual members.

**Hybrid Conference Mega Issue** The Board of Trustees felt an idea-generating discussion about a Hybrid Conference would be both beneficial and insightful to all. This year’s Mega Issue aligns with Al-Anon’s Strategic Plan to explore delivering barrier-free access to information for members. One aspect of the Board’s envisioned future for Al-Anon is to increase access to knowledge, resources, and the program. This Mega Issue idea-generating conversation focused on exploring an opportunity. Discussion regarding a Hybrid Conference (which is defined as a “live” in-person event at a physical location with a “virtual” online component) was held within three, one-hour sessions. Members were reminded to keep in mind Al-Anon’s spiritual principles as expressed in Al-Anon’s three Legacies and to be assured that no decisions regarding holding a Hybrid Conference would be made based solely on the Mega Issue discussions.

The format for the first session began with seeking additional insights from Conference members in response to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions in an initial brainstorming session. From these insights, the task force refined and revealed several key components related to a Hybrid Conference.

The second session included prioritization of potential solutions. Using an abundance of creative minds, we expanded our vision; we came up with ideas of how a Hybrid Conference might look and how barriers could be overcome for existing members who struggle with overwhelming time commitments and the next generation of members, some of whom are working and may have less available vacation time to commit to attend Conference.

The final session focused on identification of the benefits and potential risks of the solutions. We evaluated the ideas that were generated. It is now up to the Board to determine which next steps—if any—will be taken. The task force and the entire Board appreciated the enthusiastic participation by so many in this Mega Issue discussion of a Hybrid Conference.

**TEAM Events** Since this January, six Areas’ requests to host Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) events have been accepted. The Areas hosting are Nevada, whose event was held in February; the Maritime Provinces; Quebec East; New York; Pennsylvania; and South Carolina. We feel confident that these events will be successful and beneficial to all involved. However, after much discussion with Staff and Trustees and on the recommendation of the task force charged with reviewing TEAM, and keeping in mind the best use of our resources to carry out our Strategic Plan, it was decided that after the end of 2019, TEAM will no longer be available. The Board of Trustees will be announcing at next year’s Conference what a new format for connecting with our members may be. Please stay tuned!

**Bylaws Revisions** Revisions to the wording of the US Bylaws and the Canadian By-Laws were presented. The revisions represent 17 months of work and five reviews with the Board. These included many conversations that will undoubtedly be revisited again in the future, as they have been in the past, by the Board of Trustees in their legal role.

The majority of the changes to the Bylaws fell into four categories:

- **Updates to reflect current standards and laws.** After the Board completed their review in October, our attorney was asked to evaluate the Bylaws to ensure they met current standards and adhered to laws governing AFG, Inc., and to review the Board's proposed changes to ensure they aligned with current laws. Many of the tracked changes you see in your document reflect the renaming of the Bylaws from a hyphenated By-Law to the current unhyphenated standard. Canadian standards still require use of the hyphenated spelling of "By-Laws."
- **Updates to simplify language.** Perhaps unexpectedly, the attorney proposed several simplifications. The first example occurs under Article 1 – Names, where several sentences were eliminated.
- **Clarification of language.** The task force sought to remove language that might be confusing when considered in the context of our Legacies. The first example occurs in Article 1 – Names, paragraph 1, where the word "organized" was replaced with "formed."
- **Clarification of practice.** The task force sought to clarify descriptions to reflect current practices. An example of this clarification occurs in the definition of "ex-officio" under Article VII – Duties of Officers.

In addition to these changes, there are a few that are wholly new. We also discovered through research that a few were updates to previous practices. A copy of the full revisions will be posted in our *2019 World Service Conference Summary*.

**Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect** We were provided with a lively presentation on "Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect." This event is an opportunity for Al-Anon members to meet and interact with the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee members. This year's Road Trip! event will be held in Seattle, Washington on October 19 following Board week. Registration will open in May and will be posted on AFG Connects and *In the Loop*. All Delegates at Conference were provided with an information sheet, a new template for a Request for Meeting Proposal, and an invitation to complete if Areas are interested in hosting this event in 2020. Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect 2020 will be held October 31, with the site to be determined. The deadline to submit a bid to host will be September 30, 2019.

**WSO Volunteers Traditional Approval** Five Regions began the process of nominating Regional Trustees by forming their respective Regional Committees on Trustees: Canada Central, US Southeast, US South Central, US Southwest, and US Northwest. The deadline for résumés to be submitted to the WSO for Regional Trustees is August 15.

The Conference gave traditional approval for and in its legal capacity elected, during the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, the following trusted servants:

**Regional Trustees:**

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Marianne B., US Northeast	First three-year term
Jean L., US North Central	First three-year term

**Trustees at Large:**

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Lynette K.	Two years of a first three-year term
Rosie M.	Second three-year term

**Board Officers for 2019–2020:**

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Gail G.	Chairperson of the Board
Rosie M.	Vice Chairperson of the Board
Cindy K.	Treasurer

**Executive Committee:**

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Debbie G.	First one-year term
Joan S.	First one-year term
Karen W-P.	First one-year term

**Chairperson of the Executive Committee:**

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Debbie G.

**Executive Committee for Real Property Management:**

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Katherine R.  
Dennis G.

Remaining two years of term  
Three-year term

**Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson:**

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Sue C.

**International Conventions** The 2020 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention with Al-Anon participation will be held in Detroit, Michigan on the weekend of July 4 at Ford Field Stadium. The theme for this convention, which will be celebrating A.A.'s 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is "Love and Tolerance is our Code." Registration opens September 9, 2019 at \$115.00 US and after April 2020 at \$140.00 US. The Al-Anon meetings will be held in the Marriott Hotel and the Al-Anon program will be similar to Al-Anon's International Conventions, which are held separately.

2023 will see our Seventh Al-Anon International Convention being hosted in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 29–July 1, at the Albuquerque Convention Center. More information will become available as this international celebration of Al-Anon recovery draws nearer.

**WSC Summary** For a detailed report of the 2019 World Service Conference, please look for the free online *Conference Summary*, which is scheduled for posting July 15. A printed version will be made available for purchase in mid-August.

**Trustee Delegate Questions** Two weeks following the posting of this letter, the Trustees will begin making contact with their assigned Delegates to serve as a resource for clarification or for questions about this letter. If you would prefer not to have the Trustee phone you, please let him/her know when the initial contact is made.

To aid the Board in further visionary planning, we are asking current Delegates to share their responses to the following questions when their Trustees contact them in the upcoming weeks:

1. **After attending this first trilingual World Service Conference, what is your reaction?**
2. **If your Area hosted a TEAM event in the past, what was the greatest benefit visible to your Area?**

The 59<sup>th</sup> World Service Conference did create lots of attraction. Members very enthusiastically and respectfully engaged in discussions regarding Al-Anon's possibilities for the future. Our spiritual principles permeated Conference members' actions of presenting information and knowledge; our discussions were heartfelt. I am reminded of the quote from the 1976 World Service Conference by Al-Anon's first employee, Henrietta S.:

"I was very much impressed with what Kay of B.C. said earlier [at the Conference], 'that every single Al-Anon gives sense and meaning to this worldwide fellowship for the simple reason that each is a channel through which the message is carried.'"

*Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), page 189

My dream would be that as we go forth from this Conference, we all carry the light of attraction and we are ever reminded that action is attraction.

In gratitude,



Gail G.  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.