

Delegate's Report Spring 2015

This year's World Service Conference theme was Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision. Each day started at sunrise. Last year's anxiety was replaced this year with eagerness. I felt I had a running start over my other Panel 55 comrades. A display at the back of the room showed all the countries that we have groups in and who use our literature. The first day of the conference was special because this was the first time we were allowed to use electronic devices for note taking. I used my mini iPad which travelled well and did not take up much space nor much battery. I also used my old fashioned notes on my papers and small notebook as needed.

A Thought Force identified a list of the spiritual principles or core values they felt were enhanced by being a registered group: Unity, Participation, Accountability and Responsibility.

Throughout 2014 and early 2015, each edition of the *Area Highlights* newsletter on the Members' Web site was visited by an average of 159 members. Have you read the Area Highlights sometime this year? So what would make the *Area Highlights* newsletter more useful to the members in our Area?

Trustees and executive staff presented a funny skit to introduce us to dreaming as a way of expanding our vision. This is the "Meeting after the Meeting" skit. Some of the dreams voiced by delegates were: to hold an Area event, to increase participation at Assembly, to increase the visibility of Al-Anon Family Groups, to ensure financial support of Al-Anon Family Groups, to strengthen Alateen groups, and to strengthen Al-Anon Family Groups.

One of the chosen agenda items was the following: Is the current model of Alateen the best model for the future of both Al-Anon and Alateen? The importance of Alateen to our Al-Anon programs. In some Areas, what is stopping our kids from coming to Alateen? The discussion was honest and open. Some points were that we're not using our resources efficiently by putting so much into Alateen, what does "model" mean, a younger group of "teens" seen everywhere, but the reality is 11 year olds don't mix with 18 year olds. There seems to be less kids in the current generation. We need to market to Al-Anon members. Alateens don't drive, someone has to get them there. That the Alateen Chat meeting is "not safe" is a misunderstanding of the chat room. Training focuses on the problems, not on how to be a good Alateen sponsor. Some positive ideas were having Alateen in the recovery centers or other institutions, have a traveling Alateen meeting, do a meeting in the schools, meeting on wheels, someone took an Alateen member to KOMIAC and the enthusiasm spread to grow the group, and having Pizza and cookies once a month. After that, during a break I made it to the beach and back to clear my head.

There are 2300 registered Al-Anon and Alateen members for the July 2-5 2015 International AA Convention in Atlanta. The next International Al-Anon/Alateen Convention is in Baltimore July 5-8, 2018. That is 167 weeks away. So plan and budget now, estimate travel expenses and plan on the cost of days off from work. Think about how many you want to share a room with? Fortunately, hotel prices are lower than Vancouver. Several days before and after are reserved at the convention price.

I'd like to share with you a little information about the first "Meet the Board" Event which was held in July of 2014. The agenda was planned from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Most attendees pre-registered, but 20 registered on-site. The program began with a welcome message from the Chair of the Board, followed by three short talks by Trustees. Trustees shared about international visits, TEAM events, and visiting Area Assemblies. Round-table discussions on public outreach, challenges to the fellowship, and use of technology were held before lunch. Two personal talks by a Trustee and Executive Committee member followed after lunch. Lunch was an enjoyable time of members mixing and sharing experience, strength and hope. The Gallery Walk at the end of the day included ten different stations. The purpose was to rotate among tables to learn about the work of the Board of Trustees. Members had time to ask questions.

As your Delegate I would like to submit an application for the Meet the Board Event in October 2016. The trustees draw an Area out of a hat full of submissions next fall. This is an opportunity for Trustees and the Executive Committee to interact with members, as well as for members to interact with Trustees and the Executive Committee. The Area mainly needs to publicize the event, provide an Area contact person, and provide transportation between the hotel and airport if there is no free shuttle.

Been frustrated with e-communities? This year a new replacement is coming: AFGCONNECTS.

Contributions in 2014 to AI-Anon Family Groups, Inc., 61.21% of groups. The average each group gave was \$119. In Ohio, 52.6% of groups contributed. The average each group gave in Ohio was \$83. The Budget for 2015 has a \$52,000 shortfall. The increase is due in part to filling some positions that are needed and a reluctance to keep dipping into the reserve. Out of 15,456 groups, 9461 contributed. If each group that contributed in 2014 gave \$25.00 more it would be enough to make up the shortfall. If you are grateful for what AI-Anon has done for you, think abundantly and give more.

There are some job openings and new positions at AI-Anon Family Groups, Inc.: an Associate Director of Member Services-Groups, an Employee Relations and Organizational Development Manager, an Event/Project Manager, an App Developer, and a Graphic Illustrator. If anyone knows of someone with these talents, ask me for a job description and application instructions. Many of the positions do not require membership in AI-Anon.

They went over the selection process and timeline for Regional Trustees emphasizing the personal characteristics that would make a good leader in AI-Anon. They are looking for experienced, active AI-Anon members with basic computer experience and good communication skills who are committed to learning, fostering leadership in others, and being forward-thinking for the good of AI-Anon as a whole to serve as Board members. Area Chairs may have received resumes from AI-Anon members in their Area volunteering to place their names as candidates for selection as Regional Trustee. The resumes must be received at the WSO by the August 15, 2015 deadline. This means that the Area candidates must have their nominations in to the Ohio Area AWSC Meeting on August 15 to get approved and submitted that day. The US North Central Region needs to select a Regional Trustee this year. We consist of Minnesota North and South, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois North and South, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

TEAM Event Planning: The TEAM Event Request Form **must** be submitted at least six months prior to the event. The form can be submitted any time **before** six months, the earlier the better. A few weeks after the form is received, the proposed date, or the alternate date, will be confirmed. Six months prior to the TEAM Event, the planning between the Host Committee and the WSO begins. The Host Committee Suggested Planning Worksheet guides the Host Committee Chair in communicating about specific details with the WSO Task Force staff member. Additional resources on the Members' Web site include frequently asked questions, sample agendas, and sample TEAM names.

The Report on Real Property Ownership concluded that ownership of property has been financially feasible and has saved us money. Due to the management of the property being the business of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, the property management is kept separate from the primary spiritual aim of AI-Anon Family Groups. The Board of Trustees found no negative impact of property ownership.

Every three years a member's survey is conducted. This year the average number of years of continuous membership in the sample was thirteen. The average age of a respondent was 59.8 years old. Of professionals, 78% were referred by a counselor or therapist.

There were several breakout sessions for the Big Question: "How do we envision responsible

service leadership in Al-Anon - a vision that inspires today's members to be tomorrow's leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles?" I attended the one on "Relying on the ideas in concept Nine, especially the "Essay on Leadership" as a guide, what can Areas do to inspire members to grow and develop as future leaders?"

On the third day, a great skit was performed by the task force on creating ways to raise awareness of the tools available for Alateen. For example, how does the Alateen Chat work? The Alateen registers then shows up at the meeting time. They type in their sharing. The Sponsor posts it right away.

We voted on a number of issues. The consensus was to have the policy committee to come up with language regarding memorial contributions from family members. I am very excited to announce that the 2015 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a piece of CAL based on member sharing's published in past issues of the Forum. A floor motion passed to give permission for the conversion of Lois' Story (AV-1) and Lois and the Pioneers (AV-24) to DVD copy protected. We approved the wording changes to the descriptive text in the Service Manual on Concept Eight and began to work on Concept Eleven. The motion passed to adopt the definition of Universal Understanding of Family Recovery.

Member Services presented information collected from blogging on the topic "How can we keep new members coming back?" "Offer a Newcomer Packet with a meeting list and/or other Conference Approved Literature." "Spend time during the meeting acknowledging and welcoming the new member." "Initiate one-on-one contact before or after the meeting." "Our district has two meetings specifically to welcome newcomers. In those meetings seasoned Al-Anon Members follow the guideline for *Beginners' Meetings* (G-2)."

The second chosen agenda item led to a very interesting discussion which ties in with the recent discussion on the district representative e-communities: 1) How can we clarify our primary purpose while welcoming members who need our program who may have a drug addicted friend or family member? 2) Is Al-Anon becoming friends and families of addicts? Is the focus more on addiction than alcoholism? Are we diverted from Tradition Three and Tradition Five? How can we support group and maintain Al-Anon's primary aim? Is the Al-Anon program being diluted?

Several good points were brought up in the discussion. First, in the section on Tradition 5 in Paths to Recovery on p. 179. In that sharing a woman called the Intergroup Office and was told that because she was concerned about a boss who used drugs she was not to come to Al-Anon. As it turned out her grandparents were alcoholics. In the Service Manual on p. 25 it states: "When some alcoholics try to do without alcohol, the withdrawal symptoms are so overwhelming that they go back to drinking because drinking seems to be the only way to get rid of the agony. This is addiction." The term "addiction" is used throughout our literature. Finally on p. 124 of the Service Manual the following is stated: "A symptom of alcoholism in the home may be the abuse of drugs by family members. Occasional discussion of this topic is acceptable at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting as it may be one of the results of living with alcoholism.

As I partially participated at the WSC 2014 in the following thought force I was up on stage with them. The topic was the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions. They identified barriers and strategies for overcoming those barriers.

The Task Force to Identify, Gather and Present Practices Demonstrate a Healthy, Thriving Group developed a fabulous handout which is available on the side table or by contacting me.

Om 2014, 347,000 copies of Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism were distributed by members in comparison to 13,000 copies in 2001.

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting met in 2014. Thirteen structures were

represented, not all 26. Lack of attendance was due to finances, language, travel, and lack of importance. As a result they proposed to suspend the equalized expense. Nine topics were covered with open discussion following. The highlights were discussions of finances, inventory, using principles in concepts 6, 10, 11, and incorporation.

On Friday, we flew almost an entire plane full of Delegates, Trustees and WSO staff to New York City. The next day, we were taken to the home of Bill and Lois Wilson about an hour north of New York City. I was so excited to be there. We had a lovely welcome by local Al-Anon group members including home baked cookies. The day was lovely and sunny. Lois' gardens were beginning to bloom. I saw the coffee pot that served many. We weren't allowed to take pictures in many locations inside but the kitchen was okay. Lois' study was fascinating with a multitude of mementos and photos. I was able to sit at Bill's desk where he wrote the Twelve and Twelve.

Your Trusted Servant,

Ginny C., Delegate, Panel 55