

Thought Force Topic: Area Events – Alateen Conference

Background Information on the Thought Force – This thought force is convened to gather information from our current AWSC panel on our collective knowledge about Alateen Conference. Please answer these questions individually and also feel free to discuss the topic at your table. Make sure that you do not try to reach a consensus answer – a wide variety of perspectives is being sought.

Historical Info: This is a multi-day event, with overnight accommodations as part of the event. Since the Area split North and South Florida Areas alternate hosting this event. We do not have much information in our Archives about previous events. You do have some information based on our most recent Events. If you participated in any of these Conferences, please make notes on the back and give your thoughts – good and bad.

Financial Impact: The Alateen Conference has been self-supporting the last two times we have had it (2014 and 2012), each time returning money to the Area. We have been highly dependent on the participation of South Florida Area Alateens.

Charge: Discuss your experiences with, and thoughts about, our Area Alateen Conference. As an event. Do not try to reach a consensus answer to any question – but listen to each other, and allow yourself to communicate thoughts, experiences, ideas, suggestions, concerns. If you would like to be involved in future Task Forces regarding this Event, be sure to include your name and email somewhere on this paper.

[These are the raw data results from the Thought Force on the Alateen Conference. Clearly we need to gather more information for our members so that they can make more informed decisions about hosting, supporting and continuing this Event. I will be creating a Survey on the Website for teens and Al-Anon members to give more input. – The Chairperson]

Five KBDM Questions

1. What are my needs, wants and preferences relevant to our Alateen Conference? Do I want us to continue offering this type of Event? If so, why? If not, why not?

- Yes I want it to continue (11)
- No I do not want it to continue (15)
- I don't know if it should continue (13)
- Alateen needs to grow in NFla before we do a conference (3)
- I am not involved in Alateen (7)
- Yes, it is the best place for kids without meetings
- South Florida brings their kids
- I am not familiar with Alateen Conference, I'm not an AMIAS and I'm not involved in Alateen (6)
- No energy in our District for Alateen (4)
- I have been praying for more Alateen participation
- I am not really clear on what an Alateen Conference is (18)
- Brings together North and South Florida, so important.
- No one wants to do it (3)
- Is there value in our efforts?
- What about more Round Ups (one day events) in different Districts instead?
- I am not familiar with the Alateen Conference but it may be worthwhile
- I want to be trained in Alateen after my three years in Al-Anon, this seems worthwhile
- I find working with Alateens very hard work
- Teens need socializing but I'm not convinced it is recovery

- I'd rather see this done in a very different way than it currently is

2. What do I know about our resources (finances, member participation, etc) about Alateen Conference?

- we have very few Alateens in our Area (15)
- Not enough member participation
- Spending too much money for so few people (8)
- This is Public Outreach that is sorely needed
- Without attracting kids we are failing 12th Step
- Too few persons for the outlay of funds (4)
- No Alateen Meetings in our District
- We are willing, we need more training and broader knowledge
- Teens must be very committed to helping raise funds.
- Looks like we don't have the funds for it.
- Money demanded from our District for 2014 was a huge burden and caused resentment
- Use the success of the Convention to build up Alateen rather than trying to have one on its own
- Really expensive, costs too much for teens, adds a burden to families.
- Alateen seems stronger in South Florida
- Who is this program for? Adults or teens?
- Our resources can be better spent in other ways
- Investment in our teens is priceless
- I find it a drain on our resources: money, people, time spent dealing with it. It seems all we do is talk about Alateen.
- Personally, I think more teens will end up going to AA than Al-Anon
- We do not budget for the actual cost – we just put in a number and then the District makes demands on the other Districts. This along with the Convention Hospitality is getting out of control. It is harmful.

3. What do I know about the current realities (membership, culture, etc) and our fellowship's environment (technology, geography, demographic, etc) that may impact an Alateen Conference?

- It sounds like an Alateen Convention, not a Conference
- Small amount of members spread out over large Area makes it difficult
- The kids are out there!
- We need to work on improving communication and support to and with AMIAS in order to reach kids (5)
- There seems to be a lot of fear about this. We need to develop a feeling of safety and trust

- I feel that our Alateen Coordinators are really building up momentum and they are amazing!
- Our teen numbers go up and down through the years.
- I took part in 2012 and it was a wonderful, uplifting experience
- Looks like the membership is so low it should be stopped
- There are no interested kids or teens or meetings in our District
- Kids are doing other things, and don't seem interested in Alateen
- Alateen seems to be at a crossroads. What is WSO going to do?
- Young people are changing, we need to stop thinking of them as teens in some idealistic way

4. What are the pros and cons about our hosting an Alateen Conference? Are our decisions consistent with our spiritual principles?

- It seems like a spiritual principle to continue to host this event
- Con: It is scary because so few have experience with kids at Conference
- Con: so much misunderstanding of AMIAS' role
- Pro: Grow in 12th Step service
- Pro: support and fellowship from peers
- Cost is high, participation is low. Can we use technology to get feedback from kids?
- I wish I had had Alateen when I was a kid.
- Requires a lot of effort
- Pro: gifts to my own spiritual program
- Pro: future Al-Anon members in recovery
- Con: Large amount of work for a small amount of people
- Con: difficulty getting members to step up
- Not enough volunteers
- I like Alateen, but is a Conference really feasible?
- Con: teens sleeping overnight at an event is bad
- I don't see a Conference adding to spiritual growth; it is more about babysitting teens who want to have a vacation
- Are we enabling? Forcing a solution? (5)
- Pro: our convention is a big success – why don't we use that for our Alateen Conference in the even years?

5. What do I wish I knew, but don't? (use the back if necessary)

- How do we get more teens to meetings? (15)
- Does the Conference really make a difference or is it just a fun time for them?
- How long can we continue doing what we've been doing before Alateen is down to 3, 2, 1 groups?

- How do we rebuild this program? (3)
- How do we dispel fears? (3)
- What would help the teens attend? (12)
- I wish I knew more specifics – what happens at a conference? Who attends? How do the people get there? I really am clueless. (4)
- Does this Event attract members?
- What do other Areas do? (7)
- How much does it really cost?
- Why don't we cancel it? (2)
- What is WSO considering?
- How long will WSO take to implement changes, suggestions?
- What is best for Alateen spiritually speaking?
- What do the kids want?
- How do they think an Alateen Fellowship would look?
- How do we get more AMIASes?
- How to sustain even one Alateen meeting in our District?
- Can we use Technology to get teens more involved?