

## **Assembly June, 2023**

In April, I had the privilege of representing our Area at the **63rd Annual World Service Conference (WSC)** held from April 20 to 23 at the Founder's Inn Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. As your elected Alternate Delegate, I was one of 91 voting members who met daily from 8am to 9pm to address a full agenda. I have summarized key points from the Conference below, but feel free to reach out to me with any questions and there will also be a full report of the Conference available later this year and posted (with an archive going back to the first Conference!) at: <https://al-anon.org/for-members/world-service-conference-wsc/>

### **Conference Theme and Spiritual Principles**

Every year the WSC leadership team is tasked with selecting a theme for our annual gathering that serves to inspire and point towards the spiritual essence and purpose of our worldwide Al-Anon fellowship. This year, our theme was:

**Love, Laugh, and Grow Together**

**Aimer, rire et grandir ensemble**

**Amar, reír y crecer juntos**

### **LOVE**

Concept 4; Participation is the key to harmony.

There is a tradition that Area groups and members send “love gifts” to their Delegates at Conference in support. Thank you for all the love gifts from our NC/Bermuda Area! Letters of gratitude, encouragement and support filled my mailbox at home even before I hit the road. The \$1255.00 sent from Groups, Districts & our Area to be given to the WSO filled my heart to represent our support and participation in our seventh tradition of being a self-supporting

fellowship. The love and care of the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) and the Board of Trustees and staff was evident in all the hard work and quality of communication.

## **LAUGH**

Like most Al-Anon meetings, discussions at World Service Conferences occasionally include laughter.

Many Voices One Journey (B-31) p. 110

There is a lot of laughter at Al-Anon meetings, especially about the crazy things we have done in reaction to the disease of alcoholism. One Al-Anon member said, "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people." That is so true! (*Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33), p. 59)

Most of the laughter we experienced at Conference came from the sharing of stories by the outgoing Panel 61 Delegates and their final skit, and our visit to the WSO Clearing House. It continues to inspire me how tears and laughter, sadness and joy go hand in hand in the spiritual practices of Al-Anon. When we arrived at the WSO, the parking lot was lined up with every staff member, Volunteer and Trustee to give us warm hugs and WELCOME US HOME! The visit was like no other. The environment of this spiritual space with its history was oozing with positiveness, warm team efforts and excitement about our worldwide fellowship and the hope it brings to so many people.

## **GROWING TOGETHER**

Tradition 4; "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole."

From Al-Anon 12 Steps & 12 Traditions p 101 about Tradition 4. .... "This freedom however, also carries a responsibility for preserving the unity of Al-Anon throughout the world."

At the 2023 WSC, this question kept surfacing; "How do we as Members, Groups, Districts, Area's and WSC practice this responsibility?"

## **Highlights from the 2023 World Service Conference (WSC)**

"The conference agenda is derived from input through Delegates, Conference Leadership Team (CLT), and the Board of Trustees. In addition, suggestions made to the CLT by any Conference

member and the membership-at-large are carefully considered.” (2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (p.24/27v2, page 168)

### **Who was at this year’s World Service Conference (WSC)?**

- There were 91 voting members.
- Out of 120 participants all together:
- 68 Delegates from 67 Geographical Areas & the Global Electronic Area throughout the USA, Canada, Bermuda & Puerto Rico from Panels 61, 62, and 63;
- 14 members of the Board of Trustees;
- 3 At-Large members of the Executive Committee;
- 8 World Service Office Staff members; the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM); the Conference Summary and audio recorders; an International Representatives; and the interpreters.

“ The World Service Conference makes the group Conscience available and effective fo Al-Anon” (2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual {p-24/27}v2,page 164)

### **Increasing Service.**

There was an open discussion on attracting members into service. What works? What doesn’t? What are the barriers to service participation? How can we better tap into our wealth of experience with our Past Delegates at the Area & Conference Level? Some of the ideas from other Areas were: Joy of service annual workshop outgoing trusted servants put together to inspire & inform potential members. Another Area had a “speed dating “ event with a bell and 5-20 minutes with current trusted servants to learn the highs and lows of each role and how to utilize the Al-Anon support and tools.

### **Sharing Area Highlights.**

Every year the outgoing panel of Delegates gather all Delegates to have a conversation about Area Highlights shedding light on strength and challenges. It’s an opportunity to share

Experience, Strength and Hope with others and learn from each other. We participated in a “Penny Ice Breaker” followed by seven key topics Area’s wanted to learn about. Topics included:

- **Archives**- is there a workforce to support the Archivist? Is there a policy on how materials are collected, stored and cataloged?
- **7th Tradition WSC Contribution procedures** - what is working, what isn’t?
- **Hybrid Area Meetings** – Do you have a tech position? Name three successful choices your Area made involving Hybrid meetings that make it flow.
- **Service positions and technology needs**
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** - does your Area have a task force? Has your Area successfully reached out to members who are not the typical members in AL-Anon (typical=older white woman)
- **Vacant Area positions and decline in Area participation.** What steps /actions were most successful in filling vacant Area positions? How do you increase GR attendance at Area Assemblies?

## Finance Report

Tradition 7: Every Group ought to be fully Self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

This year our WSO Financial Committee presented a balanced budget for 2023. Contributions from 2022 increased from 2021. This is mainly due to the special appeal letter that was sent to the entire membership. We are continuing to recover from the effects of the pandemic and are not expected to be out of its grips completely for 2024. This year we anticipate an increase in literature sales due to the publication of a new daily reader coming out at the International Convention in June.

Currently 100% of Al-Anon/Alateen groups are benefitting from WSO services, while 61% are making contributions, up from 52% last year. **\$321.25 is the cost for WSO per group annually. Every Group is encouraged to create an annual budget to at minimum cover the cost per group of \$321.25 for our worldwide fellowship to be self-supporting.** Currently there

are **13,300 groups that exist while 8,113 actually contribute to WSO** but not at the \$321.55 per year.

**(Consider the power of \$1.00 in 1955, which is equal to \$6.79 in 2023)**

### **DEI Workshop.**

Honoring Al-Anon's commitment regarding continuing our work on Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI). We participated in a three-hour long workshop led by an outside consultant. The workshop consisted of a presentation, breakout groups allowing for discussion of feelings brought up by the presentation, and a discussion at the end of the session by the entire WSC. Spiritual principles we utilized in this session were humility, open mindedness, curiosity, acceptance, willingness to talk about topics that are uncomfortable at first, and having conversations that are conducive to Awareness, Acceptance & Action. Seeds were planted to help us explore and consider how we are welcoming to all populations. As it states in our Al-

Anon declaration:

“ 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. “

Some takeaways:

No magic bullet, It begins with me willing to think differently:

Take my own inventory - look at my own bias (practice self honesty) - where do I need the courage to change? It may take me outside of my comfort zone, ask for help, finally a new way to think about diversity - the word diversity is “to divide”. What if we consider “representation”? Or building bridges. Who is at the table, who is not? How can we become a bridge to Inclusion?

### **Transforming Electronic Groups.**

Activities continue both to support the new Global Electronic Area (GEA) and to support Areas that have decided to accept electronic only groups. GEA meeting search is now available at

alanon.org. As of 4/4 /23 the GEA (Global Electronic Area has 891 groups, 376 GR's & 1,468 meetings conducted.

- Electronic groups can transfer to and from the GEA if their Area made the decision to accept electronic only meetings to their Area, using available online forms.
- An Excel-compatible document of electronic groups registered with geographical Areas is being developed for the current online Group Records application.
- Electronic groups registered with geographical Areas are currently NOT displayed on al-anon.org. WSO staff are working now to evolve the geographical meeting search to list these groups (In our Area, these meetings can be listed on Area websites as we make our decision)

### **Alateen Electronic Group.**

A WSO Committee has been meeting to explore the use of electronic meetings for Alateen. The committee is working on plans to make online platforms available for all Alateen members who wish to participate while ensuring the safety of Alateen and AMIAS members.

### **International Coordination Committee.**

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) enlightened us with their trips to other global Al-Anon Structures throughout Europe and their attendance at the Convention in London, England. There are currently 9,126 International groups world wide in 12 languages 8,458 Al-Anon and 668 Alateen.

Again, feel free to reach out to me with any questions! Remember there will be a full report of the Conference available later this year and posted (with an archive going back to the first Conference!) at: <https://al-anon.org/for-members/world-service-conference-wsc/>

Thank you for your service and all the ways you participate in our World wide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups.

In love & gratitude,

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