



# Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

phone: 757.563.1600  
fax: 757.563.1656

al-anon.org  
wso@al-anon.org

## October 2023 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter is to share with you some highlights from our Board of Trustees' Quarterly Meeting. You will also find updates from our Policy Chairperson, a Finance Update from our Treasurer, and an update from our Conference Leadership Team (CLT).

### Financial Update:

Thank you to our membership for supporting our mission with your donations and purchases of our Conference Approved Literature (CAL). You are simply amazing! Your financial support helps the World Service Office (WSO) to be a self-supporting organization as stated in the Seventh Tradition. Your generosity allows WSO Staff to provide the many services that are listed on the back of the Quarterly Appeal Letter. As always, due to the generosity of the fellowship, our mission of helping those affected by the family disease of alcoholism is flourishing. More detailed information will be provided by our Treasurer. (See the Finance Update attached to this letter for more financial information.)

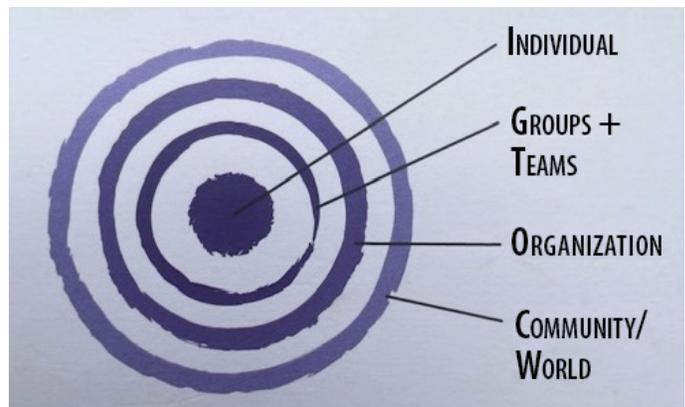
### October Board Meeting:

The Board had a full agenda. It included the use of generative discussions, training, and various presentations.

### Board Development:

The Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) brought to the Board a generative discussion entitled "How Attractive Are We?" Discussion began with several questions about who the "we" being discussed was. EFWG shared with the Board that they had intentionally left this term vague to allow for a generative conversation that naturally identified the "we" it was most important to address. The Board discussion evolved to focus on the attractiveness of the Board itself. Questions were raised regarding the potential for increased visibility of Trustees in Areas through in-person and virtual visits, increased Delegate and Trustee connections, and clarification of myths about being a Trustee.

The Board continued a generative discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). We decided to bring in a professional who is an expert in this field to facilitate the conversation. The facilitator selected was both a past Trustee and a consultant with a professional practice in the field. Before our session, she developed questions and statements for each Board member to consider. The discussion, which focused on inclusion and what the Board needed to examine to continue this journey, was open and honest. It was noted that our Legacies as well as our Mission Statement are paramount in all future discussions and that our onboarding process for new Trustees and Executive Committee members may need additional focus on DEI. The consultant acknowledged that the Board is always continuing to work individually, but now the Board is also working at the group level, which is promising and hopeful. She emphasized that efforts to start at the organizational level are often unsuccessful. There was cohesiveness in our efforts to become more inclusive, and this process will continue in a dedicated manner. As we closed, one Trustee shared how spiritual this session was, and each of us agreed.



### **Nominating Committee:**

The Nominating Committee is continuously working to evolve and improve the process by which we discuss and select Trustee and other WSO Volunteer candidates. The Committee recommended changes to the Nominating Committee Selection Process document that were approved by the Board. The Nominating Committee also reported that they are discussing how the interview process could be enhanced and how the Human Resources Manager could assist the Board in developing a better application/resume. As part of the Committee's effort, the Board brainstormed about what requirements are truly necessary for a Trustee/Executive Committee member.

### **Reducing October Board Week and Schedule:**

There was a thoughtful discussion concerning the October Board Week schedule. There were several factors considered including finances, efficiency, and time. A consensus followed to shift the arrival at the October Board Week one day later but maintain the existing overall meeting duration of 14 hours for a one-year trial in 2024.

### **International Coordination Committee (ICC):**

Some members may be unfamiliar with how the ICC is involved in Conference Approved Literature. On page 211 of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v2*, it states the ICC "also considers first-time requests for permission to reprint Conference Approved Literature (CAL) outside the WSC Structure." The more CAL is reprinted internationally, the more support we are giving members throughout our fellowship. This committee is excited to report that there are four more countries who have the ability to translate and print CAL in their language. That is a big step forward for all of us.

The following motions were approved by the Board:

- Bulgaria granted permission for first-time translation and printing CAL in Bulgarian
- Romania granted permission for first-time translation and printing CAL in Romanian
- Thailand granted permission for first-time translation and printing CAL in Thai
- Paraguay granted permission to reprint CAL

Our presence has also been felt on the international level this fall with various Zonal meetings. The European Zonal meeting was held in September in France. Eighteen structures attended as well as three ICC members. In October, three members attended the virtual South American Zonal meeting which was hosted by Argentina. In November, the Central American Zonal meeting will be held in Honduras. Two ICC members will be attending in person. Each Zonal meeting has an impact on the WSC structure and on the Trustees and Staff members who participate, whether attending virtually or in person.

The 2024 IAGSM's theme is "Nurturing Communication, Cooperation, and Connection Worldwide." This event will be held in Virginia Beach.

### **Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect:**

California-South was the location for our eighth Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect. There were 113 pre-registered participants. The day was busy with the following:

- Personal shares by Board and Executive Committee members
- A panel on how being a member of Policy has impacted their recovery
- Presentations from the following topics: the Board at Work, Finance, Executive Committee, Conference Leadership Team, and International Coordination Committee
- Table discussions
- Q&A periods (all related to information presented at Road Trip!)
- An interactive workshop
- A skit on service work

Several Spanish interpreters volunteered their time to be of service.

The California South Welcoming Committee did a fantastic job greeting the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee in beautiful Los Angeles! Next year's location will be revealed in January.

### Planning for the 2024 WSC:

The Board agreed on several topics to bring to the 2024 World Service Conference.

- A Chosen Agenda Item titled “It Works if You Work It,” discussing the program benefits identified in a dissertation based on the 2018 Al-Anon Family Groups Membership Survey data that was shared by a PhD candidate at the July Board meeting.
- A strategic topic discussion about holding the World Service Conference in New York to facilitate Conference member visits to Stepping Stones beyond the 2025 one-year trial.
- A Policy Committee-facilitated discussion on the question, “Is the gendered language in the Steps and Traditions in alignment with Al-Anon’s Legacies?”

In planning the strategic topic discussion, the Board also considered questions and feedback received from Delegates and new financial data provided by Staff related to the 2025 trial. The Board evaluated the information and confirmed its commitment to supporting the Delegate Team’s efforts to create a successful 2025 Stepping Stones visit by being flexible with WSO Staff involvement. The discussion helped the Board identify a key benefit of the before-or-after-Conference approach to visiting Stepping Stones: the longer bus journey will offer a wonderful opportunity to build relationships among all Conference members who attend. The Board reconfirmed its commitment to providing more details once selection of a hotel has been finalized.

### Plans for 2025 WSC Delegate Thought/Task Force:

The Board discussed what topics and discussions might be beneficial to bring to the floor of Conference in 2025. The Board agreed by consensus to bring forward one new topic, recognizing Delegates will have other responsibilities in preparing for 2025.

### Annual Report Insights:

Each Trustee and Executive Committee member was assigned to share about one or more insights for the 2023 Annual Report. The subject matter of each insight encapsulated our Members, Recovery and Service Tools Awareness, Financial Sustainability, and Global Engagement Goal Statements. More will be revealed as each of you has the opportunity to read the 2023 Annual Report.

### Reflective Questions:

At every Board meeting, we read a group of questions that are spiritual in nature about how we feel we did each day. The Board decided to do something different during the October meeting. We decided to recite these questions each day of Board Week and end each day calling out a spiritual principle that was observed during the day. At the conclusion of Board Week, we agreed to review the morning questions. This is in addition to our regular Board Evaluation survey. This practice will be added to our future agendas.

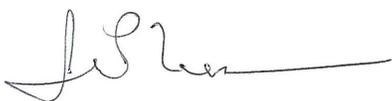
### COB Letter Presentation:

The October COB Letter Presentation is scheduled for November 11, 2023. The January COB Letter Presentation is scheduled for February 17, 2024. All Trustees will attend the presentations, which are held virtually from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm ET.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt goodbye to the Panel 61 Delegates. I hope your last two months are filled with joy, anticipation for what your next service position might be, and a look in the mirror to say, “Job well done.” You are appreciated beyond what you know.

In conclusion, your ability to work together and individually keeps our Mission alive. The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and Staff feel your support in all their endeavors. May you continue to strive to bring the best to Al-Anon Family Groups. And as the question was asked by the Envisioned Future Work Group, “How Attractive Are We?”, my answer in reference to our Delegates would be an overwhelming, “Very attractive!”

In gratitude,



Jeri W.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc