

Fall Assembly

New York North AFG Officer or Committee Report

Carol C.

Date: September 28, 2024

Delegate

I will be giving a presentation highlighting information from the following documents from the WSO. A copy of my presentation will be posted after I give my report at the Fall Assembly

- **From the Board of Trustees:**

 - Chairperson the Board (COB) Letter**

 - The Policy Committee Report**

 - The Finance Committee Report**

- **From the WSO:**

 - A position description for a job opening at the WSO**



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July 2024 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 of the highlights from the July 2024 Board week. You will also find updates from our Policy Chairperson, a finance update from our Treasurer, and a Conference Leadership Team (CLT) update.

The July 2024 Board meeting was held in Virginia Beach. Board and At-Large Executive Committee members were traveling on Sunday, July 21, which you may recall was two days after the CrowdStrike incident. Unfortunately, it did affect travel for some of our Volunteers. But I am happy to report that, with flexibility and patience, we were all there for the start of the Board Meeting on July 23. Board members were excited to be at the World Service Office (WSO), especially our new members, who were there for the very first time. Board members had a meet-and-greet with the WSO Staff, where the WSO Volunteers and Staff had an opportunity to introduce themselves. Volunteers and Staff were given an opportunity after introductions to interact informally with each other.

Board Development

Refreshing Our Spirituality during Board Week

Following a longstanding practice of the World Service Conference (WSC), two Al-Anon meetings were added to this July's Board week schedule. All WSO Volunteers and Staff who are members of Al-Anon were invited to attend and share leadership in chairing the meetings. It was a wonderful opportunity to start our days on a spiritual plane.

Additionally, Trustees and Staff were invited to watch a new WSO Archives asset: an interview of a 100-year-old Al-Anon member. The family joined the member in answering questions about Al-Anon during her time in the program. The film was inspiring and uplifting, reminding us of the power of service to the worldwide fellowship.

Documenting Hidden Norms of Behavior

Since July 2023, the Board has been working to identify "hidden norms" of behavior for Trustees that were understood but undocumented. At each Board meeting, the Board continues its review, discussion, and identification of specific actions needed for each hidden norm. Many have been incorporated into the WSO Volunteer Handbook, the Board of Trustees Governance Handbook, or the WSO Volunteers orientation materials. Documentation of behavior norms represents one of the actions the Board is taking to translate its commitment of inclusion into action.

Welcoming and Developing Leadership

The orientation for new WSO Volunteers (Trustees and At-Large Executive Committee members) happens in two phases. The first occurs online in May, and the second part happens before the Board meeting in July. This year, a concerted effort was made to update the orientation to reflect the items uncovered during sessions on hidden norms, which also led to the development of a new "Tips for Volunteer Mentors" document. This effort resulted in development of a "Key Resources" guide for WSO Volunteers, which includes an updated WSO Volunteer Handbook, Board Governance Handbook, and the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters and Headquarters (Canada), Inc. Returning and new Volunteers were invited to attend and participate in the orientation.

Completing Annual AMIAS training

The annual WSO Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training was held for the WSO Volunteers and Staff by the Associate Director—Group Services. AMIAS training is provided to protect the Alateens and the Sponsors. As part of the training, we read through the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) on pages 232-234. Rereading that original motion helped many to remember the origins of the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Clarifying the Board Evaluation

The Board continues to use a Board Evaluation survey to help improve its quarterly meetings. The survey is based on current American Society of Association Executives' best practices, updated for our needs. The results of the April Board meeting showed the Board is doing well, as there were no outlying ratings. The consistency of responses left us to consider whether we were all aligned on what we were rating.

Since we have four new Trustees this year, the Board took the time to review each question to gain alignment. We were able to review the first two sections of questions out of five and will continue the review in October.

Board Financial Matters

Reserve Fund and WSO's One Year's Operating Expense

Thank you to all those WSC members who submitted ideas for using the funds calculated to be in surplus of the WSO's One Year's Operating Expense as of December 31, 2023. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) reviewed the Conference member suggestions, added a few of their own, and presented a blend of these ideas to the Board of Trustees for consideration. The Board approved four smaller expense items for immediate action, including purchasing a new mail-scanning system, and decided on two other ideas to prioritize for further investigation. The SLT was assigned responsibility for investigation and will present the ideas at the October Board Meeting.

Revised 2024 WSO Budget

The Board approved the Revised 2024 WSO Budget. Literature sales were below budget in June, leading to a reduction in projected sales for July and August. Increased income from investments helped offset the impact on revenue. The occupancy expense was increased by ECRPM to support necessary building maintenance projects, postage has increased to allow additional mailings to the fellowship and accommodate increased postage rates for Canada, and necessary technological improvements were approved. Even with those line items increased, overall WSO expenses in the Revised Budget decreased by approximately \$81,000. The Revised 2024 Budget is projecting a \$197,860 surplus.

Equalized Expense for WSC

The Finance Committee presented to the Board of Trustees a recommendation for the Equalized Expense and the Full Cost for Delegates to attend the 2025 World Service Conference in New York. The Equalized Expense will be \$2,532.00 and the Full Cost will be \$3,617.71, due to the higher hotel, food, and travel costs in the New York area versus Virginia Beach. These amounts include the cost for Delegates to visit Stepping Stones on the day following the WSC.

World Service Conference Planning

Four-Day Conference Week Trial

The Board gathered information from the WSC members at the 2024 Conference to help evaluate the effectiveness of the four-day WSC week three-year trial. While a few benefits were expressed, Conference members generally described the increased demand placed on participants by the shorter Conference week, with tightly packed workdays providing less time for fellowship and discussions during sessions. Conference members also generally felt that, despite the intention to increase accessibility for working and younger Al-Anon members, in practice scheduling Conference over the weekend required similar amounts of time off from work. (More details will be available in the *2024 WSC Summary* once posted.)

After a thoughtful discussion at the Board Meeting, the Board voted to end the four-day WSC week trial and return to hosting the WSC across five days, beginning with the 2026 WSC, while continuing to seek opportunities to hold appropriate sessions virtually so gaps are available for fellowship and breaks. In addition, the Board voted to

end the trial of holding the WSC over a weekend and return to scheduling the Conference agenda to occur during the week starting with the 2026 WSC, with the flexibility to shift onto one weekend day if necessary to accommodate holidays while ensuring the WSC occurs during the month of April.

Triannual Visit to Stepping Stones in New York

After hearing discussion at the 2024 WSC, the Board held a generative discussion from the perspective of Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole on whether a visit to Stepping Stones needs to be incorporated as part of Conference activities once every three years. Following the discussion, the Board approved holding the WSC in the New York area for a six-year trial starting after 2025 to allow for the Conference members to attend Stepping Stones once during their panel.

Next Steps from 2024 WSC Thought and Task Forces

The Board acknowledged the Delegates' thoughtful efforts in creating the WSC thought and task force presentations. After discussion, the Board agreed no further action was needed in relation to the 2024 Personal and Service Sponsorship Task Force or the 2024 Revitalizing Alateen Task Force beyond any assigned to WSO Staff.

The Board reviewed the work of the Eliminating Regional Trustees Thought Force and feedback from Conference members. The Thought Force was not asked to make recommendations; however, the Board recognized more work was required, as it continues to be faced with few or no Regional Trustee resumes from each Region. The Board decided to form a thought force to define strategies for overcoming the barriers to applying to become a Regional Trustee.

Noting that another big concern expressed by Conference members was that eliminating Regional Trustees could possibly lead to loss of Regional representation (even though Regional Trustees do *not* represent their region), the Board agreed to form a task force to develop ideas to discuss with the WSC about a process for creating a Board consisting only of Trustees at Large that:

- Identifies criteria that would address the concerns about representation of diverse perspectives of members from across all the WSC Structure (e.g. Canadian representation, representation of primarily rural communities, etc.); and
- Ensures Area input on candidates is considered.

Strategic Planning

Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG)

The EFWG is a work group of the Board charged with bringing forward-looking generative discussion on strategic topics. The topic this time was "How Do We Grow Future Leaders?" The Board held a robust and enlightening discussion that generated many different ideas, thoughts, and suggestions about the possibilities for moving forward with this topic.

eBooks Globally Strategy

The SLT presented information about options it had been exploring to satisfy the Board's request to create a strategy that would allow the WSO to publish its current catalog of Spanish-, English-, and French-language Conference Approved Literature (CAL) books while being considerate of the impact ebook sales have on international structures that also rely on CAL sales to fulfill the Seventh Tradition. The Board accepted the SLT's recommended approach and approved pursuing the strategy, which includes creating legal agreements with the international structures that reprint in these languages to share net revenue.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The Cautionary Tale

The Executive Director shared important guidance regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI). WSO Staff and Volunteers were asked not to use any AI tools unless licensed by AFG, Inc., which includes transcription features for web conference meetings. This approach is designed to protect personally identifiable information and the confidential nature of Board and other Committee discussions. As it was described, when we use free AI, "we are the product!" While offering this caution, the Executive Director assured the Board that Staff understand and appreciate that AI is here to stay, much like the internet, so Staff will continue its investigation into how to safely utilize the technology to improve efficiency at the WSO while protecting our fellowship from harm.

Road Trip!

Mark your calendars for October 26, 2024! Come meet your Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and several WSO Staff members. We will be in Columbia, South Carolina from 8 am to 5 pm for Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect. This is an opportunity to meet the WSO Volunteers who have oversight of AFG, Inc., understand the committees on which they serve and how the WSC Structure works, and learn how they are just members, too! There will be personal shares, panels, interactive sessions, lunch, and snacks, all for the low registration fee of \$30 US! Attendees will be responsible for travel to and from the event and any hotel rooms reserved. Come join us for a day full of fun, food, and fellowship!

Committee Work

Public Outreach Committee

The Public Outreach Committee (POC) is made up of Delegates, At-Large members, and Staff. They have formed several work groups to address all the work that needs to get done. They meet quarterly and report their progress to the Board. This past quarter, the Public Outreach Toolkit Work Group reviewed six toolkit submissions. They also improved their process for addressing missing information or lack of clarity, which they anticipate will speed up the publication process. The Equitable and Unbiased Work Group developed a new pamphlet, which will be evaluated for possible submission to the Executive Committee for approval, and is reviewing other Welcome Series pamphlets to ensure the language is inclusive and relevant. The POC also created a new Open Letter Work Group to draft a generalized letter of introduction to professionals for Staff consideration and Executive Committee approval.

Nominating Committee At-Large Executive Committee Member Role

The Nominating Committee is now working on the Board of Trustees' request that it create an At-Large Executive Committee Member role description similar to what exists for the Trustee role. The Committee plans to bring a draft for review at the October Board meeting. The Board has asked the Committee to develop an At-Large Executive Committee member application to replace the current resume when they finish the role description.

In gratitude,



Kathi M.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc

Policy statements are interpretations of our basic guides: the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service. They help clarify how a Tradition or Concept might apply to a new or confusing situation that arises in Al-Anon or Alateen. Changes and additions to the Policy Digest are made only as our circumstances and growth require, since anticipating and including every specific situation would be impossible.

The purpose of the update sent each quarter by the Policy Committee Chairperson is to report progress and provide information on the following:

- Topics generated by the fellowship and discussed by the Policy Committee regarding issues or concerns that need clarification or interpretation in consideration of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service
- Progress of work being completed by Policy Committee work groups and task and thought forces
- Policy motions to be presented to the World Service Conference (WSC)
- Policy motions passed by the WSC

The Policy Committee meeting occurs quarterly prior to the Board of Trustees meeting. The Policy Committee met in person on July 22-23, 2024.

2024-2025 Concept Study Task Force presented the first installment of the Policy Committee Concept Study, which offers members the opportunity to study the Concepts collectively together throughout this year. The July session focused on Concepts One through Three. Members appreciated and valued the opportunity to explore the Concepts as a group, particularly in the context of their world service responsibilities.

The Policy Committee Guideline was reviewed in advance and together, affording an opportunity for the members to achieve mutual understanding and accuracy of their roles. Edits for clarity were approved.

Local Services Task Force: Autonomy of Groups presented their report on progress to date. The conversation started, but no recommendations were finalized during the meeting. The Task Force was asked to continue their work and return with further recommendations to the 2024 October Policy Committee meeting.

As a result of the 2024 WSC's approval of the "Choosing a Group's Name" Policy, the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPiRiT) brought forward recommendations for the Policy Committee related to WSO implementation of new procedures to reflect the updated Policy. The recommendations were accompanied by background on the WSO procedures related to group names, including the historical preference of groups across the WSC Structure for using the "focus" (now called "Participants") field for community identification. When the "focus" field had been removed earlier, trusted servants reported their groups still wanted that feature to help members search for a meeting in which they felt comfortable.

A thoughtful and spiritual discussion occurred, which resulted in the Policy Committee confirming that the proposed WSO procedures align with the new Choosing a Group's Name Policy. Through this confirmation, the WSO was directed to:

- Register new groups and update existing group names only when their name does not contain community-identifying designations.
- Guide groups seeking to encourage community-specific participation to use the "Participants" designation.

The Committee directed Staff to communicate widely through the links of service so that existing groups with names containing such designations would be encouraged to practice "obedience to the unenforceable" by aligning their group name with the new Policy.

As always, the Policy Committee welcomes all questions and suggestions from any AI-Anon member, meeting, group, or Area regarding issues that might need further clarification or interpretation in light of our Legacies.

Conference Leadership Team (CLT) Update

July 2024

Jayne C., Chairperson

Our Path toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding Nuestro camino hacia la gracia, la unidad y la comprensión Notre cheminement vers la grâce, unité et la compréhension

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) is responsible for preparing a World Service Conference (WSC) agenda that facilitates the active voice and effective group conscience of our fellowship.

To accomplish this responsibility, the CLT initiated the planning process for the 2025 WSC shortly after returning home from the 2024 WSC in Virginia Beach. The CLT members have reviewed the 2024 WSC evaluations that were submitted. We appreciate each member's comments, feedback, and suggestions. All your input is valuable as we prepare for the next WSC.

The 2025 WSC will be held Thursday, April 24 through Sunday, April 27, 2025, at the Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport Hotel, 28 Day Hill Road, Windsor, CT, 06095. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Wednesday, April 23. The Stepping Stones visit will occur Monday, April 28, and rooms will be available for those Conference members who cannot fly out until Tuesday.

The 2025 WSC will be the third year of the four-day Conference week three-year trial. To create more space on the 2025 WSC agenda, the CLT agreed to recommend to the Board of Trustees (BOT) that the Trustee affirmations process occur in a virtual meeting scheduled by the second week of January and held no more than two weeks prior to the WSC to protect confidentiality.

After thoughtful conversation based on the 2024 Conference discussion and evaluations, CLT made two recommendations to the BOT for the July meeting: a recommendation to return to holding a five-day World Service Conference starting in 2026 and one to return to holding the Conference during the week, with the flexibility to shift onto one weekend day if necessary to accommodate holidays while ensuring the Conference occurs in April.

Acting upon the BOT's delegation of the charge related to the WSC Motion Eight (Delegate Participation on CLT for Agenda Development), the CLT created the charge, invited Delegates to participate, and selected one Delegate from each panel to serve on the Task Force. The charge reinforced the confidential nature of this and all task force work.

The CLT reviewed theme phrases and words suggested for the 2025 WSC theme. The CLT forwarded their suggestion to the BOT for approval at the July meeting. The approved theme will be announced closer to the end of 2024 to align with its introduction in January 2025. We look forward to the ongoing evolving preparations for the 2025 WSC.

The six-member Conference Leadership Team includes:

- Chairperson and Co-Chairperson of Conference (both Trustees)

- Associate Director—World Service Events & History
- Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
- Executive Director
- Director of Programs

Finance Update

Ann Marie Z., Treasurer

July 2024

The following update is based on the unaudited financial statements for the period that ended 6/30/2024.

Revenues (Income)

Revenue consists mainly of literature sales and contributions. Other revenue sources include magazine sales, *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* premium subscriptions, and investment gains or losses. Literature sales for June were \$244,254. Contributions for June were \$210,581. See the table below for YTD Actuals vs. YTD Budget.

Expenses

The largest categories of expenses consist of WSO Staff salaries and associated costs (payroll taxes and benefits), technology support, Conference costs (including interpretation), and office expenses (postage, telephone, stationery, supplies, printing, Canadian office). Expenses for June were \$552,515. See the table below for YTD Actuals vs. YTD Budget. We continue to monitor all expenses and reduce them wherever possible.

Net Increase/(Decrease)

The change in net assets has resulted in an operating surplus of \$488,409, which is higher than the projected budget.

Year to Date (YTD) June 2024

	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget
Revenue		
Literature Sales—net	\$1,579,837	\$1,561,365
Contributions	\$1,342,395	\$1,288,671
Other income	\$578,810	\$472,418
Total Revenue	\$3,501,042	\$3,322,454
Total Expenses	\$3,012,633	\$3,039,391
Net Increase/(Decrease)	\$488,409	\$283,063

Investments

Our ample reserve is contained mostly in the Reserve Fund under the careful watch of our investment manager. Market conditions in June were favorable, as the market experienced positive rates of return. We have a YTD increase of \$198,840 in the Reserve Fund. Our investment accounts continue to be sensitive to market conditions.

Reflections and Insight

Let's keep this momentum going! Our literature sales are slightly above budget. The members continue to respond to our message about consistent donations with our year-to-date contributions being above budgeted expectations by \$53,724, or four percent.

Our message to the fellowship has been and continues to be one of gratitude and consistency. The WSO's role of providing services to the fellowship can only be carried out with consistent contributions, the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and subscriptions to our *Mobile App* premium content and our magazines (*The Forum*, *Le lien*, and *en accion*).

As it says on page 115 of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), "In Al-Anon we learn to take responsibility for our own recovery rather than expecting others to do our work for us." Tradition Seven is all about Al-Anon being a self-supporting program. One of our guiding principles is that we do not take outside contributions. We are self-supporting at our group, local, Area, and World Service Office levels. The World Service Office (WSO) needs members' contributions to enable it to provide information to anyone, anywhere who reaches out for help. I believe our understanding of this principle and the responsibility we take helps to unite us around our wonderful program. It is another example of how we live our Conference theme for 2024: "Our Path toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding".

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: International Specialist
Reports To: International Services Manager
AI-Anon Membership: 5+ Years

Job Brief: Communicates and supports members outside the WSC Structure in a manner that consistently conveys the warmth, understanding, and love that characterizes the AI-Anon program and fosters unity among structures. Oversees the World Service Office (WSO) efforts to facilitate expanded availability of Conference Approved Literature as translated and reprinted by our international structure partners.

Specific Duties & Responsibilities:

- Assists and supports trusted servants for new, existing, and evolving international structures in providing services and resolving concerns through application of the Twelve Traditions and Concepts and AI-Anon Policy by sharing the accumulated experience of the WSO.
- Supports international structures in understanding the need for permission to translate or reprint Conference Approved Literature (CAL).
- Guides international structures undertaking first-time requests for permission to translate or reprint, coordinating approval from the International Coordination Committee (ICC) and ensuring secure distribution of original copyrighted materials.
- Oversees the processes to gain authorization and archive requests for translation/reprint licenses.
- Coordinates with Paralegal on international structure needs for independent review and trademark registrations
- Coordinates the International Communications Calendar process including drafting content for publication, moderating specific AFG Connects communities, and communicating updates to international structures as needed.
- Participates in Regular Structure Meetings and provides answers to international structures inquiries as requested.
- Serves as a member of the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) planning team and fulfills assigned responsibilities and participates in International Coordination Committee meetings when invited
- Validates global AIS, AIS/LDC, and LDC new registrations and changes.
- Answers meeting line phone inquiries from AI-Anon/A.A./potential members, professionals, and others regarding basic AI-Anon and Alateen group information
- Supplies other teams with accurate contact information for service arms outside the WSC Structure
- Participates in internal discussions of policy application and implementation as part of SPIRiT with voice, but no vote.
- Writes articles for WSO publications.
- Communicates consistently about international community concerns with the International Services Manager in a timely manner
- Provides feedback to international structures on service tools, PowerPoint presentations, website content updates, etc. to ensure clear and consistent messaging

- Answers English meeting line when required due to vacation and other shortage
- Other duties as assigned

Requirements:

- Familiar with Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service and *Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies* and how to apply them to member questions and concerns
- Demonstrated ability to write and speak effectively in English in business and legal environments
- Ability to collaborate and cooperate in a team-based organizational structure
- Ability to prioritize and complete work on multiple tasks or projects independently and meet deadlines
- Attention to detail, good organizational and problem-solving skills
- Confidence using technology to plan, communicate, collaborate, and organize
- Proficient in Microsoft 365 products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint & Outlook), including online collaboration tools such as Teams

Education & Experience:

- Associate degree in communications, social sciences, or related fields
- Three years' experience in a professional capacity; or equivalent combination of education and experience
- Five or more years continuous, active Al-Anon membership required, with service experience beyond the group level
- Cannot be or have ever been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous
- Must qualify to be certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) in accordance with the WSO AMIAS Certification Program

Physical Demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to express or exchange ideas by means of the spoken word. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision.

Work Environment:

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job in an office environment. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

Work Location:

This job is located at the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters' World Service Office in Virginia Beach, VA. Remote location will not be considered for this position.

Travel:

This position requires up to 1-2 weeks of travel per year, frequently occurring over weekends.

Point of Contact to Apply:

Email resume with cover letter to HumanRes@al-anon.org.