



Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

2023
WORLD
SERVICE
OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

Greetings & Thanks	1
Who We Are: Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan	2
Our Intentions	4
Strategic Plan	4
Strategic Plan - Board of Trustee Initiatives	4
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	5
2023 Strategies Update	6
Domain: Members	6
Domain: Recovery & Service Tools.....	6
Domain: Awareness	6
Domain: Financial Sustainability.....	6
Domain: Global Engagement.....	6
Our Impact	7
Our Work	15
Domain: Members	15
Meeting the Needs of Our Groups and Our Members	15
Al-Anon Member and Group Communications	15
Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility.....	16
Al-Anon Information Services and Literature Distribution Centers Communications.....	16
Inmate Correspondence Service.....	17
Transforming Electronic Groups: Updating WSO Processes	17
Global Electronic Meeting Search.....	17
Group Transfers between the Global Electronic and Geographic Areas.....	18
Geographic Meeting Search.....	18
Archives: Engaging with Our History	19
Research and Process Improvements	19
Collection Growth	20
Digital Communication: Connecting Members	20
Al-Anon Family Group Mobile App Code Refresh	20
al-anon.org Redesign Feasibility	20
International Conventions	21
2023 Al-Anon International Convention	21
2025 A.A. International Convention.....	23
2028 Al-Anon International Convention	23
Domain: Recovery & Service Tools	24
Literature: Collecting, Editing, and Maintaining Our Member Sharings	24
Conference Approved Literature (CAL).....	24
Recovery Magazines— <i>The Forum</i> , <i>Le lien</i> , <i>Al-Anon y Alateen en acción</i>	26
Translation	27
Translated WSO Guidelines	27
International Structures Support	27
Publications: Publishing Recovery and Service Tools	28
eBooks Globally Strategy Refinement	28
2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v3.....	29
Warehouse: Distributing Literature & Al-Anon Tools	29
<i>A Little Time for Myself</i> (B-34) Launch	29
Domain: Awareness	31

Digital Communications	31
Public Outreach Toolkit Launch	31
Same Public Service Announcement (PSA), New Delivery Method.....	31
The Ever-changing Landscape of Social Media	31
Community Relations	32
Trusted Servants–Our Vital Link to Public Outreach	32
Fostering Connections within the Recovery Community	32
Al-Anon Member Survey Data Supports Recovery Research	32
Domain: Financial Sustainability	33
Human Resources: Recruiting, Growing, and Retaining Staff	33
Executive Director Succession Planning	35
Operations: Managing Operations	35
Phone System Replacement	35
Legal: Protecting Al-Anon’s Name	36
Trademark and Copyright Protection	36
Trademark Registration.....	37
Domain: Global Engagement	37
Coordinating the World Service Conference	37
Supporting the WSC Structure and its Trusted Servants	39
World Service Conference Delegates	39
WSC Structure Areas.....	40
WSC Structure Area Trusted Servants.....	41
Trust the Process - Flow of Information	41
Area Alateen Coordinators & Alateen Process Persons.....	41
Area Archives Coordinators.....	41
Area Public Outreach Coordinators.....	42
Supporting WSO Volunteers	42
Evolution of the Nominating Process.....	42
Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect.....	43
International: Increasing Access to Al-Anon Globally	44
Supporting Structures Worldwide.....	44
Global Gathering Launch	45
CAL Globally	46
Zonal Meetings.....	46
International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)	47
Our Financials	48
Manage Our Budget & Financials	48
Our Plans	51
AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future	51
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	51
Nominating Process	51
Strategic Planning	52
Fiscal Responsibilities	52
2024 Strategies	53
Appendices	54
Organization Chart	54
Board of Trustees Motions and Decisions by Consensus	55
Executive Committee Motions and Decisions by Consensus⁴	56

Greetings & Thanks

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

Vali F., Executive Director

2023 was an important year for the Al-Anon program. We lived our World Service Conference theme of “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together” in many ways throughout all 12 months. Throughout the Annual Report that follows, you will read about the accomplishments of the World Service Office through its Board of Trustees, Executive Committees, and WSO Staff, including:

- Over 4,000 people from around the world gathered together either in person or (for the first time) virtually for the seventh Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque.
- There was overwhelming demand for the first new daily reader in over 20 years, *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34).
- The fellowship strongly supported the operations of the WSO—financially, through both literature purchases and contributions from members, as well as in all segments of the Links of Service.
- Exciting progress was made in support of the needs of the Global Electronic Area and electronic groups generally, with 80 percent of Areas within the WSC Structure accepting electronic groups as the year came to a close.
- Additional growth occurred in the breadth and depth of support for Al-Anon’s structures in countries all around the world, both through increased contact in various formats as well as services offered.
- WSC members were “welcomed home” to the WSO during Conference to see the facility and meet the Staff in person.
- One key area of focus for the Board of Trustees was in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, where the Trustees collectively held the mirror to themselves to see how their thoughts and actions in this area impact the fellowship that they serve and the decisions that they make as Trustees.

We thank the dedicated Staff of the World Service Office for their tireless efforts throughout the year. Change is a constant theme for all of us, and the WSO is no different in that it experienced Staff departures and arrivals, retirement of a long-time Staff member, and the unfortunate loss of another who was a servant and friend to many past and present WSC members. Yet through it all, the 45 WSO Staff members remained steadfast in their work to ensure the Al-Anon program remains accessible and growing for those who need it.

Who We Are: Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan

VISION

Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.



MISSION

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences.



DOMAINS & GOAL STATEMENTS

Members: AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics.

Recovery & Service Tools: AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

Awareness: AFG, Inc. builds public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program.

Financial Sustainability: AFG, Inc. encourages membership and organizational self-support by aligning resource allocation with its core purpose and strategic priorities.

Global Engagement: AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Members:

1. Provide access to the Al-Anon program for all
2. Advance support to underserved and diverse communities
3. Understand member and group needs

Recovery & Service Tools:

1. Create attractive, new content by gathering, processing, and disseminating pertinent information
2. Communicate the message of hope in a way that is current, appealing, and widely available
3. Reduce barriers to accessing information created by cultural and linguistic obstacles

Awareness:

1. Identify and reduce the effects of biases that may be preventing effective outreach
2. Validate the effectiveness of the Al-Anon Family Groups program in helping our members
3. Educate the public and professionals about who we are, what we do, and why
4. Build relationships with the media, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and professionals

Financial Sustainability:

1. Align resources to support the needs of the fellowship in accordance with Al-Anon's spiritual principles
2. Create opportunities for members to support AFG, Inc.
3. Improve transparency of the financial needs of AFG, Inc.
4. Manage risk to reputation, operations, and assets

Global Engagement:

1. Reinforce the process for passing experience on to incoming trusted servants using effective approaches for the new generation
2. Communicate leadership skills required for trusted servants and create development pathways
3. Collaborate globally to share knowledge and evolve our programs and communications

Our Intentions

Strategic Plan

In January 2023, as in the last several years, members of the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)¹, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee gathered at the January Board meeting to agree on priorities for the World Service Office (WSO) and its Staff and Volunteers for the coming year. SLT presented a vision, referred to as the WSO Projects Landscape, which outlined Strategic Plan Strategies it proposed undertaking or carrying on in 2023 as well as major project initiatives not directly identified as Strategies. These initiatives included hosting the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation, connecting with World Service Conference Structure Area and international structure trusted servants to define a potential concept for registering electronic Alateen groups globally that would protect Alateens and the Al-Anon Family Groups name, and continuing the technical development and implementation necessary to support electronic groups seeking both global and local audiences.

Strategic Plan - Board of Trustee Initiatives

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Vali F., Executive Director

While Staff have primary responsibility for executing the Strategic Plan Strategies outlined in the WSO Projects Landscape, the Board of Trustees and its Committees continued Strategic Plan initiatives to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Board and the service structure and to increase the transparency and approachability of the Trustee application and selection processes. Some of these initiatives evolved as a result of the Strategic Plan Refresh undertaken in 2021.

2021 Strategic Plan Refresh Impact on our Work

Lynette K., Vice-Chairperson of the Board (Trustee)

Work on refreshing the Strategic Plan began in 2021, and the current Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees (Board) in January 2022. This refreshing of the Strategic Plan gave the Board and Executive Committee (Exec) members a nudge to look once again at the work we are doing and think about which Domain of the Strategic Plan—Members, Recovery & Service Tools, Awareness, Financial Sustainability, or Global Engagement—our work fits into.

That nudge also reminded me of something a previous outside consultant employed by the Board had once said: that as Board members, we should look at the work we are doing. If our work does not fit into or move the Strategic Plan forward, then we should reconsider that work. This makes perfect sense. The Board sets the direction for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. through our Strategic Plan. Why would we want to continue with work if it is not moving the Strategic Plan forward?

Earlier this year, Exec recommended that each Board Committee or Work Group incorporate into its Guideline a statement about how the work of that Committee or Work Group supports the Strategic Plan. What a brilliant idea! For the committees that I am serving on, the recommendation gave us an opportunity to think about how our committee's work is supporting the Strategic Plan and what work, if any, could be let go. Additionally, this work gave me the opportunity to reflect on the idea that no matter what Al-Anon service role I am serving in, I am working to make sure Al-Anon continues to be there to support the families and friends of alcoholics.

¹The Strategic Leadership Team consists of the three Directors, two Associate Directors and a Manager. Its primary purpose is to deliver the strategic priorities of the organization as defined by the Goal Statements and Strategic Objectives established by the Board of Trustees.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

In 2023, a significant strategic focus for the Board of Trustees was honoring its commitment to incorporate discussions and workshops related to diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of every Board meeting agenda. To accomplish this goal, the Board relied upon both external and internal resources, including two consultants who each brought different perspectives and ideas for how the Board could continue its efforts to improve inclusion both within the Board and throughout the Al-Anon service structure. As with most journeys, progress has not been without missteps. Thankfully, the message from Bill W.'s Leadership Essay contained in the descriptive text of Concept Nine of the *Service Manual* encouraged the Board to continue to experiment and explore despite challenges:

"Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all."

Insight - The Board's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Journey

Debbie P., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Workgroup (Trustee)

As a Trustee, I recognize that, without exception, we all have the same goal and intention for Al-Anon Family Groups: to support and foster growth so that, as our Vision expresses, "Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives."

In the past, the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference have periodically discussed the lack of diverse representation in our Al-Anon groups and around the Board of Trustees table and questioned *why*. In 2023, the Board of Trustees decided to seek new directions with which to address the concern and answer the question.

At our January Board meeting, we participated in a workshop that encouraged each of us to become aware and gain new perspectives on our own understanding and beliefs around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The workshop invited the Trustees to examine and consider our individual unknown biases. We were collectively and powerfully affected—shocked by new personal insights and awareness—and yet still uncertain how to use this new awareness to help the fellowship. After much reflection and thoughtful discussion, the Board reached the consensus that there was value in bringing this workshop forward so all World Service Conference members could participate in the workshop and gain insight into the continued Board efforts regarding DEI. Despite concerns that there could be some resistance from those who consider this topic an outside issue, the Board concluded the workshop could be beneficial. In fact, Conference members' reception and understanding of the Board's motives was mixed.

The Trustees continued our education at the October Board meeting by participating in another workshop facilitated by a professional DEI consultant who was also a past Trustee. We were all encouraged when the consultant confirmed for us that looking at ourselves was a good way to begin the process of expanding inclusivity. Now, we are energized to develop ideas from this workshop.

I am excited and inspired to be part of this Board, which is fully committed to moving through discomfort and exploring what actions we can take to move forward.

2023 Strategies Update

Staff Strategic Leadership Team

In 2023, SLT consisted of the Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations, Director of Programs, Director of Communications & Community Awareness, Associate Director–Community Relations, Associate Director–International, and the Publications Manager.

While unable to anticipate some challenges involving the International Convention, including the hotel reservation and July North American airline travel crises, the SLT efforts “to make good estimates” in 2023 allowed us to either complete or make incremental progress on all but one Strategy proposed to and approved by the Board of Trustees at its January meeting.

Domain: Members

AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics.

- Transforming Electronic Groups
- 2023 International Convention with A.A. Participation (IC2023)
- Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility

Domain: Recovery & Service Tools

AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

- eBooks Globally Strategy Refinement (reflecting international structure self-support)
- CAL Globally
- Translated WSO Guidelines
- al-anon.org Redesign Feasibility
- *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* Code Refresh

Domain: Awareness

AFG, Inc. builds public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program.

- Public Outreach Toolkit Launch
- Longitudinal Survey (year two)

Domain: Financial Sustainability

AFG, Inc. encourages membership and organizational self-support by aligning resource allocation with its core purpose and strategic priorities.

- Phone System Replacement
- Improve the Online Store
- WSO Staff Emergency Texting System
- Member Guidance: Bequests

Domain: Global Engagement

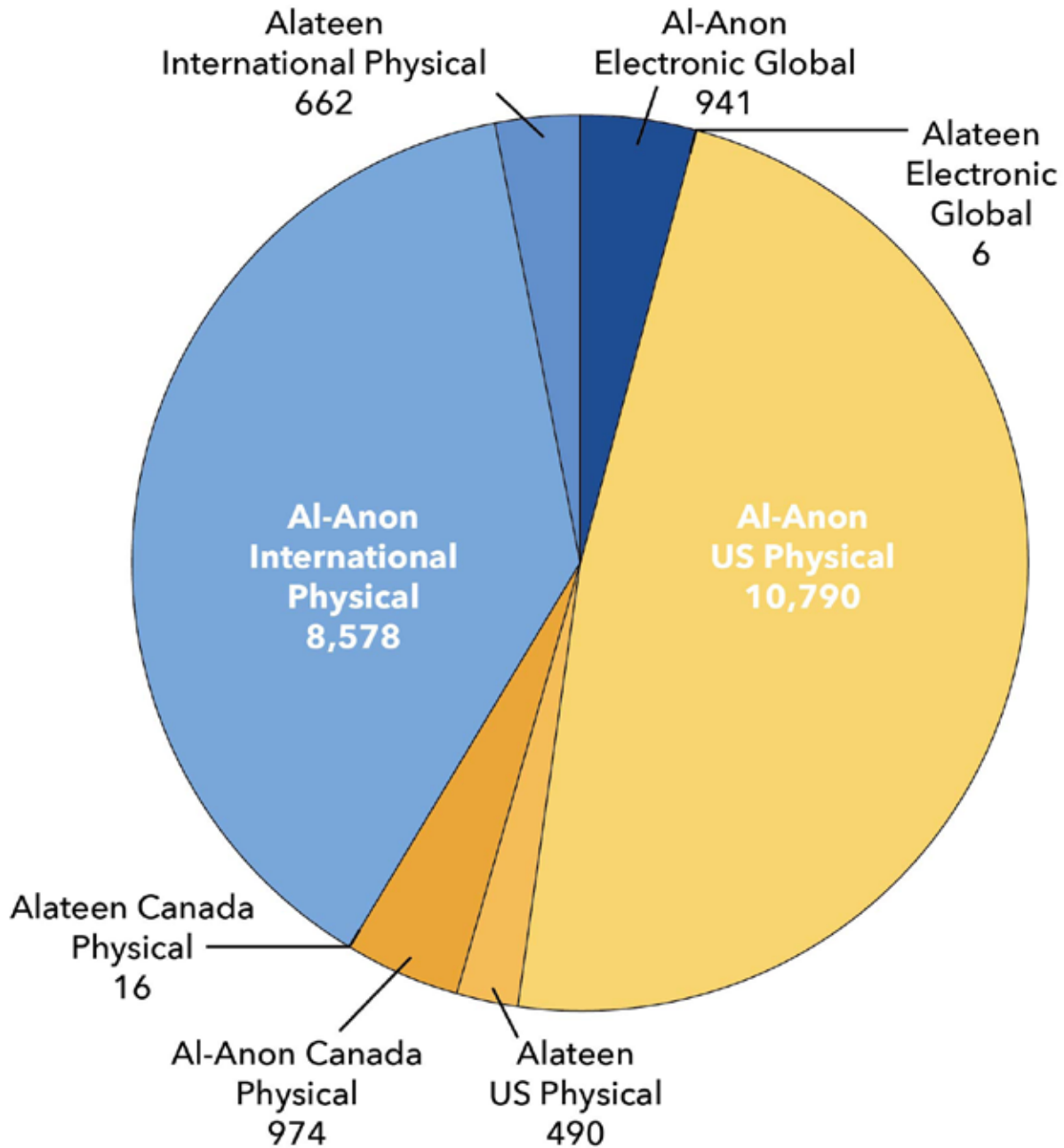
AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape.

- Global Gatherings Launch

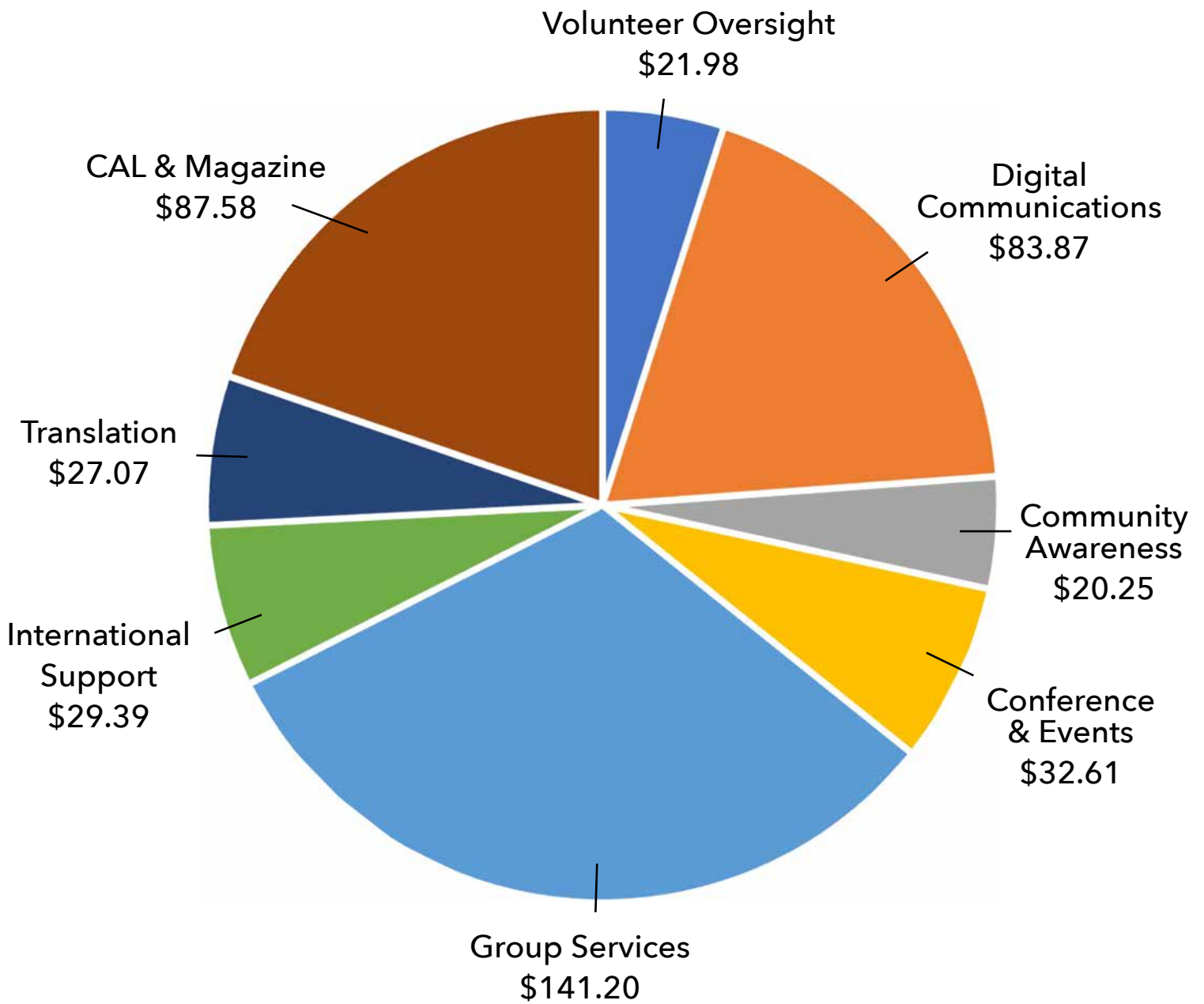
This year, the Annual Report headers under Our Work have been modified to differentiate sections detailing 2023 Strategic Plan Strategies or operational initiatives. Note that a few ongoing or smaller initiatives listed here, specifically the Longitudinal Survey and WSO Staff Emergency Texting System, are not referenced in the Annual Report. Additionally, two initiatives—Improve the Online Store and Member Guidance: Bequests—deferral of which was approved by the Board of Trustees in July are also not included.

Our Impact

2023 Worldwide Al-Anon Family Groups Statistics



Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Groups



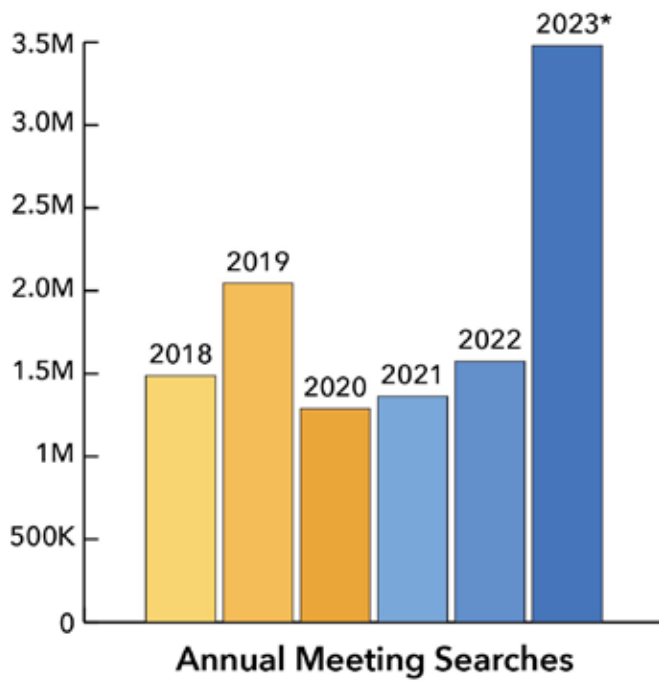
Groups by Language



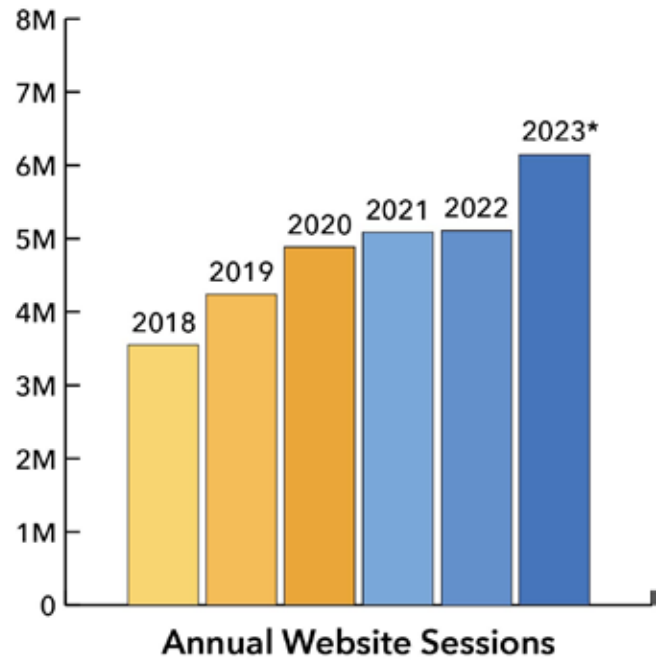
Meeting Platforms



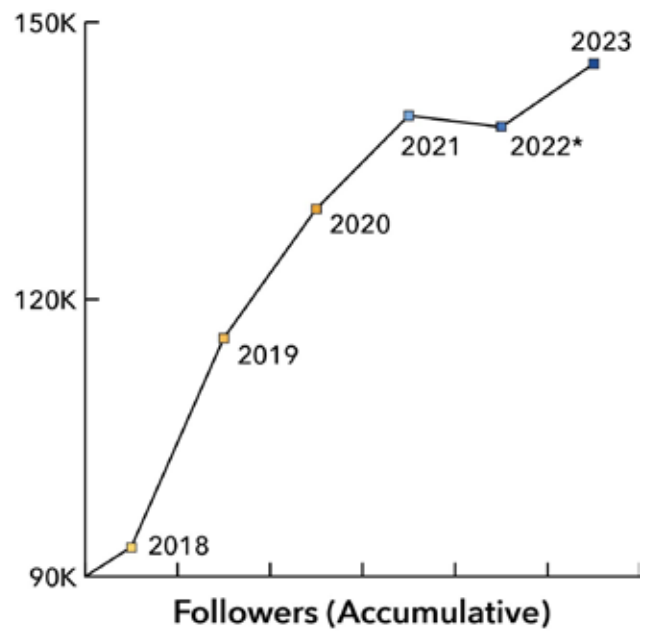
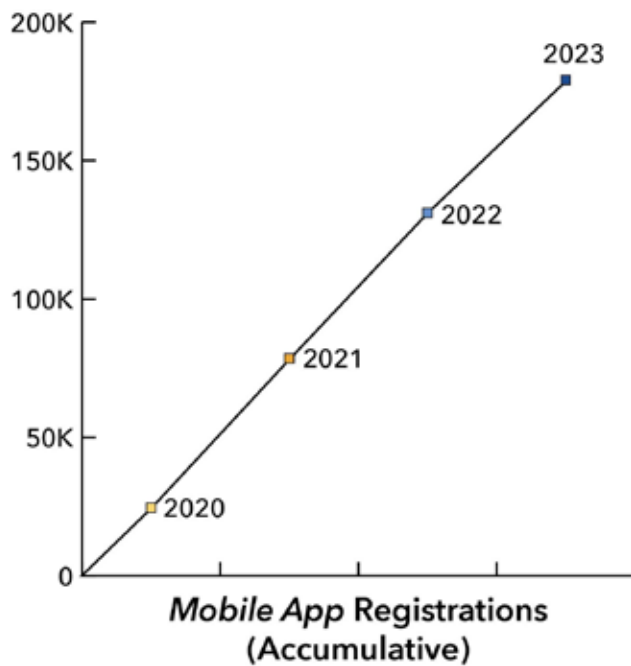
Digital Communications Connections



* In March 2023, the new Global Electronic search launched, providing greater search visibility.

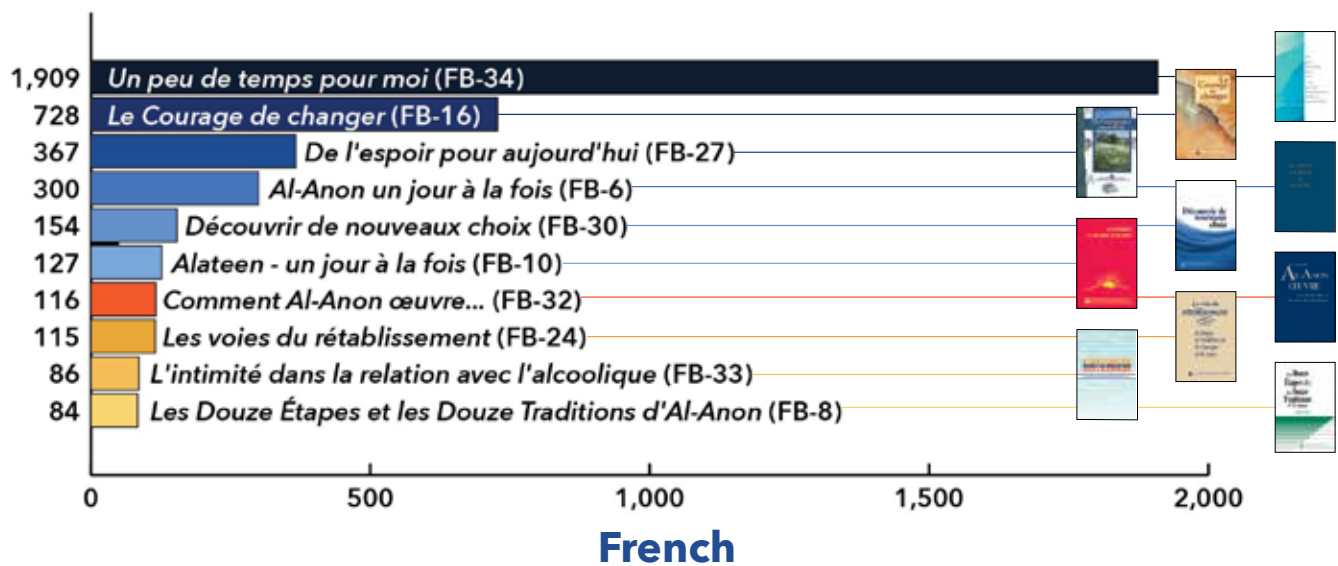
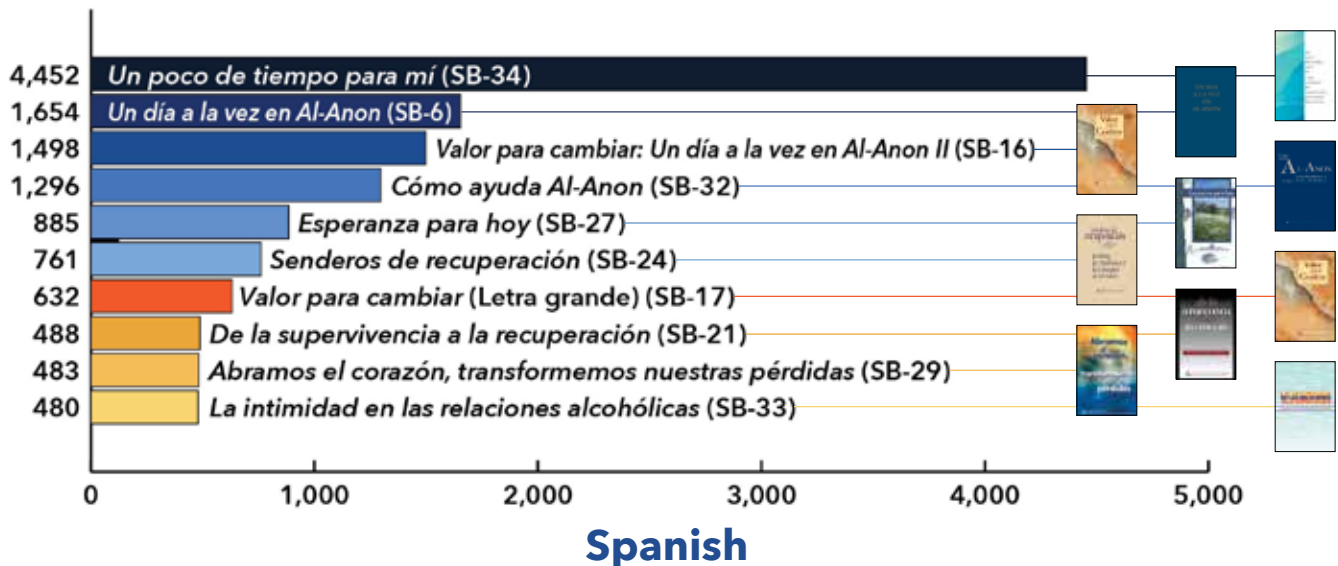
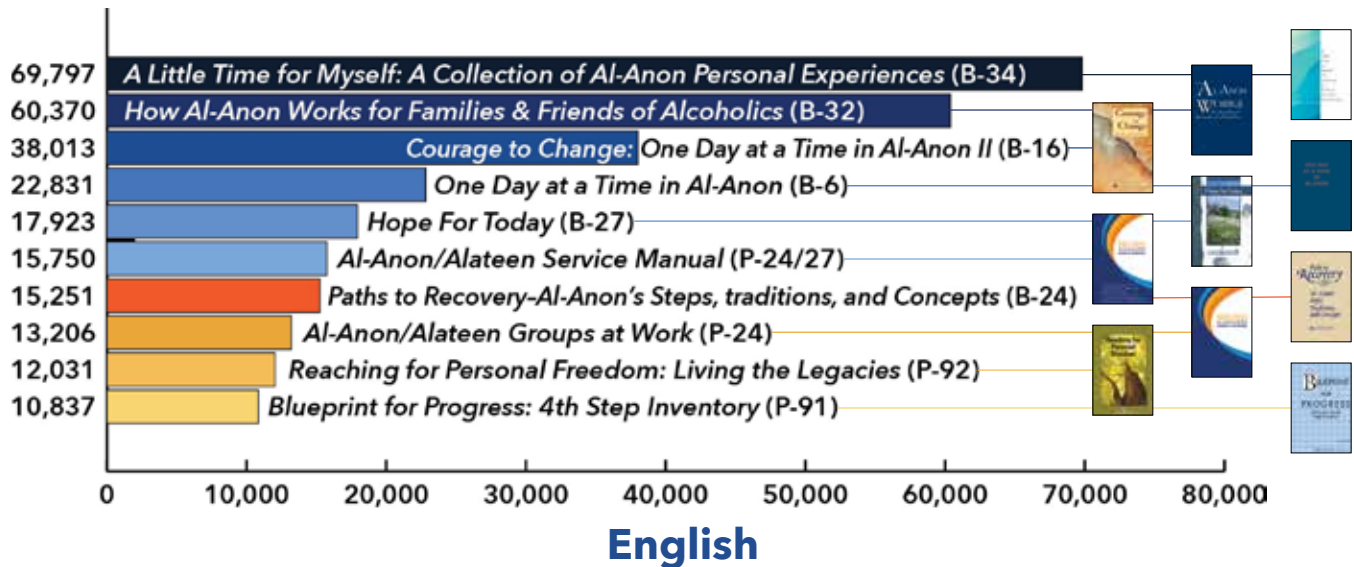


* In 2023, session tracking analytics changed from using cookies to using events.

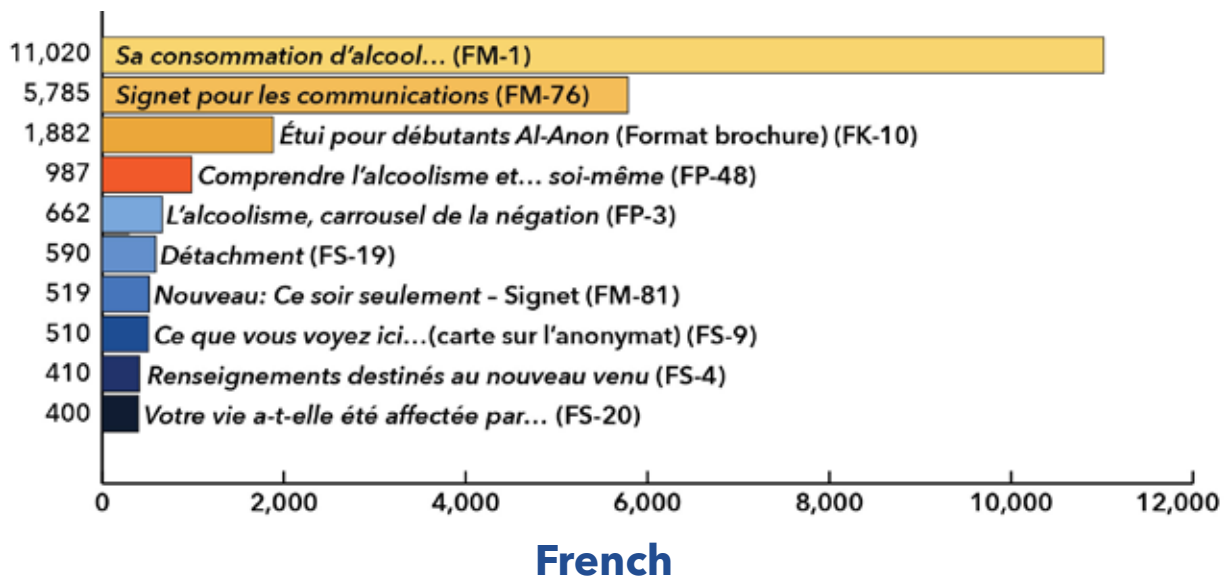
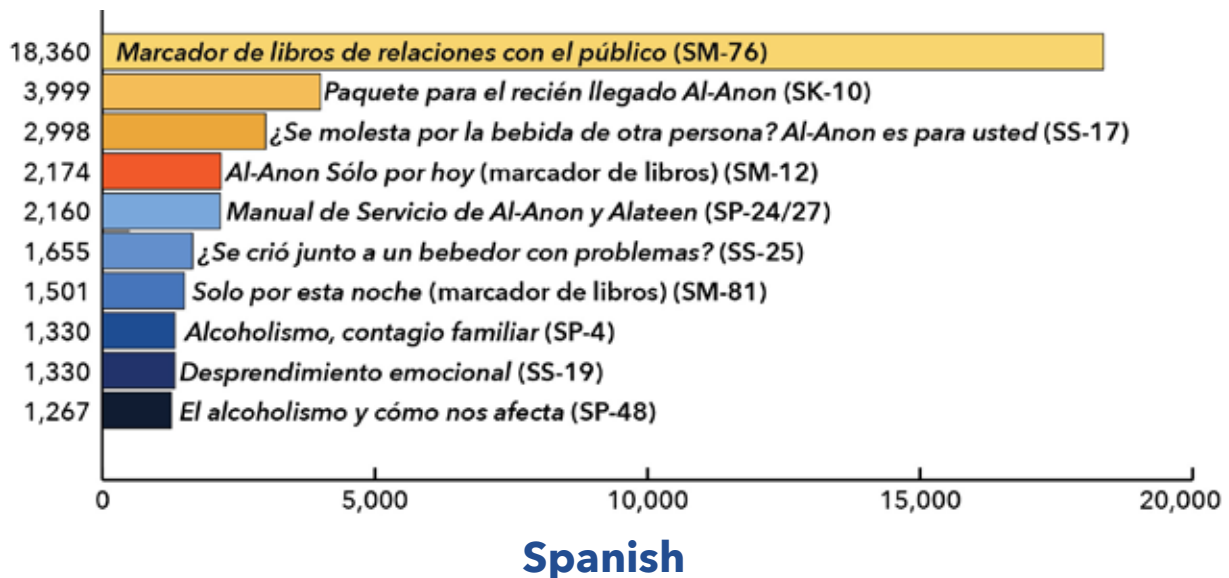
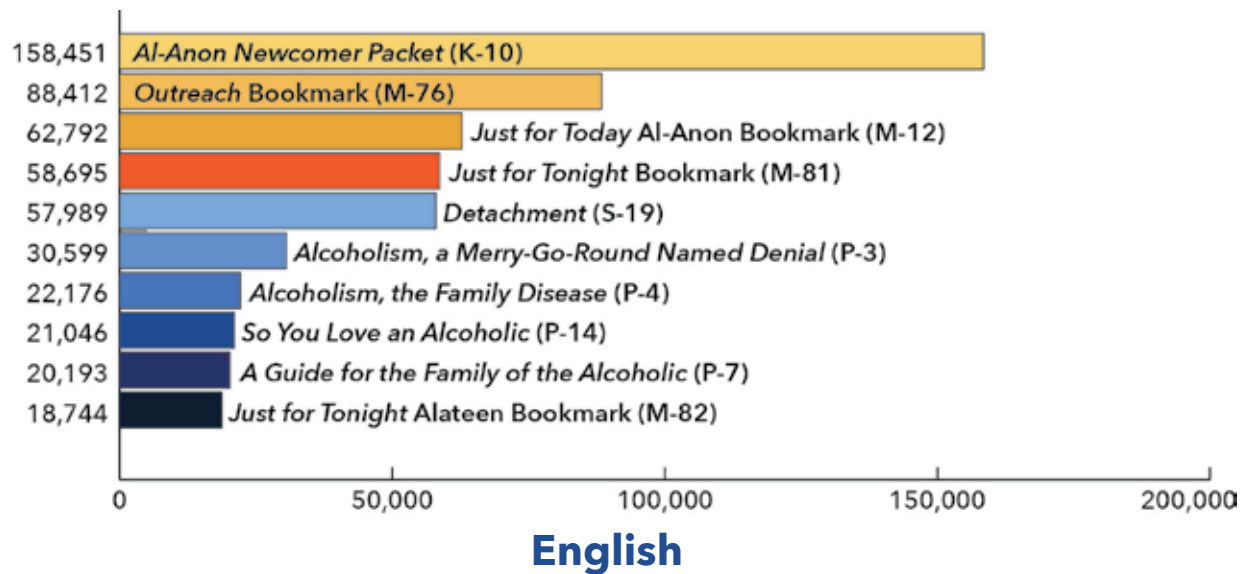


* No longer managing Alateen pages - removed 9,021 followers as a result

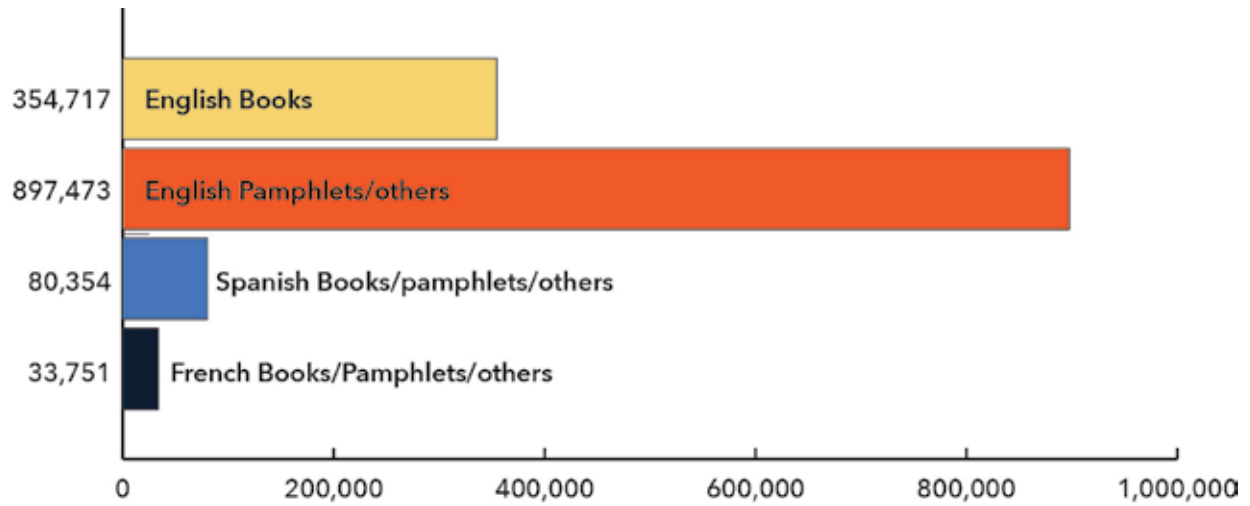
Top 10 Selling Books/Booklets of 2023



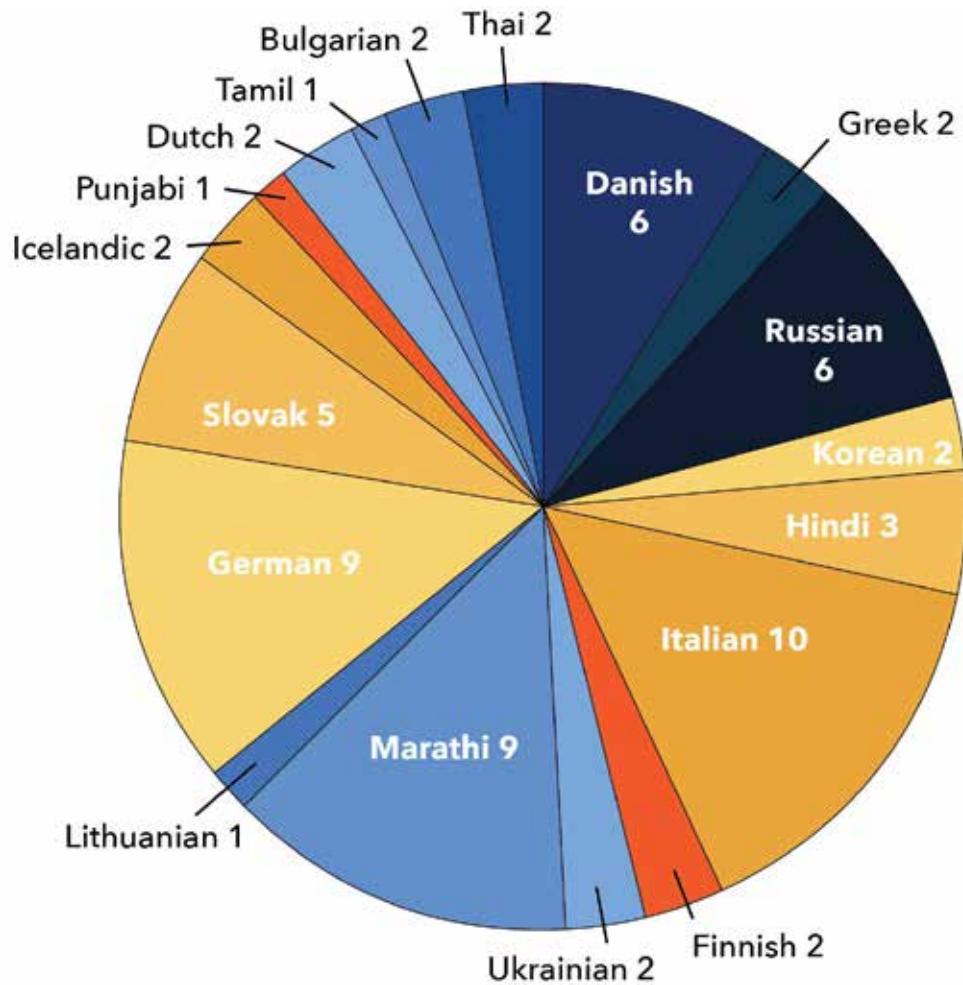
Conference Approved Literature Volume



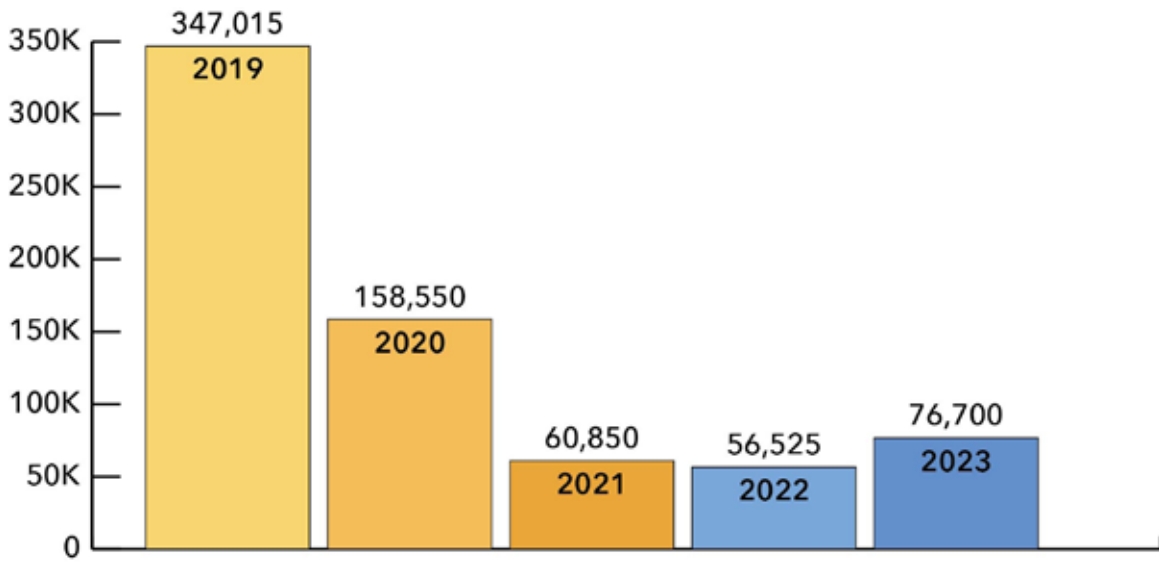
Conference Approved Literature Volume



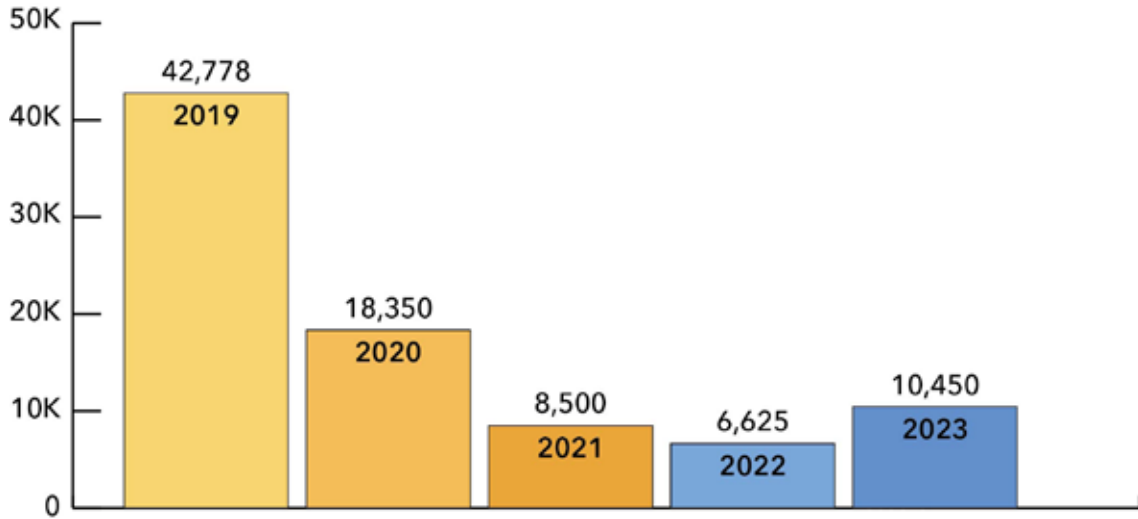
Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally



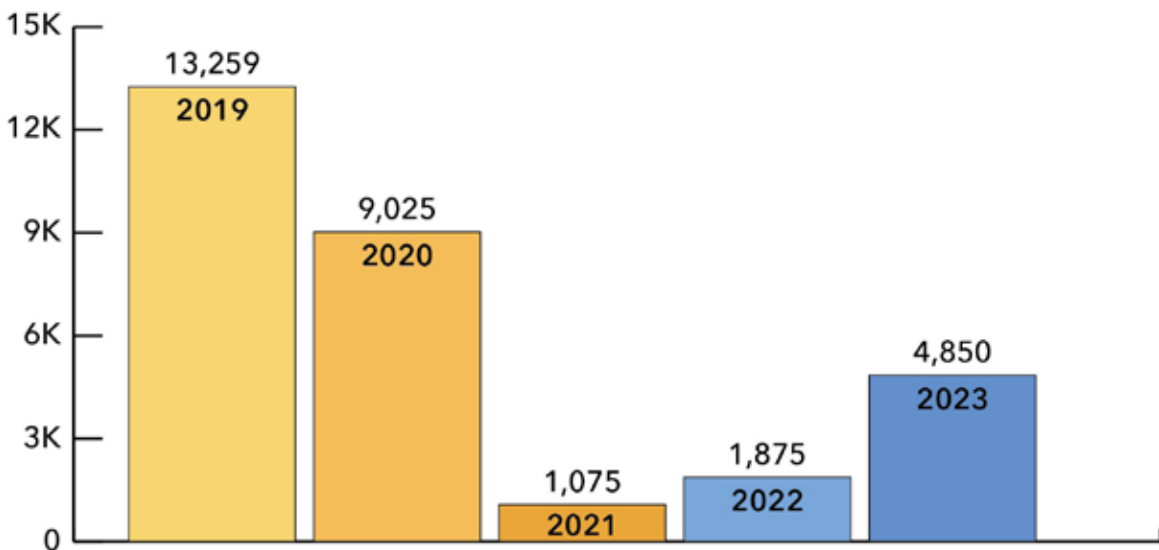
Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



English



Spanish



French

Our Work

Domain: Members

AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics.

Meeting the Needs of Our Groups and Our Members

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Manager (Non-member)

The 2023 WSC theme, “Love, Laugh, and Grow Together,” permeated through the Group Services team as we continued to serve our members. Correspondence via email and phone was filled with excitement and hope as members shared their questions and concerns. The loving interchange that takes place in those moments inspires us in Group Services to be informed and prepared so that we can best support you.

The Group Services team was privileged to be able to participate in international structure meetings with Greece, Belarus, Cayman Islands, Venezuela, and South Africa as well as to support the evolving structure of Iran and share experience, strength, and hope. Topics included attracting trusted servants and teens to Alateen, where to hold meetings, and being aware of and adhering to local laws as well as welcoming electronic Al-Anon groups.

Group Services Staff shared in the first International Town Hall hosted by WSO to discuss and gain insight into the feasibility of supporting electronic Alateen groups and proposing the concept of a Global Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirement. This gathering attracted over 80 members from around the world, representing more than 25 countries. Results of this discussion were shared at the 2023 WSC to present a truly worldwide view for Alateen, which prompted additional discussion and encouragement to move forward.

Group Services also participated in the Identify the Optimal Flow for Online Group Records Task Force. The Task Force charge was to determine the requirements for supporting the changing landscape of where and how Al-Anon groups meet and how to best support the Area trusted servants accessing and interacting with that group information. In March 2023, the Task Force completed its work, which began in August 2022, with the presentation of its final report. One unique component of success for this Task Force was the first-time gathering of input from District Representatives. This information, together with that gathered from Area Group Records Coordinators, offered a conclusive perspective on what is needed, as well as what is working well, with the current Online Group Records application. For Group Services, our participation gave us insight into how better to support groups as they navigated decisions about whether to continue meeting electronically, hybrid, or in person, and whether to connect to a geographic Area.

Al-Anon Member and Group Communications

Group Services fielded significant correspondence from people looking for information related to helping individuals affected by the family disease of alcoholism, resulting in referrals to attend meetings. Since so many newcomers have questions about the meetings, having accurate contact information can help provide a newcomer with answers and someone to look for their arrival and welcome them to their first meeting. We were excited to be part of the process that resulted in over 25,000 hits to the al-anon.org/welcome page during 2023!

Calls continued to be answered regarding group autonomy and business issues. Groups that meet electronically searched for clarity with Area-related issues and how to make Seventh Tradition contributions. While there are some differences in how and where groups meet, it helps to remember that “a group is a group is a group,” always adhering to the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon and the decisions of our World Service Conference.

Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility

The pilot project for the six Alateen meetings (five English, one Polish) taking place on the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* continues to thrive and be well-attended. Reported attendance averages from two to 16 in any given meeting, including newcomers who return! Certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) are rotating to serve the meetings. They are supported through an AFG Connects community as well as scheduled quarterly conference calls with Group Services Staff to address meeting concerns as well as to share best practices on meeting topics, engaging the Alateens, and technology.

The Electronic Alateen Group Feasibility Team successfully completed its charge to explore the possibility of registering electronic Alateen groups. The Team conducted thorough research including investigating national and international legal restrictions related to minors, surveying some Alateen members' interests, tracking and surveying international structures' Alateen pilot projects, surveying Area Alateen Coordinators, and facilitating robust discussions at the WSC and at an online town hall meeting with international structures. As a result, the Team determined it could be possible to support registration of electronic Alateen groups. In July, the Team presented its findings to the Board of Trustees, which agreed the Team had accomplished its charge. While this was a major accomplishment, the WSO Staff and trusted servants from international structures recognize much work is left to be completed in 2024 as the Team continues to explore how an electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements process might be implemented globally.

Al-Anon Information Services and Literature Distribution Centers Communications

Al-Anon Information Service (AISs), Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs), and AIS/LDCs (sometimes known as Intergroups) within the WSC Structure reach out to the WSO for support to understand how they can operate and serve members with meeting information and literature sales. Group Services Staff answer their questions, including further explaining service positions and roles; finances; deciding geographical boundaries; and linking to the Area World Service Committees (AWSC) and Area Assemblies as liaisons.

Currently within the World Service Conference, the following number of these service arms are registered with the WSO:

	English	Spanish	French
Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)	81	2	1
Literature Distribution Center (LDC)	103	1	4
AIS/LDC (Intergroup)	85	16	0

Seven percent, or 19, of the English service arms and five percent, or one, of the Spanish service arms are in "no mail" status. For AISs and AIS/LDCs, this means they cannot be listed on al-anon.org, since the status indicates the service arm may not be functioning.

One role of Group Services is to continually update important contact information for newcomers, members, and professionals who are looking for local meeting information. In 2023, Group Services collaborated with other teams to begin the process to create an update form for these service arms that could be published in English, Spanish, and French.

Group Services also hosted the very first online informational service meeting for AISs, AIS/LDCs, and LDCs in March 2023. The meeting was extremely well-attended, with 80-plus attendees connected to AIS, AIS/LDC, and LDCs. Essential information was shared to support further understanding and knowledge, including:

- Service arm roles and responsibilities
- The importance of keeping contact information updated, especially for the Worldwide Al-Anon Contacts page on al-anon.org
- How to access AFG Connects
- Experience, strength, and hope.

A post-meeting survey of the participants concluded that 90 percent found it provided vital support to their roles. A second session was planned and held in November 2023, with over 100 members registering and more than 80 in attendance.

The Associate Director–Customer Service & Shipping and the Associate Director–Literature led the sessions, providing insight on how the small number of WSO Staff supports Al-Anon worldwide by processing orders and developing new literature. Recordings of both meetings were posted on AFG Connects along with information on supporting rotation of service.

[Inmate Correspondence Service](#)

The pandemic prevented the distribution of several WSO mailings, including the Inmate Correspondence Service (ICS) Contact update. Historically, there have always been Al-Anon members willing to serve incarcerated people by volunteering to write letters that serve as meetings, since many incarcerated populations must find their own path to the program. The WSO acts as a postman to preserve the anonymity of the ICS Contact. ICS Contacts send their correspondence to the WSO, which is forwarded to the assigned inmate and vice versa. Areas are encouraged to reach inmates through a variety of public outreach efforts.

Transforming Electronic Groups: Updating WSO Processes

Vali F., Executive Director

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Manager (Non-member)

Karen Wolff, Software Engineer (Non-member)

In 2023, the Transforming Electronic Groups (TEG) Strategy project team continued its multiyear effort to update WSO technology and processes to better support the electronic groups created as the result of 2021 and 2022 WSC motions. As the year began, WSO Staff found it challenging to keep the semi-automatic feed of the al-anon.org electronic meeting search current, due to the growing number of electronic groups registering as part of the Global Electronic Area. Geographic Areas continued to evaluate whether they would accept electronic groups in their Areas and what would happen to groups that wanted to transfer in or out of their Area once the decision was made. Groups temporarily meeting online that wished to become electronic groups registered in geographic Areas were also struggling to figure out how newcomers could find their meeting on al-anon.org given geographic meeting search restrictions.

[Global Electronic Meeting Search](#)

As the number of electronic groups seeking a global audience grew, so did the number of time zones, languages, and platforms supported. Automatic updates of group information from the WSO database to the meeting search became critical to ensure accuracy for the newcomer, as did the need to improve the user experience for those searching for meetings. In late 2022, Staff began an effort to upgrade our electronic group meeting search. Staff identified several features that would be critical to the success of the new meeting search, including:

- Embedded translation capability supporting as many languages as are supported by electronic groups—currently our global electronic groups are held in 18 languages.
- User time zone recognition, allowing meeting times to be displayed in the user’s time zone.

The new Global Electronic Meeting Search (GEMS) launched in March 2023 with very positive results. Later in the year, Staff discovered an incompatibility between several components of GEMS, which led to misaligned information being displayed when users searched for Spanish- or French-speaking meetings. A GEMS code refresh was approved to resolve the issue. In the meantime, ongoing component updates addressed the alignment issue. The experience reinforced for Staff that the complexity of the GEMS technology will require ongoing investment and resource commitment. At year end, Staff were completing their testing of the code refresh, which is expected to increase long-term code stability.

Group Transfers between the Global Electronic and Geographic Areas

The Team developed a process to support electronic groups choosing through group conscience to transfer from one Area to another following Area procedures. The process supports a group submitting a request on al-anon.org to join a new Area and transfer out of the Area where the group is currently registered. Once submitted, the transfer request notifies the group and Delegates for the Areas involved. After the initial trial of the process, Staff recognized Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) needed to be included in the process. Given technical challenges, AGRC notification is currently limited copying AGRCs on the original request. This approach provides the AGRCs and Area Delegates with necessary background information. Transfers are completed once approved through both Area procedures.

Geographic Meeting Search

The number of geographic Areas that accept Al-Anon electronic groups and have policies/processes to support them increased significantly in 2023. At year end, 58 Areas were accepting electronic groups. As of September, groups with electronic meeting locations in geographic Areas were incorporated into the Al-Anon Group Annual Update Sheet mailing, while groups in the Global Electronic Area (GEA) will receive the update in January.

Finding an electronic meeting seeking a local, geographic audience also became much easier this year. The geographic meeting search on al-anon.org now displays electronic meetings alongside local physical meetings. Electronic groups are easy to distinguish from physical groups by the custom pin on the map view and wording on the listing. The meeting search was also updated to allow those interested in attending an electronic group to join the meeting directly from the listing. The 2023 update allowed for the automatic refresh of meeting information, ensuring the most accurate results possible and a good user experience.

Insight: Impacts of Electronic Groups on the Service Structure

Norm W., At-Large member of the Executive Committee

Electronic groups have dramatically affected our service structure and have greatly expanded the number of meetings available to those seeking Al-Anon recovery. Electronic groups have enabled us to move closer to achieving our Mission that “families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences.” It could even be asserted that electronic groups enabled the fellowship to survive and prosper throughout the pandemic and into the future.

Because of the success of electronic groups, the WSC Structure has even added a 68th Area, the Global Electronic Area (GEA), which is made up exclusively of electronic groups seeking to attract a global audience. At year end, the GEA had 941 groups holding 1,556 meetings. In addition, some groups still temporarily meet electronically, and some electronic groups have moved into geographic Areas and seek to attract a local audience.

The impact of the electronic groups on Al-Anon is further demonstrated by the extraordinary success of the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, which has more than 177,500 active users.

Numerous Areas have held and continue to hold Assemblies and AWSC meetings electronically, as well as many District meetings. Without exception, service participation using technology has increased! All as a result of welcoming electronic groups to our service structure.

Electronic groups have helped make meetings available on a 24/7 basis worldwide. Electronic meetings are available in at least 18 different languages and on more than 20 platforms. Members on all continents can experience Al-Anon meetings based in South Africa, Great Britain, Mexico, France, Australia, India, Russia, Brazil, and many more countries. Thank you, electronic groups, for fostering our unity and truly making us a worldwide fellowship.

Archives: Engaging with Our History

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Jennifer U., Archivist & Conference Specialist

In April 2023, the WSO Archivist of 27 years retired, leaving behind a legacy of contributions that continue to resonate in daily operations. The mission of the Al-Anon WSO Archives remains steadfast, aiming to permanently document the history of Al-Anon and Alateen, make organizational history accessible to members and researchers, and provide a contextual understanding of Al-Anon's evolution, principles, and traditions.

Archives plays a crucial role in offering resource materials and services to Al-Anon members, researchers, and others interested in the history of Al-Anon/Alateen. This includes responding to global information requests and supporting local Areas, Districts, groups, and individuals conducting research on their history.

Research and Process Improvements

In 2023, Archives Staff undertook several activities to improve processes and increase internal awareness:

- Completed an inventory of Board of Trustees and its Committees' meeting minutes, identifying gaps and strategies to fill them.
- Reviewed and improved procedures.
- Conducted extensive training with the cloud-based archival solution provider.

American Archives Month in October was marked by a presentation at an all-hands Staff meeting emphasizing the significance of preserving the history of Al-Anon Family Groups, including Alateen. A scavenger hunt for WSO Staff engaged employees in our history by showcasing key artifacts around the Corporate Landing office.

Group and Structure Research

In 2023, the Archivist addressed over 60 group registration requests, a commonly sought-after archival service. Working closely with the AFG Records Team, detailed research, often dating back to old World Directories, was conducted to determine the formation dates of groups, some spanning over 50-60 years. The Archives actively responded to numerous requests for information, using tools such as the Archives Guideline (G-30) and the online Archives Research Request form (AR-9) to manage and respond to requests promptly.

Archives also conducted research for the WSO International Team exploring the history of over 70 international structures, including Al-Anon in Iran, the Russia with Love project, and other notable requests.

Archives Exhibits and Tours

In 2023, the Associate Director–Community Relations and the Archivist collaborated to begin a regular cadence for rotating the Archives exhibit cases and displays in the WSO lobby, with the first rotation occurring ahead of the 2023 WSC. Visitors and Delegates at the WSC expressed excitement at exploring the Archives and gaining insights into the organization’s rich history.

Ongoing WSO tours, which include a visit to the Archives, received positive feedback, which led to improvements in the tour script. Collaboration with the Graphic Design/Publications team led to the creation of professional signage for Archives and tour gift books, enhancing the visitor experience.

Collection Growth

The digital collection continues to expand, with over 100,000 documents stored in cloud-based archives repositories. While not entirely paperless, the Archives is actively moving toward digital preservation to safeguard its history. Generous donations of historical materials, including audio recordings, photographs, and letters, have enriched the collection. Notable donations include an old letter from a Hawaii Delegate and audio recordings from past Virginia Delegates featuring international and spiritual speakers from the 1968 WSC.

Collection growth is a key responsibility for Archives, and the Archives Team’s collaborative efforts with various stakeholders underscore the ongoing evolution of the Archives and its vital role in preserving and sharing the history of Al-Anon and Alateen.

Digital Communication: Connecting Members

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

Al-Anon Family Group Mobile App Code Refresh

The *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* was launched in August 2020. Since then, the *Mobile App* has had two significant upgrades, which added much-needed features and improved the user experience. At the start of 2023, however, the development code for the *Mobile App* was over three years old. And while we added features and improved the design, the base code was primarily the original code from the initial launch of the *Mobile App*.

This year, we invested in long-term success for the *Mobile App* by completely updating the underlying code to the most widely used coding language today. This simplifies future updates in addition to providing a better user experience to members in the *Mobile App*. This code is more streamlined and requires fewer resources to run, which makes it smoother and faster. We continue to work through issues as they arise; most recently, we worked through a compatibility issue with the latest version of Zoom and the latest operating system of Android devices.

al-anon.org Redesign Feasibility

We have launched a feasibility study to determine the estimated costs associated with a complete redesign of al-anon.org. The website was last redesigned in 2017, which makes it a prime candidate for a significant update to take advantage of the latest advancements in website technology. Staff has identified the key features members need on the website, along with some areas which need improvement. Some updates being considered include additional accessibility features, easier access to the most-used member resources, and simplified navigation. This project will provide the necessary information to make an informed decision about whether and how best to proceed with a site redesign.

International Conventions

Vali F., Executive Director

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

2023 Al-Anon International Convention

Al-Anon's Seventh International Convention (IC2023) saw 3,387 Al-Anon members, 42 Alateen members, 293 A.A. members, and 54 guests register for the Albuquerque, New Mexico celebration of recovery! Making history, an additional 741 people participated *virtually*, as the 2023 International Convention included a virtual component that allowed attendees an option to watch recordings of the Big Meetings and daytime sessions in all three languages. The virtual registration option offered those attendees the ability to watch a recorded version during convenient local time zone hours.

International Conventions are an enriching way to champion the Board of Trustees' Members Goal, "AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics," and a total of 4,517 participated in doing just that in person and virtually in Albuquerque!

Insight: Creating "New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery"

Kathi M., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team—2023 (Trustee)

I feel blessed to have attended many International Conventions since I started in Al-Anon. This was my first time as a Trustee. I got to participate in so many ways: behind the scenes, and right out front as one of the Parade MCs. There were so many firsts: the parade was held in the morning, leaving Friday evening free for fellowship. There was a virtual component, a party in the plaza, and I got to dance in the rain.

I was grateful and impressed that we attracted seven professionals to attend our program for professionals and the media. The program included a professional panel, which received many positive reactions. I personally appreciated hearing the panelists speak on Al-Anon and what it has done for their clients. I learned years ago that Al-Anon is not anonymous, its members are. I believe having this program at our Convention was truly a big boost to our public outreach.

Being onstage for the Language of Love Parade and announcing all the different structures and Areas that form part of our global fellowship gave me chills. What a gift to include those who couldn't travel to join us but did so virtually. I'm grateful to have co-chaired the in-person event which was simultaneously streamed to members attending virtually. I even received a message from members thanking me.

There were some challenges at the Convention: finding places to eat, everyone wanting the same sessions, and rain during our party. But those are the stories that will be told, great memories that I will laugh about in the future. I didn't starve, order was restored, and I danced in the rain with some of the nicest people.

"New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery" was our 2023 International Convention Theme, and I believed we lived up to it.

With the assistance of a convention management consulting firm, all of the Staff's plans to reimagine—and yet provide a familiar landscape for—Al-Anon's 2023 International Convention with A.A. Participation came to fruition this summer.

Many attendees registered for the Day of Connecting add-on event held Thursday, the day before the Convention started. Participants began the day together in the auditorium before breaking out into various service-related interactive sessions. Over lunch, participants joined together again and were welcomed by a couple of Al-Anon-friendly professionals who shared their experiences referring their clients to Al-Anon. Members could join more sessions in the afternoon before gathering back together in the auditorium to share their experiences from the day.

Also new to the Al-Anon Convention experience, the weekend kicked off early on Thursday evening with a Party in the Plaza featuring music, dancing, and food just outside of the Convention Center in Civic Plaza and games, films, and food inside the Albuquerque Convention Center. Attendees enjoyed watching two Al-Anon and two A.A. films in English, French, and Spanish.

Moving the first Big Meeting from Friday night to Friday morning afforded virtual attendees, depending on time zone, the ability to watch the Language of Love Parade in real time. Following the parade and break for picture-taking, the Big Meeting continued with three speakers who shared their experience, strength, and hope as members of the Al-Anon global fellowship.

Saturday morning, our reimagined Trailblazers Breakfast on Route 66!, a ticketed event, was available for participants who wanted to celebrate current and longtime pioneers in our program. Three speakers shared their experiences: a former WSO Staff member's journey to Russia back in the '90s; a former WSO Deputy Director's relationship with Lois W., Al-Anon's Cofounder; and a member from the Global Electronic Area's experience with the evolution of electronic meetings, from groups to members of the 68th Area of Al-Anon's World Service Conference Structure. A separate *first-ever* longtime, Spanish-speaking members' session was held concurrent to the Trailblazers event.

All throughout the event, the New Mexico/El Paso Welcome Committee volunteers greeted attendees and answered myriad questions while staffing an Information Booth.

Members who downloaded the Convention app were able to plan in-person and virtual meetups with old and new friends, post celebratory pictures, and view the Convention schedule and floor map to ensure attendees knew where sessions were being held. Many Convention attendees chose to meet up with fellow participants by arriving early or staying after the Convention to tour Albuquerque and the surrounding area. Hot air balloon rides were among the most popular of the organized tours.

Following the International Convention, Staff participated in a retrospective with the event management company and also conducted their own. Among the takeaways were opportunities for growth along with clarity about what activities, schedules, and sessions were particularly successful in celebrating "New Hopes, New Friends, Renewed Recovery." After these conversations, Staff began planning for 2028! The location will be announced at the 2025 World Service Conference prior to our celebrating recovery with our A.A. friends from July 36, 2025 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Alateen at the IC2023

New Friends were made among the more than 40 teens who registered for the Alateen sessions held at IC2023. The four closed sessions and two open sessions held over two days were filled to seating capacity. Many Al-Anon members interested in learning more about Alateen attended the open sessions, to the point that some were turned away to allow the teens to participate. Certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were willing to serve to fill the 1:5 ratio to ensure safety and recovery in the meetings.

IC 2023 also hosted the first Spanish-speaking open Alateen meeting, in which an Alateen and their parent shared their experience on how Alateen has been helpful in the family dynamic. It was a privilege to plan this session and see how welcomed it was by our Spanish-speaking members.

Insight: Creating Inclusion for Worldwide Al-Anon

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee–2023 (Trustee)

My experience with the 2023 International Convention was enriched by the attendance of our international participants. How can you have an International Convention without the participation of our global community? This really hit home for me when I got to experience the language of the heart at the registration desk. One specific memory was greeting a group from Mexico. I could feel the excitement. I utilized a translation app on my phone to communicate. We shared contact information and gifts. Being able to break language barriers and share hugs and stories with members whose language I do not share was a highlight for me.

Having an online option allowed members in many countries around the world their first-ever opportunity to participate in this international Al-Anon recovery event. But even though this option eliminated travel costs, the registration cost itself could still be prohibitive for many globally. One of the gifts that was approved this year was the ability to offer cost-adjusted virtual registration fees for international participants. As a member of the WSC service structure, it is hard for me to imagine the burden of trying to pay a registration fee set in United States dollars and based on US economic conditions when I might be severely limited by the economic conditions where I live. Countries outside the WSC structure were offered a discounted price for virtual registration based on local economic conditions, which 127 Al-Anon members were able to enjoy. Approval of this discount demonstrated to me the Board of Trustee's commitment to making the Al-Anon International Convention as inclusive as possible.

I will never forget all that I experienced attending the International Convention. Having the International Convention in person as well as a virtual portion set at a realistic price to all participants allows us to honestly say, "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there!"

2025 A.A. International Convention

In support of the AFG, Inc. Mission, "Families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives," as well as the AFG, Inc. Goal statement, "AFG, Inc. connects and supports the friends and families of alcoholics," Staff members attended their first site visit to begin the initial planning for Al-Anon's participation in A.A.'s International Convention, to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2025.

Two Staff Coordinators were assigned to lead the WSO IC2025 Planning Team. In 2023, these Coordinators:

- Defined the Planning Team's roles and responsibilities
- Selected the headquarters hotel for Al-Anon's daytime sessions
- Recommended the number of WSO Staff and Volunteers needed to attend the event
- Met with the A.A. planning team and consultant
- Began reviewing Al-Anon International Convention Welcome Committee guidelines and considering ways to improve the collaboration between the Welcome Committee and the WSO IC2025 Planning Team.

Al-Anon's daytime program will consist of sessions on Friday and Saturday. In addition to sessions covering various recovery topics that were popular during Al-Anon's 2023 International Convention in Albuquerque, Staff is excited to consider offering several service workshops. On Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday morning, Al-Anon and Alateen members and their guests will attend A.A.'s Big Meetings.

Staff looks forward to A.A.'s 2025 International Convention in Vancouver, where we anticipate celebrating recovery with an estimated 4,000 Al-Anon and Alateen members, in addition to the tens of thousands of A.A. members and their guests.

2028 Al-Anon International Convention

Prior to IC2023, following the guidance of our event management consultant, the WSO decided to defer site selection bid process for the 2028 Al-Anon International Convention until after Albuquerque as opposed to before the Convention, as was the historical practice. The change reflected both shifts in the event planning environment after the global pandemic and 2022 resource capacity. Collaborating with the consultant, the WSO established a schedule, and WSC Structure Delegates were sent a site selection questionnaire to complete by January 2024. Like the site selection timeline, the questionnaire also reflected changes, inviting Areas to commit to organizing 400 Al-Anon member volunteers rather than asking for detailed evaluation of facilities. As of the year end, Staff had already received eight bids and are looking forward to what January 2024 will bring.

The site selection process will continue throughout 2024 in anticipation of an announcement at the 2025 World Service Conference. Those who attended IC2023 may recognize that this timing is different than the timeline shared at the closing Big Meeting in Albuquerque. Based on feedback from members and the IC2023 retrospectives, Staff recognized it would be more appropriate to announce the Al-Anon International Convention site at an Al-Anon rather than an A.A. event, so a new timeline was developed. Staff members are always grateful for the opportunity to learn and make different decisions.

Domain: Recovery & Service Tools

AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.

Literature: Collecting, Editing, and Maintaining Our Member Sharings

Tom C., Associate Director–Literature

Carol C., Magazine Editor

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

During 2023, the WSO Staff and the 11 members of the Literature Committee received 25 more requests for the development of new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces. The Committee brought a recommendation to the 2023 World Service Conference for the development of an in-depth piece about personal sponsorship and service sponsorship. It also continued answering the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions begun last year regarding the need for a piece about members' relationships with finances in Al-Anon recovery. Based on the results of that work, the Committee decided to recommend such a piece to the 2024 Conference.

While the development of new material is important, so is bringing attention to already existing literature. In addition to the monthly "CAL Corner" spotlight in *The Forum*, several newsletter and magazine notices put the focus on our literature throughout the year, including the April "Notes from the WSO" in *The Forum*, which explained what "conceptually approved" and "Conference approved as a concept" mean, and the May "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" *Forum* article on the history of the Al-Anon Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps. The magazine continued the "CAL on..." spotlight for a third year, featuring memorable quotations on specific topics. February's issue included "CAL on Adult Children," September's was about "CAL on Carrying the Message," and November's featured "CAL on Anonymity."

Area Literature Coordinators are essential in sharing news and information about literature to local members. Updates were posted every other month on the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects, where Coordinators also share their ideas and questions about writing workshops and other ways to encourage Area members to take an interest in CAL. To help further communication between them, two Literature Coordinator conference calls took place—one in February and the other in December.

For members' convenience, the WSO once again provided 20 quotations in English, French, and Spanish for service arms to use in fundraising calendars without having to seek written permission. This service reduces work for trusted servants as well as WSO Staff.

Additionally, progress was made on the following projects:

GEMS BOOKLET (working title)

The 2021 Conference motion to add a new Foreword to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) also included development of a GEMS BOOKLET (working title) of favorite ideas from this book and other material. During this year the Literature Committee completed review of two drafts, eventually giving unanimous approval and sharing high praise for the piece's content. The booklet was next

reviewed by the Director of Programs, the Policy Review Task Force, and the Executive Director. It is currently undergoing design and translation.

Insight: GEMS BOOKLET

Mary W., Chairperson of the Literature Committee (At-Large Member)

This year, once all Literature Committee members had the opportunity to review the first draft of the GEMS BOOKLET (working title), a tally of all comments was distributed to the Committee. The diverse and disparate opinions of the Committee seemed to be all over the place. I wondered how we could ever reach a consensus, and how this booklet would ever come together. Prior to development of a second draft, we had further discussion about the scope and contents of “the gems.” Some previous discussions were revisited and some new perspectives added.

I have been a member of the Committee since before the initial discussions of this project began in 2018, and I voted to approve the current document. At times I have experienced feelings of frustration and fear during some of the Committee meetings. Now that my part in the process is completed, I have one more example of how my Higher Power, the Al-Anon principles, and the WSO Literature Committee Guidelines can help achieve an outcome that is so much better than I would have ever imagined.

Just for Tonight Alateen Bookmark (M-82)

This year, the *Just for Tonight* Alateen bookmark became a reality. After completing reviews by the Director of Programs, an Alateen Task Force, a Policy Task Force, and the Executive Director, the bookmark was designed, translated, and printed. It became available on September 1, and announcements were made on various communities of AFG Connects, as well as in *The Forum* and *In The Loop*.

Insight: First New Alateen Piece in 22 Years

Kathi M., Member of the Board of Trustees

As is the case whenever we provide materials that help everyone, I am very excited not only that we have our first Alateen piece of literature in 22 years, but because of the opportunity that was given to our Alateen members to submit their sharings for the bookmark. It's wonderful that there was such a positive reaction from the WSC to approve this piece. The bookmark is such a wonderful expression of the Alateen program.

As everyone knows, there have been so many questions and concerns about Alateen in the last few years. The pandemic was *definitely* not their friend and was a plague for many young (and older) people. The technological generation was getting slammed with technology for school, church, and even Alateen. Alateen meeting attendance dropped. I see this bookmark as a beacon of hope for our Alateen members and Alateen meetings, and hopefully a draw for so many more.

It has been a privilege to have had my children attend Alateen and to have served as an Alateen Group Sponsor for a meeting, at conventions, and for the Southern California Alateen Conference. I have walked through some tough times with my daughter when she was an Alateen member, but I believe Alateen gave her a safety net. I've also walked through tough times with the Alateen members in my groups and with Alateen itself. We've had lots of growing pains. But today I am truly blessed to be a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon, which includes Alateen. I am grateful to see these positive signs that Alateen will come back stronger. *Together*, we can make it. I have been fortunate to personally watch so many of the members of my Alateen groups grow into such amazing adults. Alateen and Al-Anon have made such a difference in so many lives.

Personal/Service Sponsorship Piece (working title)

Once given conceptual approval by the 2023 World Service Conference, the Literature Committee began developing a writing guideline to encourage members to share their recovery stories for the development of an in-depth piece about personal sponsorship and service sponsorship. Meanwhile,

Literature Coordinators have already been leading writing workshops for the piece, and sharings have been arriving at the WSO.

Recovery Magazines—*The Forum*, *Le lien*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*

As the monthly magazine of Al-Anon Family Groups, *The Forum* continues to offer hope and help to the families and friends of alcoholics, as do our bimonthly Spanish and French magazines, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* and *Le lien*, which until this year have been made up only of translated excerpts from *The Forum*. All our magazines feature sharings from members in various relationships with alcoholics and are intended to support recovery between meetings and provide topics for meeting discussion. The Publications team designs the magazines from the manuscripts developed by the Magazine Editor, incorporating member-submitted photographs as well as stock photography.

Member sharings are selected for publication based on recommendations from the At-Large *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC), whose members evaluate 50 sharings each month. The FEAC meets quarterly via web conferencing to discuss the status of the magazine and address reader concerns. Continuing a project initiated in 2022, FEAC members helped formulate questions for the first-ever online survey regarding *The Forum*, which took place in October 2023. The Committee also played a crucial role in planning for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of *The Forum* in 2024.

Dozens of Area *Forum* Coordinators from throughout the US and Canada also participated in web conference calls in 2023, sharing their service experience with one another. Many reported resuming in-person writing workshops to encourage member submissions to *The Forum*, reflected in an uptick in sharings received at the WSO.

Insight: Planning the 70th Anniversary of The Forum

Meg U., Chairperson of the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (At-Large Member)

I have been honored to be a member of the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) since 2020 and to serve as its Chairperson for the past two years. Our Committee is composed of five dedicated Al-Anon members representing different geographic regions, along with the *Forum* editor. It has been a privilege to meet and work with these members, as well as with the talented and very helpful Staff at the WSO.

Our Committee meets virtually several times a year and stays in touch through the WSO's AFG Connects platform. 2023 has been a fun and busy year for the Committee. We recommended a *Forum* reader survey, which was done in October. We have had fun brainstorming ideas and planning ways to celebrate the 70th anniversary of *The Forum*, which will be commemorated in 2024. For me, as a *Forum* subscriber since 1988, this has been especially meaningful. I can still remember some of those early articles I read that helped me so much!

Every month, Committee members read submissions by Al-Anon members from all over the world. We evaluate each sharing to ensure that what gets published in *The Forum* is consistent with Al-Anon principles, and we offer our thoughts on how each one impacts and inspires us. I am continually awed by our members' wisdom and resilience and the creative ways in which they practice and live our program. Like sitting down to have a cup of tea in the afternoon, reading a few sharings daily brings me peace and serenity, even in the midst of the most hectic day.

I have found much joy and fulfillment serving on the FEAC. Being a Committee member has been a wonderful way to be of service and to give back to our fellowship.

First Publication of Original Spanish- and French-Speaking Member Sharings

A milestone was reached for the WSO's Spanish and French language magazines in 2023! For the first time in their history, original submissions from Spanish- and French-speaking members were published in *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* and *Le lien*. Prior to this year, content in these two magazines

represented only translated versions of English member sharings. This milestone came as the result of a collaboration between the Digital Communications, Literature, and Translation Teams.

The final 2023 edition of the Spanish *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazine contained two sharings originally submitted in Spanish, and *Le lien* contained two sharings originally submitted in French. As reviewers, the Translation Team took great care to preserve the original voice of the members, limiting edits to grammar, punctuation, spelling, and clarity.

Translation

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Colette Norman, Translation Manager (Non-member)

The WSO Translation Team continues to make strides in providing faster translations to support the timely release of trilingual communications. A huge contributing factor is the access to our six freelancers who have been translating for several years now and are dedicated to preserving the essence of Al-Anon in their translations. This favorably impacted the turnaround of a large number of translation projects in 2023.

This year, aside from their routine translation projects (COB Letter package, Appeal Letter, *In The Loop*, *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazines, social media, etc.), the Translation Team had a robust schedule of special projects:

- *2022 Annual Report*—an average of 20,000 words were translated ahead of the projected date in under four months
- Two Electronic Group Transfer Forms—Global Electronic Area (GEA) to a Geographic Area and Geographic Area to the GEA
- Longitudinal Survey
- 2023 International Convention materials—al-anon.org International Convention page; Privacy Policy and Terms updates; emails and communications with attendees; program and participant messages for the Convention app
- *Just For Tonight* Alateen bookmark
- 2022 Strategic Plan Refresh
- New forewords for *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) and *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6)

Translated WSO Guidelines

Following the 2021 kickoff of a multiyear Strategy to progressively review and update all Al-Anon Guidelines—the shared experiences of Al-Anon and Alateen members on diverse topics—Staff continued its phased approach of translating and publishing updated Al-Anon Guidelines in English, Spanish, and French. As a result of this cross-team effort, a total of 24 guidelines (eight English, eight Spanish, eight French) were recently uploaded on our website.

Members can find these Guidelines, which are identified with a *New* label, under the Members menu at al-anon.org or by visiting al-anon.org/guidelines. Guidelines are free to download.

International Structures Support

As a result of the increased communication and collaboration between the WSO and trusted servants globally, the WSO identified two new areas in which trilingual translation would better support our international structures. The WSO committed to implementing these changes in 2023 to better support the Al-Anon Mission: “Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences.”

At a 2023 Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) discussion, Staff discussed the potential challenge for Spanish- and French-speaking international structures seeking to understand the

background leading to Policy Digest changes. Since international structures are responsible for adhering to all policies contained in the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Staff decided the *WSC Summary* content describing policy discussions needed to be translated in addition to the approved Policy Digest text changes themselves. The Translation Team implemented the new practice by translating the 2023 WSC “Announcing Events” and “Workshops” Task Force discussion. This discussion was translated along with the new Policy Digest text approved by the 2023 WSC and published as part of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v3*.

To improve global communication and honor our trilingual responsibilities, the WSO International team collaborated with the Translation Team on a regular basis throughout the year to translate materials publicizing events such as the Global Gatherings and other AFG Connects communications.

Publications: Publishing Recovery and Service Tools

Vali F., Executive Director

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

eBooks Globally Strategy Refinement

In 2022, Staff gained an understanding of the potential impact on our Al-Anon international structures’ ability to practice Tradition Seven self-support created by what appeared to the WSO to be a relatively small volume of international ebook sales. Once informed, the WSO deferred the rollout of new CAL in ebook format until research could be conducted into options that would consider both the WSC and international structures’ needs.

That research began in earnest in the second half of 2023, once Staff’s International Convention responsibilities were fulfilled. The eBooks Globally Project Team relaunched its evaluation of current technology in a constantly advancing industry and made some exciting discoveries. Additionally, the Project Team began discussing the financial implications of both self- and third-party hosting of ebooks. The conversations illuminated not only revenue potential but also the considerable resource knowledge and expense required to manage, protect, and administer ebook sales. Honoring the WSO’s commitment to keep international structures informed, Staff attending the European Zonal Meeting provided an update, which included a plan to invite affected international structures to collaborate in 2024 on options and ideas.

At year end, the Project Team was working to prepare its presentation to the Board of Trustees in January, which will outline a plan for progressing the eBooks Globally Strategy in 2024.

Insight: Expanding CAL Availability through Flexibility & Creativity

Cindy M., Chairperson of the Finance Committee—2022 (Trustee)

As our program continues to move forward into the digital age, the WSO is continuously asked about having more CAL in electronic form. It was perfect timing that the electronic welcome for newcomers was released right after we were hit by the pandemic. It was originally a request from our online community, which has been around for over 20 years. The pandemic just increased our presence online, creating a thirst for more online literature.

While we have a good number of books, pamphlets, and issues of *The Forum* available in electronic format, in 2022 the Board of Trustees voted to answer the membership’s requests for more online CAL. Data about our CAL sales suggested ebooks would not reduce printed literature sales, which is a main source of income for the WSO. What we didn’t realize until hearing from our international structures at the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was that the Board decision to produce more electronic literature could be reducing these structures’ main source of income. Because of this new information, WSO Staff is currently researching and compiling a report for the Board to review

at its January 2024 meeting about how we can honor our international partners as we move forward to make ebooks more widely available.

In the meantime, we have another project in which multiple international structures are being connected to improve their access to already available CAL in their language of choice. We must be creative and flexible as we expand the availability of our literature so that any member, anywhere, will have access to their choice of content—either online or in print.

2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v3

The *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* supports the Board’s “Recovery & Service Tools” Goal statement: “AFG, Inc. develops and publishes materials to share the collective experience of the families and friends of alcoholics.”

After overcoming significant supply chain delays in 2022, the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* v2 became available in print in English, French, and Spanish in January. Regrettably, Staff discovered two unfortunate errors in the English *Service Manual* on page 13. The word “God” was mistakenly italicized in Steps Three and Eleven. Staff corrected the online version, and the text will be corrected in the next printing. The errors did not occur in the French or Spanish *Service Manuals*.

Following the WSC’s approval of new Policy text, Staff translated the text and published v3, including housekeeping changes, online in English. Staff expect to publish the French and Spanish v3 online immediately after year end. Given current inventory levels of the *Service Manual* v2, the WSO did not print v3 in 2023; however, Staff did finalize replacement pages that members can download, cut to size, and add to their printed v2 copies.

The changes to the electronic version of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v3* include a housekeeping edit to the “Channel for Arriving at Policies” to reflect the accurate composition of the Policy Committee; an update to the Announcing Events Policy text per a 2023 Conference motion; a housekeeping change to “Electronic Communication Outside of Al-Anon” to replace “social networking sites” with “social media posts”; and a housekeeping edit to the Concept Eight descriptive text to reflect a 2021 Bylaws change.

Warehouse: Distributing Literature & Al-Anon Tools

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Camille Peters, Associate Director—Warehouse & Customer Service (Non-member)

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

A Little Time for Myself (B-34) Launch

In 2023, the WSO introduced the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Experiences* (B-34). Just as Al-Anon’s earlier daily readers reflect the times in which they were written, this book represents our fellowship as it is today.

The process to deliver this new piece, which occurred across multiple years, began with the Literature Committee identifying and reviewing the manuscript. The manuscript was completed and translated into Spanish and French during 2022, in keeping with our practice of releasing literature simultaneously in all three languages. Potential covers and binding for the book were also designed, and one version was approved in 2022. Once the design and translation were complete, WSO Staff began working with several different publishing vendors equipped to handle the volume and unique design of the book. The Finance Committee approved pricing consistent with our primary purpose. Staff sent updates to the LDCs and AIS/LDCs several times, informing them of relevant information along with a Priority Notice order form for preordering the book. Staff communicated availability dates via AFG Connects, *The Forum*, *In The Loop*, *Le lien*, and *en acción* and configured the Online Bookstore for sales.

Insight: The Excitement of Experiencing New CAL Be Fulfilled: A Little Time for Myself (B-34)

Tony S., Member of the Board of Trustees

I have been looking forward to this new publication for as long as I have been involved at the WSO. At the WSO in 2016, the first year I became Delegate, we were told that the WSO had collected 680 possible sharings and would need many more for this new daily reader, which had received conceptual approval by the Conference in 2014. In 2017, we were given the update that we had received 10,662 sharings. We were so excited. In 2021 when I became a Trustee, I heard the plan was to launch this book at the 2023 International Convention. We were even more excited!

At the end of this June, the first printing was launched, and in four days we sold out of all books taken to Albuquerque. A second printing of 30,000 books arrived the week before October Board week, and by mid-week, there were only 5,000 left. A third printing was already on order. The membership was hungry for this newest book, and judging from all the communications I have heard, they were not disappointed. Many members were excited about the new personal sharings and the question at the bottom of each page. This has truly been one of the greatest successes of 2023.

On a personal note, this daily reader has been a great addition to my daily routine. I love how it is laid out so differently than our other readers. The readings are so in touch with our changing world, the reflections are so closely related to the reading, and the questions give us something to think about as we go about our day. I really love how this book fits in with all the tools Al-Anon has given us. Thanks to all involved in making this happen.

All this occurred prior to the books being received in the Virginia Beach warehouse. Staff anxiously anticipated the books' arrival in time to ensure availability for sale at IC2023. Many pallets were shipped to Albuquerque in the hopes of providing adequate supply in all three languages. Both the Spanish and English copies sold out before the Convention concluded on Sunday.

Anticipating huge sale volumes upon return from IC2023, Warehouse and Customer Service Staff worked the Monday WSO Staff holiday before July 4 to start processing preorders for the LDCs and AIS/LDCs. Preorders allow LDCs and AIS/LDCs an opportunity to receive books first so they can distribute them to the groups and individual members in their respective areas. In 2023, we shipped 69,797 copies of *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34).

Insight: Persevering in the Face of the Post-Pandemic Materials Distribution Realities

Diane B., Member of the Board of Trustees

This has been an exceptionally exciting year for new WSO materials. The WSO released the new daily reader *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34) at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention. This new CAL was a huge success and sold out completely. There were supply chain delays with both the second and third printing, but WSO persevered, all the while ensuring transparent and timely communication with the Areas, LDCs, and AIS/LDCs.

My experience is that the world is still dealing with residual supply chain issues resulting from the pandemic, including paper supplies. Through all the delays and frustrations, WSO has done a stellar job of providing literature so we can carry the message to those who are suffering from the effects of the disease of alcoholism.

My message to members is always to purchase literature, write articles for *The Forum*, and contribute in any way possible to the development of Al-Anon literature. This is a small example of the work that is done daily at the WSO and through our Volunteers to ensure that our fellowship has the tools we need to carry out our Mission.

Domain: Awareness

AFG, Inc. builds public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program.

Digital Communications

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Public Outreach Toolkit Launch

Historically, a popular Public Outreach resource was the *Best of Public Outreach*. This was a PDF document that provided lots of information about Public Outreach, including ideas for projects that could be completed by members in all different levels of service. The challenge with this type of document is that it is very tedious to maintain. In a digital world, things change frequently, and a PDF document is not flexible enough to be updated regularly. With that in mind, the Public Outreach Committee made the recommendation to develop and maintain a space on al-anon.org where trusted servants could share public outreach ideas with one another. This idea became the Public Outreach Toolkit (PO Toolkit), which launched on al-anon.org this year, featuring several of the projects from the *Best of Public Outreach*. These ideas are tagged with various attributes, making it easy for any member to find ideas that fit their service arm, budget, and/or time commitment. Furthermore, as the clearinghouse of Al-Anon Family Groups, we also created a form on this page for members to share their Public Outreach experience, strength, and hope. These submissions are reviewed by a Work Group of the Public Outreach Committee, then added to the PO Toolkit.

Insight: Impact of New Toolkit on Increasing Public Outreach

Jean H., Chairperson of the Public Outreach Committee (At-Large member)

I am currently serving my second one-year term as an At-Large member of the Public Outreach Committee. The opportunity to exchange ideas and participate in public outreach projects is gratifying.

Members have been invited to share information about their local outreach projects. When I review the submissions in my role on the PO Toolkit Work Group, I am amazed at the variety of creative ideas. Some are short-term projects, some are low-cost, and some are directed to a specific audience.

This new approach to sharing current public outreach projects offers our members the opportunity to use an idea, perhaps with some modifications, to share the message of help and hope offered by attending Al-Anon.

I believe the new PO Toolkit will ease member hesitation about trying a new outreach project, inspire others to do a project for the first time, and alleviate any roadblocks that could occur. I am looking forward to seeing more ideas added to our online PO Toolkit.

Same Public Service Announcement (PSA), New Delivery Method

For years, the World Service Office has produced and distributed PSAs throughout the WSC Structure. While our PSAs continue to be played on TV and radio stations, we have also expanded our reach through a new digital partner that helps us reach a digital audience. This new way to deliver our PSAs has generated over 3 million views of our message.

The Ever-changing Landscape of Social Media

Over the past decade, social media has been a successful channel for building awareness and attracting potential newcomers to our life-saving program. Currently WSO Staff maintain profiles in English, Spanish, and French on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formally Twitter). Additionally, we also maintain a profile on YouTube, with videos in English, Spanish, and French, and a profile on LinkedIn to attract professionals in the position to recommend Al-Anon.

In 2023, Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, created a new platform to compete directly with X. While the WSO is not currently posting content on this new platform, Staff reserved the Al-Anon WSO profile names in English, Spanish, and French, so that when we are ready to start posting content, we can maintain the same brand identity as on all the other platforms.

Community Relations

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Trusted Servants—Our Vital Link to Public Outreach

The 14-member Public Outreach Committee, made up of an At-Large Chairperson, three At-Large members, eight Delegates representing each panel, and two WSO Staff members, met quarterly to assist in conveying the effectiveness of Al-Anon/Alateen as a valuable resource for families and friends of individuals struggling with alcoholism while attracting new members to our fellowship. The Committee's work supports the AFG, Inc. Strategic Goals of Recovery and Service Tools and Awareness by developing materials to share the collective experiences of families and friends to build public and professional awareness of the Al-Anon program. To remain relevant in the face of constant change, evolving cultural landscapes, advancing technology, and shifting public needs, the Committee has three work groups: Public Outreach Toolkit, Social Media, and Equitable and Unbiased Public Outreach Materials.

- The PO Toolkit Work Group reviewed 21 projects submitted by members.
- The Social Media Work Group rated 918 testimonies for posting.
- The Equitable and Unbiased Work Group investigated replacement materials for the discontinued pamphlet *Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Gays and Lesbians (S-70)*.

Fostering Connections within the Recovery Community

AFG, Inc. engages in community relations to build positive relationships with various stakeholders, raises awareness about its Mission, and promotes understanding of the support Al-Anon provides to friends and family members affected by someone else's alcoholism.

One way we foster connections within the recovery community is through a mix of in-person and virtual events. Attendance at national conferences such as the American Psychological Association and NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, not only provided networking opportunities but included participation in sessions to learn more about current trends in the addiction and recovery industry. Our presence at Recovery Month Kickoff events was another occasion to engage with key public officials, advocates, and professionals. The events included a luncheon with speakers sponsored by Faces & Voices of Recovery and SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Walk for Recovery. The connections made during these conferences and events have helped raise Al-Anon's visibility and establish a pipeline for potential cooperation with professionals in the future. More than 50 meaningful contacts were established, with contact information being passed to the appropriate Area Public Outreach Coordinators for follow-up. Significant professionals and subject matter experts were incorporated into AFG, Inc.'s portfolio for potential interviews, contributions to *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, or panel participation.

Al-Anon Member Survey Data Supports Recovery Research

As AFG, Inc. continues to build bridges within the recovery community, our commitment to cooperation with professionals, researchers, and students remains steadfast. In 2023, the Associate Director—Community Relations and Senior Data Analyst were invited to attend a Clinical Psychology doctoral candidate's virtual dissertation defense presentation entitled "Does It Work If You Work It? The Therapeutic Elements of Al-Anon Participation." The student utilized the anonymous survey data from the 2018 Al-Anon Membership Survey to analyze the impact of participation on subjective well-being, finding positive correlations with spirituality, service, sponsorship, and consistent attendance.

This research was presented at the Midwestern Psychological Association's conference and shared with the Board of Trustees. Staff has continued to cooperate with the new Doctor of Psychology and their dissertation advisor, who reached out to discuss additional opportunities to cooperate with other students interested in conducting research using AFG, Inc. Membership Survey data.

Insight: Sharing Professional Validation of Al-Anon Recovery

Cindy M., Member of the Board of Trustees

The final dissertation, "Does It Work If You Work It? The Therapeutic Elements of Al-Anon Participation," was presented to the Board of Trustees, and I found it to be amazing! Here we have a professional who did their research and came up with evidence-based data that backs up what we hear in meetings: "It works if you work it!" Their findings suggest that the following four actions improve members' recovery:

- Going to meetings
- Being spiritually motivated
- Being of service
- Getting a Sponsor and being a Sponsor

As a member who has been told to do all these things, I was surprised by "being a Sponsor." I thought that being a Sponsor was just another form of service. In reflecting on sponsoring others, I see how it has greatly enhanced my recovery, as I am constantly driven back to the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. So now, I encourage anyone that wants to grow in their recovery to not only to go to meetings, be spiritually motivated, get a Sponsor to work the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service, and be of service, but most of all to be a Sponsor or Service Sponsor to others! I am so grateful that we have a professional sharing their findings with other professionals, which helps to validate that our program works if you work it!

Domain: Financial Sustainability

AFG, Inc. encourages membership and organizational self-support by aligning resource allocation with its core purpose and strategic priorities.

Human Resources: Recruiting, Growing, and Retaining Staff

Vali F., Executive Director

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

In 2023, WSO Staff turnover was 11.1 percent², representing a decrease from 2022. Sadly, 2023 turnover included the unexpected death of a beloved, long-term Staff member and another departure resulting from health issues. Given his longevity of service, the WSO hosted a hybrid (in-person and virtual) memorial in November to honor our well-loved and immensely dedicated Staff member who passed.

Thankfully, during 2023, we were also able to onboard several talented new Staff members, including our part-time Maintenance Technician, two new Office Assistants, who have already begun expanding their roles to reflect their unique skills, a Human Resources Manager, and our Associate Director—International. Staff members, especially the Accounting Team, were grateful to have a full-time, experienced Staff member available to address the myriad human resources issues that arise even in a relatively small office. At year end, the WSO employed one part-time and 44 full-time Staff members.

²Note: The turnover percentage starting in 2020 is not comparable to previous years' calculations, as the WSO Human Resources Staff members applied an industry-standard calculation method beginning in that year.

With these new hires, and considering the constantly evolving needs of the Al-Anon Family Groups organization and fellowship, the World Service Office reorganized several positions to clarify responsibilities in keeping with Concept Ten and to utilize specific Staff member talents. The new Communications & Community Awareness Department was formed, consolidating the capabilities and skills of both the Brand and Digital Communications and Community Relations Staff. Several Staff members received opportunities to undertake responsibilities in new roles on different teams.

To reflect a July Board decision and to increase clarity around two key Staff benefits, the WSO updated its Employee Manual after review and approval by the Compensation and Executive Committees.

And finally, to acknowledge Staff members' incredible efforts in supporting our Mission throughout the year, the WSO hosted a holiday luncheon to which former WSO Staff members who still live locally were invited. The celebration served as its usual opportunity for Staff to connect and relax as well as the opportunity to acknowledge milestone Staff member service anniversaries at the WSO. This year, we celebrated five five-year anniversaries. Two early 2024 departures were also announced: the Executive Coordinator to the ED and Board was recognized for her efforts and wished all the best in her new position, and the Associate Director—Literature was recognized for his more than 22 years of dedicated service to ensuring the Al-Anon message of help and hope submitted by our members is shared and available through our Conference Approved Literature.

Insight: Sharing World Service Leadership with WSO Staff (Concept Eleven)

Carol M., At-Large member of the Executive Committee

As an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee, working with and getting to know the WSO Staff has been an incredible gift. Further understanding of what their work (and challenges) consists of, as well as how they serve the fellowship, is extremely humbling.

As noted on the al-anon.org website, the work of the WSO includes acting as the worldwide clearinghouse; registering new groups, planning, and coordinating the WSC; guiding Al-Anon's public outreach efforts worldwide; and preparing and distributing CAL. My broader appreciation emerged through understanding how this work gets accomplished year after year to support the Strategic Plan, as well as how it ensures continuity of the organization for future generations, for it is in the discernment of the future that the challenge lies. Al-Anon the organization continually needs to access and adjust to the needs of Al-Anon the fellowship.

Like with other businesses and nonprofit organizations, 2023 brought some staffing challenges to the WSO. While Staff turnover remains low at the WSO, turnover has a greater impact on a smaller Staff. I appreciate the diligence and creativity of the Directors' Team³ when addressing open positions to look across the entire organization for potential resource reallocation as well as development opportunities for existing employees.

Human resources are the greatest asset that any organization has—without people, no work would be completed, and without good leadership and oversight, people would not know where to focus. As our Cofounder Lois W. said, "It takes one person to start something, but many others to keep it going." As a member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen, I am beyond grateful to the entire WSO Staff for keeping it going.

³The Directors' Team consists of the Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations, Director of Programs, and Director of Communications & Community Awareness.

Executive Director Succession Planning

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board—2023 (Trustee)

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board—2022 (Trustee)

In keeping with their fiduciary responsibilities, at the January 2023 Board meeting, Trustees began discussions related to succession planning for the World Service Office (WSO) Executive Director. Following the wisdom contained in Bill W.'s Leadership Essay found under Concept Nine in the *Service Manual*, the Board began its efforts by looking "at past and present experience to see what we think it means." The Board reviewed notes from previous Board of Trustees discussions on the topic to understand the thought process that led to the implementation of a ten-year employment limit on the Executive Director position. The Board discussed the differences between rotation of service in the traditional roles within the fellowship and the nature of legal responsibilities involved in employment relationships with AFG, Inc. Trustees reflected on the differences in the Board's employment evaluation and transparency practices in place in 2017 and those which had been developed and successfully implemented since that time. The Board also gathered information about best practices from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), of which AFG, Inc. is a member, and other sources of senior leadership succession planning. The Board identified the differences between:

- Continuity planning—how the organization will function if the senior leader is unavailable due to illness or other causes for multiple weeks, and
- Succession planning—a structured approach for creating a smooth, planned transition between senior leaders, which includes nurturing and developing leadership candidates both inside and outside the organization.

With this background in hand, the Board recognized the need to differentiate and discuss two separate topics: the ten-year limit on Executive Director employment and ongoing succession planning for the Executive Director. Given the importance of both topics, discussions began in January and continued across each subsequent Board meeting in 2023. Having conducted three thoughtful and informed discussions, the Board made the decision in July to remove the ten-year limit on Executive Director employment in favor of the transparent, robust performance evaluation process implemented, tested, and refined over the last six years. The evaluation process aligns the Executive Director's annual goals with the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan Goals, defined and approved by the Board of Trustees; incorporates Board and Executive Committee feedback as to ED achievement of these goals as well as Staff feedback as to ED performance; and concludes with an all-Trustee discussion on the results. At its July meeting, the Board committed to continuing its education and ongoing development and review of the World Service Office Executive Director succession plan.

To that end, the Board engaged an ASAE-recommended consultant to present best practices for effective succession planning. The consultant acknowledged the Board's decision regarding the employment limit as a best practice before commencing their presentation, which included detailed steps for building, reviewing, and updating the Board's Executive Director succession plan. This conversation concluded with the Board establishing specific 2024 goals to further develop the Executive Director succession plan and ensure smooth continuation of operations and leadership at the WSO.

Operations: Managing Operations

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Michael Rodriguez, Building & Office Manager (Non-member)

Phone System Replacement

A key Strategic initiative for 2023 was improving the phone system in the World Service Office. The current phone system is over 20 years old and antiquated, and it had begun to present limitations and impacted Staff's ability to provide helpful and timely information to members calling seeking help.

Staff researched multiple companies and decided to upgrade a VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) solution to replace our traditional landline phones. This new system provides greater flexibility for answering meeting line, department, and reception line calls and allows phone operators to answer calls remotely if the office is closed due to inclement weather. This system will boost productivity and enhance responsiveness when the members contact the WSO seeking information or a meeting. The new phone system launched seamlessly, without any disruption to members, in December 2023.

Legal: Protecting Al-Anon's Name

Vali F., Executive Director

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Anne P., International & Legal Specialist

Trademark and Copyright Protection

To answer questions frequently asked by members and trusted servants, a Trademark and Copyright Protection presentation was shared with the 2023 WSC. The goal of the presentation was to share information about what does and does not violate Al-Anon's copyright and trademark in the hopes of expanding WSO capacity to inform and reduce the incidence of violations. The presentation was posted on AFG Connects to provide accessibility for all Conference members to use, particularly for Delegates to share with their Areas.

Members responded, and the WSO received numerous reports of violations related to social media. As a result, the WSO worked with Apple, Facebook, and YouTube to remove content violating AFG, Inc.'s intellectual property rights.

- Podcasts of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) and *Courage to Change* (B-16) by two individual accounts were removed from Apple's iTunes platform.
- Ten Facebook groups using the trademark name of Al-Anon and posting pages from our daily readers were removed for violating Facebook's intellectual property policy.
- One channel on YouTube that had produced 734 videos reading from *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*, *Courage to Change*, and *Hope for Today* (B-27) was removed by YouTube.

Insight: Understanding Trademarks & Copyrights

Pennie K., Chairperson of the Policy Committee—2023 (Trustee)

On the last day of the 2023 World Service Conference, I was in awe of the knowledge and excitement I had witnessed in the room throughout the first three days of the Conference. I took a couple of minutes to soak in the peace and serenity and looked at my agenda to see what interesting things I would learn that day. I wondered what I could glean from the copyright and trademark presentation.

According to the presentation, a few short years ago, copyright and trademark challenges were not something that needed to be understood by the typical Al-Anon member. At that time, it was possible as a fellowship to delegate these challenges to Staff at the WSO to resolve. The presentation explained the "what, why, how, and when" of copyright and trademarks. Conference members learned that the names Al-Anon and Alateen and the triangle-and-circle logo are all registered trademarks of AFG, Inc.

We then learned about the human as well as the financial cost of copyright violations. The WSO and other service structures around the world must work to protect the Al-Anon name. Whenever a violation of copyright comes to the attention of the Board of Trustees, it is the responsibility of the Board to notify the violator through its duly appointed representative. This is necessary in order to avoid invalidation of the copyright.

When the presentation ended, I realized how lucky the Conference members were to be informed so we could all now help to protect the Al-Anon name for all of us.

Trademark Registration

As the WSO International Team expands its collaboration with structures all over the world, it remains imperative that the names of Al-Anon and Alateen and the Al-Anon logo are protected. Collaborating with AFG, Inc.'s trademark counsel, WSO Staff works to make certain the Al-Anon trademarks are registered trademarks in each new country where Al-Anon is present. This effort is especially important when an international structure desires to translate and print Conference Approved Literature.

This year, with the assistance of counsel, WSO Staff initiated the registration of trademarks in Bulgaria, Latvia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Belarus. Registrations in the Cayman Islands and Kazakhstan, initiated in 2022, were finalized in 2023. Additionally, the trademark registrations for the United States and Uruguay were each renewed for another ten years. The process for renewing registrations in the US were quite involved, requiring samples of how the trademarks are used within each registered class (for example, pamphlet, book, etc.).

Domain: Global Engagement

AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape.

Coordinating the World Service Conference

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Kathi M., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team—2023 (Trustee)

Debbie P., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team—2022 (Trustee)

The World Service Conference (WSC), Al-Anon's annual business meeting, provides guidance to the WSO on service matters that are brought to its attention, and is a prime example of the Board of Trustees' Goal Statement "Global Engagement": "AFG, Inc. invests in each new generation of trusted servants to preserve our legacy and improve our structure and operations to meet the needs of the global landscape."

Planning for Al-Anon's 2023 WSC began shortly after the close of the 2022 WSC and continued into 2023. In April, Conference members gathered in Virginia Beach, Virginia, for Al-Anon's 63rd WSC. Ninety voting members and other attendees carried out Al-Anon's business.

In addition to discussing and voting on routine motions such as the Annual Report and the Finance Committee Report, the Conference passed a motion to amend language in the "Conventions and Other Events: Workshops" and "Conventions and Other Events: Announcing Events" sections of the "Policy Digest" to improve clarity regarding what events may be announced.

Insight: Policy Committee Update

Pennie K., Chairperson of the Policy Committee—2023 (Trustee)

The spiritual purpose of this Committee is the unification of the Al-Anon membership. It includes the Board of Trustees, At-Large Executive Members, and voting Conference members of the WSO Administrative Staff. Some spiritual principles we bring to the Policy Committee are open-mindedness, discernment, principled deliberations, personal experience, and an ability not to force solutions. The Policy Committee welcomes all questions and suggestions from any Al-Anon and Alateen member, meeting, group, or Area regarding issues that might need further clarification or interpretation in light of our Legacies.

In 2023, we held a generative conversation brought by the Registering Multiple Meetings Thought Force. The "Announcing Events" and "Workshops" Task Force brought changes to these sections of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" to the 2023 World Service Conference (WSC) for discussion. The WSC approved the updates, which were published in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) v3*. A Task Force was charged with examining the entire "Local Services" section of

the Policy Digest. The Policy Committee completed its review and recommended the changes be approved by the Board. These changes will be presented to the 2024 WSC for possible consideration.

Policy Committee discussions also included information from the Choosing a Group Name Task Force, which was formed following the Open Policy Committee Meeting at the 2022 WSC. This Task Force is continuing its charge and is scheduled to bring further insights to be discussed in January 2024.

At the July and October Policy Committee meetings, Committee members had an opportunity to discuss two topics of concern. One was initiated by a letter from a District trusted servant on the topic, "Is the gendered language in the Steps and Traditions in alignment with Al-Anon's Legacies?" The second topic was introduced by an Al-Anon international structure. We had a thoughtful discussion on the topic of the policy implications of not allowing minors under 18 years of age in Al-Anon meetings. Our conversation reflected Al-Anon's Traditions, Concepts, and policy statements in relationship to legal requirements. Both of these conversations will be continued.

Having the privilege of being the Policy Committee Chairperson has enlightened and enhanced my recovery.

During the WSC, Conference members visited the WSO where they were welcomed home by WSO Volunteers and Staff, toured the office, met Staff, and spent time in the Archives.

Insight: Welcoming Conference Members Home with the WSO Tour

Sally K., Member of the Board of Trustees

At the April 2023 WSC, members were able to tour the WSO in Virginia Beach. Being a WSO Volunteer, I was part of the WSC welcoming committee. All members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff lined up along the driveway outside the WSO. As the bus pulled up, excitement grew amongst us. As the Delegates started to step down from the bus and moved along the line of WSO Staff and Volunteers, everyone was stopping to talk and to give and receive hugs. As the Delegates moved closer, I could see that most of them were crying, as were many Staff and Volunteers. The Staff and Volunteers were all welcoming the Delegates home.

I have heard from many Al-Anon members who have visited Stepping Stones just what an emotional and spiritual experience it is to visit the WSO. From my observation and personal feelings on that day, I think it was an experience of equal emotion. There were more than 100 of us all hugging, talking, crying, and laughing. It was an incredible and extraordinary beginning to the WSO tour.

The Delegates were split into small groups and escorted around the World Service Office while being given the information from the various Staff on the workings of each department. Those of us given this task worked in pairs, one at the lead and one behind (me) making sure no one was left behind. It was a challenge to keep everyone on track, as they all wanted to see Staff and ask questions, but there was only so much time.

The experience of observing the workings of the WSO is *incredible*. It is something those of us who have had the privilege to be a part of will never forget. I know for me that I have my name tag and mug waiting in the Board Room each time I am onsite.

I can say the impact of being part of the tour has to be an experience that makes Al-Anon members want to serve at this level. Everyone has the opportunity to serve in Al-Anon, and those of us who do serve know how enriching that can be to our programs and our lives.

Besides receiving a copy of *Many Voices, One Journey* (P-31), all Conference members were given a printed copy of the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v2.

Insight: Sharing Many Voices, One Journey as a World Service Conference

Don B., Member of the Board of Trustees

There are several Conference Approved Literature (CAL) books that I use on a regular basis. First, there are the daily readers, and my next most frequently used book is *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31). I use this book as both a reader and as a reference. I love reading about the history of our program; there is so much experience, strength, and hope packed into this book! When someone asks a question about where we have been and my answer is, "I'll get back to you," I typically refer to this book to find the answer. There is a lot to be said about knowing where we have been as a fellowship.

I would encourage all WSC members to become comfortable with this book so when they are making decisions, they can look back to see what worked in the past and what didn't before looking to the future.

Supporting the WSC Structure and its Trusted Servants

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

World Service Conference Delegates

In 2023, the Board continued its practice of hosting virtual presentations of the Chairperson of the Board Letter (COB) and accompanying three updates from the Finance Committee, Policy Committee, and the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) in February, August, and November. These presentations are designed to increase the speed with which the COB Letter content is available as simultaneous interpretation is provided for our Spanish- and French-speaking Conference members. All Conference members are invited to attend. After the presentation, Delegates are also offered the opportunity to meet with their assigned Trustee to ask clarifying questions to ensure they have a robust understanding of the content shared.

Embracing the AFG, Inc. Mission, "Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through barrier free meetings, information, and shared experiences," CLT continued supporting Area Delegates by posting messages outlining the importance of preparing for Conference, as well as detailing the various roles of Conference attendees and the value of taking notes for Delegate Reports.

Insight: From Despair to Hope

Cindy B., Rhode Island Delegate

As I sit and reflect over my journey this past year, it feels very familiar. The beginning of this past year brought me back to a time in my life when I felt helpless. When I was elected to Delegate in the fall of 2021, I was so excited to represent Rhode Island. My excitement quickly faded as I realized that the Area's service structure had some issues, including dominance, disharmony, and double-headed management. As time went on, I realized that there had been a gradual breakdown of Rhode Island Al-Anon and the communication process.

In January, conversations began at the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings regarding combining Rhode Island with an adjacent Area, as there were 11 open service positions. I stepped out of my comfort zone and reached out to the WSO, and the journey of reasoning things out began. A lunch meeting was held at the 2023 WSC with three WSO Staff members and a few other Delegates to continue the interchange of information. I began to feel hope creeping in.

As the year went on, much communication took place. Two wonderful women from the WSO came to Rhode Island and held two workshops: a service workshop on Friday night and another workshop

during our Fall Assembly. In my eyes, the weekend was a success: five AWSC positions were filled, and many new faces were seen at both events. We did not fill every position, but I am hopeful that the message will continue for anyone needing Al-Anon in Rhode Island. My service journey over this past year took me back in time to a place of despair, with many hands reaching out, and I am now in a place of hope once again.

WSC Structure Areas

The Board of Trustees, Executive Committee members, and WSO Staff continued the practice of visiting Areas within the WSC Structure whenever invited. Thanks to technology and the global pandemic, many Area Assemblies and Conventions are held virtually or with a hybrid component, providing a more cost-effective opportunity for these visits.

Insight: Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope with the Areas

Sally K., Member of the Board of Trustees

I am moving through my second year as a Trustee and have had the privilege of being asked to attend Area Assemblies in both Saskatchewan and Alberta/Northwest Territories (Alberta/NWT).

The Assembly in Saskatchewan was held online, which I personally feel can create a less personal connection, so I was a little concerned. I was to present about my role as a Trustee and, in the evening, present my personal story. I was encouraged to see so many happy faces looking back at me on the screen.

Sharing on my role as Trustee, I talked about my personal experiences, travel issues, my nervousness at the first Board meeting, etc. I was pleased to hear later that attendees were thankful to understand the personal side of my experience and not just the business details. While sharing my personal story, I watched attendees being moved to tears and came to understand that being remote was not a barrier after all.

When preparing for the Alberta/NWT Assembly, I was pleased it would be in person. I was asked to host a workshop. I suggested the topic of abundance, and the Chairperson suggested the Concepts. I decided to combine the two. I enjoyed presenting and felt it was well received. For my personal story, I wanted to share using the Concepts. On the day, I was uncomfortable using that topic and decided, at the last minute, to share my journey as a Trustee. It felt heartwarming to hear the feedback I received, which helped me to realize my growth in service.

I am honored to share my experience as a Trustee with my home and neighboring Areas and provinces. It's important to me that Al-Anon members have a chance to hear and connect with other members who hold positions on the Board, so they can learn that Trustees are just Al-Anon members involved in service because they love the program.

Group Services Staff Visits to Areas

Group Services Staff also had the opportunity to participate either in person or remotely in the following Area events:

- Florida South Area Al-Anon Convention with A.A. participation
- Tennessee A.A. Convention with Al-Anon participation
- Illinois North Area Spanish Workshop hosted by Intergrupala Hispana de Al-Anon
- Rhode Island Area Assembly
- Oregon Area Assembly

The ability to share our personal journey in recovery with members at the local level serves to bridge the gap between the clearinghouse and the fellowship. We welcome the opportunity to extend ourselves in this manner and provide any type of additional sessions at your events!

WSC Structure Area Trusted Servants

In 2023, Staff continued to use AFG Connects to communicate in real time with fellow trusted servants efficiently and effectively. Staff witnessed our members using the platform to ask for help as well as to collaborate on ideas to best serve their respective members and service responsibilities. The strength and hope garnered from the shared experiences of our trusted servants helped WSO Staff and teams to better serve the fellowship. It is gratifying to witness the various links of service supporting each other as, for example, Areas continue discussions on welcoming electronic groups into their respective geographic structures and navigating these groups in and through their links of service.

Trust the Process - Flow of Information

The World Service Office received regular feedback and questions regarding the timeliness and flow of information. The WSO processes hundreds of requests from members all over the world every month. While Staff has protocols to address that many requests, each request is uniquely different and can potentially require research and collaboration across multiple teams. In 2023, Staff continued their efforts to streamline communication processes, encouraging submitters to use team emails such as groupservices@al-anon.org and international@al-anon.org when submitting questions and requests. Throughout the year, WSO Staff remained committed to completing necessary research and discussion to ensure requests were answered in a principled manner, inviting those who were, and potentially are still, awaiting a response to trust the process.

Providing WSO Resources to Area Trusted Servants

Throughout 2023, Staff continued the practice of uploading new content each month to the WSO Materials to Distribute Locally AFG Connects community created in September 2022. The effort resulted in hundreds of downloads each month by trusted servants with access (Area Delegates, Area Chairpersons, PO Coordinators, Newsletter Editors, Web Coordinators, and District Representatives). These trusted servants were empowered to share these messages on Area, District, and local service arm websites or newsletters.

Area Alateen Coordinators & Alateen Process Persons

Group Services reviewed and approved the revised Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements for two Areas in 2023, including New Mexico/El Paso, the approval for which was completed ahead of the 2023 International Convention. Staff were also able to certify two additional Areas that lost certification in 2021. Of the 11 Areas that lost certification, eight are now certified to use the Alateen name and the remaining three Areas are in progress to certify. There are currently 64 Areas certified to use the Alateen name.

The Annual Area Alateen Recertification was completed by all certified Areas in the World Service Conference Structure ahead of the June 15 11:59 PM EST deadline. Group Services Staff worked diligently with AFG Records Staff to assist multiple Area trusted servants in carrying out the annual recertification process.

Area Alateen Coordinators and AAPPs are invited to several WebEx videoconference calls per year to share experience, strength, and hope regarding rotation of service, training, and service roles and responsibilities. These are hosted by Group Services and AFG Records. In addition, calls received from members, potential newcomers and professionals interested in supporting Alateen are referred to local Alateen trusted servants for follow-up.

Area Archives Coordinators

In 2023, the Archivist fostered engagement by facilitating over 20 posts in the AFG Connects Area Archives Coordinator community. A successful meeting held on October 15, 2023, showcased the Archives' role and services to the community and offered insights into its collections. This meeting, attended by various service structure members, marked the beginning of a renewed connection with the community, with plans for quarterly meetings in the coming year.

Area Public Outreach Coordinators

In February and August, meetings were conducted for Public Outreach Area Coordinators, including French Public Outreach Coordinators, Spanish Public Outreach Coordinators, Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinators, Institution Coordinators, and Public Information Coordinators. These gatherings facilitated the exchange of successes and challenges tied to various public outreach initiatives, offering valuable insights, support, and inspiration from a broader perspective. To enhance engagement and encourage dialogue, efforts were made to incorporate icebreakers and surveys into the meeting format.

Additionally, the monthly inclusion of “open” questions on AFG Connects Public Outreach Community aimed to foster discussions on specific topics, such as the role of Public Outreach Committees at the District level, utilizing the Al-Anon Welcome Series pamphlets to reach underrepresented communities, and ensuring the continuity of Public Outreach projects through the rotation of service. To better support incoming Public Outreach Coordinators, the AFG Connects welcome letter to the Public Outreach Coordinators community was updated. Specific links to public outreach resources were included, providing easy access to relevant information.

Supporting WSO Volunteers

Vali F., Executive Director

Heather S., Associate Director—Community Relations

Evolution of the Nominating Process

This year, Staff had the privilege of participating as part of the ongoing Nominating Committee efforts to improve the application process for experienced Al-Anon members seeking to serve on the Board of Trustees of AFG, Inc. The onboarding of our new Human Resources Manager proved timely in that she had experience to offer the Nominating Committee as it began evolving the document, now an online form, historically known as the “Trustee resume.” The first observation provided on the “resume” was that the form more closely resembled an application than a resume. This observation led the Nominating Committee to discuss the background on how the term “resume” may have come to be used and to agree to consider the term “application” moving forward. Staff were grateful for the opportunity to collaborate and share their professional knowledge with the Board of Trustees in this process.

Insight: Experiencing the Impact of Nominating Committee Changes

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Nominating Committee (Trustee)

Based on feedback obtained from Delegates during a 2022 WSC discussion centered around the Board of Trustees implementing a skills-based approach to selecting Trustees, the Board tasked the Nominating Committee to work toward moving in that direction. The Board approved a recommendation from the Nominating Committee to adopt a new skills-based Trustee role description, which was put into use for the 2023 Nominating Process. As the August 15, 2023 deadline for Trustee resume submission drew near, I was cautiously optimistic to see if the newly implemented Trustee role description would have any impact on the number of resumes that would be submitted.

I kept in mind the words “trust the process” and reminded myself that a Higher Power was in charge. I was ecstatic when I was informed that the Nominating Committee had received many more Trustee at Large resumes than we had available positions. Wow! That had rarely, if ever, happened in the past few years that I have served on the Nominating Committee. My heart was filled with gratitude to see that the hard work done by the Nominating Committee seemed to be having a positive impact.

I am grateful to my Higher Power for allowing me to be a small part of this change that will help the Board with their “obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committees are filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry” as stated in Concept Eleven.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

A dynamic avenue for building awareness of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, WSO Staff and the work they carry out on behalf of Al-Anon Family Groups, Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect was held in California South at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel on October 28, 2023.

Closing out Board Week, the event was a unique opportunity for Al-Anon members from the Area and across the WSC Structure to interact with the 14 members of Board of Trustees and three members of the Executive Committee. A total of 121 members were in attendance, including nearly 50 members from the Spanish-speaking community. Spanish interpretation was provided as a gift to the fellowship by the Area Spanish Coordinator in cooperation with the Area Welcome Committee.

The day started with fellowship, including coffee and icebreaker games, followed by a robust program of activities including personal shares, table topics, and informative presentations and culminating with a half-hour of fellowship. Participants acquired valuable insights into the operations of the board, understanding its functions and discovering pathways to potentially assume a Board member role themselves. A small sampling of these insights follows:

- *"This day has opened new areas of service to me."*
- *"Loved the presentations. I'm going to share what I learned at the next Area meeting and encourage the next chair to invite WSO to come out and share with members to take a 'road trip' that could inspire service."*
- *"The Staff and Volunteers at the WSO are regular members who are dedicated to serving the fellowship."*
- *"Me llevo mucho apredisaje para mi crecimiento. 'Y que empieze por mi.'" ("I am taking a lot of knowledge for my growth. 'Let It Begin with Me.'")*

Though the 2023 Road Trip! was originally slated to be a hybrid event, upon further review and discussion, Staff and the Board decided to forgo using an app to further enhance engagement at the event. The "limited" capacity created a more intimate experience to support the goal of connection and unity. Experience suggested that the app and virtual component might serve more as a distraction than a benefit for this smaller venue.

Preparations for Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect started long before it actually occurred at the end of Board Week in October. Throughout the year, the Road Trip! Work Group, made up of two Board of Trustees members, an At-Large member of the Executive Committee, and two WSO Staff members, refined the agenda based on the previous year's feedback and worked with the Area Welcome Committee to engage local members in promoting the event.

The invitations to host the 2024 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect were distributed at the 63rd Annual World Service Conference in April 2023. Area Delegates were encouraged to work with their Areas to submit a completed request form by September 22, 2023. The WSO received eight applications, and three potential sites for 2024 were selected at the Board of Trustees meeting in October 2023. The destination for the 2024 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect will be announced following the January 2024 Board of Trustees meeting.

Hosted annually by the Board of Trustees, Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect supports the AFG, Inc. Strategic Goal "Member" by connecting Volunteers, Staff, and members together in fellowship, and the "Global Engagement" goal by communicating leadership skills required for trusted servants in a creative and engaging manner. Held in a different Area each year, the event is a vital mechanism for fostering deeper connections and relationships within the Al-Anon community.

Insight: Creating Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

Jayne C., Member of the Board of Trustees

In my first year as Trustee, I was a member of the Road Trip! Work Group. Since I had never attended a Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event, I had no idea what to expect. The Work Group was cohesive and worked well together, making decisions about the day's activities.

We started the day with a fun networking activity that required attendees to ask each other questions in a service-oriented process. This icebreaker led to meaningful connections, and I met members from New York, Massachusetts, Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, Ontario North, Mexico, Northern California, and many different parts of Southern California.

Sitting at a table with members from the Spanish-speaking community was particularly rewarding. We shared our experience, strength, and hope throughout the day. It was thrilling to see all the participants' dedication and recognition of service as an integral part of their recovery. Sharing our service experiences at the table reminded me that we are all the same no matter what language we speak. I also enjoyed hearing the other WSO Volunteers share their personal stories. The entire day exemplified the AFG, Inc. "Members" and "Global Engagement" Goals, highlighting the WSO Volunteers' and Staff's connection to the fellowship and how we all work on its behalf.

International: Increasing Access to Al-Anon Globally

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Tanya J., Associate Director–International

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee–2023 (Trustee)

Kathi M., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee–2022 (Trustee)

Supporting Structures Worldwide

The worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon which includes Alateen now offers meetings in over 133 countries. There are 40 countries with established General Service Offices (GSOs), one country evolving toward becoming a GSO, 14 countries with Al-Anon Information Services, and 12 countries with groups that are working together with the support of the WSO to carry the message of hope within their borders. These links of service partner with the World Service Office to support families and friends around the world affected by someone else's drinking. Each operates as a distinct service entity within their respective country while also working creatively and collectively with the WSO and one another to carry the message of Al-Anon and Alateen to those who have yet to find the priceless gift of serenity.

The international team which expanded in 2022, experienced some significant changes in 2023 with the addition of a new Associate Director–International in March, the participation of the new Office Assistant in October, and the departure of the Programs Project Specialist early in the year. The new team members join our International and Legal Specialist and our Events Planner and Senior Assistant in collaborating with our international partners in the many capacities outlined here.

Celebrations

In 2023, Cuba celebrated 30 years of carrying the message of recovery. Russia celebrated their 35th anniversary, Mexico their 50th, Spain their 60th, and Finland celebrated their 70th anniversary!

Translation of Conference Approved Literature

To date, international structures have translated and printed Conference Approved Literature (CAL) into 37 unique languages. This year the International Team worked closely with six countries, supporting them as they prepared requests for recommendation from the International Coordination Committee (ICC), which then recommended them to the Board of Trustees for final approval to translate and print CAL. This year, the Board of Trustees approved Bulgaria, Romania, and Thailand for first-time translation and printing of CAL in their respective languages. The Board also approved first-time reprint

permission for Paraguay, as their primary language is Spanish. Latvia and Mongolia have created and registered AIS centers and hope to have permission to translate and print CAL in early 2024.

Insight: Creating Unity through the International Team Reorganization

Debbie P., Delegate for the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (Trustee)

I have been gifted with the opportunity to serve on the Board of Trustees and witness our spiritual principles of participation and inclusion on a global scale.

Since my first involvement with the ICC and attendance at the 2022 International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM), I have seen and felt the efforts of the WSO International Team reorganization in how they connect, support, and engage with structures outside the WSC. Having a team approach allows the opportunity for expanded collaboration, engagement, and support. Hiring a new Associate Director—International has introduced new and fresh perspectives. The International Team connects regularly with structures, increasing communication and trust. I hear the words of gratitude and appreciation noted in the international AFG Connects communities.

With the recent inception of bimonthly Global Gatherings—a virtual meeting to which all structures are invited—the WSO continues with its sincere efforts and commitment to connect structures that might not have the ability to attend Zonal meetings so they can see and hear each other. There is a unification that happens when others from around the globe have the opportunity to hear and see how often many of us have the same questions and concerns. The value, respect, and importance that WSO puts on all voices being heard is evident.

I have witnessed and experienced “Al-Anon’s Declaration of Unity” (Unanimous motion, 1984 WSC) in action on a global scale. *“Each member of the fellowship is a significant part of a great circle of hope. While respecting each other’s individuality, our common welfare must come first. Our recovery depends on our mutual need and an atmosphere of trust.”*

Regular Structure Meetings

In February 2022, the International Team began holding Regular Structure Meetings (RSMs) with some structures, both evolving and established GSOs, to improve communication and exchange information. In 2023, the International Team expanded the scope of these meetings to include groups from countries where there is no formal structure, as well as countries with Al-Anon Information Services. A total of 112 RSMs with members from 60 countries took place in 2023.

These meetings continue to be very well-received and sincerely appreciated by members from all over the world. Discussing shared experiences and challenges on a wide variety of topics, similar to those received and answered by the WSO via email every day, is powerful and productive for all involved.

As could be imagined, hosting 112 RSMs took considerable time and effort. During the year, Staff recognized the volume was not sustainable. Necessity being the creator of invention, Staff brainstormed ideas for continuing a regular cadence of communication with international structure trusted servants while honoring resource capacity. Building on the concept of the Board of Trustee’s COB Letter presentation, the idea for Global Gatherings was generated.

Global Gathering Launch

The International Team launched the first series of Global Gatherings in 2023 to provide an opportunity for international structures to gather with the WSO and learn from each other about frequently asked questions and other topics of interest they have shared with us. All international members are invited via AFG Connects, or email for those not yet part of an AFG Connects community. Staff plan to continue to host these Global Gatherings every other month.

On Tuesday, September 26 the first Global Gathering, “Board of Trustees: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities,” was attended by 85 members representing 25 countries. The event featured the Executive Director answering questions from international structures, such as, “To apply for the position of Trustee, do you need to present a Certificate of Criminal or Judicial Record?” and “Should the number of Trustees correlate with the number of groups or Areas registered in the service structure?” The series takes place via Zoom, which offers translated captions in 28 languages. In addition, the WSO provides simultaneous translation in French and Spanish.

The second Global Gathering was held on December 12 and featured the Communications & Community Awareness Department, whose Staff members shared a presentation and answered frequently asked questions about how best to conduct public outreach and social media efforts. There were 124 attendees, including members from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, The Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK & Eire, Venezuela, along with members of the Board of Trustees. Four interpreters, two French and two Spanish, and the WSO Tech Team supported the event.

CAL Globally

The goal of CAL Globally, which became a Strategy in early 2021, has been to collaborate with international structures to understand opportunities for expanding the availability of literature across geographic boundaries. In 2023, the CAL Globally Project Team has been collaborating with several international structures who are eager to participate in a select number of pilot projects to gather information, experience, strength and hope about sharing CAL between structures, so that more members are able to access CAL already available in their language at a reasonable cost and expediency.

The CAL Globally Project Team met throughout the year as it worked on developing pilots for two scenarios:

- Structures purchasing CAL wherever is most feasible
- Structures printing CAL utilizing translation from another structure

At the end of the year, the Project Team had finalized a carefully designed legal agreement developed with input from the two international structures who will carry out the first pilot, which was being translated into Spanish prior to being presented to the two structures.

Zonal Meetings

The Tenth European Zonal Meeting, hosted by Al-Anon France, took place in Paris, France over the weekend of September 1-3 and brought together 28 members representing 18 countries within the European Zone. The mission of the European Zonal Meeting is to improve cooperation between European structures in order to support growth of Al-Anon and Alateen in Europe. The EZM meets every other year, and the theme this year was “The Al-Anon Declaration.” Sarah S. shared a presentation about the Alateen Feasibility Project, and Vali F. and Tanya J. shared WSO updates with attendees.

The 11th Reunión Iberoamericana de Servicios de Al-Anon or Iberoamerican Al-Anon Service Meeting, hosted by Argentina, was held online October 20-22. The theme was “Unity in Diversity with Hope and Action,” and members from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela were in attendance. WSO Staff members Sarah S. and Tanya J. and Volunteer Diane B. attended on behalf of the WSO and heard powerful presentations about the Seventh Tradition, Strengthening Structures, and Alateen.

The 14th Reunión Centroamericana y del Caribe de Servicios Generales de Al-Anon or Central American & Caribbean Al-Anon General Service Meeting (RECACSA) hosted by Honduras was held November 17-19. The chosen theme was “A Light in Al-Anon Service.” This year RECACSA was attended by international representatives from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama.

These structures provided a warm welcome to Sarah S., Director of Programs, and Jean L., WSO Volunteer, who attended as invited guests from the WSO.

Insight: The Power of In-Person Connections

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee—2023 (Trustee)

Zonal meetings are service meetings. The meetings can be attended by structures that are fully organized GSOs or small groupings of mighty volunteers dedicated to carrying the AI-Anon message to the country where they live. They share experience, strength and hope to further the growth of AI-Anon in these “Zones.” Three Zonal meetings occurred this year and I had the privilege to attend the RECACSA which is the Central America and Caribbean Zonal meeting.

This meeting consisted of members from Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the host country of Honduras. As a WSO Volunteer, I was an invited guest along with the Director of Programs. My hope was that I would be able to share some knowledge with the structures. What I did not count on was how much knowledge I would gain from them. I learned that all that is required to build a solid foundation of AI-Anon in a country is a group of willing members. They do not need an office, literature, all the links of service, and funds. These structures showed me that where there are dedicated volunteers, there can be strong AI-Anon. These members are dedicated and do it all for the love of our program. I met members who put themselves at significant risk just to carry the message. They are pioneers.

As a WSO Volunteer, I feel the connections I made with these members were beneficial for the worldwide fellowship. Although few attendees spoke English and I speak “muy poco Español,” we communicated in our common language of the heart. These connections are important as they break isolation and encourage bridges to our worldwide fellowship. I will forever carry them in my heart. We are not just various structures, we are AI-Anon Family Groups.

International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)

In 2023, planning began for the 2024 IAGSM, which will take place in Virginia Beach, Virginia from September 25-29, 2024. In preparing for this exciting service event, the ICC has solicited topic suggestions from IAGSM Delegates and GSOs for inclusion on the agenda, as well as identified international structures with valuable experience and perspective to share as prospective presenters. As is typical, topics submitted and selected include specific challenges faced by several international structures. These topics will undoubtedly generate lively discussion and sharing of experiences and spiritual solutions during the upcoming IAGSM.

Our Financials

Manage Our Budget & Financials

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Ann Marie Z., Treasurer of the Board of Trustees–2023 (Trustee)

Cindy M., Treasurer of the Board of Trustees–2022 (Trustee)

With the launch of the new daily reader, *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34), literature sales had a substantial increase in 2023. The book was released and available for purchase at the 2023 International Convention. Due to the excitement and demand for the new book, literature sales for 2023 were \$4,403,746, which is an increase of 61 percent over 2022. We are still facing challenges with supply chain issues and increasing paper costs. However, we remain committed to advancing operations to overcome those challenges in 2024.

As a result of immense generosity, member contributions totaled \$2,916,399, which accounted for 42 percent of revenue for 2023. Contributions decreased in 2023 compared to 2022, in which a special appeal was held. Contributions from groups provided approximately 50 percent of all contributions received.

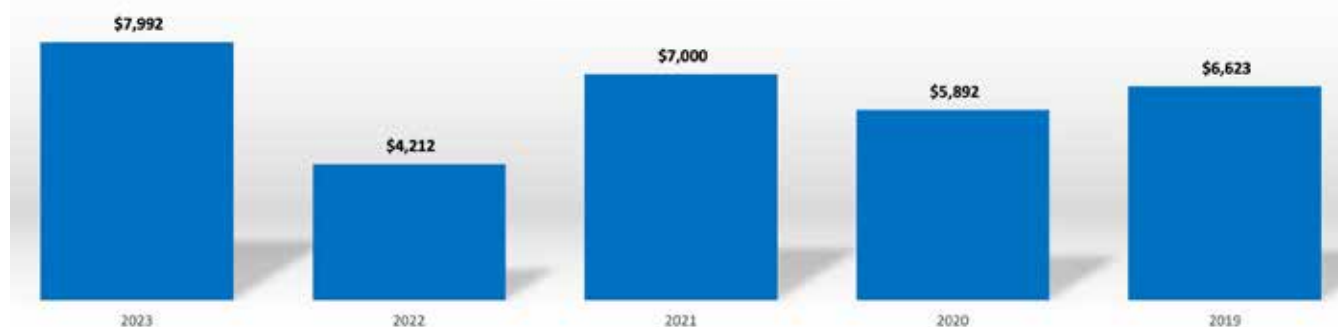
Positive market conditions increased our investments held in the Reserve Fund, allowing the WSO to build an ample reserve, which had decreased in previous years due to a tough market.

Continued member support and increasing literature sales allowed the WSO to provide essential services, along with other important achievements. The WSO was able to host the 2023 International Convention, attend RECACSA and EZM Zonal meetings, refresh the code for the *Mobile App*, expand our work to support electronic groups, launch a new Public Outreach toolkit, publish translated Guidelines, and install a new phone system at the WSO.

Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. More than 68 percent of total expenses go directly toward achieving the mission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provide customer service and financial support to maintain operations.

Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. for fiscal year 2023 may be obtained online at al-anon.org.

Revenu sur une période de cinq ans (en milliers)



Insight: Treasurer Update

Ann Marie Z., Treasurer of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

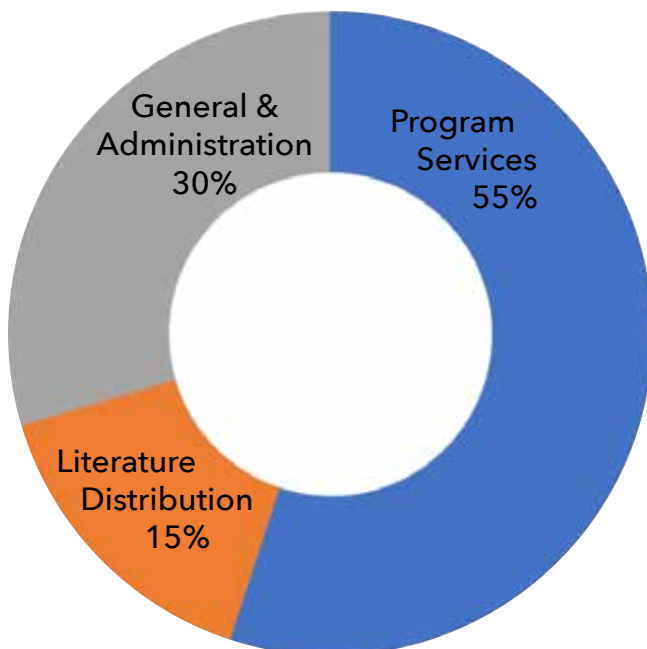
The WSO's role of providing services to the fellowship can only be carried out with consistent contributions and the purchase of literature—these are our two main sources of income.

Al-Anon's new daily reader, our first in 21 years, was introduced at the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. There has been an unprecedented response to *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34) that would have been impossible to anticipate. Our sales of *The Forum*, *Le lien*, *En accion*, and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazines as well as *Mobile App* subscriptions are higher than projected. Members' consistent and continued contributions also exceeded our budgeted expectations. The Staff at the WSO works diligently to keep our expenses consistent and within budget. This has resulted in a surplus, which has enabled the Executive Committee to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to transfer back from the General Fund to the Reserve Fund the four percent Board-approved transfer. This transfer is usually needed to help cover our operating expenses.

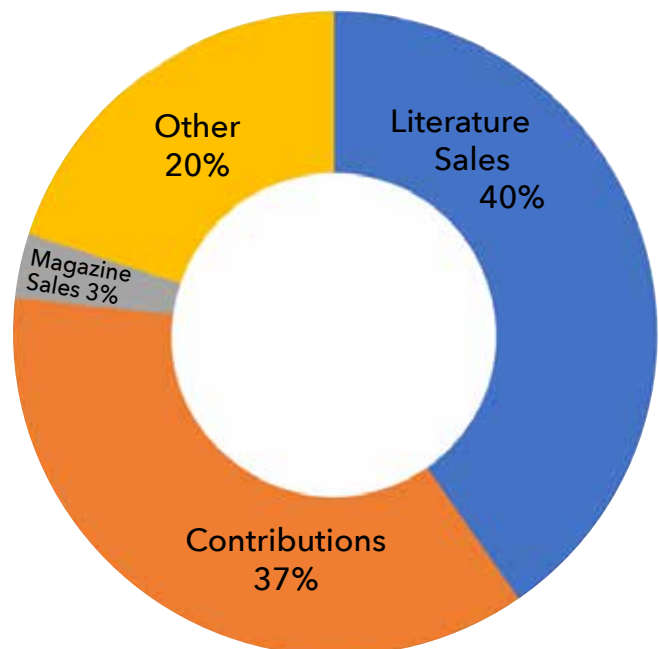
As Treasurer of the Board of Trustees and Chairperson of the Finance Committee, I participate in the review of the monthly financial statements and help to develop the Quarterly Appeal Letter for individual members. The Quarterly Appeal is sent from the WSO to the Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs). It is sent four times a year and is an opportunity for individual Al-Anon members to contribute in gratitude for what Al-Anon has given them.

As I write, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the life and relationships that I have now. I believe that my disease is a progressive disease. I shudder at times to think about the person I could be today if I had not found Al-Anon. I give my financial support so that "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help," Al-Anon will be there for them too.

Functional Expenses



Operating Revenue



Financial Highlights

Statements of Financial Position	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Assets (in thousands)	\$14,575	\$12,757	\$13,783	\$11,833	\$11,060
Liabilities and Net Assets Total liabilities	\$1,466	\$1,850	\$1,497	\$1,333	\$1,531
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$13,109	\$10,907	\$12,286	\$10,500	\$9,529
Total liabilities and net assets	\$14,575	\$12,757	\$13,783	\$11,833	\$11,060
Operating revenue (in thousands)	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Literature sales, net	\$3,218	\$2,100	\$1,906	\$1,847	\$2,914
Contributions	\$2,916	\$3,338	\$2,623	\$3,295	\$2,187
Magazine sales	\$262	\$247	\$238	\$292	\$275
Other income, net	\$1,596	(\$1,473)	\$2,233	\$458	\$1,247
Total operating revenue	\$7,992	\$4,212	\$7,000	\$5,892	\$6,623
Operating expenses (in thousands)	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Program services	\$3,184	\$3,333	\$2,752	\$2,484	\$2,865
Literature distribution	\$891	\$904	\$922	\$866	\$839
General & administrative	\$1,715	\$1,352	\$1,540	\$1,571	\$1,837
Total operating expenses	\$5,790	\$5,589	\$5,214	\$4,921	\$5,541

Our Plans

AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees—2023

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees—2022

Debbie P., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Grop (Trustee)

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is unwavering in its commitment to look toward the future and explore how best to serve, support, and grow our fellowship. For the Board to succeed in these efforts, we continue to collaborate, to be thoughtful when utilizing organization resources, and to maximize our own efficiency. Some areas of improvement we achieved in 2023 are those that the Board expects will bring long-term benefits to both the organization and the fellowship.

In its role as a visionary work group that supports the Board in its world service roles, the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) will continue in 2024 and beyond to encourage strategic and future-minded thinking during and outside Board meetings to advance the AFG, Inc. Mission Statement.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We have taken our responsibility earnestly in our efforts to nurture the spiritual principle of inclusion contained in Al-Anon's Legacies. At our January meeting, the Board participated in a diversity workshop to continue and honor our commitment to expand our DEI work. After much consideration and collaboration, the Board brought this workshop to the 2023 WSC. Trustees also engaged in a suggested "21 Day Challenge" to expand individual awareness on this topic. Then, during the October meeting, the Board participated in another session on inclusion facilitated by a professional DEI consultant, who is also a past Trustee. This workshop led to a deeper understanding of how we can expand our thinking and provided clarity on the direction we want to lead.

Not all activities undertaken in 2023 were equally successful, but the Board takes heart in the knowledge that DEI journeys are rarely without detours. What is important is continuing the work to expand diversity and inclusion within and beyond the Board, and we are committed to doing so while practicing the slogan "Progress Not Perfection." As the Board looks forward to 2024, we will follow the guidance of the DEI consultant by expanding from individual to group, i.e. from individual Trustee to the Board, its committees, and its governance procedures. We will start by examining nominating processes which could evolve to increase the inclusion of more diverse viewpoints and perspectives on Board Committees.

Nominating Process

In 2023, the Board of Trustees charged its Nominating Committee with recommending changes to the Trustee selection and nominating procedures that could improve clarity for future applicants and increase inclusion. Following best practice guidance and considering its DEI responsibilities, the Board is committed to transforming its application process toward a more skill-based approach. To that end, the Nominating Committee invited the WSO Human Resources Manager to share her professional expertise in improving the Trustee application itself. The Board will consider process and application changes resulting from this effort in 2024.

In 2023, the EFWG brought forward a conversation about the value of looking toward the future and how best to develop current Board members and expand the pool of future applicants who desire to serve Al-Anon Family Groups. The Board recognizes there are Al-Anon leaders among the fellowship, and we are discussing approaches to attract and develop more of these members. At the October Board meeting, the EFWG brought a question for discussion entitled "How Attractive Are WE?" This conversation broadened the Trustees' perspectives on what further directions we might take. Related conversations will continue as we progress into 2024.

Strategic Planning

The AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan serves as the foundation for prioritizing the work of the Board, its committees, and the WSO; yet the Plan itself remains a fluid document, with the Board regularly concentrating on its Goals and Strategic Objectives and reviewing Staff-generated Strategies. Operationalizing Al-Anon's spiritual principle of inclusion, the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan reflects the Board's commitment to diversity and inclusion through numerous Strategic Objectives, including:

- Advancing support to underserved and diverse communities (Members Goal)
- Reducing barriers to information access created by cultural and linguistic obstacles (Recovery & Service Tools Goal)
- Identifying and reducing the effects of biases that may be preventing effective outreach (Awareness Goal)

As in previous years, 2024 will commence with the Board evaluating the coming year's WSO Projects Landscape at its January meeting. The Landscape contains Strategic Plan Strategies and operational initiatives recommended by the Staff. The Board considers the priorities represented by the Landscape and how they serve to achieve the Goals and Strategic Objectives previously approved. In light of DEI efforts, thoughtful discussion will undoubtedly occur as to the Landscape priorities, which must balance Strategic Plan Goals with resources and operational responsibilities. At mid-year, the Board will reflect on the priorities represented by the Strategic Objectives themselves to ensure they continue to convey the Board's vision for AFG, Inc.'s future.

In 2023, every Board committee and work group was asked to include a statement in its guideline clarifying how their work supports the Strategic Plan. These committees and work groups will have this resource to guide their work and priorities in 2024 as well. Additionally, the EFWG will continue to use outside sources when beneficial to bring additional questions and ideas to the Board to consider and pursue.

Fiscal Responsibilities

In 2023, the Board held several discussions and took actions designed to contribute to improved fiscal responsibility. In a year that ended very well financially, these conversations may appear to be unusually timed. However, the Board recognizes its responsibility to consider trends and other external impacts on long-term World Service Office operations. Post-pandemic inflation has increased costs for venues and services needed to host Road Trip! and the World Service Conference and affected operational expenses, including everything from salaries to publishing materials to office supplies. Despite the positive financial result in 2023, the Board recognizes it must continue to engage in these often-uncomfortable conversations about how we responsibly manage the WSO's financial resources.

One very uncomfortable fiscal conversation in which the Board engaged, both internally and with the World Service Conference, in 2023 was about whether to continue hosting the WSC in New York to allow Conference members to visit Stepping Stones. This conversation continued throughout the year and resulted in both the formation of a Delegate Task Force in 2024, which will be charged with planning the Stepping Stones visit for the 2025 WSC, and a commitment to continue conversations with the Conference at the 2024 WSC. The Board recognizes the outcome of this discussion in 2024 and beyond will likely ultimately reflect the wisdom found in Concept Nine, which reads, "Compromise comes hard to many of us. Nevertheless, progress is nearly always characterized by a series of *improving compromises*." –2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), page 201.

Considering the wisdom of the Al-Anon Declaration that encourages us to "Let It Begin with Me," the Board continued to improve the efficiency of its Board Week schedule and agenda. In 2023, our forward thinking included using the Consent Agenda more wisely to increase time available for the Board to focus on discussions about the future. Additionally, the Trustees began meeting virtually for its January Board meetings and established a one-year trial to decrease the October Board Week schedule by one day while maintaining the same number of meeting hours. With these latter actions,

the Board recognized it could continue to use its time wisely and effectively while decreasing the financial resources required.

“Al-Anon has grown so fast and so far, it takes my breath away! The more it grows, the greater the contrast between the early days and now.” These words were written by Al-Anon’s co-founder Lois W. in 1979.” –*Paths to Recovery* (B-24), page 249.

The Board of Trustees looks forward to continuing our endeavors to support Al-Anon’s growth today and in the future.

2024 Strategies

Vali F., Executive Director

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Sarah S., Director of Programs

Scot P., Director of Communications & Community Awareness

Heather S., Associate Director–Community Relations

Tanya J., Associate Director–International

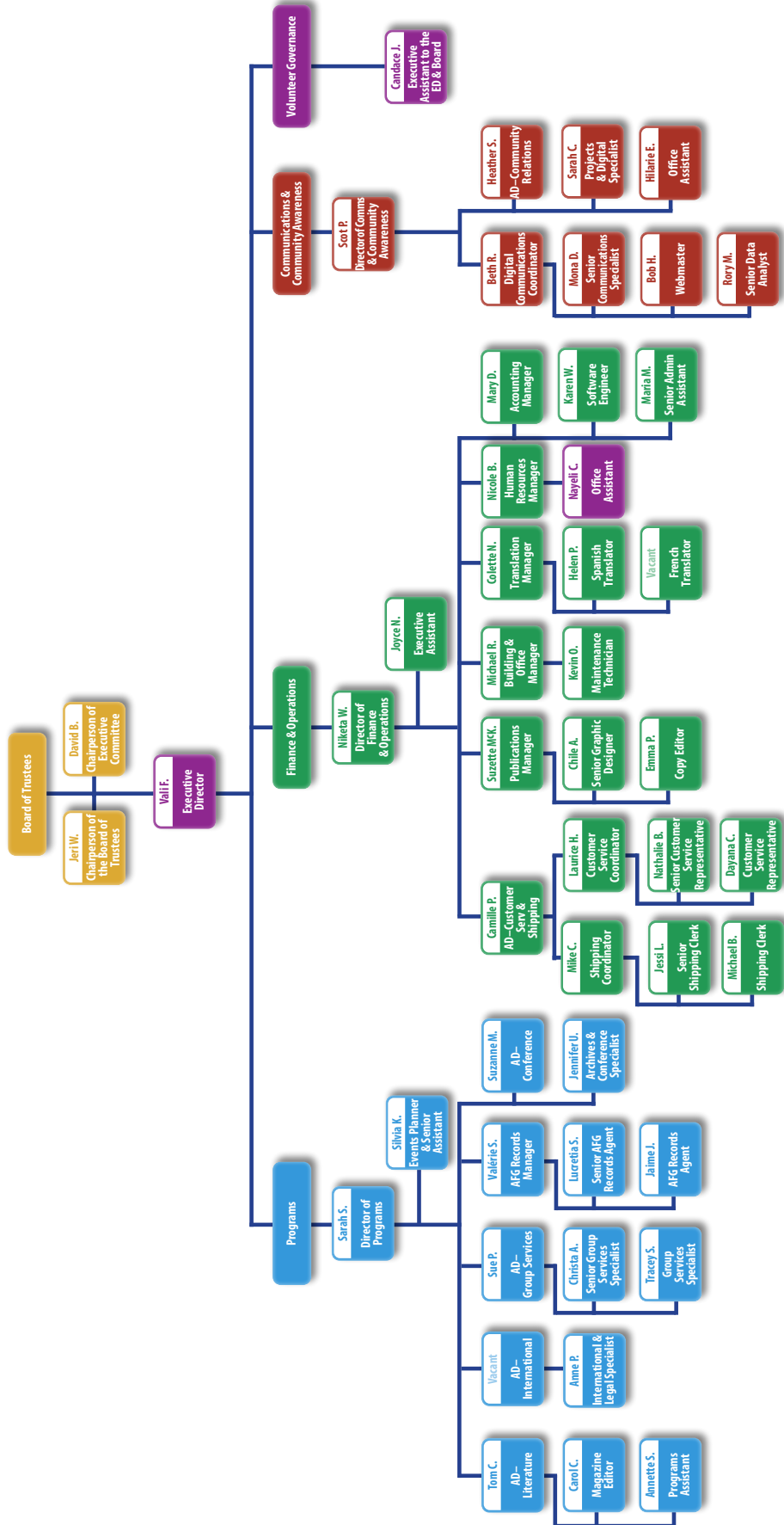
Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), whose members are listed above, began 2024 Strategies planning in advance of the October 2023 Board meeting. In accordance with the annual Strategic Plan planning cycle, the Board asks SLT to present preliminary suggestions for Strategic Plan Strategies and operational initiatives in October to allow for thoughtful discussion and input prior to the Board of Trustees making an informed decision on the final recommendations, which will be presented in January 2024. SLT informed the Board that the 2024 WSO Projects Landscape would contain only a few major initiatives, as many previous year Strategies had created operational activities that require significant ongoing effort and investment. The Board supported the SLT’s 2024 suggestions, which are expected to include several carryover items, such as the Next Generation AFG Records solution—the next step in the Transforming Electronic Groups effort that began in 2021—and eBooks Globally, along

with the relaunch of some deferred projects such as the Online Store Upgrade.

Appendices

World Service Office Organization Chart - January, 2024



Confidential - Property of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Board of Trustees Motions and Decisions by Consensus⁴

Jeri W., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees—2023 (Trustee)

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees—2022 (Trustee)

The Board, in its legal, financial, or oversight capacities, acted:

- to accept the 2022 Annual Report to the WSC as presented.
- to hold a generative discussion on leadership development led by the EFWG at the April 2023 open Board meeting.
- to present the DEI workshop at the 2023 World Service Conference, with each Board member participating at their own pace in the 21-day DEI challenge.
- to accept for the Alateen Online Feasibility Project Team to reach out to international structures for feedback and to gather information from the WSC on the concept of the proposed Global EASBR.
- to pause the Public 12: Cartoons/Animations for Social Media Strategy.
- to approve the 2023 WSO Strategic Projects Landscape as presented.
- to approve the 2023 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect agenda as presented.
- to maintain the Reserve Fund as-is because it does not exceed one year's operating expense.
- to approve IRS Form 990 as amended.
- to approve the Nominating Committee asking candidates not currently serving on the Board who are applying for a Trustee position to provide confidential Al-Anon and skills-based references (for a Volunteer position on a nonprofit Board) as a one-year trial.
- to approve the Chairperson of the Board, in collaboration with the Nominating Chairperson, appoint three alternates (Trustees) to the Nominating Committee who could be available to be selected in an equitable manner to score, discuss, and vote on any specific Officer position to ensure the total number of Nominating Committee voting members is as close to five as possible.
- to modify the interview process to allow the Nominating Committee to create two separate sets of "general" questions, one for current members of the Board and one for those applying to come onto the Board, even if they have served before, and to add to the interview process for current members of the Board to include both a personal sharing and a Board experience sharing.
- to modify the Board of Trustee nominee selection process so that when the Board decides not to put someone forward, they clarify the reasons for their decision and reach a consensus on what feedback the Secretary of Nominating may provide if the nominee requests feedback.
- to approve the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to proceed in identifying next steps and a project to create an EASBR for the WSC Structure and Intentional EASBR for international structures and return the plan to the Board for approval.
- to host the 2025 WSC in New York with a financial plan.
- to approve financial plan Option 3 to hold the 2025 WSC in New York [Option 3 - Host the 2025 WSC in New York or surrounding area and, as a trial, invite Delegates who would be attending to form a team (Delegate Team) to organize, coordinate registration, and handle all logistics for one add-on, optional visit to Stepping Stones arranged to occur either immediately before or after WSC for all interested Conference members. WSO involvement would be limited to connecting the Delegate Team with Stepping Stones, transportation, and other logistics contacts; communicating optional visit costs to Areas along with the WSC Equalized Expense payment amount; and collecting payments by check from Areas to forward to the Delegate Team with an appropriate release of responsibility].
- to accept that the Equalized Expense amount be set at \$1,769.00 (70 percent of full cost) and that the full cost for a Delegate to attend the Conference be set at \$2527.68 for the 2024 WSC.

⁴Following best-practice recommendations provided by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), following confirmation with the AFG, Inc. attorneys, in 2022 the Board of Trustees, together with its Executive and other Committees, began using a consensus methodology for decisions except when matters, such as legal and other fiduciary responsibilities, required formal motions.

- to approve the revised 2023 Budget as presented.
- to engage Brown Edwards & Company, L.L.P. for audit services for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023 and the following four consecutive years, with retention review to be completed annually by the Audit Committee.
- to approve the revised Expense Reimbursement and Travel Policy as amended.
- to remove the ten-year cap term limit on the Executive Director position.
- to accept the Reserve Fund & Investment Guidelines and Investment Philosophy as presented.
- to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation that the Equalized Expense for the 2024 IAGSM, to be held in Virginia Beach, VA, be \$2,828.15 US (100 percent) for each Delegate, or full cost.
- to shift the arrival at the October Board Week one day later but maintain the existing Board meeting duration for a one-year trial in 2024.

Executive Committee Motions and Decisions by Consensus⁴

David B., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large member)

The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee and presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees:

- to approve the monthly Finance Committee Report and financial statements
- to approve the recommendation of the Web Tech Coordinator Task Force as presented.
- to accept the changes made to the *Service Manual* as presented.
- to discontinue the recording of answers to the Directors' Report questions in the Executive Committee minutes and provide them to WSO Archives with the Directors' Report.
- to approve the Consent Agenda, FEAC, Literature, Public Outreach, and Audit Committee At Large resumes as presented.
- to approve 2023 and 2024 World Service Conference presentations.
- to approve the guidelines for all Board of Trustees' Committees and Work Groups.

⁴Following best-practice recommendations provided by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), following confirmation with the AFG, Inc. attorneys, in 2022 the Board of Trustees together with its Executive and other Committees, began using a consensus methodology for decisions except when matters, such as legal and other fiduciary responsibilities, required formal motions.