



Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

January 2025 Chairperson of the Board Letter

Dear Al-Anon and Alateen members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter is to share with you some highlights from the January 2025 Board week. You will also find updates from our Policy Committee Chairperson, a Finance Committee update from our Treasurer, and a Conference Leadership Team (CLT) update.

Welcome to the new Panel 65 Delegates as members of the World Service Conference (WSC). On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee (EC) members, and the World Service Office (WSO) Staff, we wish you all the best in your new role as Delegate. I am looking forward to seeing you in Hartford, Connecticut for the 65th WSC.

The Board Meeting started on January 14, 2025. The Board spent two days interviewing before determining which Trustee nominees to put forward to the World Service Conference for affirmation.

We reconvened January 28 through January 30, 2025, to conduct the rest of our Board Agenda. The January Board Meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Board decision a few years ago. Our Board Meetings are consistently spiritual and fulfilling experiences while also taking a lot of energy. However, no matter where we meet or how, I feel very privileged to be part of a Board that is willing to show up and do the work we do for Al-Anon as a whole.

Nominations

The list of nominees to be presented to the World Service Conference (WSC) for traditional approval are:

- **Regional Trustees**

Originally, we received resumes for two Regions (Canada East and the Southeast). Regrettably, the Canada East applicant had to withdraw for personal reasons, and the Southeast candidate was unable to complete the application process. As a result, the Board had no Regional Trustee candidates to consider. Given the Board's practice of honoring the Areas' traditional authority by limiting the appointment of Regional Trustees, this lack of Regional Trustee candidates will leave the Board with five vacant Regional Trustee positions in the 2025-2026 term.

- **Trustees at Large**

- Ann Marie Z., second three-year term
- Jean H., first three-year term
- Maria Magdalena E., first three-year term

The Board was grateful to receive many applications from qualified candidates for Trustee at Large.

- **Board Officers**

- Katherine "Kathi" M., Chairperson of the Board
- Cindy M., Vice-Chairperson of the Board
- David B., Treasurer

- **Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM)**

- Mark B., three-year term

Following traditional approval, the Board of Trustees may elect the nominees at its annual Meeting following the WSC.

The following resumes will be presented to all World Service Conference members for their information.

- **Executive Committee:**
 - Jeff F., third one-year term
 - Angela A., second one-year term
 - Kari O., first one-year term
- **Chairperson of the Executive Committee:**
 - Jeff F., first one-year term
- **Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM)**
 - Lori H., first one-year term

The Board of Trustees offers gratitude to all candidates and nominees. We recognize “that our service structure depends on the dedication and ability” of the “ever-new generations of leaders” who are willing to serve (“Concept Nine” descriptive text, “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service,” *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27]) and thank all who applied.

Beyond the Group Level Service Definition

Through its nominating process this year, the Board became aware that it was using the phrase “service beyond the group level” on its applications without a consistent definition. The topic was added to the January 2025 Board agenda to allow Trustees an opportunity to align on their understanding of “service beyond the group level,” given that the phrase is not defined in the current *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) v4.

Discussion focused on the question, shared with Trustees prior to the Board Meeting, “What is the definition of ‘service beyond the group level’ when used to describe service experience?” What was hoped to be a relatively short conversation confirming common understanding turned instead into a thoughtful discussion reflecting a diversity of perspectives. In the end, the Board agreed its primary purpose for the discussion was to clarify requirements for members applying to serve at the World Service level. As a result, the Board reached a consensus to ask the Nominating Committee to define the service requirements necessary for each position so that the term “beyond the group level” can be replaced by specifics in the requirements section of each of its applications.

Past A.A. Membership Requirement for WSO Service

After the October 2024 Policy Committee confirmed the current “Service Participation by Al-Anon Members Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.)” Policy, the Board of Trustees was asked to review its current criteria for members applying to serve as WSO Volunteers and At-Large Committee members. The Policy Committee recommended the Board revisit the requirement that applicants “cannot have ever been” rather than “are not” members of A.A., as the Policy states.

The Board deferred discussion of this topic until its January 2025 meeting to ensure the Trustees had adequate time to “ponder carefully its longtime effects.” Consistent with its practice of reaching an informed group conscience, the Board members answered the four questions utilized to conduct Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM) prior to the meeting and had the opportunity to review others’ responses and perspectives. After considering key themes, such as the original intention of the Policy and the spiritual principle that each member decides for themselves whether they are a member of Al-Anon or A.A., the Board reaffirmed its commitment to honoring the Policy Committee group conscience by deciding to revise its requirement related to A.A. membership on its applications to read “Cannot be an Al-Anon member who is a member of A.A.”

Road Trip! Announcement

I am happy to let you know that the 2025 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event will be taking place in Omaha, Nebraska, October 25, 2025. Mark your calendars, as we hope to see you there. More information about this year’s event will be presented at the 2025 WSC along with details about how your Area can apply to host the 2026 Road Trip!

A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation

After meeting with the Al-Anon Welcome Committee in January, Staff coordinating the Al-Anon program shared a lot of excitement about the 2025 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation happening this July

4-6 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Board was given an update on how things are unfolding and what can be expected in Vancouver. The Area Welcome Committee is in place and actively seeking members registered to attend who are interested in helping onsite. More news will be shared in the coming months about the opportunities for AI-Anon members who register to be of service. We hope to see many of you there.

Envisioned Future Work Group

The Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) brought forward the topic “fellowship and what it looks like” after noting the observation some members shared during the October 2024 discussion that fellowship in the program, including informal gatherings before or after meetings, seems to be missing or at least not as prominent as it once was. Concerns were expressed at that meeting that a lack of fellowship could be a detriment to the longevity of our program.

EFWG provided the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee At-Large members, and Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) members various resources to help them consider the question. EFWG also shared a definition for fellowship as the ability to foster a sense of community, provide support and encouragement through shared experiences, promote personal growth by learning from others, and offer a space to connect with like-minded individuals contributing to a feeling of belonging and well-being, whether in a religious, professional, or social context.

Thoughtful questions led to a generative discussion regarding what the fellowship will look like in the future. What are the barriers? What are the opportunities? How can this crucial connection and community between members be maintained and flourish in the digital age?

2025 WSO Projects Landscape

Given the Staff’s understanding of capacity and effort, the Board of Trustees has delegated to the Staff SLT the authority and responsibility for developing Strategic Plan Strategies and projects and recommending to the Board priorities for each coming year. In an ongoing effort to improve the prioritization process so that the Board can be better informed when making its annual Strategic Plan decisions, this year the SLT shared a new “proposed projects landscape” dashboard of Strategies and projects, which offered additional data points including scope, type of work, and quantifying factors for Board consideration. The dashboard contained some projects that were recommended and others that were not.

The dashboard empowered the Trustees and Executive Committee At-Large members, who are invited to participate in the discussion, to ask detailed questions and gain thoughtful insight. After a thorough evaluation, the Board motioned to approve the following Strategies and projects, which included multi-year projects carried over from 2024, to form the 2025 WSO Projects Landscape:

- WSO Core Systems Overhaul
- Electronic Alateen Validation & Implementation Planning
- eBooks Globally – WSC & International Structures
- WSO Risk Mitigation Strategy
- *2026-2029 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*
- 2025 A.A. International Convention with AI-Anon Participation
- CAL Globally (Two Scenarios)
- Refresh *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism* Magazine
- 2028 AI-Anon International Convention with A.A. Participation
- Passing It On (Initial Planning)
- AFG, Inc. Branding Guideline for Trusted Servants
- Outreach to Professionals – Young People

Our dedicated Staff at the WSO will have another busy year as they complete these tasks in addition to the ongoing operations work and fellowship support performed every day.

Delegate Participation on CLT for WSC Agenda Development Task Force

As you may recall, last year the Conference voted to create a task force including Delegates and members of the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) to develop a plan through which Delegates could contribute to the development of the WSC Agenda. The Task Force started its work in July 2024. Each meeting brought new understanding and ideas of what would be helpful. This Task Force will be presenting their ideas to the 2025 WSC.

Public Outreach Committee

The Public Outreach Committee continues to be busy looking for ways to reach the families and friends of alcoholics and those who work with them. The Committee currently has two work groups, which complete regular reviews of social media statements and submissions for the Public Outreach Toolkit. Additionally, the Committee has several task forces evaluating new materials needed for public outreach.

Board Evaluation

The Board continues to evaluate itself using its Board evaluation survey tool to improve its service to the organization and the fellowship. The survey results generated helpful spiritually based discussions about how the Board operates across a number of different activities, including:

- Oversight and Direction-setting
- Relationship with Executive Director
- Board Meetings and Relationships
- Fellowship Relationships
- Personal Qualities

Last quarter, a new comment field was added to the end of each section of the Board evaluation survey. Board members were thus empowered not only to rate the Board in each section, but to add comments explaining their ratings. The Board reviewed the ratings and the comments and had a thoughtful conversation that involved member self-reflection as well as evaluation of the Board as a whole. The Board intends to continue this helpful process at future meetings.

COB Letter Presentation

Following the last Board Meeting, the Chairperson of the Board initiated an evaluation of the COB Letter Presentation to confirm the current approach was serving the intended audience: the Area Delegates. Each Trustee was asked to reach out to their assigned Delegates and ask three questions:

1. Is it helpful to receive the COB Letter in advance of the presentation? Why or why not?

Trustees reported a resounding “yes” response from Delegates, confirming that advanced receipt of the COB Letter is very helpful both to those who can attend the presentation and those who cannot. The feedback also informed the presenters that reading the COB Letter and updates verbatim is not necessary and that highlights could be shared instead.

Based on that feedback, the Board will continue posting the COB Letter and Committee updates for the Delegates in advance of the presentation.

2. Is the time allocation for questions prior to the breakout sessions working? If not, how much time should be allocated?

Delegates offered a mixed response to this question, but overall, the response suggested a little more time could be allocated for the question and answer period attended by all Delegates. Many felt that hearing questions from the other Delegates was as valuable as asking questions themselves. Delegates shared that they appreciated that the presentation is recorded for those who cannot attend.

3. Are the breakout sessions helpful? Why or why not?

Delegate response to this question was again mixed, with some Delegates reporting that they are not able to attend the breakout sessions. Delegates who attended enjoyed the opportunity to gather together with a smaller group and appreciated having more of a connection with the Trustee who is assigned to them.

The Trustees shared the same response as the Delegates, finding it easier to connect with the Delegates through the breakout sessions than trying to schedule individual calls.

Based on the feedback from questions two and three, the portion of the presentation dedicated to presenting the letter and answering questions will be expanded to one hour and ten minutes. The breakout sessions portion of the presentation will continue, though it will be reduced to 20 minutes.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine M." in a cursive script.

Kathi M.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc