



Al-Anon Family Groups

An Historical Overview

The following is an overview of historical changes and growth phases in the Al-Anon fellowship. It is by no means a comprehensive listing of all the significant and meaningful occurrences that have taken place since Family Groups spontaneously formed and the Al-Anon fellowship evolved. It is, however, an outline of Al-Anon's beginnings, a listing of many "firsts" and basic events that make Al-Anon and Alateen the worldwide fellowship that it is today.

1935 Lois W., wife of Bill W., Co-founder of AA, realizes that she needs a program for herself.

June 29 - Lois W. meets Anne S., wife of Dr. Bob, Co-founder of AA.

1939 Family groups begin to form.

1941 Lois meets another Anne, Anne B., as they drove their husbands to AA meetings.

1948 June 1 - Anne S. dies.

1949 Ruth G. starts a 12-page magazine in California called *The Family Forum*.

1950 Three members of the Toronto Wives Group speak at the First AA International Convention in Cleveland.

1951 April - AA's General Service Conference passes a resolution thanking those who helped foster Family Groups.

May - AA General Service Office gives Lois a list of 87 Family Groups and individuals in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Ireland. Lois and Anne, Co-founders of our fellowship, send them a letter and 56 groups reply expressing the desire to form a service office. The Clearing House is opened at Stepping Stones, the home of Lois and Bill W.

November - A service committee is selected to advise and help Lois and

Anne. (The fore-runner of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees.)

1952 January 9 - The Clearing House moves to the upstairs studio at the 24th Street AA Clubhouse in New York City.

Purposes and Suggestions, written by Lois, is distributed by the Clearing House. Al-Anon groups decide to support the Clearing House by voluntary contributions of \$1.00 per member twice a year and that the Clearing House is to handle all national publicity.

March - The name Al-Anon Family Groups is selected by polling the groups.

AA's Twelve Steps are adopted as our guide with only one change. In Step Twelve, the word "alcoholics" is changed to "others."

AA's Twelve Traditions are adopted by the Al-Anon Family Groups.

1954 Henrietta S. is the first paid part-time staff worker and Margaret O. becomes the first editor of the "Al-Anon Clearing House Newsletter."

June - The "Al-Anon Clearing House Newsletter" name changes to Al-Anon Family Group Forum.

October - The Clearing House incorporates under the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1955 July - Al-Anon article published in the *Saturday Evening Post* gains national attention.

Al-Anon Family Groups, Al-Anon's first book, is published.

1957 Al-Anon headquarters moves to 125 East 23rd Street. The Al-Anon groups now number over 1,000.

Alateen begins in California.

1960 At the AA International Convention, Al-Anon votes to hold their own annual conference of delegates.

1961 April - First Trial Al-Anon Conference held in New York. Delegates from British Columbia, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania and Texas meet with the WSO staff and Board of Trustees.

1963 WSC approves the concept of Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

1970 The WSC affirms the Twelve Concepts of Service for use by Al-Anon Family Groups.

1971 The WSO outgrows its space and moves to 115 East 23rd Street as it services over 6,000 groups, including Alateen.

1973 Alateen's first book *Alateen, Hope for Children* of Alcoholics is published.

1978 February - An International Coordination Committee is established to maintain contact and worldwide unity with Al-Anon Family Groups in countries other than the US and Canada.

March - Once again the WSO outgrows

its space and moves to One Park Avenue. The number of Al-Anon and Alateen groups now total almost 15,500.

1979 The WSC approves holding two regional service seminars each year.

1980 The first General Service Meeting for overseas delegates and WSO staff is held in conjunction with AA's International Convention in New Orleans.

1984 February 24th - Anne B. dies.

1986 The lease expires at One Park Avenue and the WSO moves to 1372 Broadway. There are now nearly 27,000 Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

1988 October 5th - Lois W. dies.

1991 October - Board of Trustees votes to relocate the WSO outside of the New York City metropolitan area.

1994 The Conference passes a motion authorizing the purchase of property on a 15-year trial basis.

1996 WSO relocates its headquarters office to Virginia Beach, VA. The number of groups are 31,105, including Alateen.

1998 January - There are 31,500 Al-Anon and Alateen groups registered with the WSO in 112 countries. Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature is published in 30 languages.

July - Al-Anon International Convention held in Salt Lake City, Utah with AA participation.

Look to the past to protect the future!

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