

# (AIS) AL-ANON

## NEWSLETTER

### SPECIAL EDITION

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<http://www.okcalanon.org>  
Editor: Anita E.; [alanonnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:alanonnewsletter@gmail.com)

## Why Does Your Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Office Need Support

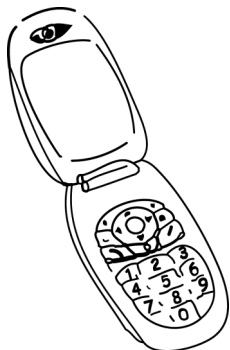


**What is the purpose of the AIS Office?** The doors are open for two reasons: 1) Distribution of literature to your club; and 2) Service to your community as an Al-Anon communication hub. We connect individuals and groups, send and receive literature; and exchange information about meetings and supports.

**Who does the AIS Office serve?** The office serves the western half of the State, including established clubhouses, community inquiries, and families and individuals requesting support due to a friend or relative who is an alcoholic.

**Where is the AIS Office located and who runs it?** The office is based in Oklahoma City. The AIS Board of Trustees oversees the office functions. The office manager runs daily operations.

**How is the AIS Office funded and how can I support it?** Generous donations keep the phones ringing, literature mailing, website connecting, and clubhouses networking. You can help in a variety of ways: Volunteer for service (answer phones, sponsor/co-sponsor an Eat 'N Speak, submit newsletter ideas, assist the Office Manager, etc.); purchase literature from the AIS Office; coordinate club-sponsored fundraisers; collect monthly or provide one time donations; and make suggestions for the office to better serve you and your community.



### AIS Office

**Edgewater Office Building**  
**3801 N.W. 63rd St. Bldg. #3 Suite 129**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73116-1930**  
**E-mail: [okcal-anon@coxinet.net](mailto:okcal-anon@coxinet.net)**  
**Website: [www.okcalanon.org](http://www.okcalanon.org)**

**Phone**  
**(405) 767-9071**

## ... of Service from Chips to the Board!

I have found Al-Anon service work to be a powerful tool of our program, much like sponsoring and being sponsored and working the Twelve Steps. My personal experiences with service work range from keeping the birthday "chips" stocked for my home group to serving as a board member for Al-Anon Information Services. While the effects of alcoholism empower my problems, each service opportunity allows me to get out of myself and give a little back to a fellowship much greater than any of my problems. Service work also introduces me to the wisdom and experiences of newcomers and old-timers beyond my home group, which continues to strengthen my own recovery. -Dusty W.

## ... I'm a Honker!

When I was a newcomer to Al-Anon, I was told that the triangle in the Al-Anon logo was like a three legged stool. The sides of the triangle stood for recovery with the Steps, unity with the Traditions, and service with the Concepts. Just as the three legged stool couldn't stand without all

three legs, my program would be lop-sided if I didn't practice all three Legacies. The lady who took me to my first meeting was the District Representative at the time. She took me to my first Area Assembly before I'd been in the program a month, so I've been involved in Al-Anon service from the beginning. Throughout my years in Al-Anon I've served in nearly every service position in the Area and at the World Service level. I didn't find a perfect life through practicing the Al-Anon program, but I found a way to cope with life's problems. Because of my service involvement, I didn't have the time to sit around and feel sorry for myself. When bad things have happened in my life, I was able to keep going because I had service commitments to fulfill. Many times I am asked, why do you still go to Al-Anon, and my answer is always the same. Life happens. I will always need Al-Anon and service has always been a major part of it. The theme of the Regional Service Seminar in Tulsa some years ago was "Recovery - Sooner With Service", and that is so true. A neat lady, I was blessed to know because of Al-Anon, shared with me the following: When the geese fly South they fly in formation, following the leader. The geese at the back of the line honk to encourage the ones in front. After a while the leader goes to the back of the line and becomes a honker. Today, I try to be a honker, encouraging the newer members in Al-Anon service. -Doris W.

**I Support the  
AIS Office  
because ...**

## ... of My Serenity

When I came into Al-Anon an old-timer suggested that if I helped set up the chairs it would give me a few minutes of Serenity. It did. I began to get there early to set up all the chairs. That took away the anger & frustration for a few minutes. After everyone had left the meeting, I put all the chairs away. I realized that not only was I helping myself and my feelings, I was helping others by serving them. After awhile I learned to give others a chance to do "Service of the Chairs." After a couple of years, I volunteered to answer the phones for the Washington D.C. area. Besides people calling to find a meeting, there were isolated, painful people. They needed to talk and I needed to hear them. I dropped my "better than" attitude listening to them. I truly began to know that the disease of Alcoholism is a leveler. We are all the same. When asked, I would chair meetings, speak at speakers meetings and help organize county day retreats. After that we moved to Annapolis MD, thirty-five miles north of D.C. When we came home to Oklahoma, the meetings were different but the people giving service were the same. There were, unfortunately, fewer willing to give service. Giving changes you and makes you better than just coming to a meeting and going home. I'm physically incapable of going to Area Assemble and sitting all day. But when the Board of Trustees was short of members, I was motivated to serve and stepped up. When I was secretary, I organized an update of the By-laws which had not been updated in 12 years. I took a year off and then once again when the Board was short of members, I came on again. Service does help you. It takes you outside yourself and changes your attitude because you are giving. - Marcia W.

## I Support the AIS Office Because... (con't)

### ... I'm Grateful!

I have had an opportunity to do a variety of service work for Al-Anon at the group level and beyond. I think it's important to contribute to my weekly meetings because it's MY meeting. Someone before me set up the chairs, made the coffee, made sure we had literature, etc. when I walked in the door. I appreciate those things and want to make sure the newcomer and others enjoy what I got to experience when I was new. In my weekly meetings I also contribute by sponsoring others, sharing in meetings, and taking service positions within the group. All the various service type work I do in my weekly meetings is a way to give back to the group, as well as, doing my part for the newcomers who are suffering from the effects of alcoholism.. I've also had some opportunities beyond the group level to do service work. In addition to saying yes when being asked to speak, I've been on the AIS Board and I currently serve as one of the Public Outreach Coordinators at the Area Level, attending quarterly meetings. I am afforded the occasion to meet so many new people through this type of service work. I look at it as widening my circle of relationships. I get to have a better understanding of how Al-Anon world-wide helps those who are suffering from the effects of alcoholism. Service work, whether at the group level or beyond, gets me out of my head; I don't have time to obsess about what the alcoholic and others around me are doing. I get to practice the principles of focusing on myself, gratitude through giving back, and being a part of something bigger than myself.

-Rachel L.



### ... I Found What's Missing

I have been in Al-Anon since the '70s but, due to the military moving us around, was not always faithful to attending meetings. After retiring in 2001, I have devoted a majority of time attending meetings, but not involved in service work. Now that I am, I realize just what I have been missing, the importance of the AIS office. This office is the hub of all the Al-Anon groups in our area.

It has provided an untold service to all of our groups, from giving assistance to someone needing a home group, providing literature for groups to buy, to keeping us connected with WSO. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve. Better late than never. -Faun F.

### ... Serving Blesses my Life

*"...When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, Let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen Always be there..."*

As our Al-Anon declaration states, it is important that when someone desperately makes that first call to get help, we are there. Someone without hope and usually at the end of their rope gets to talk to someone who understands when they call the AIS office.

If the office is closed, it gives several names and phone numbers of people that are there to talk to. This is a lifeline that is made possible by the AIS and willing volunteers.

This is just one of many services offered by the AIS office. It has been my privilege to take calls as well as serve on the Board along with many other service positions. It has helped my Al-Anon program to serve.

Thank God Al-Anon was there when I reached out. -Annette G.

## **I Support the AIS Office Because... (con't)**

### **... of Happiness!**

Service work is where I have found my place to give back. I have not done any job alone. Even when I felt I didn't have the ability, I had the willingness. Taking one job at a time, not focusing on what's coming next, allows me to learn and to grow. Over time I have been placed in leadership roles. One of the great things about that is that I am still surrounded by passionate, enthusiastic, and responsible people that care about our fellowship. I enjoyed each task I was given, it was never a burden, and my personal recovery has been enhanced. I have found that the rewards are in the actual doing. If we each do a small part and participate in the greater whole, Al-Anon will continue to reach and help the families and friends of alcoholics for generations to come. My Al-Anon world continues to grow. The future friends I meet and the friendships I have made contribute so much to my well-being; I couldn't begin to describe it. I realize that happiness is a most wonderful by-product of serving this fellowship. **-Lisa B**

### **... I Felt Isolated**

When I came to Al-Anon, my world was very small, closed in by fear, uncertainty, shame and guilt. After attending Al-Anon for awhile, I started to feel better and connected with others in the meetings I attended. I still felt isolated within my meetings because I still felt disconnected from the fellowship as a whole.

Occasionally, I would hear an announcement of outside Al-Anon activities, (ie. Speaker meetings, Eat & Speaks and Conferences) but was still too afraid to step out into the world and try something new. I helped a lot in the meetings with coffee, chairs and even chairing which was very comfortable, but I knew there must be more. I went to my first Area Assembly as an Alternate GR to one of my groups and thought this was not for me. I did not know anyone, and they talked about a lot of business. They had committees and wanted people to volunteer for stuff. I left there thinking that was not for me. I already had too much responsibility and had no time (continued on next column)

### **... I Felt Isolated (con't)**

for anymore. A few months later, I went to my first Al-Anon conference and my recovery began to change. I met a lot of people that I found out were very involved in the Area Assembly. I noticed that the Conference Committee was composed of Eastern Oklahoma Al-Anon members. I asked a committee member why that was and she said that nobody from the West had shown interest in being on the committee. She also said that if I was interested, I could ask to be considered and come to the next committee meeting where it could be voted on.

I went to that meeting and got on the committee and then, because of those I had met and encouragement from long time members, became involved at the Area level.

I now serve on committees and am very active outside my groups. I have taken on many service positions, at the group, district and area levels, continuing to meet new members from all over the state. There are three legs to my recovery, UNITY, RECOVERY AND SERVICE. I have found Unity in the fellowship, Personal recovery through the Step and Traditions, and Service has brought it all together in to a beautiful gift.

Today, I am no longer tied down with fear, uncertainty, and guilt. Today, my world is huge and expansive with no end. Serving this fellowship is just a small way to say thank you and to continue the beautiful legacy that so graciously accepted me and made me whole again.. **-Mike Mc**



## I Support the AIS Office Because...

### ... I'm a Messenger

I had been embarrassed & ashamed about a lot of things that had happened in my life. Decisions I had made, things that had happened to me growing up, the person I had become because of the affects of alcoholism in my life. Most of these things I believed were too shameful to ever be talked about with anyone. After coming into Al-Anon and taking the steps, I understood about secrets keeping us sick. I had completed my 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> steps with my sponsor and felt better in sharing those things. Then, after being in Al-anon for several years, I was asked to share my experience, strength and hope at an open speaker meeting. The things that I thought I would never talk about with anyone and then shared with my sponsor, were now the things that no longer held any power over me. I was free to share those things in a public way without any shame or guilt.

Since that time I have been blessed in being able to share my story with many people at many conferences and conventions. This is one of the ways that I practice step 12 and fulfill a service commitment in my program. I believe there are many ways to do service work. Sponsoring, setting up for a meeting, taking a commitment at the group level, by being willing to take a position needing filled or serving on a committee at the area or group level. I have done or do most of these.

I do not particularly like speaking from a podium but I do believe that when I do, I am able to give the message from my higher power about how Al-Anon has changed my life forever and how the principles work in my life. It is not how I wanted to give back to my program, but it has been the way my higher power has given me to give back. For me it is absolutely necessary for me to give back to my program that has given me everything. It is not my message. I am just the messenger. -Lori G.

### ... It is a Lifeline

*I have been a grateful member of the Al-Anon Family Groups since February 8, 1988, and have been blessed and privileged to have been a Group Representative, Treasurer of several group meetings I have attended in the past 27 years and chaired numerous meetings including The Edmond Beginners Meeting which meets every Wednesday at 6:45. At the present time I am Literature Chairman for the all of the Edmond Al-Anon groups. Being of service has been a big part of my recovery process which includes giving back to Al-Anon because it has saved my life. God has given me this wonderful spiritual program through serving others. He has continued to bless my life. Thank you Al-anon!*  
-Linda F.

### 10 Ways to Help Your AIS Office

1. Volunteer to co-host or host the Eat 'N Speak.
2. Add your name to the list willing to work in the office when the Office Manager needs a break, or help with call forwarding when asked.
3. Encourage your group to contribute funds monthly and individually.
4. Share your fundraising ideas with your group and the Office Manager.
5. Provide the Office Manager with your group's updated contact information and meeting changes as soon as possible.
6. Send suggestions for the Newsletter that help foster communication between clubs and improve community service.
7. Attend quarterly AIS meetings and bring friends.
8. Serve on the Board of Trustees.
9. Tell others about the advantages of buying literature at the AIS Office.
10. Let the Office Manager know how much you appreciate the team's dedication.



## From the Office

I would never have thought that sitting alone in a tiny office would be interesting, much less that it would be enjoyable and fulfilling. Yet that is exactly what I experience every day as Office Manager for the local AIS/LDC Office here in Oklahoma City. In January of 2009, I was diagnosed with a disease which permanently disabled me from working. I never dreamed that I would have to give up my career as a research biologist because of illness. I was told I would never be able to work again. I never thought I would be doing what I am doing today – working for Al-Anon Information Service.

### Information Service

There are many things that happen here in the office which I was mostly unaware before arriving here. We sell literature, answer phone calls and emails, order literature, update records, take inventory, make and print the monthly meeting schedules, and organize. Since 2007, the AIS office has sold over 107,000 pieces of Conference Approved Literature. Since 2009, the office has answered over 15,000 phone calls and emails and has served nearly 4,000 visitors. In an average month, we answer about 200 phone calls and emails and have close to 50 visitors to our office.

Much of the office day is filled with talking to people who are at the end of their rope. We've all been there. We've all been at that point when we were so desperate we were willing to try anything, including Al-Anon. Many of the people we speak with just need information on how to find a meeting, or get a particular book. However, the most rewarding thing is having the opportunity to do Twelfth Step work. People who call are often hurt, angry, lonely, frustrated and exhausted. Do you remember how that felt? We certainly do! They are bound and determined that somehow Al-Anon is going to give them the necessary tools to "FIX" the alcoholic/addict in their lives. How surprised our contacts are when they are educated about focusing on themselves in this program!

This kind of sharing, one on one, is at the heart of Twelfth Step work. The lightbulb always goes on when we explain that alcoholism or addiction is a disease (just like diabetes or cancer) and because it is a disease, they did not cause it, cannot control it, and cannot

*"Much of the office day is filled with talking to people who are at the end of their ropes. We've all been there."*

cure it (because there is no cure). We can contribute to the problem. In Al-Anon, we learn how to stop doing the things that are contributing to the baffling and cunning disease of alcoholism.

Al-Anon is a service based organization. The services we provide are only possible because people volunteer their time and efforts to make the program work. In a consumer based society, organizations like Al-Anon are faced with a constant struggle to keep the doors open. Any organization which is based on volunteer efforts is doomed to failure if no one volunteers. The same holds true if 95% of the people rely on the other 5% to do all the work so that they (the 95%) can just show up and "enjoy the show".

The reason I get to do this is that my "job" is a job of service. The more service work I do (whether in Al-Anon or Church, or wherever), the more rewarding I find life. Service work is vital to my own health and well-being. Sharing my own experience, hope, and courage with others regenerates me. John P.

The Al-Anon program is based on service work. This involves a variety of actions beginning with setting up chairs, making coffee, chairing a meeting, picking up someone who needs a ride, and after meeting clean-up. Other service opportunities include serving as a Group Representative or District Representative or on the AIS Board of Trustees. There are also ways to serve at the State and National levels. Al-Anon offers a full gamut of opportunities.

Here's a challenge for each of you. The challenge is to look for service opportunities around you and pick one that works for you! Do you sponsor someone in the program? Do you attend a meeting that does not have a Group Representative? Does your district have a District Representative? Has your meeting ever hosted or co-hosted an Eat 'N Speak? Do you attend the Quarterly Eat 'N Speak? Have you recently attended the Quarterly AIS Membership Meeting? Can you serve on the AIS Board of Trustees? Have you thought about being a Hotline or AIS Office Volunteer? These are only a few of the opportunities available to serve people in Al-Anon.

When we first came to Al-Anon, there were people who did all of these things for us. They volunteered behind the scenes, so that you and I had an Al-Anon meeting to attend! Let's bestow the same generosity toward those who come into the program today!

We encourage everyone to get involved in service work! This will enrich your life, your program, and those around you. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Al-Anon office! You may mail or email your form to [okcal-anon@coxinet.net](mailto:okcal-anon@coxinet.net). You may also call the office to volunteer at (405) 767-9071.

***THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR COMMITMENT TO SERVICE!***

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**I am interested in these areas of Service Work (check as many boxes as you like):**

- Sponsor another Al-Anon member
- Answer Phone Calls (answer phone calls when the office is closed)
- AIS Office Volunteer (works in the AIS Office as needed)
- Eat 'N Speak Host/Co-Host (a fun opportunity to enrich the Al-Anon fellowship)
- Speaker List (share your own story for a meeting or Eat 'N Speak)
- Group Representative (represent your meeting at the Quarterly AIS Membership and Area Assembly meetings)
- District Representative (represent your district at Area Assembly)
- AIS Board of Trustees (plan the future of the AIS Office)
- Other—Please Explain \_\_\_\_\_

Place  
Stamp  
Here

Al-Anon Information Service, Inc.  
3801 NW 63<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Edgewater Building 3, Suite 129  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116-1930