

Area 25 Delegate's Report after 2025 WSC, Panel 65

Good morning, everyone, I'm David C., your area delegate. As many people hinted at before the World Service Conference, or WSC, it was, as advertised, an awesome experience. The WSC is the largest group conscience in Al-Anon, worldwide. The conference is where the areas make their voices heard, as a group. This is more important than I initially thought, because it is only in Unity that our collective Higher Power speaks through us, to address issues and solve problems in ways that none of us could do alone.

The conference was held in Windsor, Connecticut, April 24-27.

Finances

I'll start off my report with the most basic of topics, finances. Our director of finances presented the Audit Report and the Finance Committee Report. We have good news: The WSO audit report produced a clean result, with no problems found that need to be addressed. The finance report included where all the money went in 2024 and the budget for 2025. This is how everything works at the global level in Al-Anon. Your contributions and literature purchases are how the WSO creates, prints, and delivers our wonderful literature, and keeps communications with members around the world going strong. More on that later. Many things are going on, including these highlights:

- A new HR Manager was hired in December.
- *Remember Al-Anon in Your Will (S-38)* was translated into Spanish and French, and is available for free download. Please use this tool when a member is considering contributing in his or her will, since confirming the person contributing is a member is essential for the WSO to accept the contribution.
- WSC delegates were provided with a tutorial on how to book flights for the conference, supporting the many delegates from all over the US and Canada.
- 100% of groups use WSO services, but only 62% of groups contributed. The average cost per group for the many essential services provided by the WSO last year is \$337.53. Please consider contributing to the WSO individually and as a district. I'll talk more later on about reasons why this is so important.

As warranty one indicates, our "ample and prudent financial principle" is to have a reserve of one year's operating budget. Last year, the reserve fund exceeded that, and the excess has been made available for WSO projects. These projects include: "Passing It On...", Core Systems Overhaul, Professional Outreach to ages 13-25, buying a new van (which is used for many purposes), and new office equipment. More on "Passing It On..." later. Details on the monetary

values are available in the Audit and Budget reports which can be found on the WSO website. The 2024 reports will be published later this summer. <https://al-anon.org/for-members/wso/financial-information/>

As I heard during conference: “I can’t keep it if I don’t give it away.”

Policy

Next up, Policy. The policy committee refined the language found in the Policy Digest section of the Service Manual. Here are some highlights:

- The language on *Membership and Group Meetings/Convention* is being updated, including sections on who can disband a group, and cases where the WSO is requested to remove a group from the WSO list of meetings. The WSO requires that areas submit their group removal policy for approval to ensure it meets policy requirements. Groups must know how to return to good standing and that they have the right to appeal removal.
- The WSO has also been considering how to implement electronic Alateen meetings. So far, we have a new type of AMIAS: AMIAS-E. New Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (EASBR) have been developed, and those members qualified to serve as Alateen sponsors for in-person Alateen meetings will be able to join electronic Alateen meetings associated with our area by adopting these additional policies. Additional training will be required for AMIAS-E. This policy requires an interview with each teen wishing to join the meeting. Teens wishing to join an electronic Alateen meeting associated with this area from another area will need to be interviewed to ensure all requirements are met. IDs and emergency contact information for legal guardian/custodial parent will also be needed. Several electronic Alateen meetings are being piloted on the Al-Anon mobile app.
- The policy revisions that related to Group Names were discussed at great length. The policy itself was only slightly changed, but there were many appeals related to the implementation of the policy. Although the policy that all groups should be open to all members and newcomers has been in place for quite a while, many groups feel strongly that their group focus for a particular category of participants should be in the group name. Some groups go as far as desiring that members or newcomers outside of their focus population should not be accepted in their meetings. This is often a matter of identity, particularly for marginalized populations that struggle to feel comfortable in the mainstream meetings where older white women predominate. This brings up some work that we need to do as a fellowship: How do we bring the program to any and all that suffer from the effects of alcoholism? How do we establish a loving and welcoming

environment for all in every meeting? Perhaps the solution may in part be to establish good boundaries and safety statements for meetings, particularly those with greater vulnerability to disruption. Examples of these populations are Women, Men, Parents, LGBTQ, Children, BIPOC, Siblings, and so on. For now, the policy committee has paused the implementation of the policy that would require new or changed group names to not include population identities. We were told that existing groups will NOT be required to change their names. Once again, the implementation of this policy for new groups has been suspended, and this important conversation will continue. This implementation will be once again addressed at the 2026 WSC. I feel that this situation is an opportunity for growth, a means for us to look beyond our familiar surroundings and see the program as Lois saw it, as a great service to all of humankind. I feel that instead of fear, we need Higher Power to be our guide as this conversation progresses.

As I heard during conference, “Presume goodwill.” Also, “Al-Anon is self-correcting.”

History

Next up, our Program History. The WSO is looking at ways to use our Archives to enhance recovery. Delegate reports should inform the area of our history. There is a form, called AR-1, which is designed to get history from long-time members. Efforts are underway to digitize our archives for research, materials, long-term storage, and procedures. Areas are asked to develop “how to” procedures related to archives. Our archives coordinator, Joan S., has started that process for us, but the WSO hopes that archive coordinators from all areas can share their best ideas to preserve the history that has served us up until now. History brings us together in unity; We are making history right now. Your recovery and service are part of our history.

As I heard during conference: “We don’t wait on the future, we create it.”

Membership Survey

The 2024 Membership survey was released at the WSC, and is available now on the WSO website. 15,375 members participated. The survey shows where members live, what ethnic background they have, what level of education they have, what kinds of alcoholic relationships impacted them negatively, the effectiveness of the program on mental health, and what type of in-person or online meetings our newcomers arrive in. The report is also a wonderful outreach tool to professionals. Please check it out: <https://al-anon.org/pdf/2024-Membership-Survey.pdf>

As I heard during conference, “Discussion is how we learn and grow in the fellowship.”

Stepping Stones Visit

A committee of delegates reported on the process to arrange a visit to the home of Bill and Lois Wilson, which is named Stepping Stones.

The day after the conference, we took a bunch of vans to Stepping Stones, to visit where it all began. It is located in Katonah, New York, about an hour away from the hotel where the conference was held. My experience was rather profound. Our tour guides related some stunning history of how Bill and Lois arrived at Stepping Stones, through a sequence of unlikely circumstances, leading one to the next. Their dedication to each other, despite extraordinary hardships, I find awe-inspiring. After moving to Stepping Stones, they had 5 to 25 visitors every weekend, and often hosted guests longer. They never had children, and never were able to adopt. But I must say that we are all their spiritual children. Just think of it; without Lois, Bill would probably not have survived, so there would be no AA. Without Lois' dedication, she would have left Bill to his own devices, and there would be no Al-Anon. The presence of a Higher Power, full of grace and generosity, is hard to deny when looking at our history. That grace is right here with us, right now. Visiting Stepping Stones with other delegates helped to cement the spiritual tone of the conference and feel the spiritual roots that we all share in this program.

As I heard during conference: "The higher power is the unseen member of every group."
And: "My legacy is built on the contributions of those who came before."

Literature

On to Literature. The new book, *Healing within Our Alcoholic Relationships* (P-95), is selling well, in English, Spanish, and French. Two new books are in the works. Their working titles are *Finances in Recovery* and *Personal and Service Sponsorship*. Both books are now receiving submissions from members, and writing guidelines are posted on the WSO website. Some submissions have been received, but many more would make these publications a much greater service to the fellowship. Please consider sharing your experiences and reflections soon on these topics. Submissions can be posted on the WSO website.

To submit a sharing for possible publication, visit: <https://al-anon.org/sharing>

The Spanish and French counterparts to the Forum, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* and *Le lien*, have been expanded for more submissions from members, allowing better design quality.

Many members are asking for translations of CAL. The WSO has found and contracted with independent reviewers for CAL translations in Bulgarian, Latvian, Romanian, and Farsi. Several

Al-Anon international trademarks have been renewed, including Mexico and Cayman Islands, and the process of registering our trademark in China has started.

A plan has come together to provide translation of literature in e-Book form. The selected e-Book Platform Vendor is PublishDrive, which has access to hundreds of e-Book platforms, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Apple, and Google Books, for example. Since e-Book sales impact the ability of international structures to practice being fully self-supporting through literature sales, the WSO has also established criteria to allow General Service Offices to receive net revenue from sales recorded in their geography. A successful meeting with the GSOs was held just before Conference to provide them with an update.

As I heard during conference: “Healing is in the hearing.”

Outreach

There is also news in Outreach. Earlier this year, an Alateen Outreach to Professionals toolkit was released, which originated from a 2024 WSC Delegate Task Force, with Area Public Outreach Coordinators, Alateen Coordinators, AAPPs, and AIS Coordinators and at a Global Gathering for international structures. I attended the information session because we don't yet have a public outreach coordinator, and it contains many useful documents and images that can be printed and shared with professionals involved with teens. It can be downloaded from the WSO website for free. After making connections at Recovery Month events in Washington, DC last year, WSO staff were invited to attend the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Family Education and Care Navigation Meeting in February. This two-day event brought together leaders from national family-focused organizations to discuss SAMHSA's toolkit for supporting families affected by mental health and substance use conditions. It provided an excellent opportunity to share Al-Anon resources with SAMHSA and other family-focused agencies. Finally in Outreach, the WSO is in the early stages of updating our public outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. They will be seeking member sharings and soliciting articles from professionals for next year's edition. Your contributions will help spread our message of hope and help!

As I heard during conference: “Give the best of what you got.”

Group Services

In Group Services news, our Associate Directory of Group Services, Sue P., will be retiring later this year. She told her personal recovery story at conference, including her journey to apply for a

position at the WSO. She finished her share saying “Thank you Al-Anon for God, and thank you God for Al-Anon.” She will be missed at the WSO.

In other Group Services news, the AMIAS re-certification is in full swing now. They have asked the Alateen trusted servants for their cooperation in considering completing the annual recertification by the end of May this year to help them plan for the English- and Spanish-speaking Alateen meeting program for the A.A. International Convention in Vancouver. Having the recertification completed early will allow them to assign the necessary number of certified AMIAS to the Alateen meetings.

Communications

The meeting search page on the WSO website no longer hides the group participants section of the search options, making it more obvious that participant types can be used to refine the search. See <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting/> for details.

As I heard during conference, “Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape!”

Annual Report

The WSO has released the 2024 Annual Report, which details the many activities and accomplishments by the trustees and the staff. The scope of what the small but mighty group of staff does for the fellowship is quite impressive. The report can be viewed on and downloaded from the WSO website. The 2024 report will be published later this summer. <https://al-anon.org/for-members/wso/annual-report/>

As I heard during conference, “Our trustees are willing to hear all points of view.”

Projects

A couple of notable projects in the WSO include:

- **Core Systems Overhaul:** Given the surplus in prudent reserve, the computer infrastructure managed by the WSO will be upgraded over a period of time. Computers and software need to be upgraded regularly to retain vendor support, so this is an opportune moment to get that done.
- **“Passing It On...”:** This project is very exciting, as it is an effort to attract and support future volunteer leaders in service. There are many aspects to this project, but the primary one is making sure that institutional knowledge is being passed down from current leadership to the next group of leaders that will take their place. Other aspects

include mentoring and developing skills that are essential for service work, such as familiarity with principle-based discussions. Several ideas expressed in the presentation were:

- “Documenting our Local Institutional Knowledge.”
- “Have you ever wished you knew something that was not passed down by parents or grandparents?”
- “Each of us must pass on what was passed to us.”

The project already has a lovely list of 20 questions that is like a mini-inventory of how well we are poised to prepare and support future trusted servants. The project is expected to take 3-4 years to fully complete. I expect we will hear more as components of the project are completed and made available.

As I heard during conference: “The program is a gift from those who preceded us in grace.”

ICC

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) presented on the various service structures, or Global Service Offices (GSO’s) around the world. The International Al-Anon Global Services Meeting (IAGSM) met again last year in September, as it does every two years, for its 22nd meeting. 18 GSO delegates from 12 offices met in Virginia Beach to discuss a variety of topics, including: WSO Updates, Electronic Meetings, Conflict Resolution, Public Outreach to Professionals, and more. The delegates were surveyed for the effectiveness and relevance of the IAGSM, since participation has decreased over time. The delegates responded that the IAGSM was still relevant, but needed to evolve. You can read the full report on the WSO website. An interim IAGSM is planned for this year online. The WSO will be asking IAGSM delegates for feedback on relevant and beneficial topics and to help set the agenda for the IAGSM. A Task Force was formed to consider these issues for presentation at the 2026 IAGSM.

See <https://al-anon.org/for-members/international/international-al-anon-general-services-meeting-iagsm-summary/> for details of the IAGSM.

The ICC also holds Regular Structure Meetings with GSO’s around the world, as well as some Global Gatherings to provide more opportunities for international fellowship. There is a European Zonal meeting (EZM) and a Central American and Caribbean Zonal meeting (REACASA).

The most inspiring and important part of the ICC report was regarding the trip to Asia last year. Tracey S., the international services manager, and Sarah S., the director of programs, visited South Korea, Mongolia, and India in person, and visited China electronically. This kind of global

engagement helped them to see Al-Anon the way these countries' members experience it. It provided organizational transparency and the shared joy of service. Planning the trip started a year in advance and involved many vaccinations. Tracey and Sarah's visit to South Korea, the first stop on the trip, was re-establishing contact after a long time without contact. It was clear that the challenges of the GSO's and the WSO are much the same. Many pictures of the members in their tiny office were shared with us at conference, which were not shared with the delegates due to anonymity concerns. But I can tell you, the South Korean members looked thrilled with the visit, even learning a bit of English, enough to say "Love You."

The second stop on the trip was Mongolia. It was a 4-day event, with 200 people in attendance, 100 which were newcomers. Tracey and Sarah received custom-made traditional Mongolian clothes as gifts, and were guests at a presentation where elements of traditional Mongolian culture were shared.

Their attempt to actually enter China ultimately failed, and they were forced to find a variety of different electronic platforms to connect with members there. It started with one person, then grew to many. China has hundreds of meetings. They discussed how to form a structure, meaning a GSO. 200 people joined an all-day meeting, with 2 conferencing platforms for simultaneous translation. They also discussed Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR). The process of translating the literature into Chinese has started.

After China, Sarah found her way back to Mongolia for yet more meetings, while Tracey travelled to India. Tracey remarked how inspiring it was to see the literature translated into the many languages spoken at meetings there. India is an established GSO, with very different needs than Korea and Mongolia. Most members in India spoke English. There are many difficulties there due to poverty, so a library that includes audio books is in the works. There is sponsorship, and some members get a "reading buddy" as they may be illiterate. The Al-Anon meeting they held had a packed room, with many members meeting in person for the first time. They held a workshop on conflict resolution. They also had a hybrid workshop with Sarah, who was still in Mongolia. Both Indians and Mongolians said, "they are just like us." How moving, to connect across borders in the love and goodwill of the program. The Indian members talked about revitalizing Alateen, discussed the ASBR, and held an Alateen meeting. There was an All-India electronic meeting with 200 participants. Some members asked: "how often can we do this?" After it was all done, Tracey received a tour of New Delhi to round out the trip.

As I heard during conference: "Communication and education are vital."

Chosen Agenda Items

Two Chosen Agenda Items were discussed during conference. The first was: *Service Participation in the Electronic Age*. This topic brought up many questions, such as:

- “How do we do Fellowship?”
- “How do we achieve cohesion for area and district business meetings?”
- “How is Unity encouraged?”
- “Has participation increased by providing Hybrid meetings?”

There are new dynamics in electronic service meetings that are yet to be fully accounted for. I’d love to hear your ideas about how we can improve electronic meeting formats, and the way we do fellowship and outreach in electronic and hybrid service meetings.

The second was: *Attracting and Retaining Al-Anon Members in the 20- to 40-year-old range*. This topic elicited many ideas, such as:

- “Create ‘Young at Heart’ meetings.”
- “Bring alateens to Al-Anon before they age out.”
- “Get young folks involved in smaller service opportunities.”
- “Get help from young people about how to do social media.”
- “Welcome young mothers with children.”
- “Have conventions at colleges, and start groups there.”

The “Passing It On...” project would also help to encourage younger member participation.

As I heard during conference, “It’s amazing what you can see when you look for unity.”

Participation

I would like to cover a few items related to participation, or “in-reach”:

- Delegates at the conference were asked to participate in a variety of ways, including third-year delegates sharing their recovery journey and doing a skit at the end of conference. First-year delegates (including myself) were asked to chair Al-Anon meetings during conference.
- The board of trustees is in the process of inviting delegates to help develop the agenda for the world service conference.
- Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect – The next road trip will be in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 25, 2025. The meetings will happen after the board week in October. Areas that would like to host the Road Trip in future years must apply. I was approached by a

couple of delegates from New England about applying, and if one of us does apply, we will likely have collaboration inside New England to support the event if we are chosen. The board will select the top 3 applications this October, and notify the area selected by February next year. It is another unique opportunity to understand the expansive work done by the WSO.

- Next year is Al-Anon's 75th Anniversary! Next year's WSC will be in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and will be followed by a celebratory dinner at the WSO. Plans are still in the works, and I will update you all as I hear news.
- The AA International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada will be on July 3-6. 400 volunteers will be needed. Many trustees, WSO volunteers, and WSO staff will be present. There will be Alateen meetings in both English and Spanish, so AMIAS are needed.
- The site for the 2028 Al-Anon International Convention was announced! It will be, wait for it ... Minneapolis, MN! The convention will be held on July 20-22, 2028. As the convention approaches, there will most certainly be a call for volunteers. I will let you know when I know more.

As I heard during conference, "We are all Pioneers."

Service

There are a few topics regarding Service I would also like to share.

- New members of the Board of Trustees have been elected. Toward the end of conference, the delegates were able to observe an open board meeting, in which the slate of new trustees was elected and positions for the officers were voted on.
- The board is missing 5 regional trustees, including the northeast region, with more finishing their terms next year. The board is concerned about the currently unfilled board positions. A diversity of viewpoints on the board is essential for healthy decision-making for the benefit of Al-Anon as a whole. For the upcoming year, our AWSC meeting in June will be our only time this year to consider regional trustee applications before the August WSO deadline for submissions. Please consider applying if you qualify. Ask me for more details.
- A single application process for regional and at-large trustees is being considered. The idea is to lower the barriers for regional trustees to go through the often-lengthy application process for each candidate's area prior to going through the WSO application process that follows. Until that work is finished and approved, we will use the existing process. Teams of regional delegates are being formed to help score applications. Each region has its own regional trustee process, which for MA involves the AWSC.

- Growing Future Volunteer Leaders – I believe that, in order to encourage more service, we need to establish a culture that *exemplifies* the benefits of service. The benefits include things such as: Poise under pressure, Staying in my lane, Learning new skills, Keeping an Open Mind, Personal Growth, Gratitude for the benefits of the program, and so on. Members will feel the attraction to service when they see that service is an integral part of their recovery. Service is an opportunity to practice what we have learned from the program, to make mistakes and recover from them in a supportive environment where we can grow.

As I heard during conference, “Service is an ongoing conversation with those who serve and those who will serve.”

Conference Takeaways

With that in mind, I wanted to provide a list of my takeaways from the WSC, just so you all understand a little more of what the experience was like.

- The conference had a Spiritual Tone throughout. It was clear that our combined Higher Power was present, bringing unity to our work.
- Each of us new delegates were assigned delegate mentors to help us with orientation and understanding of conference procedures, which gave me a safety net.
- It was exciting to be with others who are on their own service journey.
- To be with other delegates was like instant friendship. So many deep conversations, with almost no effort.
- It was thrilling to connect with delegates from near and far.
- Working together was more comfortable than I feared.
- We just had to be ourselves, we needed no credentials to impress anyone.
- We used the principles of the program to handle our business and refine policy.
- It reinforced our shared love for the fellowship and all those who serve, in any capacity.
- It gave me a chance to set up future collaboration, including with local New England and Spanish-speaking delegates.
- I finally understood what service to the entire global fellowship felt like.
- It allowed me to trust that our HP speaks through us individually and collectively.
- I was filled with Gratitude for all the work our predecessors put into this program.

As I heard during conference, “Democracy isn’t just rules on a page, it is written in living hearts through love.” “I saw that I had unrealized gifts and talents.” “There is no upper limit to recovery.”

The conference was a great success, but there is still work to do. And now we return to the work we have to do, here in this area. May we all become examples of recovery that inspires others.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you all, and the program.