



Al-Anon Information Services

Westchester and Putnam Counties of New York
Districts 24, 25, 26 and 27

March 2018

Volume 3, Number 1

*"Participation
is the key to
harmony"*

Al-Anon
Information
Services

info@westchesterputnamalanon.org
<http://www.westchesterputnamalanon.org/>



Please write to us to share your experience and ideas about service. But remember all material to be published must meet Al-Anon guidelines. Artwork and photos are also welcome – try to send us something that brings you serenity.

Contact us at: info@westchesterputnamalanon.org or (914) 946-1748

Anonymity

Apologies from the Newsletter coordinator... In setting up the last mailing of the newsletter, we used a return address that listed Al-Anon AIS as the first line. While most of these get mailed to the meeting locations, some go to a CMA (Certified Mailing Address) person for the group. We should never be sending anything that identifies us on the envelope as Al-Anon and will be careful in the future.

Lend your Talent and Time to AIS

As of our March 22 meeting, we still needed a permanent Chairperson, a Web Site Coordinator, and a Public Outreach Coordinator. We are continuing to recruit for membership on the web team; this is your chance to make sure it is designed for your needs. We also still need phone volunteers to do service for the call center. Send us an email or leave a phone message if you want to know more.

Service Meeting Schedules

Check the web site for all schedules: AIS, Districts, Areas.

<http://www.westchesterputnamalanon.org/welcome/service/>

We are launching this column with the goal of attracting Al-Anon members to service in their groups, districts, AIS and Area by sharing Service Stories.

Opening the Doors to Service

By Claudia M

I had the honor of sponsoring an Al-Anon newcomer about 7 years ago, and she jumped into service after attending meetings for about a year. Her enthusiasm was infectious and more importantly, I figured if she was doing service beyond the group level, so should I! I attended my first meeting of Al-Anon Information Services as a guest and onlooker, not sure when or whether I would get involved. Before I knew it, there was an opening for Email Coordinator and HP raised my hand to volunteer. I loved this job, as it put me in touch with World Service Office updates, Al-Anon members in our NY Area South and of course with members and newcomers in all of our Districts. After less than a year AIS needed a new Web Coordinator and I moved positions, eager to strengthen my computer skills as a side-benefit of doing service. Along the way I learned about the Traditions and Concepts as we handled some thorny Al-Anon issues such as requirement for membership when newcomers have friends or family using drugs; informing students and colleges about the difference between open and closed meetings; and announcing events or retreats closely allied with our program but not necessarily sponsored by local Al-Anon groups or districts. I've worked with many of the same AIS members for about 5 years now, and they feel like extended family. Given the isolation of this disease, any opportunities to build connections are essential for my recovery! This service has helped me explore my strengths and weaknesses: developing more patience, tolerance and forgiveness; taking difficult interactions less personally; being more flexible when I'm the Minority Voice in a group conscience. Service has prevented me from becoming complacent in my program. Thank you to all of my fellow AIS volunteers and to those who have attended the meetings, for providing me with such a growth-producing experience!

We hope you will be inspired by the stories of AIS volunteers to submit your story for the next newsletter. Please send your submission to info@westchesterputnamalanon.org



- What motivated you to consider doing service at the group, district or Area level?
- What had been holding you back? Fear? Lack of time? Apathy?
- What is/was the service position you accepted?
- How did you take your first step through the door of service?
- What have you learned about your strengths? Your character defects?
- What have you learned about the Traditions and Concepts?
- What has been most rewarding? Biggest challenge?
- How has Al-Anon service helped you grow outside the program?

News From The Districts

District 24 – Southern Westchester

By Sue V., District 24 Rep

February 2018

With the new year comes a sense of renewed hope. At District 24, we hope that our service above the group level will continue to help Al-Anon members in lower Westchester to strengthen their program and achieve a greater level of serenity. Equally important is carrying this message of hope to newcomers and professionals in the community.

As District Rep, a central focus of my service has been to bring back District level workshops. This is because in “Keeping it Green,” I can remember attending numerous District level workshops early in my recovery. These were often held on weekend afternoons and focused on a variety of themes. In particular, I recall one District level workshop with a theme about ‘choices.’ It was held outside on a beautiful sunny afternoon in May. I remember learning so much in those early days and thoroughly enjoying the event. Another District workshop was held at Lincoln Park on Step 4. This was equally powerful for me and really helped me dispel the ‘fears’ of doing my 4th Step. Later on, in my recovery our District held two large Share-A-Day events with numerous meetings, a keynote speaker and a recovery dance! Nothing was more comforting than to have a safe place to go in addition to my regular meetings where I could further my recovery with members I knew from group. The members who helped organize these workshops and those that gave service were an inspiration to me and definitely attracted me to service. I wanted a piece of the joy and happiness that I saw exuding from these members. I can also vividly remember attending my first Area level event which was Discovery 1999, “The Magic of Discovery.” This was another “lightbulb moment” for me and the attraction of service really caught on. I am ever so grateful for these early spiritual awakenings and thank for all your Power of Example – what a mighty Power of Example you have been to me! I hope my enthusiasm has the same effect for someone else considering giving service. We will be sure to let you know the details about our 2018 District workshop and hope you will be able to attend!

Finally, District 24 continues to spread the word about our District bank account and District Post Office Box which is helping our District be fully self-supporting. Groups make checks payable to **District 24 AFG** and mail them to: **District 24 AFG, P.O. Box 441, Bronxville, NY 10708**

December 2017

District 24 continues to move forward with our second District Workshop. This workshop was held on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017, and it was entitled “The Heart of Our Recovery: What Makes a Group Healthy.” Forty-two (42) people attended and there were many special moments. In particular, the District included our Alateens in this event and celebrated “60 Years of Alateen” by inviting an Alateen group from a Brooklyn group to join us in an afternoon of recovery. Also, Joan L. came up from Long Island to speak as our Keynote Speaker on the topic of “The Three Obstacles of Success: Outside Fellowships, Gossip and Dominance.” Plus, we had four breakout





sessions entitled: 1. What Makes a Meeting Healthy, 2. Our Recovery, Our Service, 3. What is a Loving Interchange? and; 4. A Fellowship of Equals. Attendees rotated through the four break-out sessions and we came together as a whole to share out at the end. The workshop culminated when we sang “Happy Birthday to Alateen” and enjoyed a delicious, freshly baked cake. It was a wonderful afternoon and I thank all members of the District who pulled together to make this event a success.

Furthermore, this past week, District 24 had the honor of serving together with our Westchester-Putnam Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) to respond to a public outreach invitation for a literature table at a local community speaker event on December 13, 2017. Our AIS was gracious enough to fund 50% of the cost for literature for this event. We are very grateful for that. Featured at the event was a speaker in recovery who spoke of his journey at an event held at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry. The students came together to hear the speaker and we served to answer questions and provide an Al-Anon literature. Again, many thanks to all who gave service.

District 25/26 – Northern Westchester, East & West

Reflections on my first year of district service

By Margaret C., District Representative, Districts 25 and 26

Thank you to all my fellow members for allowing me the privilege of serving as your district representative! Service has always been a part of my recovery, starting from my early days in program when several seasoned members – themselves very active in service and with a lot of experience, strength, and hope to share – encouraged me to take on service positions at the group level. Since then, I have grown and learned so much, and became very eager to step out of my comfort zone and take on a district-level position in the beginning of 2017.

In my first year of service, I attended both Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings and New York South Assemblies (NYSA), representing my districts in voice and vote at AWSC, and supporting my group reps at the assemblies. I have had the opportunity to meet and connect with members from all over southern New York, and my desire to grow in service continues to be encouraged. I am in awe of the amount of work that goes into keeping Al-Anon, the organization, functioning on a regular basis. There are a lot of dedicated members volunteering their time and energy to strengthen our fellowship, keep us connected to our groups, districts, areas, and members all over the world, and in their program, there is growth. I am honored to sit next to and serve with them in my position as a district representative.

In our districts in 2017

we held four business-style meetings, where members from across northern Westchester gathered to share their experience, strength, and hope as we discussed topics from the assemblies and the World Service Conference, and

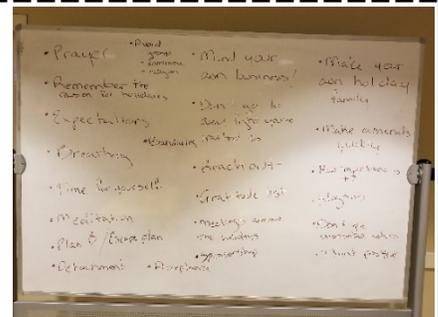
MY FIRST YEAR AS ADR

By Kathy S

I decided to take on the service position of 25/26 ADR (Alternate District Rep) because it gave me the opportunity to give back to the program, for all the Serenity it has given me over the years, without having to do it alone. Besides planning successful, informative & sometimes some very funny district meetings (me in a skit, as a program lunatic, with a sponge gun, shooting all who didn't do it My way). Working with Margaret, our DR (District Rep), has been a pleasure, resulting in a new and lasting friendship.

Over this past year, attending different meetings has opened up a whole new world of people that I have gotten to know & admire. Feeling useful, respected & a part of a positive environment has given me a new extended family that I love. So, if you're debating about volunteering for service, pick a program friend & work on it together, you'll get more out of it than you would expect.

I'm looking forward to 2 more years of new experiences, as ADR.





Photography
by Bob A,
2017-18

planned events in our districts, including public outreach. In June, we held a workshop during a district meeting, which included dinner, a fantastic skit, and fellowship. In November, just before Thanksgiving, we held a workshop called “Taking Back the Holidays” as a means of helping members who struggle with the family disease of addiction and sharing resources to help get through the holiday season. This workshop included speakers from our sister districts 24 and 27, CAL readings, a holiday meal, and a discussion about how we can stay connected to our program, even if we aren’t able to make a meeting. As you can see from the picture, there were a lot of ideas shared that afternoon!

District 27 – Putnam

District 27 is still in need of a DR (District Rep) and other district officers for the new rotation cycle. Please let AIS know if you might be interested and we will try to facilitate a district meeting.

Back to the Stacks: AIS Library Project

Claudia M., AIS Library Project Committee Chair

Most people turn to the internet for information these days, with the library long forgotten. But those of us who are library buffs know that these community institutions are alive and well and teeming with people eager to learn. AIS has launched a new Library Project bringing Conference Approved Literature to Westchester and Putnam Counties. Our first goal is to contribute *How Al-Anon Works* so that every library has their own copy, and to supply a Spanish copy to those libraries who request one. Although the inter-library loan system makes it possible to borrow books from anywhere in the County, we decided that a copy “in the hand” is more valuable than a copy “online” for people in crisis, or for those who wouldn’t think to do an online search for Al-Anon because they are not yet familiar with our 12-step program. Library patrons who wander into the stacks to learn about alcoholism will soon find *How Al-Anon Works* on the shelf beside AA’s *Big Book*. We still need volunteers to deliver books to the following libraries: Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Eastchester, Hastings, Irvington, Mt. Vernon, N. Salem, Pound Ridge and No. White Plains. If you’d like to volunteer, or if you have additional ideas for the AIS Library Project, please contact info@westchesterputnamalanon.org.

Al-Anon International Convention

Come this July I will attend my first Al-Anon International Convention. I am very excited about the special activities they will host there, from the Pioneer Luncheon to the cascade of meetings day & night. Additionally, I will be sharing it with a good friend—an alcoholic who is also a member of Al-Anon—who shares my enthusiasm for this international gathering. So, if you are on the fence, consider; only convention goers can acquire a special 50th Anniversary edition (with a Convention bookplate) of our beloved book *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*. Plus --be among the first to get the new book about intimacy and alcoholic relationships!

See you in Baltimore--Ellen M, AIS treasurer

The next convention is July 5-8, 2018 in Baltimore, just a few hour’s drive from New York South. I plan to be there and hope many of you will join me. Go to <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-international-conventions/> to register. You can sign up for accommodations at the same time, or after you register. Once you register, you can also volunteer to help or to speak or to run a workshop.

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and *Let It Begin with Me*.

A note from your Al-Anon Information Service [AIS] serving Westchester and Putnam counties

Please read the following message during the next two meetings:

Here is an update on how the AIS has been providing outreach during the last few years as well as the usual functions of providing a local number for calls about Al-Anon, maintenance of the Westchester/Putnam meeting list, supporting district outreach requests, the quarterly newsletter and the AIS website which provides the meeting lists, service event and anniversary information.

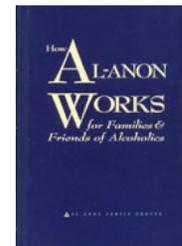
- **B-Line bus Al-Anon poster placements:** a proposal from a single group was approved to be a major outreach initiative. Posters were created with WSO approval to run inside a number of B-line buses in Westchester and Putnam counties for over 2 years; these education posters listed the local number and website for local meetings



- **Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism [AFA] Distribution Project:** About 600 English and Spanish AFA's were labeled with our AIS website and local contact details before they were distributed to each of the district groups. Vendors like Staples were used to create labels and to bundle the literature and facilitate the distribution while the AIS carried on other business. This project was started in 2016, repeated in 2017, and is in progress for 2018 as well.



- **AIS Library Project:** Currently we are ensuring that every public library branch in Westchester and Putnam counties has their own hard cover copy of "How Al-Anon Works" in English; in some libraries we are providing a second copy in Spanish as well to serve the Hispanic population. This project is being supported by a large group of volunteers who work directly with each library branch for this initiative. This project has just started with the first case of delivered books and will continue through the summer.



What ideas do you or your group have for public outreach? Please join an upcoming AIS meeting and share your ideas. Check online for the meeting schedule. For more information about any of these projects and volunteering please refer to the contact details below. AIS thanks all groups who have provided donations over the years which support these and other activities.



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