

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS



Al-Anon Family Groups  
North Florida Area  
District 1

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phone: 850-222-2294

Web: [www.tallyalanon.org](http://www.tallyalanon.org)

Email: [tallyalanon@hotmail.com](mailto:tallyalanon@hotmail.com)

To order Literature:

[Dist1Literature@hotmail.com](mailto:Dist1Literature@hotmail.com)

Complete Meeting information is found on our answering service and on our website.

Let us know how we can help!

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 5-6, 2011 - AWSC Meeting in Ocala  
(your District Rep and AISL will be there)

August 28, 2011 - District Meeting from 4:30-6 pm at John Wesley United Methodist Church

September 23-25, 2011 - North Florida Area Annual Convention! Orlando, FL .... find info here: <http://www.alanon-orlando.com/2011convention.html>

October 28-30, 2011 - North Florida Area Assembly ... all NEW Group Reps and all OLD Group Reps should plan on attending! This will be an exciting Assembly as we have elections for the new panel beginning in January 2012!



Over the next two months many groups in our District will be participating in one of Al-Anon's most wonderful tools: the rotation of service.

What this means for all of us is that in Al-Anon we have built into our service structure the idea and the practice of rotating service positions.

This is a powerful tool for many reasons. First of all, for the individual in recovery many of us have had the experience of taking on the duties, responsibilities and obligations of others. And never knowing just how to get out from under them. In Al-Anon, if we take on a service position it is for a specific period of time, and then we rotate out. Even if there is not someone standing there ready to fill our position.

"For our group purpose there is but one authority: a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are

but trusted servants they do not govern." Tradition Two.

If there is not someone willing to take over when we have served our time, then our HP must have some kind of plan for that. And we can trust it.

Another reason this is a spiritual tool is because with the rotation of service Al-Anon is "fully self-supporting" - as in Tradition Seven. Everyone has the opportunity to provide service. No one is the expert. No one is the boss. No one is "in charge" in many of the ways we're used to thinking.

And yet another reason - "Participation is the key to harmony" - our Concept Four helps guide us toward the serenity we're seeking: Participation is the key!

## Service? Really? Haven't I given enough in my life?

By Kay K., Group Representative

It was during another fellowship meeting that a someone kept mentioning Al-Anon and how it had supported their recovery; after a while I became interested. So I started attending meetings on Wednesday nights.

When I came into Al-Anon I was in terrible pain. I could barely hear the words that others spoke, it seemed, so effortlessly. As time went on I became more comfortable and started to share too. Then I heard people talking about service and positions that were open. I often felt guilty about not volunteering to be a Group Representative as I had plenty of experience both in 12 Step groups and outside in the community, however, I was working full time and going to graduate school part time. I was finding just taking care of myself to be a full time job. I needed to rest in the arms of Al-Anon and the wonderful people who would hug me each time I came and ask nothing of me.

The more I cared about others in Al-Anon I found that I wanted to be of service; however caring so much also made me feel vulnerable. What if I volunteered and made mistakes here in front of the people who had become so dear to me? What if I took on too much and then had to step down? These were new thoughts to me as in the community I had been fearless due to my workaholic tendencies but here I had been real, open and honest. This was scary.

It was after a meeting one night when I was rifling through Al-Anon literature that I found a little red and white brochure entitled, "When I Got Busy, I Got Better." What a quick read and how amazing the words were

inside. The very first topic title I saw was "Facing our fears." The list continued on and there was a complete list of MY fears in print with ESH in each paragraph as if someone had written this book just for me! Haha! ;) Evidently other people too had the same fears as I had and immediately I was relieved.

One of the things that I read in this booklet is that the idea of service is not defined by any one member. Service can be as simple as showing up to a meeting and sharing because my share might mean the world to someone else.

I used to show up because I was in pain and needed a meeting. What I have learned is that showing up even when I don't need a meeting is providing service. Someone there might be in pain and need to hear something I have to say. This took away my guilt of not having stepped up for something I wasn't yet ready to do.

My sponsor tells me all the time to check my heart. Am I giving freely and because I want to or am I doing something just because I am suppose to and will later resent it? This was good stuff.

One night the announcement was made again, that our group needed a Group Representative and I looked around the room at the people in the room. People I had been in that room with for over 8 years now. My heart filled with LOVE and I just knew it was time. I knew I wanted to be of service to a group who had hugged me, loved me unconditionally and who I could trust. I volunteered

Since then I have learned that I don't have to do anything even service all by myself. People step up to be of assistance all the time.

I don't have to do everything perfectly. As a matter of fact I sometimes make more mistakes here than I did outside these rooms. What I get is acceptance and patience, two things I never experienced as a child. Words cannot convey how healing being of service to my home group has been for me.

Each part of being a Group Representative at has brought me to a place of growth in interacting with other people, processes and situations. Working through various issues at District Meetings I have learned it is okay if we don't always agree on everything and that conflict is a given; however, it is never mean and nasty or violent. I don't know that I will ever be comfortable with conflict however I have learned that I can accept that conflict is just another part of the human experience of interacting with each other. That we all have our stuff when we come to the table.

Attending the Area Meetings was an experience not to be forgotten. To meet people from around the state who also attend meetings was just like having my home group expanded exponentially! Like discovering I had an extended family too!

I still struggle sometimes with wanting to be "more of service" than I know I can handle right now.

However I have this experience to remind me that :

- \* when I wait,
  - \* when I check my heart and
  - \* when I take care of myself first
- then the opportunity will present itself and I can step effortlessly with love into service.

## My Contribution

By Walter T., Group Representative

I felt comfortable with Al-Anon immediately after I began attending meetings in Tallahassee. There was no pressure to feel responsible for anything that occurred in the meetings. Typically, when I become involved with an organization or group, I soon find myself taking on some leadership responsibility. With Al-Anon, I felt welcomed regardless of whether or not I said or did anything in the group. The slogan "Listen and learn" reinforced my ability to relax and be myself without thinking that I should do more than just attend. I found that each person in Al-Anon is accepted as a unique individual with the ability to make his/her own choices, though there are times

when we are encouraged to extend ourselves to grow in service.

I eventually chose to share in groups, chair meetings and become the group representative for the Serenity Al-Anon Family Group (AFG). There were times when I felt some reluctance, but I am glad that I had the courage to take on these service opportunities. It has enhanced my growth in being able to, as stated in Step 12, "practice these principles in all our affairs". As a group representative, I feel pleased that I have been able to practice the words in Tradition 2 that "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern". I am now ending my third year in this role and will be passing the torch to someone else who will be courageous enough to step up and give in service to Al-Anon in District 1.



## Giving Back

I volunteered to be the district 1 DR for a variety of reasons. The first is that I wanted to give something back to the program that had given me so much. I hoped that as district representative I might encourage unity in the district and help build a connection to the larger Al-Anon community. I feel like we have made some progress but it is difficult being a small district and not having the resources of our larger neighbors. We have had some good district events thanks to the generous efforts of many of our members and with the help of several folks from around the area. I personally have gotten to know many different people in and outside our district and have grown to appreciate their recovery and the gifts they share.

The other goal I had in volunteering is more personal. I have wondered much of my life if I am introverted by nature or if I am just isolated due to events in my life. I have come to see that administrative activities really aren't my thing. I don't have much capacity for seeing the "big picture" and I do best focusing on narrow goals with short-term outcomes. This has been hard for me to accept for a variety of reasons but doing inventory work has helped me learn to be honest and accepting of the way I am. Making decisions that directly affect others is very

challenging for me and I am grateful for the patience and acceptance of my fellow members.

I am grateful for having had this opportunity to serve and look forward to continuing in service in another capacity.

-George G., current DR for District 1



*One of the first assignments that was given to me was Hospitality. I had to talk to the District Representative of District 12 to decide who was going to pay for a room or use the Area Assembly's donated room. District One got the Area room, and I was glad for that.*

*Next I called her up and we decided on what we would be bring in the way of food.*

*Finally the day came for the Assembly in Ocala. We set everything up, and before long the other DR came to me as I was putting food on the table and said everyone is complaining about the food!*

*Next day the coffee urn spilled and I had to take care of that. By Sunday I felt I had failed!*

*But I did not fail. I had to let it all go and accept the fact that I was not perfect. The food was o.k, the coffee was good and the company was great.*

*Hospitality is about us coming together and sharing our experiences with others from different places, and having fun.*

*As time went on I got better and I feel that this is what it is about.*

*Through service work I have learned to yield to others, to listen to what they say but not take it personally.*

*And that I am not perfect. There is a Higher Power that takes care of that for me.*

*Love in Service,  
Cynthia V.  
Past District Representative for District One.*

Over the years I've had many opportunities to participate in Service in Al-Anon. Each time I have said "yes" I have learned something new, something my Higher Power had planned for me. Usually it was something that I could learn more gently in Al-Anon than I could anywhere else.

In the early 90's I served as District Representative for District 1. I have good organizational skills, and thought this would be easy for me. What I did not plan on was a relapse back into active alcoholism during that time. What I learned was how to ask for help, how to do a job and not be perfect. I learned that going slowly, allowing for life to happen, and keeping my problems in their true perspective I could find peace and even happiness, whether the alcoholic was still drinking or not. Up until then I believed my happiness depended on my doing something perfectly AND other people falling into line doing what I thought they should. Gently my HP taught me otherwise!

As the current AISL (Area Information Service Liaison) there are a number of Public Outreach projects I could have done, also plenty of advertising, work with TV and Radio stations, and I could have even had a goal of increasing membership. But that would be investing my serenity in outcomes, rather than following my HP in learning what I needed to learn. So these past three years I have learned how to create a Newsletter. I learned how to take a meeting on wheels to a group of interested people. I learned that there are plenty of people eager to practice these Al-Anon principles. We have had workshops, Gratitude Dinners, Speaker Meetings and our members from District 1 have participated in Area and Statewide Al-Anon events. What a powerful way to be part of the links of service.

This is not about my goals or my ideas as much as it is about learning new ways to practice Step 3! - Cindy J. AISL/Past DR

Even though I had been attending Al-anon meetings on and off for a number of years, I decided to formally work the Al-anon steps with a sponsor about 4 years ago. As I was finishing up my step work, my sponsor suggested that I accept a regular service commitment as part of my recovery program.

At first I was somewhat apprehensive, because I was concerned that I was too busy. In addition to being a wife and mother, I was also working full time and attending graduate school. I honestly didn't know if I would have enough time to do a good job with a service commitment. However, over the years I have learned that when I try to fit my recovery program around my life, I tend to lose balance and perspective. But, when I fit my life around my recovery program, I tend to feel more balanced.

So, I decided to take on the service commitment for three years. During that time, I was able to participate in Al-anon on a different level and get to know different members from a new perspective. It also strengthened my 12<sup>th</sup> step and 5<sup>th</sup> tradition work.

- Kylie F., District Secretary

If you have a talent, or a desire to help spread the word about Al-Anon, then there is a Service position for you in District 1!

We have opportunities to work with our Website; or to create a Newsletter.

We have positions that work on keeping Meeting Lists current, and making sure all calls from newcomers and people interested in finding out about Al-Anon get answered.

We have a Newcomer Meeting that needs a liaison to help make sure meetings are covered by qualified chairpersons.

We have more traditional positions - Treasurer, Secretary, and lots of ways to work in Public Outreach.



#### Want to get involved but don't know how to go about it?

Try one of these: Call (850) 222-2294, leave a message and someone will call you back and talk about whatever position you're interested in!

Email: [tallyalanon@hotmail.com](mailto:tallyalanon@hotmail.com) .... send an email and ask for some more information, or share your ideas. You'll get an answer within two days and some good information from WSO, Area and District to help you consider.

Talk to someone at a meeting: mention it to a friend, let others know you're thinking about it. They may be too! Just like with most of our sharing - if someone has a problem or question (or desire to do service) chances are someone else is thinking the same thing!!

**Remember - YOU ARE NOT ALONE! AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO SERVICE ALL BY YOURSELF EITHER!**

#### Public Outreach in the Community

If the community is informed about the fellowship and understands the help Al-Anon/Alateen can provide, our groups will attract many who need our program of recovery. Good public relations are important to our groups as well as the community at large. It is important that the principle of anonymity is understood at the outset. We always protect our members' anonymity, but the Al-Anon/Alateen *program* is not anonymous (see the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Service Manual* for more on anonymity).

Groups can have members meet with and talk to spiritual leaders, health-care providers, educators, or the manager of the local radio or television stations. Others may help bring the Al-Anon presence to a local hospital, rehabilitation center, or penal facility. As long as members maintain personal anonymity when appearing in the media, as stated in Tradition Eleven, they can use their full names when contacting these professionals.

Holding an open meeting to which community professionals are invited and placing Al-Anon and Alateen posters in public places are other ways to enhance Al-Anon's public relations.

A listing in the telephone book that is not a personal phone number will help people find Al-Anon/Alateen. Where there is a concentration of groups, groups can subscribe to an answering service to refer callers to the nearest group. As the groups grow, an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS or Intergroup) may be established.

Many local newspapers have print and on-line listings of community resources, and the groups can make sure that Al-Anon/Alateen information is included.

Many ideas for outreach activities are available from Area Coordinators or thru the WSO. Keep your Area Coordinators informed of your Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions) activities.

from the Service Manual (p. 48)