

## **Inside Al-Anon Family Groups**

### **What It Means to Serve Alateen**

The importance of becoming involved in service was instilled in me early on in my recovery journey, and for that, I am truly grateful! Like many others, my journey began in my home group, then expanded to the District, and then, eventually, to the Area. With each opportunity came more awareness of our service structure and how simple and complex it was all at the same time. Serving Alateen was a significant opportunity that arose just as the World Service Conference voted to affirm the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. This motion required the creation of Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR).

It soon became clear that the ASBR served as the overarching guidance to follow, and that participating in training to serve Alateen was extremely important. After completing my initial certification to become an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), my desire to serve Alateen took on new meaning. However, I also realized that convincing my children to attend Alateen meetings would be as difficult as pulling out my own teeth one by one!

I am so grateful that Al-Anon and Alateen focus on attraction. The positive changes in my behavior, resulting from my recovery from the effects of someone else's drinking, have allowed me to support not only my teenaged children but also many others.

Being involved in Alateen service means I have the responsibility of understanding and maintaining my certification status, as outlined in the ASBR. Over the years, I have encountered situations that prompted me to question the processes described in the ASBR. This has led me to collaborate with the links of service to discuss whether it's time to review the contents of the document. Being a part of Alateen service presents opportunities to look at our processes. Consequently, I am on a task force dedicated to updating the ASBR! This is a wonderful opportunity to talk to each other and reason things out and follow the links of service to revise and approve the ASBR. Our goal is to ensure that clear and consistent guidance is provided.

I have come to appreciate that understanding Alateen service is not just the responsibility of AMIASs—it is also the responsibility of every Al-Anon member. I am reminded that Alateen is an integral part of Al-Anon. That does not mean everyone needs to become an AMIAS, but it's important for every Al-Anon member to know how to support Alateen if another member expresses interest and to be able to point them toward their links of service. Here's a question: Does your District offer support for Alateen, whether or not there is an Alateen meeting currently active in the District?

Serving as an AMIAS goes beyond just supporting a weekly Alateen group. AMIASs are needed to serve as chaperones and to assist with driving teens to events with Alateen participation or Al-Anon group anniversaries. They are needed to support District and Area events where Alateen meetings are taking place. AMIASs also play a crucial role in public

outreach. The recently created Public Outreach to Professionals—Alateen Toolkit offers valuable resources such as adaptable letters and presentations that can be shared with a variety of community agencies to let them know that Alateen is here to help teens affected by someone else’s drinking. We need AMIASs to carry these messages!

Now, here’s the second question: Does your group use Alateen literature in its meetings?

You might not know that you can! The readings from the two Alateen daily readers, *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10) and *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26), offer the shared experience of Alateen members on many of the same topics discussed in Al-Anon meetings. Having sample pieces of Alateen literature available for group use can be just the refresher needed to help a group that may be in a rut! When I found myself struggling with my Fourth Step inventory, I was introduced to *Alateen’s 4<sup>th</sup> Step Inventory* (P-64). Using *all* Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in my process of being “searching and fearless” took on new meaning and was a great growth opportunity.

So, if you haven’t figured it out by now, I have a passion for Alateen and for service to Al-Anon. As I write this on my last day as a World Service Office (WSO) Staff member, I am reminded of the love that I felt when first entering the rooms of Al-Anon Family Groups. That love has carried me and guided me to share this program with teens affected by someone else’s drinking. Many AMIASs have shared this sentiment, which is true for me as well: while my original motive was to “save the children,” the Alateens have, in fact, saved

me by sharing their love, truth, and honesty in Alateen meetings and events. I am forever grateful to have experienced and shared that love.

*By Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services*

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