

Growing Oaks

Oakland County Al-Anon Family Groups

Summer, 2025

Ever think about the word **welcome**? In Spanish, it's **Bienvenido**. In French, it's **Bienvenu**. In Japanese, it's **yo koso**. You can look up on your phone, as I did, how to say it in any language. I was thinking as I took my walk the other night and seeing a for sale sign, that eventually there would be a new neighbor to welcome. Our community used to deliver welcome baskets. A neighbor brought us a pizza on my family's moving-in day. There was even a neighborhood tea for the new moms. A neighborhood phone directory with lists of child care/baby-sitters and people to do odd jobs (think dog walking and lawn cutting). It was a different time, but the need for connection to a new place, a new experience is still around.

Think of being welcomed into a church, a restaurant, a school open house. Even a store! There are two components to this encounter, the **welcomers** and the **welcomed**. Another factor is the **welcomers** may know each other, have history and are familiar with the lay of the land. May even be seen as a closed group by a shy newcomer. The neighbors all know each other, names of their kids and pets, and have planned upcoming events. In church, everyone sits in the same place. The restaurant owner knows your name and your favorite appetizer. Unsureness is with the newcomers.

So, what about newcomers to Al-Anon? I've noticed at my own home group meeting that the atmosphere changes if a newcomer is present. We add a special reading to the opening. "In Al-Anon, we soon come to realize that we do not come *for* the alcoholic, but *because* of the alcoholic." (Taken from <https://al-anon.org/newcomers>.)

I looked at the **Welcome Newcomer!** Packet recently. The first inside page has the Serenity Prayer and then a place to list phone contacts and local meetings. Then follows several copies of Al-Anon pamphlets and a Just for Today bookmark. My home meeting wants give the packet and a copy

of **Alcoholism, the Family Disease** to those new to Al-Anon at the end of the group. Maybe, during the meeting, we each recall and are willing to share our thoughts and feelings when we attended our first meeting. Why did we decide to come in the first place? What surprised us? What brought us back? How long did it take each of us to become familiar with the language of our recovery program, such as slogans and phrases that bring members' head-nods, smiles and even a few chuckles. I recall the story of a newcomer who was sure they were in the wrong place since their life with an alcoholic was chaotic, scary and nothing to feel good about. Many tears and tons of anger.

So how did I move from a newcomer to an old-timer (?), attending meetings for over three decades and getting into service work that fit with my talents? Slowly, like the formation of the Grand Canyon, and just as vast, reaching into all areas of my life.

As the pictures I use here say, **everyone is welcome...** to share tears, frustrations, plans that work and ones that don't, stories of growth and backsliding without fear of judgement. **Come in we're OPEN...**, like an all-night diner with a familiar menu, we contact a sponsor or someone on a phone list.

Maybe the best picture is one that simply says **Welcome Home**. A place of safety, a place to rest, even as there is still work to do to make and keep it a home.

Another interesting thought: is home always only one place? Currently, there are over 24,000 Al-Anon groups and nearly 1,500 Alateen groups meeting in 118 countries.

Welcome!

- Shirley B.



CONNECTING WITH HOW AL-ANON WORKS

(The following is a topic presented
at a recent group meeting)



"For my topic I chose to focus on Steps Six and Seven. I am going to use as my main reference pages from How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics for a couple of reasons. At our group conscience meeting last week, in discussing what piece of literature a newcomer might like, it was said that this boo, our "big book", might be too intimidating. I wondered if it is also intimidating to many of us "oldcomers" as well. So, let's look in Part One at Steps Six and Seven, beginning on page 55.

Step Six says we are powerless to remove what we have defined in Steps Four and Five as defects of character **by ourselves**.

"Instead, we are reminded that we are in a partnership with a power greater than ourselves.It isn't always easy, because we know too much to remain comfortable with our defects. As we catch ourselves acting them out, we don't like what we see....These actions, attitudes and habits do not reflect the person we are striving to become. (p56) Paradoxically, by accepting our limitations, we can avail ourselves of unlimited possibilities....Miracles can grace our lives, and serenity can take the place of despair."

Step Seven then asks us to "Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings." Beginning on page 57, I am going to skip over the part defining the difference between humility and humiliation and read the last paragraph. "We neither grovel, regarding our needs as shameful, nor do we demand, treating our needs as all-important. There are a variety of ways to ask. We may pray,

meditate, visualize, write, speak aloud or sing our requests, but whatever we choose, we simply communicate our desire to be free of excess baggage. We simply speak from the heart."

Then I turned to Part Two: Al-Anon experiences, Number 23. p 274, "Lessons in Faith" I'll skip the personal life details of the writer's story and go pages 276-277, when the writer was asked if she was God. Thunderstruck, saying "of course not," my favorite part is when she writes she "turned over each and every person I could think of by name, each day. It was wonderful to be freed from all that planning, scheming, outsmarting and manipulating, and small miracles began to occur, People treated me better. I finally began to know what the long-time Al-Anon members were talking about when they spoke of serenity."

2025 Board Members

Chairperson: Paul R. 248-330-3631

Co-chair: Nora A 313-300-0024

Secretary: Ken L. 248-763-5439

Treasurer: Renee F. 248-821-3359

Member-at Large: Ann W. 248 941-5815

Vital Trusted Servants

District 12 Rep. Sue F. 248-585-7917

District 12 alternate Rep. Mike K. 248-464-9415

District 14 Rep. Jeanette H. 248-217-7252

District 14 alternate Rep. Nikki V. 810-410-6092

Alateen Coordinator Jill P. Jillpaz@hotmail.com

Website editor: Debbie D. 248-890-0820

Public Outreach Shirley B. 586-306-4428

Office Help Line - 248 706-1020

Literature Coordinator: Melissa 248-330-5684

AWSC liaison - Ruthanne O. 248-229-2709

(Above numbers may be used to text.)

Monthly meetings virtual and in person. Pilgrim Congregational Church, Adams Rd. north of 16 Mile, Bloomfield Hills. First Saturday at 9:45 am. Workshops (1 hour) follow as scheduled.

Growing Oaks is a publication of:
Oakland County
Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups
P.O. Box 155
Keego Harbor, MI 48320-0320

Editor: Shirley B.
Articles and Announcements
are welcome! Email to:
OaklandAFGnews@gmail.com

©2025 Oakland County AFG

How do I find a meeting?

- Zoom meetings (ID and password provided)
- Hybrid meetings (both virtual on Zoom as well as in person)
- In person meetings.

For updated list, please check: oaklandafg.org/meetings. See special meeting flyers on our website under Events/flyers.



Best Way to Get Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

To order: email Oaklandafgliterature1214@gmail.com. Books and other literature can be picked up at the monthly District 12 & 14 meeting. You may contact Melissa to make other arrangements.

Thinking about how to carry the Al-Anon message to others? (Step 12) How about, as an individual or group, donating a book to a church, school, lending library or community center near you.



Mark Your Calendar

- **Mondays, 7:30 p.m.** new Alateen meeting. Spirit of Grace Church, 2399 Figa Ave., West Bloomfield Twp. 48324.
- **Sept 12-14** - Al-Anon @ the 2025 Tri-County Conference Auburn Hills/Pontiac Marriott. 3600 Centerpoint Parkway, Pontiac, MI (Registration \$25 until Aug. 30. www.tricountyconference.org) All AA activities are open to the Al-Anon fellowship.

We now have internet access to many recordings of speakers from Al-anon and AA events throughout the years. These are available for listening on your smart phone or computer by going to the following webpage: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mRJupb_qMqUINHStEYUZX_sjIRmSNg?usp=sharing. -Mike K at itworksafg@gmail.com.

A New Collection of Insights from Our Shared Journey

There are lots of resources out there to help us navigate our interactions with others, roles we play and commitments made. We live in a world of community and our relationships are fluid, and may change over time.



A new Al-Anon resource is **Healing Within Our Alcoholic Relationships** A Collection of Insights from our shared journey, published last year.

It has four parts. While the language may seem to address marriage or long term couple partnerships, much of the wisdom may apply to any family member or friend whose life comes in contact with someone struggling with alcoholism and other addictions

Initiating Change - "Alcoholics cannot be helped unless they desire help. But a marriage - or any relationship - can be improved, even if only one person takes steps to understand the problem and do something about it."

Communicating Clearly - "We learn in time that it is not the subjects which are controversial, but the manner in which we communicate about them and the elements of personal blame we add to them in anger."

It All begins with Words - The words that make up Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, Serenity Prayer, and slogans may be read by anybody in a matter of minutes. It takes much more than a superficial reading, however, to produce understanding and results. The ideas contained in the words, when applied to our daily lives, can bring about unimaginable changes for the better, but only to the degree that we absorb and use them."

Fall Fund Raiser

Saturday, October 25, 2025 at the First Presbyterian Church, 1669 Maple Road, Birmingham, MI. Activities include Speakers, a Silent Auction and other events for fellowship and fun. Light breakfast and lunch.



\$25 Adult Donation. \$5 Alateen. Registration flyer will be available at group meetings and on Oakland AFG website.

Groups will be preparing auction baskets.