

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following timeline is an overview of historical changes and growth phases in the Al-Anon fellowship. It is by no means a comprehensive listing of all the significant and meaningful occurrences that have taken place since Family Groups spontaneously formed and the Al-Anon fellowship evolved. It is, however, an outline of Al-Anon's beginnings, a listing of many "firsts" and basic events that make Al-Anon and Alateen the worldwide fellowship that it is today.

**1935** Lois W., wife of Bill W., Co-founder of AA, realizes that she needs a program for herself.

June 29 - Lois W. meets Anne S., wife of Dr. Bob, Co-founder of AA.

**1939** Family groups begin to form.

**1941** Lois meets another Anne, Anne B., as they drove their husbands to AA meetings.

**1948** June 1 Anne S. dies.

**1949** Ruth G. starts a 12-page magazine in California called *The Family Forum*.

**1950** Three members of the Toronto Wives Group speak at the First AA International Convention in Cleveland.

**1951** April AA's General Service Conference passes a resolution thanking those who helped foster Family Groups.

May AA General Service Office gives Lois a list of 87 Family Groups and individuals in the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Ireland. Lois and Anne, Co-founders of our fellowship, send them a letter and 56 groups reply expressing the desire to form a service office. The Clearing House is opened at Stepping Stones, the home of Lois and Bill W.

November A service committee is selected to advise and help Lois and Anne. (The forerunner of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees.)

**1952** January 9 The Clearing House moves to the upstairs studio at the 24th Street AA Clubhouse in New York City.

*Purposes and Suggestions*, written by Lois, is distributed by the Clearing House. Al-Anon groups decide to support the Clearing House by voluntary contributions of \$1.00 per member twice a year and that the Clearing House is to handle all national publicity.

March The name Al-Anon Family Groups is selected by polling the groups.

AA's Twelve Steps are adopted as our guidelines with only one change. In Step Twelve, the word "alcoholics" is changed to "others."

AA's Twelve Traditions are adopted by the Al-Anon Family Groups.

**1954** Henrietta S. is the first paid part-time staff worker and Margaret O. becomes the first editor of the "Al-Anon Clearing House Newsletter."

June The "Al-Anon Clearing House Newsletter" name changes to *Al-Anon Family Group Forum*.

*Look to the Past to Protect the future!*

October The Clearing House incorporates under the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

**1955** July Al-Anon article published in the *Saturday Evening Post* gains national attention.

*Al-Anon Family Groups*, Al-Anon's first book, is published.

**1957** Al-Anon headquarters moves to 125 East 23rd Street. The Al-Anon groups now number over 1,000.

Alateen begins in California.

**1960** At the AA International Convention, Al-Anon votes to hold their own annual conference of delegates.

**1961** April First Trial Al-Anon Conference held in New York. Delegates from British Columbia, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania and Texas meet with the WSO staff and Board of Trustees.

**1963** WSC approves the concept of Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The WSC affirms the Twelve Concepts of Service for use by Al-Anon Family Groups.

**1971** The WSO outgrows its space and moves to 115 East 23rd Street as it services over 6,000 groups, including Alateen.

**1973** Alateen's first book *Alateen, Hope for Children of Alcoholics* is published.

**1978** February An International Coordination Committee is established to maintain contact and worldwide unity with Al-Anon Family Groups in countries other than the US and Canada.

March Once again the WSO outgrows its space and moves to One Park Avenue. The number of Al-Anon and Alateen groups now total almost 15,500.

**1979** The WSC approves holding two regional service seminars each year.

**1980** The first General Service Meeting for overseas delegates and WSO staff is held in conjunction with AA's International Convention in New Orleans.

**1984** February 24th Anne B dies.

**1986** The lease expires at One Park Avenue and the WSO moves to 1372 Broadway. There are now nearly 27,000 Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

**1988** October 5th Lois W. dies.

**1991** October Board of Trustees votes to relocate the WSO outside of the New York City metropolitan area.

**1994** The Conference passes a motion authorizing the purchase of property on a 15-year trial basis.

**1996** WSO relocates its headquarters office to Virginia Beach, VA. The number of groups are 31,105, including Alateen.

**1998** January There are 31,500 Al-Anon and Alateen groups registered with the WSO in 112 countries. Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature is published in 30 languages.

July Al-Anon International Convention held in Salt Lake City, Utah with AA participation.