



Historical Overview

Al-Anon Family Groups

The following overview is a timeline of historical changes and growth phases in the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship. It is an outline of our beginnings and basic events and is not intended as a comprehensive listing of all significant and meaningful Al-Anon occurrences.

1935 Lois W. recognizes her need for recovery when she throws a shoe at her husband, Bill W., co-founder of AA.

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

1939 Family groups begin to form.

1941 Lois W. and Anne B. meet as they drive their husbands to AA meetings.

1949 June 1 - Anne S., Dr. Bob's wife, dies.

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, OH.

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

May AA's General Service Office gives Lois W. a list of 87 Family Groups and individuals located in the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Ireland. Lois W. and Anne B. sent each of them a letter. Fifty-six groups expressed the desire to form a service office. Anne B. and Lois W. co-found Al-Anon and the Clearing House is established at Stepping Stones, the home of Lois and Bill W. in Bedford Hills, NY.

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

Lois and Anne write Al-Anon's first pamphlet, *Purposes and Suggestions*, and the Clearing House distributes the publication.

Al-Anon groups begin to support the Clearing House through voluntary contributions of \$1.00 per member bi-annually and decide that the Clearing House will 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 one change. In Step Twelve, "alcoholics" is changed to "others."

AA's Twelve Traditions are adapted and adopted.

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

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

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

- 1955 July** An article about Al-Anon is published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and gains national attention.
- Our first book, *Al-Anon Family Groups*, is published.
- 1957** Alateen begins in California.
- Al-Anon headquarters moves to 125 East 23rd Street, New York City. The groups now number over 1,000.
- 1960** At the AA International Convention in Long Beach, CA, Al-Anon votes to hold its own annual service conference.
- 1961 April** – The First Trial Al-Anon Conference is held in New York. Delegates from British Columbia, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Texas meet with World Service Office (WSO) staff and Board of Trustees.
- The World Service Conference (WSC) approves the Conference Approved Literature (CAL) process and the Twelve Traditions.
- 1970** The World Service Conference affirms the Twelve Concepts of Service.
- 1971** Al-Anon headquarters moves to 115 East 23rd Street, New York City. The groups now number over 6,000.
- 1973** Alateen's first book, *Alateen, Hope for Children of Alcoholics*, is published.
- 1978 February** – An International Coordination Committee is established to maintain unity and communication worldwide.
- March** Al-Anon headquarters moves to One Park Avenue, New York City. The groups now number over 15,000.
- 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 24** Anne B. passes away.
- 1985** Al-Anon/Alateen's First International Convention is held in Montreal, PQ, Canada in cooperation with the International AA Convention.
- 1986** Al-Anon headquarters moves to 1372 Broadway, New York City, and the groups now number nearly 27,000.
- 1988 October 5** Lois W. passes away.
- 1990** Al-Anon/Alateen's Second International Convention is held in Seattle, WA in cooperation with the AA International Convention.
- 1991 October** – The Board of Trustees approves relocation for the WSO outside of the New York City metropolitan area.
- 1994** The World Service Conference authorizes the purchase of property on a 15-year trial basis.
- 1996** Al-Anon headquarters (WSO) moves to 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA. The groups now number over 31,000.
- 1998** Al-Anon/Alateen's Third International Convention is held in Salt Lake City, UT. AA participated in this Al-Anon event.
- 2000** Al-Anon/Alateen incorporates in Canada. Conference Approved Literature is published in 30 languages.
- 2001** Al-Anon celebrates 50 years of offering hope to families and friends of alcoholics. Al-Anon is now in 115 countries.