

Al-Anon... In Touch in Gauteng



Latest News from our Groups

There is a wonderful spirit emerging in 2018 as our groups move from strength to strength. So many groups report that their numbers are growing and that new people come back again and again.

Our idea in 2018 was to take one of our area meetings to each of our 4 districts this year, so that members in the district can attend, find out what goes on at area level, ask questions about how Al-Anon works, stay in touch and meet people from the rest of Gauteng. We weren't sure how it was going to work. Even so, on Feb 17, we held the first travelling meeting in Kempton Park.

Well, it was a great success, and we met new people and oldies who we haven't seen in a long time as well as our regular stalwarts, who found their way to the alternative venue. We were all greeted with a warm welcome and wonderful goodies for tea. We were delighted to welcome new Group Representatives (GRs) from Brooklyn AAC, Airfield Benoni, Edenvale, East Rand Morning, St Francis and we had visitors from Airfield and Springs.

We also answered questions about all sorts of Al-Anon matters and gave very brief outlines of the different things volunteers do for Al-Anon. They work to support members, reach new people, provide literature, keep things legal, record and manage finances and offer what support we can to people in remote areas... and have a lot of fun in the process.

So, just a reminder that we will be holding another Visiting Area Meeting on Saturday May 19th in Pretoria. Don't miss it! All welcome.

Get on the WhatsApp group

News of the actual venue will come to Group Reps (GRs) via our Area WhatsApp group. If you're not yet on the Area WhatsApp group and you are a GR or Alternate GR, please ask Marlene at 082 316 3673 to add your name. If you don't have a smart phone, do you have a kindly person who does? We don't want you to be out of the loop.

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Special Dates

Convention Easter in PE on
30,31 March & 1 April 2018

Gratitude Meeting 17 March

Al-Anon Birthday Rally at St
Francis, Forest Town 5 May

Fun Day Quiz..... 28 May



Thanking Lois

In AA, members often talk about 'being a friend of Bill's'. I have never heard an Al-Anon member talking about 'being a friend of Lois' but without her, we wouldn't be thriving today.

I personally am grateful beyond words for the way my life has changed since I started attending Al-Anon meetings. I hate missing my weekly home group meeting. When I do have extremely pressing matters or am not in town, I feel myself going downhill, getting mean and ratty, irritated, losing my calm. My family and friends are also grateful for my recovery!

So we thought it would be a wonderful idea to celebrate Lois's magnificent contribution to our happiness and health on her birthday which is in March.

Many of our groups are having a Gratitude meeting before 17th March. Grateful members will put cash in an envelope and send (or bring) it to the area meeting on **17th March, our Gratitude Meeting.**

Our theme will be **"Thanks Lois!"** We will have a short reminder of what Lois had to overcome and a summary of where Al-Anon is today thanks to her and all the people who supported her efforts. Lots to celebrate and be grateful for.

Don't miss the area meeting on 17th March at our Area offices at 28 Hennie Alberts Rd, Brackenhurst, Alberton (go to our area website at www.alanongauteng.co.za for the Google map and link), bring a plate of eats and your gratitude contribution and let's party!

"I asked myself, without Al-Anon, without my home group, how would I be feeling today?"

Traditionally speaking...

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

This also works at home. My Al-Anon group has helped me give voice to my own views about our common welfare. I've learned I have the right to initiate and contribute to discussions on things that affect us all.

I can do the same at home. I start the talking, and contribute. When I do speak up during family discussions, I can give my opinion once, not attempt to bully those round me. I can also expect the same of others. Consider what is best for all of us together.

One member reports, "Today I am trying to show patience and try harder for common ground. We don't always get it right, but these days we work for a way that respects more than one person's needs. And often we get it right."

Why Gratitude is part of Al-Anon

'Changed Attitudes Aid Recovery' right? Right.

In *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22ZA), there is a whole chapter on Changed Attitudes, and how gratitude helps bring about these changed attitudes. In each of our daily readers there are plenty of readings on Gratitude.

In *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), one of our 'Big Books', gratitude is clearly mentioned in working Step Four, Step Five, Step Eight and Step Eleven. It's also in the chapters on Tradition Seven, Tradition Eight and Concept One. In fact it's an integral part of our recovery.

In *Hope for Today* (B-27ZA) p72 it says: "With the help of Al-Anon, I've learned that I can overcome the dreadful force of negative thinking. Regardless of how discouraged I may feel, I can always find *something* for which to be thankful today. [...] I can start my day over at any time. Finding a reason to feel grateful is a great way to do it."

And from *The Forum*, June 1998, p7, "Today I am grateful for everything – even things that surprise me...." May you be surprised with gratitude today and every day.



Making space for children

Some of our groups are making space for children. As one parent said, 'It seems a pity to not share our recovery with our kids.' One member said her daughter wanted to know where mom was going, so she took her along. Her daughter is ready each week, waiting by the door, when it's time to leave for the Al-Anon meeting. Kids can bring a book to read or a game to play or they can sit and listen. We save intimate content for sharing with a sponsor in private.

At evening meetings, the child can just put his or her head down and catch a nap in a safe space. It solves the problem of baby-sitting if one needs to get to a meeting and there is no-one at home to leave a child with. Not that Al-Anon is a baby-sitting service, and a crying baby is a really distressing thing. However, we have had a cooing, gurgling baby (until she fell asleep) and that was quite delightful. (See note below re: babysitting)

What our children learn by being at meetings is

- How people can talk and listen kindly
- Letting others finish what they're saying, not interrupting.
- How we let everyone say what's important to them
- How we don't criticize what they say or tell them they're wrong.
- How we don't give advice.
- How we share our own experiences if someone wants to know what they should do.

In my group, I also notice a sense of camaraderie and welcome. That alone helps children feel comfortable and accepted. There is also a sense that a higher power guides the group and gives it a kind of hopefulness and purpose. I can't put that into words but I feel it often in our group. It's a safe place to be. Why wouldn't we want our children to feel that? And of course. There are the slogans that come up, the steps that we hear week after week, discussions on what the steps mean and how they can be used in our lives.

And, the cherry on the top for some children, a chance to read from their own Alateen daily reader. One member shared that her shy son has been reading the Alateen reading in the group each week. His confidence has soared and he is now happy to read at school. So until we have more Alateen meeting this is a possible solution.

Note: Your group can hire a babysitter with group funds or take a special collection for it. It keeps Al-Anon accessible to as many as possible. (see p99 of our 2014-2017 Service Manual)



Alateen in your district?

Wouldn't it be great if we had an Alateen meeting in each district in our Gauteng area? In Gauteng we get huge support from AA members who really want their kids to be part of recovery. In Gauteng's District 3 (Joburg N), the Alateen meeting takes place every Saturday morning at 09h00 to 10h00 at Methodist Church, 64 7th/1st Ave Rosebank.

So, in 2018 members in Pretoria, East Rand, Jhb South & Soweto are putting their attention on doing just that. Kempton Park members are keen to get started.

Holding up the process is a **shortage of AMIASes**. (Al-Anon Members In Alateen Service). We need around 8 members per district to be certified, so that they can take it in turns to keep an Alateen meeting open every week. It's a legal requirement to protect the children to have 2 AMIASes at every Alateen meeting.

The sooner recovery starts, the more help it is. Some of us were old and grey before we got into a program. Do we want that for the new generation?



Alateen Literature

Alateen meetings bring a new sense of hope to youngsters growing up in homes affected by the devastation of alcohol. Our Alateen group also needs literature for reading during the meeting and at home.

Sometimes children do not have the resources to buy books. A daily reader can help a young person survive from meeting to meeting and find some comfort knowing he or she is not alone.

You can help Alateen buy literature. Make a contribution, marked 'Alateen'. See banking details below.

Tradition Seven Works

We are self-supporting, declining outside contributions. This means a fair exchange for services rendered. It occurred to me recently how important this is to my recovery.

A member of our group started her recovery working on Tradition 7 in her life. She said she hadn't really started doing the steps. A long-term member reassured her. She had actually worked a number of the steps... She had realised she was powerless over other people's money issues but responsible for her own support (Step One), that she could reach out for help and support in how to do this (Step Two & Three), and that when looking at her overall financial situation honestly (Step Four) she was doing a fine inventory and discovering more about herself and her patterns of behavior.

When I get help and support from the other members of Al-Anon and the office runs smoothly, and the books I order are delivered to me, and the area holds rallies and events and gives support to groups, I need to think how much that support is worth, and to align my contributions to the benefits I get on what is sometimes a daily basis. It is in the giving that we receive.

Book News

Once again we are beating the Literature drum! If you only go to one meeting a week, then most of us need something on a daily basis to lift our spirits. Al-Anon's literature does just that. I always find it amazing how the daily reading in *ODAT*, *Courage to Change*, *Hope for Today* or any other book or pamphlet is to me, right then.

Bear in mind ALL Al-Anon Literature - including Al-Anon Adult Children and Alateen Literature - is written by ordinary members like you and me. That's why so much of it really resonates and comes just when one needs it.

Remember, our new locally printed books are available to you at much reduced prices compared to the imported ones from the USA. These include:

***One Day At A Time* (B06ZA) @ R250**

***Courage to Change* (B16ZA) @R250**

***Hope for Today* (B27ZA) @ R250**

***Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P93) @ R190**

***Blueprint for Progress* (P91) (A4) @ R190**

***Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P92) @ R220**

***Paths to Recovery* (B-22) @ R380 until 7th March.**

Order them online at

www.alanongauteng.co.za or from your Group Librarian

Contribute!

Our banking details are:

ABSA Bank, Oakdene 632 005

Acct no: 1118881482

Acct name: Al-Anon Information Service.

Please put name or group as ref. or you may wish to donate anonymously or do ongoing EFT.

Opt Out? Send email to

alanontvl@absamail.co.za.

To subscribe send email addresses and ask.