

District 18

NEWSLETTER

What 3-5 words would describe the benefits of recovery that you have received by working the Al-Anon program? These are the most common words shared:



Meetings are starting to re-open and hold in-person meetings! **Check the district website often for updates to the schedule.** The online calendar has Zoom, In Person, or Hybrid in the meeting name now. Don't forget to notify Diana the DR and Laura Group Records if your meeting changes to another format! We want newcomers to find our meetings!



Welcoming Newcomers

There had not been an active alcoholic in my life for over 35 years when an event happened involving loss and betrayal that had nothing to do with alcohol. This event caused all of my past decisions, losses, and hurts to pop-up like corks on water. I was filled with self-doubt and loathing, and I blamed myself for issues over which I had no control.

A friend suggested that I might benefit from Al-Anon. Although I did not understand the connection, it was pointed out that quite possibly my alcoholic upbringing contributed to how I viewed everything and everyone. I agreed to give it a try.

At the very first meeting, I found an environment unlike any other. There was no judgment or criticism, only acceptance. There were people who spoke about themselves but sounded as if they knew my story. I knew I was in the right place. I began attending a second group as well, where I found the same level of acceptance, and I began to heal.

When I am asked about being a newcomer in Al-Anon, I reply that it feels as though I enter a pool of water that is always the perfect temperature: cool and refreshing when I am upset or angry, warm and soothing when I feel cold and lonely.

Al-Anon meetings and literature are like air and water to me. I could no more do without them than I could give up breathing air or drinking water. It is a comfort to know that throughout my life and wherever I go, Al-Anon will be there for me.

*By Anonymous
The Forum, December 2020*

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Did you know there is a checklist that Al-Anon has for welcoming newcomers?

It's online here: [Welcoming Checklist](#)



*Hope and Help for Young People who are the Relatives
and Friends of a Problem Drinker*

What is Alateen?

Alateen is Al-Anon for members who are 12-19 years old. If you are 12-19 years old, and are affected by someone else's drinking, Alateen is for you.

Is there an Alateen meeting in District 18?

Not right now, sorry. But we are working on getting an Alateen meeting going online soon. A flyer will go out to Group Representatives to announce once the meeting is sessioning.

How do I connect to Alateen now?

Speak to an AMIAS to find a meeting or follow the Alateen social media pages.

Facebook - @AlateenWSO

Instagram - @Alateen_WSO

Twitter - @Alateen_WSO

What is an AMIAS?

An AMIAS is an Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service. They help keep the Alateen members safe.

What if I want to be an AMIAS?

Visit District 18's AMIAS meeting for more info. The next meeting is April 25th between 11am-12pm.
Zoom ID 560 918 2140 / PW 234567

Do I have to be an AMIAS to help Alateen?

No. If you would like to help Alateen flourish here are some ideas anyone can do -

10. Invite an Alateen panel to chair your Al-Anon meeting.
9. Mention Alateen as part of the recovery for the "Family Disease" of Alcoholism during all Newcomer meetings.
8. Give Alateen newcomer packets to Al-Anon newcomers.
7. Have Alateen literature available for purchase.
6. Propose changes to your meetings welcome to include text mentioning Alateen, and it's availability to the children of Alcoholics/Al-Anons.
5. Donate Literature to your local Alateen group.
4. Inquire about Alateen sponsorship and/or starting a meeting in conjunction with your Al-Anon meeting.

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3. Donate to NoCAC conference scholarships.
 2. Attend Alateen events.
 1. Know what ALATEEN is and spread the word! ALATEEN is AL-ANON, for the children/teens affected by the disease of Alcoholism.

And last but not least . . .

Don't judge - We're recovering from this disease together!

Who do I contact if I have Alateen/AMIAS related questions?

Your District's Alateen Coordinator! District 18's Alateen Coordinator is Maria P and her email is mariap.afg@gmail.com

What does the Serenity Prayer mean to you? How do you use the Serenity Prayer?

Recently I received a video from a family member. This video was my family arguing over my grandma's care in front of her. My grandma is 85 and has dementia. Currently she is living in an in-home care facility where she has her own room. She is provided meals around the clock as well as her medication. The facility has her best interest at heart as the owner of the facility is a personal friend of one of her daughters. Unfortunately my grandma's kids can not come to an agreement on where care should continue. This video that was sent to me showed my aunt and uncle arguing directly in front of my grandma. The situation escalated and became physical between my aunt and uncle. My aunt's daughter had to pull her away from her own brother. This lit a fuse underneath me and upset me to the point of full on tears. My thought was, how could they do this in front of my grandma!? How could they do this period!? I immediately started saying the Serenity Prayer. God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference. I said this prayer three times before I was able to release full and total control to my higher power. It helped calm me down knowing this is not in my control. I continue to pray and surrender this situation when it comes to my grandma's care. Knowing that I can have Serenity no matter what is going on helps me on my recovery journey. I am so thankful for Al-Anon for helping me see that there is a new way in life.

Nicole B
Modesto, CA



One of the ways I use the Serenity Prayer is as a meditative mantra when I am jogging. Recently, as I was jogging and meditating I realized that something inside of me had changed. You see, I was outside jogging due to the fact that my gym membership had been terminated because the head trainer and I did not always see eye to eye. In the past, I would have turned myself inside out to get her to like me. But when this happened, while I did need to process my emotions, I was able to let go pretty quickly and this was curious to me. As I continued jogging and meditating, "Courage to change the things I can" kept going around and around in my mind. I became aware of the fact that I had changed, by working through my steps once more with a sponsor. What I realized was I no longer wanted to be with people who did not want to be with me. Before Al-Anon, I would have twisted myself like a pretzel to get the attention and approval of another, especially if they did not want me. Today, with Al-Anon I can accept the things I cannot change (how someone else feels about me) and change the things I can (how I feel about myself). Thank God for Al-Anon and the wisdom to know the difference.

Toni M

I've been aware of this prayer for quite some time. It became meaningful to me when my husband held my hand and recited the prayer upon hearing the news that our son was hospitalized, in ICU, and we needed to come immediately. It stayed with me during the drive over to see our son and kept me calm during the 10 days that he was hospitalized. That was the path that led me into Al-Anon.

Pat W

~ Overheard at a meeting ~

I never understood the prayer before Al-Anon. I've only been here a little awhile. I'm starting to understand it. When I was really upset last weekend, I repeated it to calm myself. It helped a lot. It's the first time I've ever used it like that. I am journaling about it too - just yesterday. I started to break it down and really understand it better.



It can be rote to say the Serenity prayer at the meeting. Especially when we are using Zoom. I don't get far into saying it, when I realize that I need to change something. A friend was sharing her opinions without me asking for them. I listened while we were together. It wasn't until I got home that I started to stew about them. I started to think my opinion was wrong and she was right. She might think she was doing something good for me by sharing her opinions. I can remember not everyone has a program. All I can change is how I hear and how I act when she shares it with me.

I use the prayer as a mantra everyday.

I have the tools and know I can use them. But that goes out the window if the topic is my child. I know I am getting crazy. I learned early that the Serenity prayer will help. I can't do anything about his choices. I know that I need to accept it.

I use it as a meditation when I run or walk. If I wake up too early, obsessing over something, I use the Serenity prayer to stop the obsessing and go back to sleep.

I say the serenity prayer. I didn't like it when I was new. The alcoholic in my life used to tell me to change things that I can. I hated that. He was telling me how to live my life.

Did you know..... The Serenity Prayer was said to have been composed by Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr composed the prayer in 1932-33. Niebuhr used it in a 1943 sermon at Heath Evangelical Union Church in [Heath](#), Massachusetts. The prayer spread rapidly, often without attribution to Niebuhr, through church groups in the 1930s and 1940s and was adopted and popularized by Alcoholics Anonymous and other twelve-step programs.

A funny twist on a prayer with which we are all familiar:

God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway,
the good fortune to run into the ones I do,
and the eyesight to tell the difference.



Recently, I've been taking some steps to care for myself and address my anxiety, which has taken a lot of courage. I'm so grateful for my recovery in Al-Anon, that even though it's taken me ten years to get here, I know I'm right where I'm supposed to be. I love the analogy of the well on page 294 in Hope for Today as it relates to courage. Before I came into the rooms I was in the dark much like the bottom of a well, without hope. Then as I started to come to Al-Anon, I could see the light, but didn't know how I'd ever be able to climb out. Al-Anon has given me the tools to climb out of that well, giving me opportunities to practice courage by not allowing my fear to motivate my choices. My anxiety has always told me that my fear would consume me, and that it would render me incapable of the courage necessary to take responsibility for my well-being (keeping the focus on myself). But as I continue to do what the program suggests, I find my fear is proven wrong and I continue to make progress towards a healthier more serene me.

Lindsey

I was diagnosed with Covid19...I made it through the virus...however it lingered with symptoms for months. I consider myself a vibrant woman...yet this disease has been a great opportunity to work my program. I recently read in one of my favorite CAL books an excerpt that struck me..."Having had a Spiritual Awakening" page 117. The key sentence was" I must seek the guidance of a Higher Power every day."

Remembering that each day my Higher Power and I will take on this day together. If I am not feeling well enough to do things I think I should, it is ok to rest instead. I may not have the ability or strength to make every meeting I would like right now. I must do what is best for me first. I know my Al-Anon family will be there to share their experience, strength and hope with me when I can get back. I am Grateful for all of the people in the program and that they keep coming back.♥

Anonymous

The serenity prayer is truly a godsend. Not having control in my life has been a huge trigger for me for as long as I can remember. Feeling out of control can be scary and produce anxiety and reactivity for me. I have been reactive and impulsive for as long as I can remember. So the serenity prayer helps me to slow down a bit and gives me strength, courage, and direction to

live life in a much healthier manner. A long drawn out process regarding a shared fence with a neighbor became a huge serenity stealer for me. We had some neighbors move in next-door, demolish the house and rebuild. After they completed the house and moved in, it became very clear that we needed to put up a fence that would give us privacy. They had built up their yard and patio so high that we could see into each other's backyard and pool area. My husband and I discussed the issue with the neighbors and we all agreed in building a fence sufficient in addressing privacy needs. I took and shared a picture of a fence I found that was attractive and would also give privacy and security. We all agreed that it would work. My husband agreed to build the fence since he is a contractor and has that skillset. He gave the neighbors a quote to which they agreed. When my husband went to order the lumber, he was told that shipments weren't coming in because of Covid-19, so the project was put on hold. Many months later the boards were available to order. My husband had mistakenly quoted them an amount for a different style of fence the months prior, therefore the estimate they had previously agreed upon was lower than what it would actually cost. The neighbor's weren't pleased about the new price and didn't want to put out more money. Now due to my husband's error, we would have to come to some kind of agreement once again. My husband wanted to deal with the owner himself at this point. Reluctantly but respectfully, I acquiesced and agreed for him to take care of it. It had been six months of waiting and I was getting very impatient... Lack of control... Trigger... Breathe... I stood by as my husband and the neighbor texted back and forth for two months trying to come up with a plan. Standing on the sidelines was driving me absolutely mad. I soooo wanted to step in and get it dealt with and force a solution. In my head I just knew if I could get us all together again to discuss it, we could deal with it and get the boards ordered and the fence could be built. God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, (them and the painfully slow process), Courage to change the things I can, (Me, keep my big mouth shut, which was uncomfortably difficult for me to do), and the Wisdom to know the difference. The wisdom was there, but I needed many more prayers for the power to carry it out. Thank goodness for the program. Seven months later, an agreement was finally met and we now have a new fence and privacy. I, gratefully, have serenity and integrity from practicing the serenity prayer day in and day out throughout this arduous process.

Cheri B.

Topics for the next Newsletter **Due 06/1/2021**

1. What is your favorite slogan and why?

2. How would you finish this sentence: I am grateful for.....

3. How have the steps and the program helped you through grief?

You can type your response in an email to [Newsletter Coordinator](#)
You can [click on this link for a form to submit your share](#)
You filled out or print this page and mail it to D18 Newsletter, PO Box 579491, Modesto, Ca 95357-9491



Thoughts on being your District 18 Alternate District Representative (ADR)

As the last panel in District 18 was coming to an end in the Fall of 2020, my sponsor as well as some of my closest and trusted Al-Anon member friends asked me, “What is next for you, April? Will you serve again in District 18?” This is when my thoughts and conversations with my Higher Power (HP) traveled to: do I want to participate in service at the district level and if that answer is “yes”, what is it that I want to do? Just as if the answer was “no” then what next in Al-Anon/Alateen service, did I want to do. I do know that service is vital to my personal recovery, so for me, that meant some type of service was a must. Thus, in keeping it simple, my conversations with my HP began with: what is next for you in Al-Anon/Alateen service, April? I heard “April be where your heart is...” which for me is in District 18. That led me to chat with my HP about what in District 18 did I want to do and did that align with my HP’s will for me. Conversations such as these are common for me today. I no longer shoot (or immediately say “yes”) and ask questions later. In other words, today I do a much better job of acting and not reacting.

So began my footwork. I looked at the service positions at D18 and continued my conversation with my HP. I knew I wanted to continue to learn and grow. Today I embrace my AFGOs (Another F%#ing Growth Opportunity), getting comfortable with uncomfortable. That means, study the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service; they are guides for group unity, growth, and service, listen, continuing to learn to work with others, reason things out, to be “ok” if I do not get my way, accepting the group conscious, agree to disagree, to better learn about conflict and how to resolve it, and oh so many more things. My opportunity for growth is truly endless.

The service position that continually came up was that of Alternate District Representative. My HP directed me to read the Al-Anon Guidelines for the District Representative as the Alternate would share and assume some of these suggested guidelines as well as be ready, willing and able to step-in should the District Representative not be able to fulfill their term. My HP encouraged me to talk with prior Alternate District Representatives asking them to share their experience, strength and hope with me. And lastly, He led me to discuss, in depth, with my sponsor my thoughts and especially my motive for wanting to serve in this position.

My HP encouraged me to take a good look at my motive. What is my motive? Is my motive pure?

There were many answers that came. The two that repeatedly came up were:

Step 12 which reads: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs and Tradition 5 which reads: Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

I was excited and looking forward to continuing to carry the message as I was moving from the D18 Institutions Coordinator to the D18 ADR. I received so much more than I gave as the Institutions Coordinator and I wanted that to continue. I feel the position of Alternate District Representative gives me the best opportunity to actively practice Step 12 and Tradition 5. Part of the suggested duties and responsibilities of the ADR in District 18 is to lead the Public Outreach Committee and to be the Al-Anon liaison at the Central Valley Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous (CVIAA).

Today I am where my heart is: in District 18 actively carrying the message. Service at District 18 is FUN! Our panel shares my energy and enthusiasm! I hope this attracts other members in our district to join us in carrying out Al-Anon's 12th Step and 5th Tradition.

Gratitude in Service,

April M. – D18 ADR, Panel 61



Sponsor's Corner

When I first walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I was told that my best chance for success in the program was to consider the following: I should attend multiple meetings, listen with an open mind, look at the person who is speaking for focus, read the literature, and work the steps with someone called a sponsor.

This sounded great, but how do I pick one? It was suggested to me to listen in meetings to hear someone's story or how they worked their program and see if I could relate. I heard several members telling my story to my surprise! I set out to a meeting one night, and on simple faith during my share, I mentioned that I was looking for a sponsor. There were not many men attending Al-anon meetings when I first started. God is funny as he brought to me a gentleman who had some of the same life commonalities as me: an alcoholic wife and our professions were the same!

My sponsor walked me through the steps. I was asked to check in with him at least once a week by phone and we met once a week in person to do our step work and to apply his knowledge of the steps, traditions and concepts to my weekly struggles with alcoholism on the Al-anon side. Our work produced many "ah ha" moments from the first week we started. I knew God had me on the right path, the journey towards peace and serenity had begun.

I excelled because of the love, listening, and guidance of my sponsor. There was no judgment. As I sometimes stumbled through the steps, his guidance helped me to open up, stop judging myself and help me to feel comfortable in my own skin. My sponsors helped me to take what I have learned spiritually in my relationship with God outside of our program and apply all these principles in my daily life.

A sponsor is now that phone call I make before the confrontation starts.

A sponsor is that person who reminds me how much I have grown.

A sponsor is that insight, not opinion, on the study of the steps, traditions and concepts.

A sponsor is that invaluable sounding board.

I have been reminded as a sponsee that my sponsor does not need to be called only during the tough times but would love to hear my successes. I practice this more today. I will never stop being a sponsee. This tells me and the world that I am forever TEACHABLE.

Greg F.

I love having fun! How do you have fun? I love puzzles and keeping my mind going so here is one for you to try.

Word Search

T	Q	S	K	G	O	C	G	E	G	N	C	E	E	L
D	Z	P	T	G	L	D	D	R	H	N	G	R	C	M
F	V	E	L	E	A	E	A	U	O	A	O	C	O	Y
T	B	T	H	A	N	T	M	I	R	S	S	P	N	T
R	U	S	L	I	I	O	T	U	N	L	B	O	C	I
A	O	M	A	T	R	A	O	O	Y	S	R	W	E	N
D	D	L	U	B	T	C	P	V	E	M	W	E	P	E
I	C	D	A	I	K	S	H	U	R	X	W	R	T	R
T	E	O	D	M	A	R	T	Y	R	W	C	L	S	E
I	U	E	N	H	M	E	W	H	O	P	E	E	O	S
O	M	J	N	T	C	U	N	A	U	E	M	S	C	A
N	W	A	K	O	R	M	Q	B	Z	F	P	S	W	Z
S	P	W	R	U	T	O	B	Q	R	F	W	K	Y	G
Q	A	L	C	O	H	O	L	I	S	M	J	G	I	M
A	Y	O	N	N	R	E	Y	A	R	P	L	V	I	T

ALCOHOLISM	DENIAL	MARTYR	SERENITY
CONCEPTS	GRATITUDE	MEDITATION	SPONSOR
CONTROL	HOPE	POWERLESS	STEPS
COURAGE	HUMOR	PRAYER	TRADITIONS

If you need some inspiration for “fun”, you might want to read Hope For Today pages 25 and 143.

Vicki B



District 18 currently has the following 3 positions open:

See the website **Service** tab for more information!

Hispanic Liaison (diversity) Coordinator

Purpose: To provide help in reaching out to our Spanish language groups.

Public Information and Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinator (PI/CPC)

Purpose: Attract to Al-Anon Family Groups those whose lives are or have been affected by problem drinkers, so that those who need our program can find the help and hope we offer. Carry the Al-Anon message to print, broadcast or electronic media within District 18. Be a conduit of information between NCWSA and District 18.

Special Events Coordinator

Purpose: To coordinate, find an event chairperson, and assist in all District 18 events.

District 18 had its first Outreach meeting for 2021!

Hello District 18 - There is a new recovery facility in Modesto! This connection came about as a result of the recovery facility making a call to our D18 answering service. Thank you D18 answering service! District 18 was invited to tour ***Insight Recovery for Teens and Their Families***. We walked into their recovery center and immediately felt calm and encouraged about their program. Their recovery center is large, beautiful, bright and cheery. What a great environment for teens and their families to be welcomed into and to participate in their recovery. During the tour, we met and spoke with the counselors and personnel and left as energized, or more 😊, as they were to bring Al-Anon and Alateen to their facility. They would like to host an Alateen meeting on Saturday afternoons and an Al-Anon meeting on Thursday evenings. Maria P., our Alateen Coordinator, is coordinating the Alateen meeting and Patty L., our Institutions Coordinator, is doing the footwork for the Al-Anon meeting. We are

excited for this opportunity and look forward to sharing much more with all of you very soon. Stay tuned!!!

HUGS in Service,
April M. - D18 ADR

~ More Outreach ~

Hello Family!

District 18 needs your help! We need contributions to carry out our 5th Tradition – carrying the message of HOPE to the families of Alcoholics in our District! We can do this by doing some exciting Outreach projects! Our D18 Public Outreach budget is \$1,000 for 2021. This is only enough money to do some basic footwork, i.e., delivering AFAs (Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism) to professionals and recovery centers, mailings of our Public Outreach packet and participating in Outreach events we are invited to, all are wonderful, but we would like to do more, much more! Some examples of “the much more” that we would like to do are:

- Advertising on digital Billboards (approximately **\$1,800** per month)
- Theatre or home movie/internet advertising (approximately **\$3,000** per month)
- Advertising on buses (approximately **\$3,500**).

That is just the tip of the iceberg of all of the possibilities. We need your contributions to District 18. Please, when you consider allocation of your donations to District 18, Northern California World Service Area (NCWSA) and the World Service Office (WSO), know the only donations that District 18 receives are from the groups and the members in our district. The donations made to NCWSA come from all the groups and all the members in Northern California and the WSO donations come from all the groups, districts, areas and members in the US, Puerto Rico and Canada.

We thank you for any and all donations you contribute to help us continue carrying the message of Hope in our District!

Hugs and Joy In Service,
Diana C.
DR, District 18

SPECIAL EVENTS

- The Special Events Coordinator position is still open. See the website Service tab for more information! No prior experience needed.
- The first Sunday of every month is the District meeting from 1-3.
Zoom ID: 894 4011 5206, Passcode: 900980
- Save the date!! Sept 17-19, 2021 NCWSA Convention - More to come soon!

Check the calendar on the District 18 website for more details:

<http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/events.htm>

Check the NCWSA calendar for events in other districts:

<https://northerncaliforniaal-anon.org/calendar/>

The AI-Anon Membership Survey Is Coming!

Historically, this is the time of year when the World Service Office (WSO) would be kicking off the 2021 AI-Anon Membership Survey; but this year, we are revamping the survey. Our goal is to "Keep It Simple" while still collecting the appropriate evidenced-based data which will help

professionals in their decision to refer their patients/clients to AI-Anon. So, to provide a more simplified and streamlined survey, the WSO needs a little more time. The survey will be coming this summer and will be open to all AI-Anon members and newcomers aged 18 and older.



Getting & Staying Connected

Can't find a newsletter?? You can log into our website and go to the Newsletter tab to find it or click on this link: <http://alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org/newsletter.htm>

Want to subscribe to the newsletter? Send me an email using the email below. It's free!
newsletter@alanonsanjoaquinvalley.org

District Meetings:

When: The 1st Sunday of every month from 1:00-3:00

Where: In person: Doctor's Hospital Conference Center
(between the parking garage & emergency room)
1441 Florida Ave, Modesto 95350

Virtual: Zoom ID: 894 4011 5206 Passcode: 900980

Who: Open to everyone!

In The Loop News from the WSO

To sign up to receive the monthly emails from the WSO, click on the link below fill in the following fields and hit submit.

[In the Loop Sign-Up](#)

Did you know that the WSO has a blog where you can share on the current topic? Here is the website: [Member's Blog](#)

Free downloads from WSO: [Free information](#)

For newcomers: Enter your email and receive a welcome email: al-anon.org/welcome

Young Al-Anon Members Meeting list: [Young People Focus Meeting List](#)