

growing oaks

OAKLAND COUNTY,
MICHIGAN
AL-ANON
NEWSLETTER
SUMMER QUARTER
2013

Come one, come all - to the 10th Annual Oakland County AFG Fall Workshop! The **New Beginnings** Group is excited to host the Workshop this year and promises to deliver an inspiring, informative, joyful and entertaining experience. The Workshop will take place Saturday, September 21st from 9 AM until 2 PM at the **First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham**, 1669 West Maple Road, Birmingham.

The Fall Workshop is both a learning opportunity for the fellowship and the annual fundraiser to help support the Oakland County AFG office, including the Alateen and Public Outreach programs. Our 7th Tradition states "Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions". Since we are self-supporting, the funds we raise from the Workshop help to reach out to those that need help, which is after all, our primary purpose. The Oakland County Office serves as an Al-Anon Information Service and Literature Distribution Center and is an important and invaluable resource to our community. All contributions and funds are used to meet expenses for rent, utilities, insurance, office operations, meeting lists, literature, website, our District Reps and Liaison, and contributions to MIAFG and the WSO.

The projected goals for this year's Workshop are to increase attendance to 125 participants and to raise \$2000 through ticket sales and the Silent Auction. The Committee is well organized and has Chairpersons and Co-Chairpersons for each sub-committee. The theme of the Workshop is **The Many Gifts of Al-Anon** and we are planning an interactive, participatory and fun-filled day. The morning program will include a continental breakfast, a speaker's panel, entertainment and creating a craft project. This will be followed by lunch, announcement of the Silent Auction winners and an afternoon "Speed Sharing" segment.

How can you help? - There are many ways to help either individually or as a group:

- Volunteer to work on one of the committees by contacting our Chair/Co-Chair:
Denise Z @ 248-514-0079 (denisez@sbcglobal.net) or Judy F @ 248-840-6426 (judithyvonne@comcast.net)
- Consider an individual or group contribution of paper plates, cups, plastic ware, beverages, etc., or a monetary donation
- Each group will be asked to create a gift basket, gift bag, gift box or a selection of gift cards based on a theme of their choice to donate to the Silent Auction. Each Group Rep will be receiving a flyer to announce to their groups with guidelines and suggestions.

Thank you to everyone for your participation, contributions and donations to ensure this year's Fall Workshop is a success! Please plan to attend so we are able to continue to provide the vital services our District offers to those in need. We look forward to sharing the day with you and the many gifts of recovery our beautiful program and fellowship offers to each and every one of us!

Respectfully submitted ~The Fall Workshop Committee

what's new

★**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** for the Fall Workshop, September 21.
Please contact DeeZee at 248.514.0079 or Judy F. At 248.840.6426

★NEW! There are currently 13 Alateen meetings in SE Michigan. For a current list, please visit our website at: oaklandafg.org/alateen-meetings/

★Check the website at: oaklandafg.org for the most current list of events, and other information.

july

4-7

Al-Anon/Alateen International Convention. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

26-28

61st Michigan State AA Convention
The MET Hotel, Troy

29

Public Outreach Meeting

7:00pm - Maple West AFG
First Presbyterian Church of
Birmingham- Al-Anon meeting

august

3

Board Meeting - 8:30 a.m.
GR Meeting - 9:30 a.m.

Office Open for Literature
sales 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m..

3

Open Talk - **30 Years of Hope - Hope B.** Our Lady of Refuge School,
Orchard Lake 11:00 AM

10

AWSC
St Louis, Michigan

september

3

Public Outreach Meeting

7:00pm - Maple West AFG
First Presbyterian Church of
Birmingham- Al-Anon meeting
follows at 8:30 p.m.

8

Board Meeting - 8:30 a.m.
GR Meeting - 9:30 a.m.
Office Open for Literature
sales 9:00-12:00

21

10th Annual Oakland
County Fall Workshop

Taking Al-Anon With Me Wherever I Go

A few years ago, I went to another state to take part in a family program for a relative who was in a drug rehab facility. They suggested attending Al-Anon meetings while we were there. I met other people's family members, and we attended the meetings together. Familiar faces accompanied me to those meetings in an unfamiliar environment. Even though I was out of town, I felt at ease attending with others whom I had befriended. I had not gone by myself.

When I got home, I found some meetings which worked for me time-wise. The first time I went by myself, I got to the church, sat in the parking lot, and drove back home. I tried again the next day, and somehow found the courage to walk in. I then began working my Al-Anon program of recovery. I got a Sponsor, attended several meetings a week, read the literature and began working on the 12 Steps.

I took a week-long vacation in the beginning phase of my recovery. I brought along my Courage to Change book and it stayed in my suitcase the entire time and did not attend any meetings while I was away. Quite frankly, the thought never crossed my mind. Speaking of my mind, boy, did that quickly digress into a very dangerous neighborhood during those seven days. I didn't even realize my "stinkin' thinkin'" until I was in the plane on my way home, obsessing about other people. I couldn't wait to get back to go to my regular meetings, and my Al-Anon family. At that point, I decided that whenever I travel from then on, I would attend Al-Anon meetings.

The next vacation was a few months later, and before I went I pointed my browser to the Al-Anon WSO website (www.al-anon.alateen.org). I found meeting lists there for every single state, and many cities within each state. From there I clicked on the local Al-Anon websites to get more detailed information about the meetings. I printed it and off I went, with many options for meetings to attend. I had my plan to attend a certain meeting at noon. Similarly to my very first Al-Anon meeting ever, I totally bailed out. I was so uncomfortable thinking about walking into a room of complete strangers. After feeling bad for most of that day, I looked at my handy list, and made the decision to go to another meeting that evening. I drove there, parked my car, and rallied up the courage to walk in the door. Upon entering the room, I saw conference approved literature on a table, chairs set up in a circle, some with bodies in them. Someone immediately greeted me, and asked if I needed a newcomer packet. Everything seemed so comfortable and familiar to me, like I had just entered the home of a favorite relative. When the leader opened the meeting, she read the exact same suggested opening that I hear at my local meetings. There were some brief announcements about local events, and a reading from one of the Al-Anon conference approved books. As I listened to people share, I could not help but to think that I knew these people. The stories are all so similar, even if the faces are different. I felt like I belonged there, and was never again afraid to go to an unfamiliar meeting.

I have been given the opportunity to travel to different states, and to locate and attend many different meetings. On one of my excursions, I travelled with my ex to visit our son. My Higher Power provided me a great occasion to work my program, big time. On that occasion, we had to drive together in a car for over two hours. He became agitated over the difference in our attitudes, and tried to engage me into an argument. I was able to detach, get out my journal which I carry with me always, and to simply write down my thoughts and feeling rather than have the verbal lashing of the past. No reactions. As soon as we arrived at our destination, I went to an Al-Anon meeting. I confidently walked through the door, knowing that I belong there, and that there was help. I was right.

Now, whenever I travel, I look forward to attending the local Al-Anon meetings. I find a unity there unlike any other. I may arrive a stranger, but have met some wonderful people on the road, that I would not have had the opportunity to otherwise. And I depart a friend. I always meet regular folks, just like me, who speak a common language, are in various degrees of the recovery process. Some have many more years of beautiful wisdom, and there are the newcomers as well. The one thing for certain is, I fit in there somewhere, and always walk out of a meeting with new information I didn't have walking in the door. And I know it is good.

I encourage anyone to follow my lead. Even if you travel with others, I highly recommend giving yourself the gift of your Serenity by taking an hour to yourself and discovering the local flavor of Al-Anon. I did, and I am grateful for it.

magazine page

--R.J.--

Did you know...

There are currently 13 Alateen Meetings in Oakland County

For a current meeting list, go to: <http://oaklandafg.org/alateen-meetings//>

Local Sponsors Answer Some Common Questions About Alateen

What makes an Al-Anon Group want to start an Alateen meeting?

Inviting an Alateen to speak inspires groups! "I think the Al-Anons (and Alcoholics) realize through Alateen speakers, literature and meetings just how this insidious disease affects not only them but also their children." Ron V.

"A concern for teens and the realization that there is a need for Alateen are a couple of things that motivate an Al-Anon group to begin an Alateen meeting." Bill C.

What made you want to be an Alateen sponsor?

"I think it was more because I was a child of two Alcoholics, and felt I could relate to the kids. Also, I was looking to do service work." Michele K-H

What's involved in getting an Alateen meeting started?

"A little paper work and a BIG heart." Ron V.

"Our group had a group conscience after a few members mentioned that they were parents of teenagers, and one of our members decided to become an Alateen Sponsor. We filled out some paperwork, passed out flyers at Al-Anon and AA meetings in the area, and the rest is history! After just one year, we have 4 kids going to KOMIAC." Therese S.

"Sponsors are needed, preferably two. The group also needs to be sure there is room for the teens at the meeting place, separate from the Al-Anon meeting. There are forms to fill out, and then it's time to get the word out about the new meeting." Bill C.

What's the difference between an Alateen meeting and an Al-Anon meeting?

"The only difference between an Al-Anon meeting and an Alateen meeting is the age of the participants." Ron V.

"I don't think they are different at all. Same steps, same issues." Michele K-H

"Alateen is part of Al-Anon, so it uses the same 12 steps. Alateen has its own literature that is specifically geared toward younger people." Bill C.

What are the greatest rewards of sponsoring an Alateen meeting?

"There are too many rewards to mention. For me, though, it is when the teens realize alcoholism is a disease, and they can still love the alcoholic while hating his/her disease. Also, when I see them realize what effect it had on them, they learn they can address their issues in a healthy way and have a good chance at a happy life." Ron V.

At just about every Alateen meeting I attend, I get to work on the stuff I didn't get to work on when I was a teenager living in a home impacted by alcoholism. What a privilege to be able to 'grow up' right along with the kids I sponsor!" Therese S.

"That's hard to put into words... there are many rewards, but they are hard to quantify and describe. There is an incredible feeling that overwhelms me when the teens share with each other and encourage each other." Bill C.

"My greatest Alateen reward is tied in with my greatest angst. The reward is watching these kids 'get' the steps or use each other to figure out the answer. They know what the problem is, but when they become part of the solution it is awesome. The hardest thing for me is letting them figure it out, and not helping them. That is where my God box helps. I visualize my paper being the person, and I am putting them in God's hands. I love going to an Alateen meeting because they are so honest...and that makes me more honest and open. They have the best view of how Al-Anon works, "It works if you work it, and it sucks if you don't!" How simple is that? So my greatest reward is the watching these kid's grow and watch myself grow along with them. But the 2nd greatest reward is they allow me to be their sponsor." Alisa B.

Public Outreach

Committee Update

The Oakland County AFG Public Outreach Committee carries the message of Al-Anon and Alateen by distributing information and literature to professionals, institutions, the media and the public. We participate in conferences, community health and parenting fairs, facilitating meetings in the courts and treatment centers.

IN THE LAST QUARTER...

WE ATTENDED THE FOLLOWING:

- *Michigan Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (MAADC)
- *Manresa retreat for women in recovery
- *March Roundup

WE ALSO:

- *Attended and delivered literature at: Maplegrove Friday night meeting
- *Updated Alateen meeting list to office to include in Newcomer Packets
- *Inventory of Literature - printed labels and meeting lists for PO and OCAFG Office
- *Distributed 325 copies of "Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism", reaching our goal of 100 per month

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE:

We will be submitting a document to post on the website under Community Resources for professionals and the community at large who are seeking information explaining the resources and services the committee provides with our contact information: outreach@oaklandafg.org.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- * Join the Public Outreach Committee
- * Distribute literature
- * Assist in projects

DID YOU KNOW...

- Public Outreach supplies current meetings lists to the Oakland County AFG office
- Tribute cards are for sale, proceeds benefit Public Outreach committee. Ask your Group Rep. to bring the kit to your meeting.
- Public Outreach reached their goal of distributing 100 copies of Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA), handing out 325 YTD!

Trusted Servants

Board Members – 2013

Chairperson	Bill C.
Co-Chairperson	Carmela M.
Treasurer	Mitch S.
Secretary	Kathi B.
Member at Large	Judy F.
Member at Large	Janet N.
Member at Large	Mike A.

Other Vital Volunteers

District 12 Representative	Mike A.
District 12 Alternative Rep.	Mitch S.
District 14 Representative	Sharon S.
District 14 Alternative Rep.	Andrea S.
Oakland County Liaison to AWSC	Renee F.
Alateen Contact	Alisa B.

OAKLAND COUNTY AL-ANON/ALATEEN FALL

*with AA participation

"THE MANY GIFTS OF AL-ANON"

SPEAKER

Alateen Speaker:

Hobie G.

Al-Anon Speaker:

Doug K.

AA Speaker:

Heather H.

(Dual Member)

BREAK-OUT

Reaching for
Personal Freedom
Using the 12

MAKE AND TAKE!

Create a gift you
will use time and
time again!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2013

9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham

1669 W Maple Rd.,

Birmingham, MI 48009

****Breakfast and Lunch included****

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

DeeZee

248.514.0079

denisez@sbcglobal.net

or

Judy F.

248.840.6426

judithyvonne@comcast.net

SILENT AUCTION!

Many special gift
baskets, created
and donated by
Oakland County
Al-Anon Family
Groups, will be
auctioned.

ENTERTAINMENT!

You will feel
"Alive" by the
sound of this
year's music!

Even if you can't make it, you can still give a gift! Just use the "Other Donation" entry on the form below.

REGISTRATION FORM (please print clearly)

Name: _____

Before Sept 11, 2013 _____ \$10 _____

Phone: _____

After Sept 11, 2013 (or at the door) _____

Email: _____

Alateens (Anytime) _____ \$5 _____

Additional forms available for download at: oaklandafg.org

Other Donation: _____

Detach and mail this form along with payment to:

Total Enclosed: _____ \$ _____

Oakland County AFG - Fall Workshop

Al-Anon/Alateen Information Office • Phoenix Square Office Bldg. • 3720 Elizabeth Lk. Rd. • Waterford, MI • 48328

This is Oakland County's only fundraiser for the year, proceeds assist the OCAFG office. Thank you for your support

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

...there are 13 Alateen meetings in Southeast Michigan? For a complete list, check out the website at: oaklandafg.org/alateen-meetings

**MEETING
UPDATES**

For changes in meeting time and/or location, contact:

Renee F. 248-821-3359
farbush@sbcglobal.net
Mike A. 248-376-2394
mikeandrus49@gmail.com
Sharon S. 248-792-4153
oaklandcountyafg@aol.com

**OFFICE
INFORMATION**

Address:

Phoenix Square Office Building
3720 Elizabeth Lake Rd.
Waterford, MI 48328

Phone:

248-706-1020

Hours:

First Saturday of the month
(except July and October)
9:30-11:30am
Or by appointment

**MEETING
ON WHEELS**

Did you know that if you cannot make it to a meeting, a meeting can come to you.
For more info, Contact: outreach@oaklandafg.org

FLYERS

Check out the new page at: <http://oaklandafg.org/flyers>

Download flyers for Al-Anon events for yourself and your groups

IDEAS?

COMMENTS?

Contact us:

dina@oaklandafg.org
ruth@oaklandafg.org

LITERATURE

Need literature but can't get to the office during regular hours? No problem--just call!

Mike A. 248-376-2394
Cheri C. 248-363-2097
Janet N. 248-259-8297

Please support the Oakland County Office by purchasing Al-Anon literature from our Literature Distribution Center

odds and ends