



Vol.2 Issue 5

Al-Anon of Fredericksburg

Help and Hope

the monthly newsletter



June 2014

This month's topic:

ACCEPTING YOUR ALCOHOLIC

My mother went into AA when I was 17 so I have been accepting alcoholics for a long time. But it wasn't until I began Alanon that I have begun to learn to accept them without trying to manage them and take responsibility for their actions. I knew that alcoholism was a disease, but still hoped they would become what I wanted and felt was right. When they did not live up to my hopes and expectations I was crushed. I have a long way to go but have actually had days of serenity and can feel love and compassion for the alcoholics in my family while learning to detach and set boundaries

Catherine

Length in Program: 7 months

Accepting my alcoholic has been a terrifying roller coaster ride. The ride stopped 24 months ago when I and my husband attended to our first Al-anon meeting together. I went for one reason and one reason only...to stop our son's drinking. Our lives had become a living hell. Most days, I was unable to function.

Preparing meals, doing laundry, even getting out of bed in the morning was difficult. Each crisis was worse than the last. Incidents were coming, non-stop. I was overwhelmed by their seriousness. Why was this happening to our family? Did we cause his drinking? Why wouldn't he stop? His unrelenting path of self-destruction made no sense to me. I lived in fear of what would happen next.

Watching a loved one deteriorate is devastating. Nothing prepares a parent to watch a son/daughter suffer from any disease. Through Al-anon I learned that I did not cause the disease, I could not control it, and I could not cure it. It was a relief to hear those words at meetings. However, it took a while for me to believe them and, still longer, to accept them.

Next, I began learning about the disease of alcoholism. It has taken me almost two years to accept the fact that alcoholism is a disease. It can be fatal. There is no cure. When I began thinking of it in terms of brain cancer or tuberculosis, I understood that it was important to separate the disease from the person. My mother, who had brain cancer, which was terminal, could not be held accountable for the fact that she had the

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Next month's topic: Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-
that our lives had become unmanageable.

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Announcements:

Our district donated literature to the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (CRRL) last year as part of a public outreach effort. You can find these books by using the catalog on their website; then, if you have a library card, you can check-out the books for two weeks. We donated a lot more than just daily readers, so please take a look if interested.

NOTE: Area 57, District 19, Al-Anon Family Groups, and Al-Anon as a whole is not affiliated with, neither do we endorse nor oppose the CRRL. The donated books are property of the library.

We are always looking for Alateen sponsors. The only requirements are that you be at least 23 years of age, have at least 2 years in the Al-anon program, and attend 1 Al-Anon meeting a week in addition to the sponsored meeting.

Our district meeting is on the second monday of every month at Home Team Grille in Eagle Village next to the University of Mary Washington. 5:00 if you would like to eat with us, 6:00 to discuss business. All are welcome to come.

Our Monday morning meeting, Serenity Seekers, is in need of a treasurer for their group.

Our July district meeting has been pushed back to July 21st to allow for those who would like to tour the WSO office in Virginia Beach on the 14th

Step, Tradition, and Concept of the Month

Step Six:

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Tradition Six:

Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Concept Six:

The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

disease. As such, the alcoholic cannot be held accountable for the fact, that he/she has the disease of alcoholism.

Another challenge for me was to understand, acknowledge, and accept "what part I played in the crisis of alcoholism." It was devastating to learn that my reactions and behavior were not healthy responses for me or for him. With my best intentions, I had inadvertently played a significant role in adding fuel to the fire. Through the Al-anon Program I have learned to create healthy boundaries between what is his business and what is my business. Today, I attend to my business, not his. I have lovingly detached to enable each of us to live our own lives as we see fit.

I am hopeful and positive about the future. I ask my Higher Power to do what is best for our son. I do not ask for specific solutions. I ask for guidance. Daily, I count my blessings. I have clean water to drink, food to eat, and a shelter, which is safe. Many people do not have these basic life-sustaining necessities.

After a recent meeting, one of my group's members asked me how my son was doing. I responded "He is doing the best that he ever has done." She smiled and said "Because you changed, he changed." I trust and believe her.

Pat

Al-Anon Stories from the Heart

I keep coming back to Alanon because it is a lifesaver for me! I am learning to deal with life (not just the alcoholics) and find great comfort in the meetings where there is strength and hope. I can say what I feel with no worries of criticism or being looked at askance. Little by little I hope I am becoming a better, stronger individual.

Catherine

Length in Program: 7 months

Please remember, we are always looking for your story of your experience in Al-anon, whether you are a newcomer or have been here for over 20 years.

To submit your share on our monthly topic, or tell how Al-Anon has affected you, please go to al-anonfredericksburg.org/submitShare.php

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.

Just remember, you cannot
change yesterday, but you can
change today.

Events:

Virginia Area Recovery Day

Saturday, June 14th, 2014, 9am - 4pm
Location: Double Tree by Hilton, Richmond-
Midlothian, VA 23235

This is Virginia Area's Annual Convention condensed to one day. There will be three workshops and a speaker. There will also be a 50/50 raffle, silent auction, and literature sales. The cost is \$49, which includes lunch and a gift if pre-paid. If you pay at the door, it does not include lunch, and the gift is subject to availability. Flier here Overnight hotel rooms are available for \$93 + 13.3% tax, by booking before May 22 and mentioning VA Area AFG group.

Mid Eastern Alateen Conference (MEAC)

Friday July 18, 2014 - Sunday July 20, 2014
Location: Virginia 4-H Center, Front Royal, VA

This is one of the two annual Virginia Alateen Conferences. It is a fun-filled, exciting weekend for teens aged 7-19 and their Alateen Sponsors. Early-bird registration (due May 31) is \$90. Regular Registration (due June 30) is \$100, and walk-ins are \$110. The price includes lodging, food, and a good time. MEAC does have money available for scholarships.

Please see your GR for a flier.