



## **Al-Anon / Alateen North Jersey Information Services**

*Help for friends and relatives of alcoholics*

To the entire Al-Anon Community: North Jersey Al-Anon Information Services (“NJIS”) recently held a Special Meeting, with more than 24 NJIS area Groups sending ISR’s to elect new officers and to install a new Steering Committee. NJIS is grateful for the terrific response of our membership and for the support of New Jersey Al-Anon/Alateen Area for their help in getting the word out. We post this letter to let you what has been happening since and what we have planned for NJIS going forward.

### ***Where We Have Been***

We will not re-live or rehash history, but in a Tenth Step sense, we want to acknowledge that for some, there have been issues with NJIS operations and responsiveness. Some of these were the natural effects of age and attrition, as long-serving, former NJIS members served out (and beyond) their service commitments, and no one came forward to take their places. The short and overly simplistic history is that NJIS – like so many businesses, organizations, and so many people – was hit very hard, and on many levels, by the pandemic. NJIS lost Literature sales and contributions slowed, and resources, both financial and personnel, dwindled. If difficulty in maintaining support and service volunteers was not a new phenomenon in Al-Anon, it became starkly worse as the isolating effects of the pandemic wore on. Many Groups stopped sending their customary yet vital contributions to NJIS during the pandemic, and did not resume support, once the worst of the pandemic impacts began to lessen.

**The new Steering Committee is 100% unconditionally committed to NJIS not simply surviving but thriving! Whenever and whatever issues or problems arise, we will address them, and we will do so honestly and transparently as part of our “open door” policy. When someone reaches out to NJIS at our contact information (<https://www.northjerseval-anon.org/contact-us/>), email address ([www.northjerseval-anon.org](http://www.northjerseval-anon.org)) or telephone number ((973) 744-8686), we will get your message, and we will be on the job. We have already begun the work (summarized below) and there is a lot yet to do.**

### ***Where We Are***

With that being said...we need you! We need your help, and we need your financial support. If you can volunteer and lend a hand, please contact us to help. In whatever way you can -- come to the office, help with Literature packaging/mailing, or help with our responding to 12<sup>th</sup> Step calls and contacts -- whatever you can do, please help. **If you don’t have the time or can’t personally volunteer, you can still be a part of NJIS’s 12<sup>th</sup> Step mission of carrying the Al-Anon message, though your critical financial support!**

We have cut costs and revamped old operating procedures but there’s more to be done and it still costs more to run the office we currently receive in donations every month. (It was not this way before the pandemic but has become our new norm). We as the Al-Anon community can change that.

When you attend your home meetings (in-person, or virtual), please feel free to share this letter and to ask your Group, at your next business meeting, to reconsider and resume contributing to NJIS. We need your support! The Al-Anon community needs your support. Please give what you can, when you can.<sup>i</sup> There are a number of ways you can contribute to NJIS:

- 1) PayPal link: [Donate to NJIS](#)
- 2) Zelle donations to NJIS to: [northjerseyais@yahoo.com](mailto:northjerseyais@yahoo.com) or
- 3) Donations can be sent via mail to:  
**Al-Anon Information Service, P.O. Box 646, Montclair, NJ 07042**

### ***What We've Been Up to and Where We Are Going***

The newly installed NJIS Officers have been holding Steering Committee Meetings throughout October and November. The work, some of which began before the Special Meeting, is ongoing and is briefly summarized below.

1. **Update and Upgrade of the NJIS Website** -- We have begun working with a website developer to redesign and update our website to improve overall accessibility, particularly to enhance the timeliness and accuracy of our listing of in-person and online Al-Anon Meetings in the New Jersey Area. The new website will also allow for easier, automated online ordering of Al-Anon Literature and we will also be adding a section to give visitors access to the latest Al-Anon related News, events, information and documents from, NJIS, from WSO, and from the New Jersey Area.
2. **Addressing Literature Ordering, Payment and Delivery Issues with WSO** – The pandemic-related interruption of ordinary Literature sales, felt throughout the entirety of Al-Anon, world-wide, hit NJIS very hard and resulted in unsold inventory and a growing receivable owed WSO. In late October, NJIS conducted a productive conference call with WSO which resulted in WSO restoring NJIS to full active status which will allow NJIS to resume usual sales (we expect turn-around and delivery time will, in fact, improve beyond pre-pandemic levels once the new NJIS website ordering is operational). This progress was facilitated by the immediate and significant paying-down of the NJIS receivable, a step made possible through generous help of a few NJIS members.
3. **General Updating and Upgrading NJIS Operating Procedures** – Immediate and substantial operational cost-saving enhancements have already been put into place. For example: cost-savings have been achieved due to the donation of boxing and packaging materials being donated by Al-Anon members; changes are being made to our bank accounts for additional cost-savings resulting from reducing and eliminating bank fees; the entire NJIS financial process has been revised, updated, and automated; the financials are current on a day-to-day and month-to-month basis; we are revisiting the terms of our current rental and subscription services; and NJIS, with the help of our service area DR's and GR's, is updating our database of AFG's contact information/management system.

We thank you in advance for your time, understanding, efforts, and generosity; and best wishes for health and happiness to you and your loved ones.

Yours in service and gratitude, **Mark M, Chairperson, Jim M, Treasurer, Linda S, Secretary, Doug L, At-Large Member and Eric A, ISR Member.**

*Special thanks to Doug L, both for his prior service at NJIS and for his continued willingness to serve in a new role, and thanks to Eric A, whom the Steering Committee appointed to serve as the ISR Member representative, for Eric's tireless work in organizing and encouraging the overall effort to regenerate NJIS.*

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<sup>i</sup> The Al-Anon Service Manual and Al-Anon Information Service Guidelines provide context for the ordinary and proper financial support from for Al-Anon members and Groups.

- The Al-Anon Service Manual section on Tradition Seven states: “Supporting Al-Anon and Alateen groups financially is a way for members to express their gratitude for the help they have received from the program, thus ensuring that Al-Anon and Alateen will be available when someone seeks recovery from living with the effects of alcoholism. Group funds are used to support Al-Anon’s purpose of carrying its message of help and hope to those who still suffer. Group contributions support all levels of Al-Anon service including the District, **the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup)** . . .” and later discusses the purpose of Appeal Letters and notes, “**Al-Anon Information Services**, and Districts may also send an appeal letter to the groups.” pp. 53 and 55
- The Information Service is supported by the groups within its geographic boundaries. Contributions from Al-Anon groups and members are voluntary and are not a condition for membership. The AIS does not seek or accept support outside the geographic area it serves.
- The Service Manual, at p. 102, also contains a general section on “Financial Matters” and the “Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon’s Self Support”: “*Tradition Seven is Gratitude in Action. Al-Anon is supported by members’ financial and service contributions together with the sale of our literature. Our spiritual principles inspire members to support the fellowship as it serves both members and prospective members. As we receive the hope and help we each sought, we use these spiritual principles to ensure that those following in our footsteps have the same opportunities: **Abundance**—We learn to change our thinking from what we don’t have to an awareness of gratitude for what we do have. As that idea expands, we continue to give of our time and money, realizing we can never give back all we have been given. Thinking abundantly allows us to accomplish our primary purpose of reaching out to families and friends of alcoholics.*”