

Calgary AIS Newsletter

November 2019

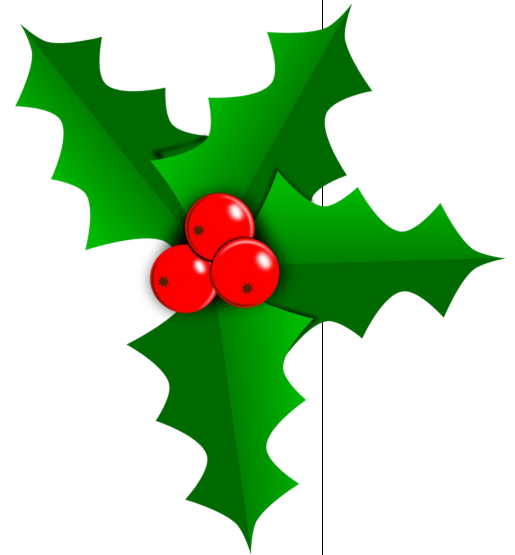
Do you live or work downtown?

Need a sanity break in the middle of the day? Serenity Central AFG meets at noon twice a week in downtown Calgary. We'd love to have you join us at one or both of our weekly meetings. Come late and leave early if you have to get back to the office—we won't judge. Our group has shrunk so we've got plenty of room if you want to bring a friend or two. We rotate topics including the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions, Slogans, and Conference Approved Literature (CAL).



Serenity Central AFG

Tuesday & Thursday
Noon until 1 pm
Central United Church
131 – 7 Avenue SW
Room 3 lower level
Access via back alley



A New Pathway to Hope



There are many families of alcoholics who only know despair. They are unaware that Al-Anon meetings are available to help them recover from the effects of the alcoholic's drinking.

Receiving a copy of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazine from a professional or picking up a copy from an information rack at a public library can open a new pathway to hope. The stories shared by members and the articles written by professionals give the families of alcoholics the encouragement they need to attend Al-Anon meetings.

Delivering *AFA* magazines to locations in your community gives each member the opportunity to carry the Al-Anon message of hope to others. Alcoholism takes its toll on the families and friends of alcoholics regardless of the season; it doesn't take vacations or time off for the holidays.

**Calgary and Area
Al-Anon Information
Services (AIS)
Al-Anon/Alateen
Newsletter**

**PO Box 512,
Station M
Calgary, AB
T2P 2J2**

**[aiscalgarynewsletter@
gmail.com](mailto:aiscalgarynewsletter@gmail.com)**

**Next submission
deadline:
February 7, 2020**





Calgary AIS Information



AIS Calgary Phone Monitoring



Service Opportunities

AIS is looking for a volunteers to take on the Alternate Chairperson position and Website Liaison position.

Please give this some thought.

I will be happy to answer any questions and help anyone interested in volunteering to serve Calgary in this position.

Thanks,

Sally K.
AIS Chairperson
Call: 403-969-7376

MONITORING SCHEDULE

WEEK	GROUP NAME
NOV 18 TO NOV 24	Starting with Serenity
NOV 25 TO DEC 1	Pal-Anon
DEC 2 TO DEC 8	Calgary Parent Recovery
DEC 9 TO DEC 15	Bowmont
DEC 16 TO DEC 22	Macleod Trail AFG
DEC 23 TO DEC 29	Airdrie Open Door
DEC 30 TO JAN 6	From Despair to Serenity
JAN 7 TO JAN 13	Letting Go AFG
JAN 14 TO JAN 20	Hillhurst Finding Serenity
JAN 21 TO JAN 27	South Elbow Drive AFG
JAN 28 TO FEB 3	One Day at a Time
FEB 4 TO FEB 10	Let it Begin with Me
FEB 11 TO FEB 17	Monday Night Monarchs/ Cochrane Friday Night
FEB 18 TO FEB 24	Northern Hills Trailblazers

If your monitoring rep or group rep has changed, send updated contact information to aiscalgarymonitoring@gmail.com.



AIS Meeting Schedule

Calgary AIS meetings take place the first Monday of every **second** month at 7:00 pm at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, 8831 Fairmont Dr. SE.

Everyone Welcome

Meeting Dates

February 3, 2020

April 6, 2020

June 1, 2020

September 14, 2020

November 2, 2020

Calgary AI-Anon Information Services (AIS) Trusted Servants	
Name	AIS Calgary Position & Email Address
Sally K.	Chairperson, aiscalgaryinformation@gmail.com
VACANT	Alternate Chairperson, calgaryaltchair@al-anon.ab.ca
Carolyn M.	Secretary/Group Records/Archives, calgarysecretary@al-anon.ab.ca
Anita A.	Treasurer, calgarytreasurer@al-anon.ab.ca
Cathy S.	Newsletter Editor, aiscalgarynewsletter@gmail.com
Ian H.	Alateen Coordinator, aiscalgaryalateen@gmail.com
Shellie O.	Monitoring Coordinator, aiscalgarymonitoring@gmail.com
Lorraine F.	2019 AA Gratitude Roundup Liaison
Lori G.	2020 AA Banff Roundup Coordinator
Carol B.	Public Outreach Coordinator, calgarypublicoutreach@al-anon.ab.ca ,
VACANT	Website Liaison **New Position**

Reach Out to Newcomers with an *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* Sharing

Your story can help a potential newcomer shift their thinking from, “Maybe there is a problem,” to, “I need help because there is too much drinking.” A story for families of alcoholics can be about one of the following topics:

- “I didn’t want to go to AI-Anon.”
- “It’s not my problem; why do I need help?”
- “What was my first meeting like?”
- “How is AI-Anon helping me?”



For more information, please refer to the *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism* [Writing Guideline](#). Members can submit their sharings [online](#) or send their stories to:

AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
 c/o *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism*
 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
 Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Words matter! Thanks for sharing.

Calgary Speaker List

AIS is compiling a list of members willing to share their story at local speaker meetings. This is a great way to get active in service and meet other members. Our stories are relatable and help others in their recovery. Refer to the AI-Anon Guidelines (G-1) to help tell your story.

Send your name and phone number to aiscalgarynewsletter@gmail.com.



Appeal for Donations to Calgary AI-Anon Information Services (AIS)

AIS expenses for the September/October reporting period are exceeding donations. Please consider AIS for a portion of your group donation before the end of 2019.

Thank you!

AIS Bank Reconciliation September & October 2019

Balance Forward, August 31, 2019		\$1,916.23
Receipts:		
Donations-September 2019	\$375.00	
Donations-October 2019	\$225.00	\$600.00
Disbursements-September 2019	-\$704.79	
Disbursements-October 2019	-\$292.17	-\$996.96
Balance per Bank, October 31, 2019		\$1,519.27
Petty Cash Balance	\$13.00	

NEWS FROM YOUR AL-ANON CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE ALBERTA

As the year draws to a close we are happy to report that all is well at the Bookstore. Thanks to your support we show a small positive net income. We appreciate every dollar that comes in and hope to stay in the black for our year ending December 31, 2019. Speaking of our year end, we are looking for two people to conduct an audit on our books in late January. If you have accounting skills and would be willing to do a review of our financials, please contact Shelley at the Bookstore, or myself.

Shelley and a group of volunteers took the Mobile Bookstore to our Area Assembly in September. Our members were happy to see and purchase Conference Approved Literature (CAL) while they attended the Assembly.

We are very excited about our plans for the 2020 Open House to be held on April 4, 2020. Our Theme this year is "***Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision***", which is the Theme of the 2020 World Service Conference (WSC). Look for the poster in this newsletter. Hope to see many of you there; we have a great day planned. We are still looking for members who would be willing to be on the committee and help us on the day of the event. Contact me if you would like to help.

The Bookstore will be closed **December 25th & 26th** and also on **January 1st**. Shelley will be back in the office on **Thursday January 2, 2020**.

Again, thank you for your continued support!

Norma F.
ACSOA Chair
acsoa@al-anon.ab.ca

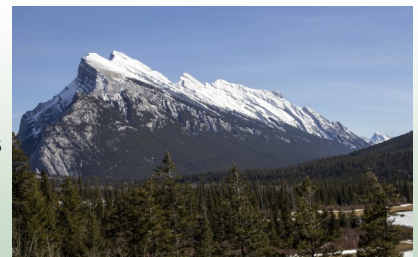


AA Event with Al-Anon Participation

The AA Banff Roundup will be held on March 6, 7 & 8, 2020

Lori G, AA Banff Roundup Coordinator is looking for Al-Anon volunteers to read at the Al-Anon meeting and to operate the literature table.

Contact Lori at aiscalgaryinformation@gmail.com



McKenzie Circle AFG will have a speaker meeting on **Saturday, November 23, 2019 at 10:00 am**. McKenzie Towne Church, 7 McKenzie Towne Gate SE.

December 18, 2019 at 11:55 am. "The Serenity Seekers" will be joining AA for a Pot Luck Lunch at the Ascension Lutheran Church, 1432 19th St NE, in the big room on the right hand side of the back door.

2019 District 5 & 6 Fall Workshop Report

kcaB2Basics Saturday, October 26th



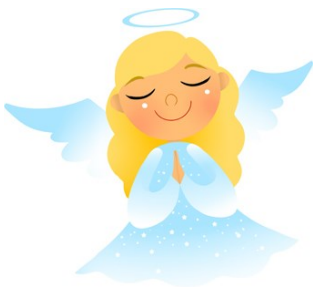
“Today I am grateful for everything—even things that surprise me...”

Hope for Today pg. 72

The committee arrived at the hall early, had the rooms set-up, decorations in place, coffee brewing and everything ready...when a rain/snow blizzard descended... making everyone wonder if they'd be able to get home let alone if anyone would be able to get to the Workshop. Incredibly, by noon the hall was packed....and an amazing, surprise-filled day was had by all!

We are very grateful to the Speakers who shared about their journeys of taking responsibility, letting go, growth and spirituality; to the gifted Musicians who provided musical interludes and a sing-along session that took us down memory lane. *“I believe in Angels”* (the chorus from the song: *I Have A Dream*) summed up the day's events.

We are indebted to the team of *Al-Anon angels* who arrived early to set-up and decorate the hall....and those that stayed for the take-down, clean-up process; for the insight and guidance provided by our District Reps; for the warmth and efficiency of the Welcoming and Registration volunteers; for the leadership (and humour) of the Chairperson; to the numerous AFG angels who eloquently, articulated introductions and the readings and those who confidently facilitated the breakout sessions; to the ACSOA for providing a selection of CAL for perusal and purchase; for the enthusiasm of members who talked about AIS, Alateen and Service; and last but not least for the generous donations of door-prizes and delicious cookies that added to the ambiance of the day.



Thank you to our Higher Power and all the Al-Anon angels who worked together to provide the miracles, surprises, participation, dedication and gratitude that contributed to the success of the Workshop and safe travels for everyone.

“When I take time for gratitude, I perceive a better world.

Today I will appreciate the miracles all around me.” *Courage To Change* pg. 282

Submitted by Maryon K.

ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT

As some of you are aware, every year the Board of Trustees for our World Service Office meet somewhere other than Virginia Beach for one for their quarterly meetings. This year they met in Seattle Washington from October 13 – 19th. Areas can submit bids a year in advance for the Trustees to meet in their Area. Some of you may remember that they met in our Area in 2015 in Nisku. On the Saturday after the Board meeting members are invited to attend a day of connecting with the Trustees.

I was fortunate to attend this year along with Sharon F, our Delegate, and Jean H, Delegate from Saskatchewan. Janis A, Past Delegate from BC met us at the airport in Abbotsford and took us a road trip to Seattle. We joined up with 125 other members from all over Canada and the US who were excited to meet our Trustees and hear their personal sharings and news from the World Service Office.

What a day it was. There were 14 Trustees and 3 members of the Executive Committee present. All of them had time on the Agenda.....it was a busy day for them. We were able to sit back and listen to their Experience, Strength and Hope, both personally and in relation to the roles they serve as Trustees. There were many times throughout the day that the presence of our Higher Power was so visible... the power of love and acceptance.

Our Regional Trustee for Canada West, Gail G. reported on her trip to the IAGSM - International Al-Anon General Services Meeting in Slovenia earlier this fall. 23 countries were represented from 5 continents. She spoke about our principles and how they are universal. She had so many interesting stories to share with us; the one that struck me the most was that there are 20 Alateen Groups in Poland and 1 Chat line. They have been invited to do a presentation at their Parliament. You can read more about this meeting on the al-anon.org website or the details will be in the 2020 Conference Summary!

Some of the quotes that resonated with me:

- “Spiritual growth eases the pain of the family disease of alcoholism”*
- ” We cannot keep the gifts of the program if we don’t give them away”*
- “I have a plan.....God has the agenda”*
- “I seek a meaningful and purpose filled life”*
- “Repetition is important at all levels of this program”*
- “The circle of hope expands with every meeting I attend”*
- ****“Service is not additional, **Service IS recovery.**”*****
- “Our World Service Office is a Clearing House, not an Authority”*
- “A good idea can come from anywhere”*
- “Core of the Concepts is **Balance**”*
- “Sticker on my mirror- You are looking at the problem”*
- “Learn to listen **spiritually**”*
- “The Board of Trustees **ARE** Al-Anon Members”*

The next Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect is October 31, 2020. The location has not been determined yet, we will know after the Board meeting in January. I know that Winnipeg has put a bid in to have it there. Wouldn't it be great to have a group from our Area take a Road Trip to Meet the Board?

Submitted by Norma F, Past Delegate



WHAT IS ALATEEN? IS IT SOMETHING YOU ARE INTERESTED IN?

Thank you to all who attended the Alateen workshop, it was a good discussion and time to learn more of what Alateen is and how people can support it whether that is being an **AMIAS (Al-Anon member in Alateen service)**, or helping with public outreach as an example.

We are looking for people who are interested in being an AMIAS, we are having problems having enough people to support the Alateen meetings in Calgary as well as the Alateen Chat line. Listed below are a few statements taken out of the workshop presentation about Alateen. There are some requirements to becoming an AMIAS. Please feel free to contact me at alateen@al-anon.ab.ca.



Alateen is...

- Part of Al-Anon Family Groups.
- A fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend.
- Members of Al-Anon Family Groups who study and apply the Al-Anon/Alateen twelve steps and twelve traditions to their own lives.

Alateen is not...

- A program for young people seeking sobriety.
- A therapy program.

WHAT IS AN AMIAS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Is an Al-Anon member who is directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen
- All AMIAS have been certified by their Al-Anon Area
- Provide direction to assure that emphasis is placed on the Al-Anon program of recovery
- To the best of their ability, maintain an atmosphere that will protect the Alateen members from physical and emotional harm
- Encourage Alateens to keep order and take responsibility for themselves and the meeting

Thank you for your interest in Alateen.
Sharon P, AB/NWT Alateen Coordinator

Public "Inreach"—Sharing the Hope of Alateen in Al-Anon

I volunteered to be an Alateen Group Sponsor when a high school guidance counselor contacted Al-Anon. The counselor knew about Alateen and had five students to refer to an Alateen group, which then formed very quickly out of necessity. The Alateens were all beginners. I was new both to Alateen service and to feeling feelings I hadn't felt since childhood or my teen years as I listened to the teens share at meetings.

I made numerous announcements within Al-Anon and A.A., placed ads in the local newspaper, and participated in a radio interview. Yet, no new teens came to the group. The outcome was that the group closed because its five members graduated from high school and it was without new members. Perhaps

(Continued on page 9)

(Public "Inreach", continued from page 8)

Al-Anon's best kept secret is that there is help and hope for our children in Alateen.

The Alateen group I sponsored left an imprint on my heart. Later, my career at the World Service Office (WSO) began as the Alateen Assistant. Today, I respond to inquiries from mental health professionals and communicate with national non-profit and governmental organizations that provide services to teens. My assignments often include collaboration with the Group Services/Alateen Staff, and I am also a certified Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service. However, the WSO's outreach efforts are national in scope. Real recovery for teens happens at local Alateen meetings.

I think the best way for Al-Anon members to support Alateen is by encouraging the teens in their families to attend Alateen. Public "inreach" within Al-Anon is just as important as Public Outreach in our communities to help Alateen continue to exist and thrive. I am grateful to see the Alateens rushing through the doors of my home group into their weekly meeting. They are receiving the help and hope that I wish I had received at their age.

*By Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals
Used with permission from *The Forum*, November 2019*

Dear Sponsor

Dear Sponsor,

I would like to participate in service but I'm feeling stressed about the time commitment.

Sincerely, Working on my recovery



Dear Working on my recovery,

There are lots of ways to be of service in Al-Anon and many require only small time commitments. You could start by chairing a meeting, welcoming a newcomer, setting up for a meeting, or volunteering to help with a workshop. I've found many ways to add service to my recovery, and the results have helped me discover deeper personal growth. An Al-Anon Concept says participation is the key to harmony!

Dear Sponsor,

My adult son has asked to move back into my home after twenty years on his own. I feel worried and scared of the change, and I'm not sure what to do or say. I want to tell him what to do to improve his situation, but my limited experience in Al-Anon tells me to stop and to reach out to you instead.

Sincerely, Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

That sounds difficult for both of you. Challenging situations can make it hard to remember to focus on yourself and your Al-Anon recovery, so I'm glad you reached out. For me, I find writing in my journal helps me clarify my thoughts. I also ask my Higher Power to help me see His will for me. Talking to others in the program is also valuable. I find hope in the Al-Anon closing that says, 'Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too.' I encourage you to work your Al-Anon program one day at a time, read Al-Anon literature, and call me or other members as you work towards a solution.



District News



District 3 & 4 Outreach

Rockyview Hospital - 8 month rotation
Holy Cross Ambulatory Care Centre
Room 5A-103

Tuesday and Thursday meetings, 8:00 pm.
Al-Anon participation at AA meeting

Month	Groups
November	Calgary Parent Recovery AFG Starting with Serenity AFG
December	MacLeod Trail AFG Tuesday Afternoon AFG
January	Saturday Early Risers AFG Tillicum AFG Hope for Today AFG
February	Chinook Monday Afternoon South Elbow Drive AFG



District 5 Outreach

Foothills Hospital Institution Meeting
Open AA Meeting Room AGW2, Baker Centre,
One floor below the main lobby

Monday and Thursday meetings, 8:00 pm.
Al-Anon participation at AA meeting

Month	Groups
November	Cochrane Friday Night AFG Hillhurst Finding Serenity AFG
December	Inner Peace AFG Monday Night Monarch AFG
January	Steps to Serenity AFG Serenity Plus Adult Children AFG
February	Sunday Evening Group AFG Spiritual Awakening AFG

District 6 Outreach

Courage to Change **Newcomer Meeting**
Peter Loughheed Centre, 3500-26th Ave. NE

Monday meetings, 7:00 p.m.
**Reserved Dining Room #0524 (downstairs, back of
the Auxiliary Cafeteria**

Date	Chairing Group
November 18	Finding Our Way
November 25	From Despair to Serenity
December 2	Northern Hills Trailblazers
December 9	One Day at a Time
December 16	Finding Our Way
December 23	From Despair to Serenity
December 30	Let it Begin with Me
January 6	Northern Hills Trailblazers
January 13	One Day at a Time
January 20	Finding Our Way
January 27	From Despair to Serenity
February 3	Let it Begin with Me
February 10	Northern Hills Trailblazers
February 17	One Day at a Time
February 24	Finding Our Way

District 6 Outreach

Sunrise Rehabilitation Centre
1231-34 Avenue NE

Meetings 1st Thursday of each month at
6:00 pm chaired by a District 6 Group

afgdistrict6@gmail.com

Date	Chairing Group
December 5	Let it begin with Me
January 2	Northern Hills Trailblazers
February 6	Finding Our Way

District Meetings

The Group Representatives (GRs) and District Representative (DR) from each District meet once a month.

District 3 (SE) - DR is Sharon P.

Meets the second Wednesday of each month at Christ Moravian, 600 Acadia Dr. SE from 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

district03@al-anon.ab.ca

District 4 (SW) - DR is Nancy H.

Meets the second Wednesday of each month at Holy Spirit Church, 10827 - 24 Street SW at 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

district04@al-anon.ab.ca

District 5 (NW) - DR is Greg M.

Meets the second Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm, at Highwood Lutheran Church, 419 Northmount Dr. NW.

district05@al-anon.ab.ca

District 6 (NE) - DR is Wendy L.

Meets the second Tuesday of each month at Centennial Presbyterian Church, 103 Pinetown PI NE at 6:30 pm.

district06@al-anon.ab.ca

2020 Dates to Remember

Banff Round Up, AA Event with Al-Anon Participation: March 6-8, 2020
 AB/NWT Area World Service Committee (AWSC) Meeting, March 21, 2020
 ACSOA (Bookstore) Workshop, April 4, 2020
 AB/NWT Assembly & AWSCM, May 23 - 24, 2020
 You and Your Board Connect, October 31, 2020

Al-Anon Members!

Do you remember your first Al-Anon meeting? You received support and encouragement, and you kept coming back.

Our Newcomer Meetings are for you too! Come, meet, welcome and encourage the newcomers!

Courage to Change AFG**

7:00 PM Monday

Peter Lougheed Centre

3500-26th Ave. NE

Reserved Dining Room #0524

(downstairs, back of the Auxiliary Cafeteria)

**Note: This is a new date, time and location of this meeting

Sunday Evening Beginner AFG

7:30 PM Sunday

Wild Rose United Church

1317-1st Street NW

(top of the stairs)



Keep your recovery by sharing it!

Submitted by Margaret J.

Announcement

The ACSOA Bookstore will be CLOSED for the Christmas holidays, December 25th, 26th and January 1st. OPEN on January 2, 2020. The bookstore is located at 303 Forge Rd SE, Calgary, AB

Meeting Christmas Day

Serenity Seekers,
11:55pm

Ascension Lutheran
Church

1432 19th St. NE,
Calgary, AB

Gratitude Meetings

Many Al-Anon groups hold a Gratitude Meeting in December. Here is a list of Gratitude Meetings planned by Al-Anon Family Groups (AFGs) in the Calgary area.

Date	Time	Group	Location	Notes
Mon, Dec. 2	8:00pm	One Day at a Time	Crossroads Community Church, 912 19 Street NE	Bring a candle in a holder and finger food to share.
Fri, Dec. 6	7:30pm	Airdrie Open Door	Airdrie Co-op 2700 Main St. S, Airdrie	Upstairs, community room
Tues, Dec. 10	7:30pm	Bowmont AFG	Bowness Senior's Center 6422 - 35 Ave NW	West entrance on 35 Ave NW
Tues, Dec 10	12:00pm	Serenity Central AFG	Central United Church 131 - 7 Ave SW	Room 3 lower level. Access via back alley
Weds, Dec. 11	10:00am	From Despair to Serenity AFG	Airdrie Co-op 2700 Main St. S, Airdrie	Upstairs, community room
Weds, Dec. 11	7:30pm	Northern Hills Trailblazers AFG	Harvest Hills Alliance Church, 10099 Harvest Hills Blvd NE	Follow footsteps upstairs
Thurs, Dec 12	12:00pm	Serenity Central AFG	Central United Church 131 - 7 Ave SW	Room 3 lower level. Access via back alley
Thurs, Dec. 12	7:00pm	Let it Begin with Me	Centennial Presbyterian Church, 103 Pinetown Place NE	Downstairs

Gratitude Meetings

Many Al-Anon groups hold a Gratitude Meeting in December. Here is a list of Gratitude Meetings planned by Al-Anon Family Groups (AFGs) in the Calgary area.

Date	Time	Group	Location	Notes
Mon, Dec. 16	7:30pm	Pal Anon AFG	Lakeview United Church, 3063 - 63 Ave SW	Enter church through southside door, go downstairs, room is at end of the hall on the right
Mon, Dec 16	8:00pm	Serenity Plus Adult Children AFG	Highwood Lutheran Church, 419 Northmount Dr NW	
Tues, Dec. 17	7:30pm	Paths to Recovery AFG	West Springs Free Methodist Church, 742 - 85 St. SW	
Tues, Dec. 17	7:30pm	Finding Our Way Adult Children AFG	Centennial Presbyterian Church, 103 Pinetown Place NE	Basement, bring battery candles and goodies to share
Weds, Dec 18	9:30am	Wednesday Morning Serenity AFG	McKenzie Towne Church, 7 McKenzie Towne Gate SE	Upstairs turn left at the top of the stairs, room on left, bring a candle and goodies
Thurs, Dec. 19	10:00am	Living the Legacies AFG	33 Edgevalley Circle NW	
Thurs, Dec. 19	7:30pm	South Elbow Drive AFG	Southwood United Church, 10690 Elbow Dr SW	Enter through eastside doors, turn right, room 10
Sat, Dec. 21	9:30am to 11:00	Saturday Early Risers AFG	St. Peter's Anglican Church, 903 - 75 Ave SW	Meeting is in the basement and wheelchair accessible
Sun, Dec. 22	7:30pm	Sunday Evening Beginners AFG	Wild Rose United Church, 1317 - 1 St NW	Top of stairs
Weds, Jan. 1	11:55am	Serenity Seekers AFG	Ascension Lutheran Church, 1432 - 19th St NE	Come in the back door of the church and look for a hallway on the right.



ACSOA
hosts
Workshop & Open House
Dreaming Big
with
20/20 Vision
April 4th 2020

Guest Presenters
Area Literature/Forum Coordinator
District 21
Book—Discovering Choices

Join us for Fellowship, Hope
 And Growth

11am—Potluck and Fellowship
Tea and Coffee Provided

Noon— 4:00 pm Workshop
 7th Tradition

303 Forge Road SW —Calgary



Through to the Other Side

Prior to attending my first Al-Anon meeting, I often wondered why things happen the way they do. Why do I always seem to be digging myself out of one mess or another? I can't remember a time before Al-Anon that didn't include chaos. Life as a teenager was not easy—dealing with bullies at school. For others, their homes were their sanctuaries away from that abuse. But for me, living with an alcoholic, it was not sanctuary at all. I would come home and be bullied by my father. The same cruel things I heard at school I heard at home. If I was lucky, I would escape to my room before he went off. The pattern of fleeing, along with my low self esteem, led me to a revolving cycle of bad decisions and digging out.

I remember my mother telling me to “count my blessings” and I often couldn't understand what blessings she was talking about. It took me decades to figure it out. They say hindsight is 20/20 and I have to say they are 100% correct. Looking back at all the mess and chaos in my life, I can reflect on some of the positive things that have led me to where I am today. One day I learned that my wife, who went to visit her mother, decided that she and the kids were not coming back. Devastated, I responded by escaping into a dark place which resulted in a demotion at work. This demotion was the catalyst for me to pack up everything I owned and drive 2,000 miles across the country to at least try to be a dad to my kids. I was able to find work in Michigan and begin regular visitation with my children.

I then met a woman who traveled even farther—8,500 miles from an island in the South Pacific—who

(Continued on page 15)

(Through to the Other Side, continued from page 14)

stole my heart. Our relationship blossomed, and she introduced me to her employer, who later became my employer where I learned to love marketing. We were married, and my children were in the wedding. Shortly thereafter, my ex-wife found herself in a situation where she could no longer care for our children and we were awarded custody. So then I found myself with a new job, a new bride, a new baby, and my kids moving in with us. I thought everything would be perfect, but little did I know that chaos would almost consume our family. My children did not respect my wife, and it became a constant battle until the day both kids moved out.

Without Al-Anon, it would have been impossible to find gratitude through all that chaos. But since attending Al-Anon meetings, I must give credit where credit is due. I am most grateful that my Higher Power has been with me throughout it all, even when I didn't know any better. My Higher Power needed me to travel across the country and for my wife to travel to the other side of the world so we could meet and so that I could kick-start my life, which included a new career. He allowed my children to test our marriage, and it showed us that we were unbreakable. My Higher Power gave me new tools with each challenge, including the one that led me to the World Service Office. I am forever grateful.

*By Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy
Used with permission from The Forum, November 2019*

Alberta Al-Anon Website

One stop for information on Al-Anon events, the current meeting schedule, public outreach, newcomer information, Alateen and so much more!

al-anon.ab.ca

Check us out at <https://al-anon.ab.ca/members/> with password: Area80

To subscribe to, unsubscribe from, or submit a story sharing the experience, hope and strength of the Al-Anon program to the Calgary AIS Newsletter Email

aiscalgarynewsletter@gmail.com

**Submission deadline for
the next issue is
February 7, 2020**

