

# *Loners' Letter*      *Gauteng & Districts*

Experience, strength and hope from Al-Anon members for times when you can't get to an Al-Anon group

September 2023

Dear Loners

I would like to begin this month's letter by sharing this extract from the Alateen *Just for Today* bookmark (M-13):

*"Thank you God for Life... a life with meaning in which I can be me, a life of courage to replace the fear. It feels so good to be young and alive, to carry my head high and to keep my mind clear so that I can see and enjoy the truly beautiful world in which you have placed me."*

It is a particularly lovely prayer, reminding me to be grateful and to keep my eyes open to all the good there is in our world. I would like to thank one of our Alateen's, James, for sharing his thoughts on what this prayer means to him.

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When we read the *Thank You God* prayer in our Alateen meeting, I always want to read it.

The first paragraph says "*Thank you God for Life*". When I first heard it, I realised that my life has meaning to it and that I must live it out.

The second paragraph says "*Thank you God for Love*". After I went to my second meeting, I learned that hatred is bad for me and others so I learned to love.

The third paragraph says "*Thank you God for Joy*." I learned that happiness is needed in very dark times.

And as it says in the final paragraph: "*And thank you, most of all, dear God, for being the greatest friend a young person like me can have.*"

This prayer has really helped me so much.

James

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When times are time tough, as they are for many of us these days, it is good to have tools to hold on to and to use as we navigate our way through life. Being hopeful and believing in life, love and joy lifts our spirits and helps us to see the good in our lives even when we may be feeling hopeless.

In this next section of this month's letter, an Al-Anon member will be sharing about how she enjoys working with the children in Alateen and how they have inspired her, all while she is trying to help them.

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I'd like to talk today about the joy of being an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). I had the privilege of joining the AMIAS team in October last year, and what a team. There is a lot of planning and organising that goes on in the background to keep the meetings available for the children – for this I thank those that do these service positions.

The AMIASs are a willing and enthusiastic bunch which is infectious, and let me be selfish here, I also benefit by being part of this awesome team. I feel great joy when I see the smiles on the faces of my fellow AMIAS members when they interact with the children.

I have been in meetings with both the Pre-Alateens and the Alateens on Zoom and Face-to-Face. I think it's so great to be able to get together in person again after so long without this privilege. And isn't Zoom just awesome – I get to meet children from far and wide. And I have a wonderful laugh when those skilled with the computer dress their faces up with all sorts of disguises like spacemen or furry animals with funny faces and long ears, maybe some whiskers and fancy noses. Or create backgrounds of outer space and pretty pictures.

It's such a joy to see their enthusiasm to communicate with each other. They are so eager for some free time, to connect and to finally be with people who understand and relate. It must be nice to know that they have special friends in Alateen and that they are no longer feeling alone and helpless. It's also a joy to see the children's commitment. To be told: "Oh, in all the years I've been here, I've only missed one or two meetings."

It's a great joy to me as well to see how well everyone participates. It does not matter if errors are made when everyone takes their turn reading extracts out loud. I am just so excited that everyone tries and everyone participates – and the spinoff is I see everyone's reading skills improve. I see the children's ability to communicate growing and blossoming. I also often sit back stunned at how the children come up with shares that I would never have thought about and they provide me with a new perspective, a new insight. I find that amazing.

I am convinced that simply participating in Alateen has far reaching benefits for the children and this excites me. I am sure that it must help with having to make speeches at school and with having to read in front of the class. Over time they feel more confident about themselves and are better equipped to deal with life at school or at home or at social events. I know this because I have seen how the programme has helped me in all these areas and many others as well

Being an AMIAS also helps me because as I hear the children read the literature or make comments on the topic we are discussing – the simplicity is often just what I need to hear and with this simplicity comes a new understanding. Very often too one of the children will say something that I had never thought of and it will be just what I needed to hear. Then, I have one of those Aha moments, which I love, and I find myself growing in my journey.

Ann

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Thanks James and Ann for sharing how you are finding meaning, love and joy through your participation in Alateen.

Best wishes

Clare

P.S. If you would like to send a share for possible publication in the Loners' Letter, please forward your contribution to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) with the subject "Loners' Letter Submission".

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Al-Anon Bosberaad**

**When:** 30 September 2023

**Time:** 11h45 - 15h15 (Area Assembly 11h00 - 11h45)

**Venue:** 4 Homestead Road, Eastleigh, Edenvale.

**RSVP:** 25 September 2023

**Bring along:** A plate of snacks, scissors and old magazines.

Al-Anon is a self-supporting organisation – we rely on financial contributions from our members to keep our offices open and our meetings going. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

### **Tradition Seven**

*Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions. If you would like to contribute towards our office expenses, payment options are provided below.*

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