

Loners' Letter • **Gauteng & Districts** •

Together we can make it

August 2026

Dear Loners

To celebrate **Alateen's 69th Birthday**, this month's issue shares how Alateen provides caring, positive, practical assistance to those living with alcoholism in a family member or friend.

Below are some shares from South African Alateens, Alateen parents and Al-Anon members working in Alateen detailing how they have been helped by participating in the Alateen program. For more details on Alateen: [Click here](#)

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♦ Today I want to share how Alateen has helped my son, and how his journey has also helped me in my own recovery.

Living in a family affected by alcoholism can be very confusing for a child. There can be questions, fear, anger and feelings that are difficult to understand. As a mother, I wanted to protect my son and take away all his pain. I wanted to fix things for him.

But through Al-Anon, I learned that I cannot control another person's drinking, and I cannot fix everything for my son.

Alateen gave my son a safe place where he could meet other young people who understood what he was going through. He didn't have to feel different or alone. He could talk about his feelings and learn that he was not responsible for someone else's drinking.

He learned the three Cs: I didn't cause it. I can't control it. I can't cure it.

Those words have helped him understand that what happens because of alcoholism is not his fault.

Watching my son benefit from Alateen has also taught me a lot. I have learned that being a good mother doesn't mean trying to solve every problem for him. Sometimes he doesn't need me to have an answer. He simply needs me to listen and support him.

Al-Anon has taught me to keep the focus on myself and to let go of the things I cannot control. Instead of asking, "How can I make everything better?" I am learning to ask, "What can I do today to take care of myself and support my son?"

I am also learning to "Let Go and Let God".

I am grateful that my son has his own recovery journey through Alateen, while I have mine through Al-Anon. We don't have to walk the same path, but we can support each other.

Alateen has given my son understanding, hope and a place where he knows he is not alone. Al-Anon has given me the same understanding, hope and the tools to live one day at a time.

Today, I am grateful that my son and I have these programs in our lives. I am grateful for the people who make Alateen possible, and for the fellowship that continues to teach both of us that we can recover, even when we cannot change what is happening around us.

### Anonymous Al-Anon Parent

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◆ Before Alateen, I felt like I was carrying everything alone. Living with someone's drinking made my home feel unpredictable. I kept thinking it was my fault, and I tried to fix things I couldn't control. I was angry, anxious, and lonely, even around other people.

Coming to Alateen changed that. The first thing I learned was: "I didn't cause it, I can't control it, and I can't cure it." Just hearing that out loud took so much weight off me. In meetings I heard other teens say things I thought only I felt. For the first time, I wasn't the "weird one." I was just understood.

Alateen gave me tools. I learned to set boundaries, to focus on myself, and to use the slogans when things got chaotic especially "One Day at a Time" and "Let Go and Let God." I stopped trying to manage other people's choices and started managing my own peace.

Most of all, Alateen gave me hope and friends who get it. I'm not responsible for someone else's drinking, but I am responsible for my own recovery. And because of Alateen, I finally believe I deserve that peace.

Anonymous Alateen

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◆ I appreciate Alateen as a space where my teens learn what toxicity looks like. In toxic, alcoholic and dysfunctional families fear rules and we are taught to deny that abuse and neglect exists in the home. My teens are learning to name their emotions and also to express them in a healthy way.

Attending meetings gets my teens out of their heads/minds and they get to do something together that has the capacity to unite their bond with each other and to build a sense of belonging. They realise they don't have to catastrophise.

Using tools like the Alateen slogans, they are learning to assert themselves. I also appreciate the Al-Anon adults doing service with the Alateens and my kids get exposed to healthy adults who wish my children well.

### Anonymous Al-Anon Parent

◆ I started going to Alateen because home felt like walking on eggshells and I thought it had to be fixed. At the first meeting I listened to other teens say stuff I'd never said out loud... about drinking, about yelling, and about feeling guilty for things that weren't my fault. Nobody tried to give me advice or told me to "be strong". They just got it. Slowly I learned I'm not responsible for someone else's drinking, and I'm allowed to have my own life anyway. I leave lighter and I finally know I'm not the only one carrying this.

### Anonymous Alateen

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◆ I love going to Alateen meetings because I feel safe, welcome and understood. My experience has been really good because I get to meet other young people who understand what I am going through. I enjoy listening to other children and sharing my own thoughts. The meetings have taught me that I am not alone and that it is okay to ask for help. I always leave the meetings feeling happier and more confident.

I enjoy going to Alateen meetings because I get to learn and share my opinion. My experience at Alateen has been great because I get a chance to help and hear from others. The meetings have taught me how to behave in different situations. I always leave the meetings with better knowledge about the way I view life.

Anonymous Alateen

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◆ I love attending Alateen meetings on Thursdays and Saturdays. It makes me understand that it's OK to have an alcoholic parent in my life. I like doing the Twelve Steps and I also like the phrase "One Day at a Time". I like to attend the meeting with my siblings which tells me that I'm not alone and I'm loved and cared for. I also see other kids, the same age as me, that are going through a similar problem. Alateen makes it easier for me to share my emotions and feelings. I also feel loved because people in the meeting are kind and loving.

### Anonymous Alateen

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◆ When I first came into Al-Anon, I was completely lost. I had tried everything I could think of to make life feel more manageable, but nothing worked. I was drained: mentally, emotionally and spiritually. That's when I finally found the courage to walk into an Al-Anon meeting.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I had learned how to survive. I became good at staying alert all the time, trying to keep the peace, putting everyone else first, and doing whatever it took to avoid conflict. I thought if I could just do everything right, then maybe things would get better.

For so long, I had thought the drinking was somehow my fault. If I could just be quieter, more helpful, more perfect... maybe then things would change. But no matter what I did, it was never enough.

I wish I had known about Alateen when I was a teen myself.

Now, my passion is helping spread the message of hope to children in Alateen.

I want them to know that they are not alone and there are tools that can help them. It fills my heart to see the children in Alateen growing into confident, strong, and self-aware young people.

Thank you to all the Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service who work with the Alateens. The time, energy, and care you pour into supporting the teens is amazing. You show up, you listen, you guide, and you make this safe space possible. Your presence and commitment make a lasting impact.

Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

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◆ In Alateen we sometimes play a game about making sandwiches. Here is my sandwich:

- The first slice of bread of my sandwich is **Feeling**. I like going to Alateen because it helps me cope with the good and the bad.
- The meat in my sandwich is **Safety**. Alateen makes me feel safe.
- The lettuce in my sandwich is the **Alateens**. I have made good friends with the other Alateens.
- The second slice of bread in my sandwich is the **AMIAS**. The Al-Anon members working with the Alateens are friendly.

### Anonymous Alateen

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◆ As an Adult Child of an Alcoholic, I didn't realise the impact that I would have on my children until I heard an Adult Child introduce herself in a meeting as, "I am the Adult Child of an Adult Child ". In that moment, the penny dropped for me and I realised that one day that could be my child/children.

At the time my daughter was about 15 years old. I tried to convince her to go to Alateen. She went for about three months and then stopped. I had to really practice letting go and acceptance. My son on the other hand is quite a bit younger and he couldn't wait to join Alateen.

I am thankful that he joined the pre-teen meetings because he has learnt how to speak his truth. He is able to express his feelings, with confidence and honesty. He has been able to say to me, "Mummy, I am upset because..." or "I don't like it when you..." or "You hurt my feelings" or "I feel sad because..."

The other thing he has learnt is to use the tools of the Alateen program, such as the slogans, to help himself and he has also learnt about the importance of perspective.

For me, this has been the greatest gift of Alateen and Al-Anon, a child who can speak to me and share exactly how he feels and a mother who can listen without taking offence. My daughter, thankfully, has also learnt to express herself and I am trying to be a better mother, through working on myself.

Anonymous Al-Anon Parent

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◆ Being an AMIAS (Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service) is the best gift I could have. Every meeting, online or in person, the kids get to know they are not alone. That lifts my heart. As I see them grow in confidence and self-worth, I give my own thanks for Al-Anon and Alateen, and my choice to spread the love.

### Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service

#### ▪ How Al-Anon Works ▪

**Al-Anon** is a group of people who have been affected by the drinking of a family member or friend. We share our experiences with others like ourselves and share what has or has not worked for us. Having a common experience enables us to have insight into how we are being affected or have been affected, and what has helped us.

**Al-Anon Meetings:** In-person meetings and Zoom meetings are held throughout the week in South Africa and internationally. [Click Here to Find A Meeting](#) or phone our office on 063 270 2535.

**Alateen Meetings:** We hold Zoom meetings for young people (9 – 17 years) who have been affected by someone else's drinking. We help them to understand that they are not at fault and help them to keep a healthy focus on themselves and their own responsibilities.

**Al-Anon Books:** We have a range of Al-Anon books which detail the experiences of other Al-Anon members and what they have found works for them. Some suggested starter books are:

- *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* [B32ZA]
- *Courage to Change* [B16ZA]
- *Discovering Choices* [B30]
- *Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics* [B03ZA]

These books and others can be ordered from the Gauteng Al-Anon office: [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za)

**Free Downloads:** We also have a range of Free Downloads available on the Al-Anon website. <https://www.alanon.org.za/free-downloads/>

**Please support Alateen and Al-Anon by contributing to our operating expenses.  
Use “Alateen” as the reference, when contributing to Alateen.**

#### **Al-Anon Information Services**

##### **Bank Details**

ABSA Bank, Oakdene, Current Account No: 1118881482 Branch code 632 005.

Please send proof of payment to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) and use your **name, group and/or event** as the reference.

##### **Yoco Payments**

Please click on the link: <https://pay.yoco.com/AlAnonInformationService>

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za) with the word **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject and your name will be removed from the distribution lists. If you know of new members who would like to receive our newsletter, please inform the office.