

Public Outreach
Fall Assembly 2008 Report
(July 2008 report edited with updates)

Improving Area Communications:

I now know how to get your attention....suggest a change in the way Al-Anon Family Groups have and is operating. A few of you responded and all were very helpful and informative. Suggestions were made that the DR and GR be held responsible by the groups to move the information received from the WSO and Area in a timely manner to the individual members. There was a concern that Al-Anon in general was relying too heavily on e-mail.

Sometimes when I read the responses, after being in the program for many years, I am reminded of the adage “when one keeps doing the same thing over and over again and expects a different result.....

It was proven to me when I was at the WSO that we waste thousands of dollars hoping information gets to where it belongs....the individual members. Conscientious leaders will see that communications are moved to the members. For the leaders who are not so committed, we will just have to hope that the members understand the plethora of information available to them from the Area Coordinators and the WSO via their District Representatives and Group District Representatives. In addition, cross our fingers that the individual members understand they have the right to encourage their GR and DR to move information to them in a timely fashion so they can support service initiatives.

For information sake, I have sent out “e-mail buddy” forms to all those without e-mail addresses following a similar process used by the World Service Office. I will try to survey from the most recent lists who is still without an email address

Update

I will be your “facilitator” for the Action Committee “Kiss and Tell.” We are going to have a fun filled, spirited and hard working group. We will zone in on the major problems facing the Area to communicate effectively with its members. We may monkey around but we will be challenged to focus on developing a plan, determine a time line for the plan’s implementation and designate who will be appointed for specific duties (with realistic expectations) in order for our Action Committee goals to be met. The appointed “who” will receive a promise of the entire Committee’s support to insure success. When it is possible, volunteers will be given a committee of one or two people depending on the turn out for this session.

Public Outreach Web Page

The Web Master gave me a solution that will be most helpful to improve communications in the Area relative to Public Outreach. He had suggested it before; however, it didn’t stick to the gray matter. Create a PO Web page! This doesn’t answer all the communication concerns, especially for those without a computer or computer buddy but it goes along way. I will continue to be sensitive to those who can only communicate by regular mail.

Update

It is our hope to have this Public Outreach web page ready by the Fall Assembly.

Display Panel Distribution:

By the time you receive this, the panel will have been at four Public Outreach events at Roanoke, Bull Run and Triangle. We had five requests for the Panel, however, several were for the same date and we had to stand by first come first served. Reserve the display panel early. Once we receive an email from your DR requesting the unit for a confirmed date and a note that she or he understands the cost for round trip shipping; you will immediately be put on the display reservation calendar.\

Update: Display Panel.....*The Devil is in the Details*

When I originally weighed the display panel in its carrying case (canvas bag) at the WSO, it was “estimated” to be a \$40.00 round trip mailing cost. At that time, I did not think about another carrying case to place the canvas case within. I should have but didn’t. Then TPS, the vendor, gave us a carrying case for free which I thought to be so wonderful. Ever hear the saying “there is no free lunch?” Well, the new shipping rates are focused on size and shape of the “box.” The case is a very odd shape and thus makes the cost much higher than estimated. I now believe the shipping costs will be higher than the original estimate, however, we will do everything possible to keep it reasonable. In the interim, please use the Display Unit for your Health Fairs, etc. We will work this all out.

Yours truly and my highly underpaid assistant Juanita P. are currently trying to determine where we can get a box made that is of “normal” shape. This box will not have wheels like the free case has so it will need one of those pull carts (that many of us have) to easily manage its transportation from the car to the event.

Up date: FedEx Shipping for the Display Panel

I have opened an account under AFGVA with FedEx. This means that all costs for shipping the Display Panel will be charged to me and reimbursed to me by the Area. Once we find out the “new” estimated cost the Districts will be advised. As originally planned, the estimated cost must be forwarded to me prior to shipment. We have not implemented that requirement for the first few shipments. I/the Area will reimburse the Districts for the difference between the original estimated cost for shipping and the actual until we can get the new shipping box and new mailing cost figures.

Update: The Hand Out for Health Fairs and Professional Events

The Hand Out has been approved by the VAWSC and will be available at the Fall Assembly. Thank you to the many folks that helped with the multiple drafts and for your ideas and suggestions.

Ever wonder what the expectations are for hosting a table or booth at a Health Fair or Professional Event? Well, now there is an Area document that can be helpful to Districts that have never been involved in Health Fairs or Professional events. In addition, it may have some helpful hints to those Districts that have had the exciting experience of taking advantage of these opportunities to reach out to the general public.

A few examples of its contents are how to get invited to a Health Fair or Professional event, ideas for literature selection, suggestions for attracting folks to your table and follow up recommendations.

A laminated copy will be enclosed in the Display Unit. Additional copies after the Fall Assembly will be available through the Area Public Outreach Coordinator until further notice.

Closing

Thank you for your support and input. It was really nice to hear from you. A special thank you to Juanita for being such a great asset to the Virginia Area and our Public Outreach work. Without her willingness to support me when I am traveling, my service as PO Coordinator would be far more complicated.

Love in Al-Anon Service
Phyllis M.
Area Public Outreach Coordinator