



FAMILY IS THE SOLUTION.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT | July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Message from the Board Chair and CEO



Jen Aspengren

Dear Friends of Alia,

We are so thrilled to share with you this first Annual Report! We began as a small group of unconventional, uncompromising, passionate folks with an unwavering commitment to change the world for children and families. At the end of our first year, we are all that and so much more thanks to the many folks who joined us along the way with their passion and ideas..

Together, we accomplished great things, including:

- » Convening a 100-person, 3-day design thinking experience (Ten of Ten for Kids), which produced 30 prototypes of a child welfare redesign.
- » Envisioning Guiding Principles of an UnSystem – our “north star” of system redesign practices.
- » Gathering thought leaders from 11 states in an UnSummit to flush out the levers of child welfare systems change in permanency and wellbeing.
- » Publishing the Waupaca Story, providing a concrete example of what is possible when a system works to reinvent itself.
- » Helping systems all over the U.S. and Canada build capacity for transformative change, as they demonstrate improvements in their current systems.
- » Developing the launch of the first in a series of Innovation Cohorts empowered to ignite UnSystems in communities nationwide.



Amelia Franck Meyer

We are helping build a vast network of changemakers who each hold part of the greater solution. Each contains threads of experiments, insights, new ideas, and positive outcomes. Alone, these individual threads are strong but thin. The true power of this work comes alive when we weave all of these threads together to create a beautiful tapestry of wellbeing for children and families.

We know you feel the urgency every bit as much as we do, because *every year* 670,000 children and their families are depending on us to get this right.

Together, we will do better.

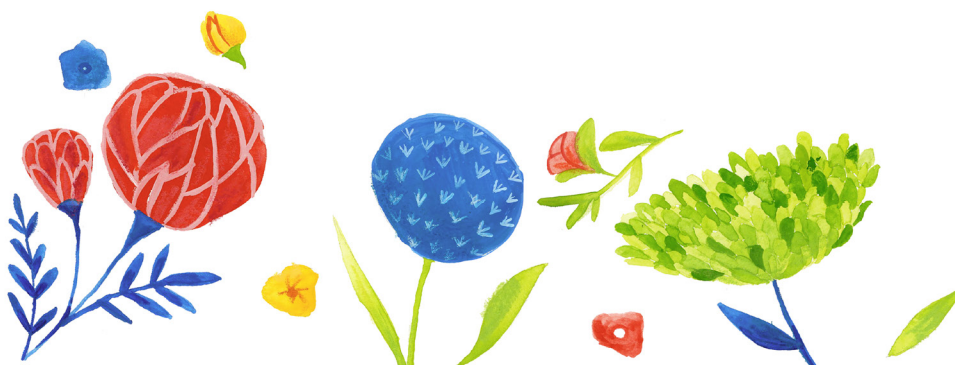
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jen Aspengren".

Jen Aspengren
Alia Founding Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amelia Franck Meyer".

Amelia Franck Meyer
Alia Founder and CEO



The mission of Alia:

To inspire and drive transformative change for the people and systems entrusted with the welfare and wellbeing of children.

The vision of Alia:

Families are upheld as the foundation of lifelong wellbeing for children.

Fearless
Innovation

*We take strategic risks
to build a better way.*

Audacious
Optimism

*We hold a bold
belief in the human
capacity to transform
and heal.*

Courageous
Partnerships

*We share knowledge and
form deep, trusting
collaborations believing
that everyone has a part of
the solution to share and
everyone is a changemaker.*

A Sense of
Urgency

*We understand how brief
childhood is and what is at
stake for our youth.*

Relentless
Pursuit
of Evidence

*We are committed to
learning from each other
and our youth, and adjusting
practices; when we know
better, we do better.*



Amelia Franck Meyer, founder and CEO of Alia, has been doing innovative work in child welfare for almost 3 decades. As CEO, Amelia lead a regional treatment foster care organization to achieve industry leading outcomes in stabilization and permanence for some of the most challenging youth. These efforts earned six national, regional, and local awards for innovation and Amelia was recognized as both a Bush Foundation and a U.S. Ashoka Fellow.

In 2015, Amelia and her team launched a new organization – *Alia* – in an effort create deeper and broader impact by focusing on transforming the child welfare **system**.

From June 2016 to July 2017 the Alia **staff grew by 75%**. Throughout the year we engaged with public child welfare agencies in **six states and Canada**, supporting them along their transformational journeys. **Our revenue grew by 185%**.

TEN of TEN for Kids

Alia means “other” and “different” in several etymologies, and our public entrée into the field as a new nonprofit was uncommon indeed.

Inspired by thinkers at the 2016 Aspen Ideas festival, Amelia imagined a national convening using IDEO’s human-centered design process to align the bright spots in child welfare, convening those doing innovative work in support of families and children across the country.

100+ innovators joined for 3.5 days in Minneapolis at an event called Ten of Ten for Kids. Leaders in all levels of child welfare, innovators from diverse industries, child development experts, achievement and innovation Fellows, and people with direct, personal experience with child protection (foster alum, birth parents, and foster parents).

Their task was to reimagine what family services could look like, to invent a new way of intervening that heals, connects, and honors family connections, obsoleting our current system that blames, shames, disconnects, and punishes families when parents struggle.

We hoped to identify one or two prototypes of a radically different child welfare system and create a short list of guiding principles we could all agree to uphold as our north star.

At the end of the event, however, we did not come up with one or two radical prototypes; *instead*, we generated 30 prototypes, thousands of ideas on post-its, 100s of evaluations, and a passionate overflow of ideas and discussion.

After many weeks of data evaluation, listening sessions, design work, and feedback from a broad scope of diverse thinkers, we realized there is no better imaginable system for raising children than FAMILIES. We asked Ten of Ten participants to complete an impossible task!



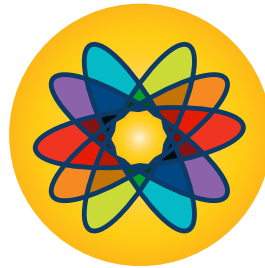
UnSystem Guiding Principles



**PROTECT RELATIONAL
CONNECTIONS AS SACRED**



**NUTURE THE CAPACITY
FOR JOY**



**INSIST ON RACIAL EQUITY
AND RADICAL INCLUSION**



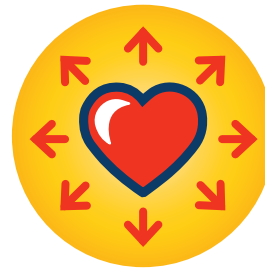
DARE TO SHARE POWER



**COMMIT TO INTERGENERATIONAL
WELLBEING**



**TRUST THE WISDOM
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO
DESIGN THEIR OWN FUTURES**

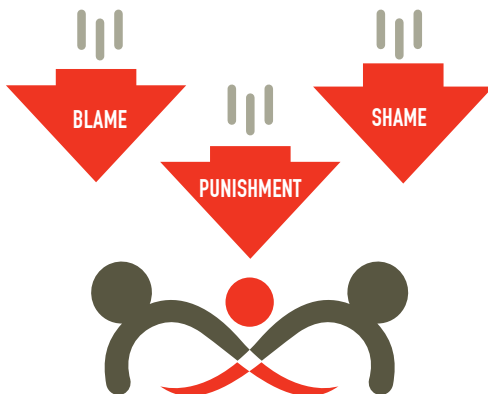


DO WHAT LOVE WOULD DO

These ideas born at Ten of Ten for Kids eventually converged into an approach we call an UnSystem.

Traditional Child Welfare System

The
CONSTRUCTED
Child Welfare System is an
ARTIFICIAL
family system



The constructed system often dismantles and adds more pressure on families in times of challenge rather than supporting the family back to balance & wellbeing

An UnSystem

The
ORIGINAL
Child Welfare System is the
NATURAL
family system



Beyond Bread

When David put his head down on his desk instead of taking out his lunch box to go eat with rest of the class, Ms. Lewis asked him if he felt ill.

"No," mumbled David, but he didn't move.

While the other students ate lunch in the cafeteria, Ms. Lewis coaxed David to tell her what was wrong. She noticed he lacked focus the last few days. He was quieter, too. He didn't raise his hand to answer questions in class like usual, and sat down during recess.

"I don't have a lunch today," David whispered.

"Why not?" asked Ms. Lewis.

Ever since his baby sister was born three weeks ago, there hadn't been a lot of food in his house. Both his mom and dad stayed home from work to care for the new baby. They wanted to spend a few weeks bonding with their new daughter before she had to go to daycare. However with no paid time off or parental leave at their hourly jobs, this meant his parents didn't have enough money to buy groceries. Each evening they asked David to hold on just a little while longer.



Sometimes CPS separates family members when a caregiver struggles to make sure a child has food, clothes or running utilities. The child welfare system often punishes parents in these situations by removing their children, leading to lifelong consequences that affect the emotional wellbeing of all family members involved. Instead of penalizing parents, what if we viewed these moments as opportunities to invest in families and connect them with the resources they need to stay together? After all, isn't love and belonging the most basic need we have?

After hearing David's story, the school contacted CPS. However instead of judgment, the family was met with something else. That evening, while David was playing with his dad and his mom fed the baby, Serena from CPS arrived at their home. She worked for Family Assessment Response (FAR), a new program Washington state rolled out in its cities between 2014 and 2016 to support families just barely scraping by. David's parents, Victor and Katrina, didn't know about FAR when Serena knocked. The social worker could see the familiar look of apprehension on their faces as she walked into the living room. She knew the feeling—she experienced it herself years before when CPS investigated her.

In her mid 20s, Serena gave birth to a baby boy addicted to meth. The new mom was not allowed to hold her son until hospital social workers came into the delivery room. Serena got to spend the first night with her baby, but then CPS took her son the next day and placed him in the nursery. Serena left the hospital alone and spent months working to stabilize her life. She saw her son twice a week for a couple hours. That was all CPS allowed. Eight months later Serena got her baby back, but the trauma of that early separation stayed with her.

Standing in the living room, Serena told Victor and Katrina that she was here to make their family stronger—not to take David and their new baby away. "What can I do for you?" she asked.

"We need help with groceries," Victor said skeptically, unsure if sharing the family's struggles would make CPS think he and Katrina couldn't care for their kids. But Serena seemed sincere, so they continued.

"We took time away from work," said Katrina, who holds down an hourly job. "We don't have family leave, but we wanted to be together these first few weeks to let the baby get to know us before she goes to daycare and we go back to work."

Serena made a list of ways to help their family: buy groceries, pay utility bills, help with rent, find clothes for the baby. She reached out to people at the local church and community center who promised to gather things for the family by the following day. As she made the phone calls, Serena remembered the neighbor who watched her son while she attended college classes and worked part-time. She thought of the landlord who forgave her for being a few days late on rent. Without that help, she could have lost her son a second time for the same kind circumstances Victor and Katrina now faced.

The next day Serena arrived at David's home to make sure the family received the bags of groceries the church down the street promised to deliver weekly. She found Victor and Katrina having lunch at the kitchen table with their children. Over the next few weeks as the family adjusted to life with a newborn, Serena helped Victor and Katrina collect money for bills like electricity, heat, and water. Oftentimes, the best way to protect children is to safeguard the relationships most sacred to them. By finding ways to help parents meet kids' physical needs like food or clothes, people like Serena can help caregivers defend children's greatest need of all: family.

Questions

- » When parents cannot pay rent or provide enough food and clothes for their children, do they become unsuitable caregivers?
- » Did Victor and Katrina make the right choice to stay home with their newborn?
- » How is CPS protecting David in this situation?
- » Could "child protection" really just mean helping families?
- » Is there a parent in your life who you think is barely getting by? What could you do to help?



Evolutionary to Revolutionary

We believe our child welfare system operates with fundamental design flaws because it is based on an old set of knowledge and requires a complete system redesign to achieve desired outcomes. This is our current *revolutionary* work (see page 10).

However, we are under a moral imperative to provide our most loving, efficient, evidence-based guidance to leadership in the *existing* child welfare industry – our *evolutionary* work. Through keynote speaking engagements, short trainings, and long-term engagement projects, we teach about wellbeing, healing, belonging, trauma, and organizational change to advance *current practice* in the field.

In 2016-2017, we provided **679 trainings hours** to **nearly 7,000 people** in over a dozen locations nationwide. Our goal is to build capacity in agencies serving children and families, nurturing *evolutionary* practice that leads to *revolutionary* change.

Where we've been this year

Birmingham, AL
Los Angeles, CA
Santa Clara, CA
Manitoba, Canada
Aspen, CO

Washington, D.C.
Jacksonville, FL
Atlanta, GA
Chicago, IL
Baltimore, MD

Jackson, MS
Waveland, MS
New York, NY
Austin, TX
LaCrosse, WI

Milwaukee, WI
Waupaca County, WI

"I was pleased and proud of the work we were already doing in our organization, but I didn't realize what was really possible until we started working with Alia. They provided guidance and expertise which has given us the confidence to push the throttle down even more on our practice and culture change. Alia has helped us build a team that is ready to stretch, disrupt and make a ruckus within the world of Human Services." – DHHS County Director

"Your style, credibility and sensitivity to the cases lends so much to the consults. Thank you wholeheartedly!" – Director of Programs

"My experience utilizing our 30-minute weekly meetings was profound – life-changing. I became a better leader, a better person, and a braver, stronger advocate for the children and families we work with." – Adult and Family Services County Manager

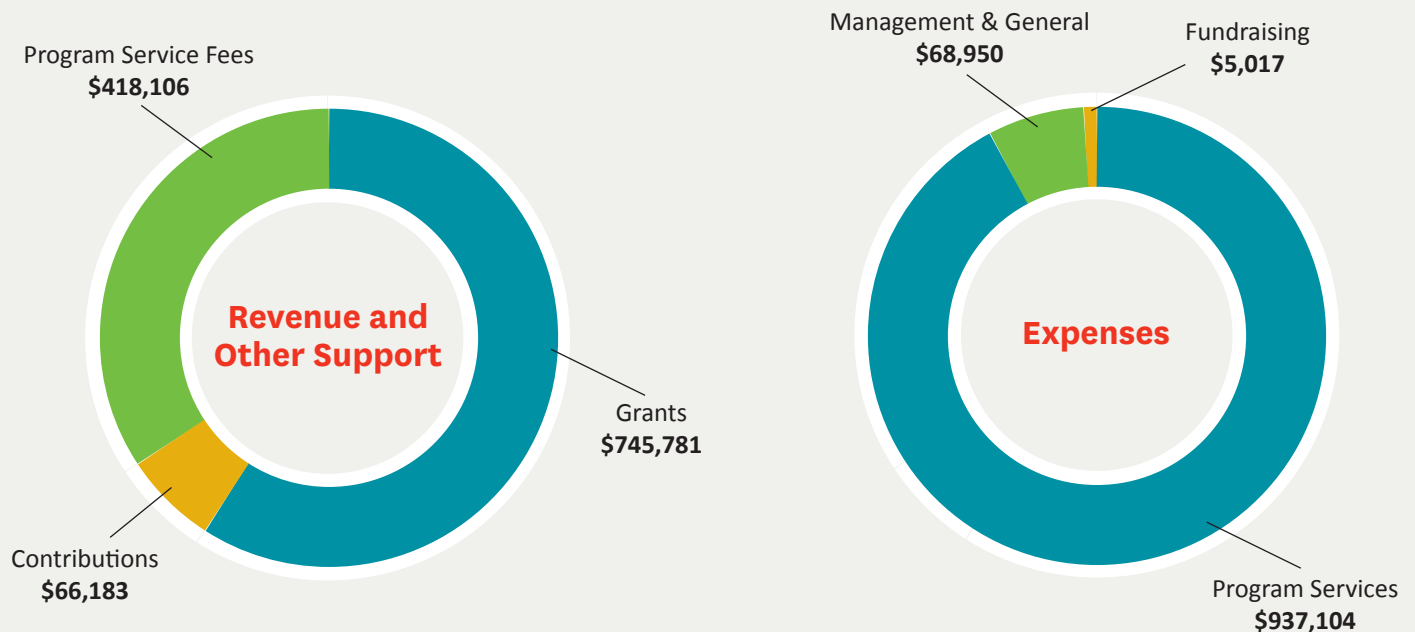
"Wow! You would not believe how much I enjoyed your presentation. Your level of communication is remarkable, and your ability to explain difficult concepts is fantastic."
– CEO/President



Alia Statement of Activities

Year Ended June 30, 2017

REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Grants	\$505,000	\$240,781	\$745,781
Contributions	\$66,183	-	\$66,183
Program Service Fees	\$414,106	-	\$418,106
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$60,000	(\$60,000)	-
Total Revenue and Other Support	\$1,049,289	\$180,781	\$1,230,070
EXPENSES			
Program Services	\$937,104	-	\$937,104
Management & General	\$68,950	-	\$68,950
Fundraising	\$5,017	-	\$5,017
Total Expenses	\$1,011,071	-	\$1,011,071
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$38,218	\$180,781	\$218,999
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	\$80,625	-	\$80,625
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	\$118,843	\$180,781	\$299,624



Meet One of Alia's Champions

About Wendy:

Wendy Nelson is a business leader whose career spans from professional tennis player, to private equity, to community leader. The Carlson family business is approaching its 80th year and successfully transitioning to its third generation leadership, Wendy included.

Over the years, Wendy has held several executive-level operating roles with Carlson and today holds several governing roles within the family enterprise. Currently, she is the Chair of the Carlson Family Foundation and serves on the Board of Carlson as well as other entities within the enterprise. She is driven to engage and lead organizations that value equity, access and opportunity and has taken on leadership roles outside of the family business through philanthropic and other pursuits at the Women's Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the Guthrie Theatre, and The Carlson School of Management to name just a few. Wendy is a mom first, with two kids.



A significant personal donation from Wendy allowed us to allocate resources to launch Ten of Ten for Kids which generated the vision of an UnSystem, which now guides our transformative work.

A note from Wendy:

I heard Amelia speak in 2015 when she was a Bush Fellow, and I was Vice Chair of the Bush Foundation Board. The stories she shared were heartbreaking and yet, when she finished speaking, I was left with a sense of hope. She shared stories that ripped at your heart, realities of our child welfare system that left tears upon your soul, and she shared stories of success, hope and the ingredients that could lead us to make this big complex system less noisy and more human.

At the end of the meeting, I rushed to the front of the room to greet her and to offer my help. Why? The answer was simple. In front of me stood a smart, passionate woman with the experience, the smarts, and the grit to make this change!

My pledge of support was immediate and continuous. I have cherished the opportunity to be a part of the dream and the change, meeting with Amelia often and for hours, offering everything from monetary capital to strategic consultation, introductions, and of course continued belief and encouragement as she developed the vision for the launch of Alia.

With each moment spent with Amelia, the sense of urgency drummed louder. The time was now to create transformative change in the child welfare system so that parents are supported to resilience and all children could live safely at home. And my "I am a believer" status grew stronger. The need was clear, the mission compelling and the leadership capacity of Amelia and her team ever-present. When Amelia shared her idea for the Ten of Ten for Kids child welfare redesign event and the difficulty of gaining initial traction for grants given the uniqueness of the idea, I stepped up with an early gift as a statement of belief in Alia and the impact that will result from their unique lens, strong leadership, and human approach.

While some might be astounded by the rapid progress, I am not. I am just more convinced that my initial instinct was correct. Alia is now established as a leader of innovative change in the child welfare field, and I am honored to be a founding donor and friend to this organization and to this movement.

Wendy Nelson

Alia Donor List

June 2016 – July 2017

Team Alia extends heartfelt gratitude to those who offered precious resources in support of advancing Alia's mission in 2016-2017. In addition to the donors below, countless hours of volunteer support and in-kind donations of goods and services were generously donated to us by our partners and friends.

\$500,000 +

Capital One Foundation

\$100,000 - \$499,999

Redlich Horwitz Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Carlson Family Foundation

Wendy Nelson

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Beim Foundation

McVay Foundation

Moxie Foundation

\$15,000 - \$24,999

George Family Foundation

Ittleson Foundation

Patrick and Aimee Butler
Family Foundation

\$5,000 - \$14,999

Casey Youth Opportunities
Initiative

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Nancy Jacobs

Public Consulting Group

SLI Global Solutions, LLC

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Julie Causey

Medtronic Foundation

Mark Meyer & Amelia Franck
Meyer

Prem Suppogu & Maria
Thrall

Western Bank

\$500 - \$999

Elizabeth Black

Mandy Ellerton

FamilyWise

Nancy Fier

Alicia Groh

Stephanie Hammes-Betti

Peter Hinke

DaWayne Judd

Karri Kerns

Wise Ink Creative Publishing

\$100 - \$499

Anonymous Donor

Jen Aspengren

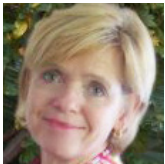
Nancy Griffith

Josie Meyer

We cannot do this work without you and it's important to us that we get this information right. If you see an error of any kind on this list, please contact Margo at margo@aliainnovations.org so we can update our records.

Board of Directors

The Alia Board of Directors are resolute in their charge to transform how we care for families and children in this country. Backed by their distinctive expertise and experience, this group has helped focus, drive, and expand the Alia footprint never for the sake of growth alone, but as a strategy to scale healing work with families.



Rachel Zahn, MD

Child Advocacy Consultant



Corey B. Best

Family Engagement Consultant
and Speaker



Kathy Goetz Wolf

Founding Partner and CEO
Be Strong Families



DaWayne Judd

Director, Financial Planning & Analysis
Columbia Sportswear



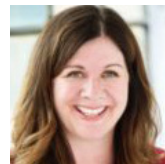
Jen Aspengren

Minnesota Lead
Change X



Elizabeth Black

Senior Associate, Child Welfare
Center for the Support of Families



Stephanie Hammes-Betti

Senior Vice President,
Innovation Design US Bank



Esra Kucukciftci

Managing Principal
Pricing Innovations



Brad Ballinger

Principal/Owner
Cincinnatus



Stacie Buchanan

Senior Child Welfare Director



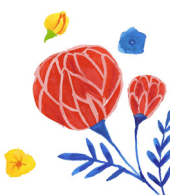
Elena Imaretska

Chief Innovation Officer
Brave New Workshop



Dr. Ramón Pastrano

CEO/President
Impact Lives



We declare: *An Alia Manifesto*

Imagine this: you're floating through life among a sea of strangers. You move from one home to another, switching schools as you go. You've got no one to talk to, and no one you trust. You're physically safe, but you don't belong with anyone. You feel abandoned, worthless and alone. Your brain kicks into survival mode.

The unbearable grief of feeling isolated turns into pain, disrespect, disobedience, inattention and rage. Our very survival is at risk when we lose our network of support. Whether that's a parent, a step brother, a grandparent or a neighbor, these people are our lifelines. They keep us safe. They don't give up on us. When we're disconnected from the ones we love, we turn into the most vulnerable—and therefore dangerous—versions of ourselves. While our current child welfare system is designed to protect kids from physical harm, it often fails to protect them from the psychological trauma of being separated from the people they consider family.

The story we tell ourselves is that we are heroes, saving children from parents who hurt them. In a few cases, this is true; but more often than not separation isn't the answer to a tough situation, and can make things far worse. Instead of punishing parents or caregivers when they struggle to provide for kids, we must embrace these moments as opportunities to strengthen them with the support they need to stay together.

True transformation in child welfare comes when we redefine our beliefs about what children need. Having food to eat and a bed to sleep in is important, but it's not enough. What matters most in life is not what we have, but rather who we share it with. Kids need stable, lifelong connections with adults they trust. We must change our measures of success to not only protect children's physical safety, but to also safeguard their hearts.



Looking Forward

Hosting Ten of Ten for Kids solidified the orchestrator role we see ourselves taking, bringing people together for an audacious common goal, and never abandoning hope that change is possible. **We believe the system was designed by us, therefore it can be REdesigned by us.**

Now we work to operationalize UnSystems across the country, enriching and strengthening child service delivery ecosystems to shift from seeing family as a hopeless combination of deficiencies, to the lifeblood to which every child must remain connected – a worthy investment.

The **UnSystem Innovation Cohort** is a small group of public child welfare systems leaders and trusted guides who will skillfully and wholeheartedly lead their agencies through a transformation. They will change the DNA of their organizations by shifting the accountability, decision-making power, culture, purpose, and rewards, with the goal that *every child experience an uninterrupted sense of love, connection, and belonging.*

**Onward in 2018,
Team Alia**

