

► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Priscilla Oliver, PhD

Volunteerism: The Big Picture

Some years ago as a young faculty member, I was asked by my chair, Dr. Ulf Zimmerman, to develop and teach a graduate class on managing staff and volunteers. As I did this class, I was made more fully aware of the importance of volunteers. It is more common, however, to acknowledge the work of staff. Both are equally as important to the big picture of work. Both staff and volunteers are necessary to the success of humankind.

At the time of my class, the nonprofit management field was becoming a profession and grew much like environmental health. Now some schools offer doctoral degrees in this field. There is a need for the higher levels of professionals to teach others, oversee services, consult, and conduct research to improve society. A big congratulations to those that are very dedicated in this manner.

My first volunteer job was volunteering in the church, serving on committees with the Sunday school. Next, volunteering at school with the band was important. My mother was a volunteer den mother with the Boy Scouts and I was a helper. I soon became a Brownie with the Girl Scouts under Mrs. Mary Charles Burton. It is important that young children learn about work and volunteering is an ideal controlled environment for that to happen. Leadership skills can develop and the students grow in service. Many schools require volunteering and service-learning activities for students to graduate. These are all groundwork to prepare for the bigger picture of getting all the work done that is necessary in many fields of study. Environmental health is no exception.

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The work needed for humankind to flourish cannot all be accomplished in the 8-hour day with paid hands. In every profession, there is a need for volunteers and student learners (internships are a part of the learning process.) This concept is true to environmental health. Some internships are volunteer and have no pay attached. To ensure growth, one might not get paid for all the work that is done. There is a need for persons to help the profession by picking up the trash, capturing a video clip, serving on a mission inside and outside of the country and community, making a speech, and being on or leading a committee or team. Workers must also be willing to volunteer to do extra work in the job that might not receive compensation in money.

The overarching purpose of this column is to encourage readers and enlighten all on the big picture of volunteerism and service. It can lead to a career or a career changer resulting from volunteering. It can be fulfilling. It is better or more blessed to give than

to receive. There should be a level of appreciation to those that volunteer. Persons cannot be paid for all the good that is done in society in volunteer efforts. Who would pay for the simple acts of kindness? What one set of eyes can see all that needs to be seen and done? Often volunteers are overlooked. In environmental health, it is imperative that we acknowledge and embrace the volunteer work that helps us as workers to get the many jobs done. Working together helps us all to improve the profession and ensures our individual successes.

Volunteering and service are required to enter some professions. Altruism has its place for it builds character, increases one's self-worth, and instills confidence. To find yourself is to lose yourself in a cause to serve others. The passion is often ignited. As teachers and leaders, this revelation is what we try to uncover. Many of us in environmental health are dedicated to that level, we volunteer. Some companies encourage volunteering as a group. It provides for effective teamwork and bonding of people. Learning can also occur and a better you, organization, and team can result. We need all of these activities to happen in environmental health.

Earth Day will occur on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the theme is climate action. The first Earth Day in 1970 started the environmental movement to wake up the world to the importance of saving, preserving, maintaining, and sustaining the earth for future generations. Over the years, many strides have been accomplished, especially through legislation and policies, but the challenges are ongoing.

ing. Global issues are prevailing and the need for climate action has increased.

Earth Day is a big event for volunteering with the environment. Please place that month, week, and day on your calendar and plan an activity for yourself and your family, friends, work team, community, church, and social group to commemorate Earth Day. Please repeat the assignment each year thereafter. As professional boxer Muham-

mad Ali stated, "The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is just one such place to volunteer. Visit the website and find your spot (www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved). There are the volunteer NEHA board of directors, editorial board, committees, technical advisors, past presidents, and

other individual positions. There are various ways to lend service to NEHA and the profession. Let me personally say a big thank you to all the individuals who have volunteered to help NEHA over the years. Your works are noticed and greatly appreciated. Thank you, NEHA volunteers! 🐾

Priscilla President@neha.org

Did You Know?

NEHA is pleased to announce its second annual membership recruitment campaign: Be a Beacon for NEHA Membership. Current NEHA members who successfully recruit a new member will receive a NEHA Beacon tote bag, which is inspired by the association's original lighthouse logo. The campaign ends June 15. Participate now and you can help strengthen the environmental health profession by being a beacon of light for NEHA membership! Find more information at www.neha.org/membership-communities/membership-campaign.

SUPPORT THE NEHA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The NEHA Endowment Foundation was established to enable NEHA to do more for the environmental health profession than its annual budget might allow. Special projects and programs supported by the foundation will be carried out for the sole purpose of advancing the profession and its practitioners.

Individuals who have contributed to the foundation are listed below by club category. These listings are based on what people have actually donated to the foundation—not what they have pledged. Names will be published under the appropriate category for 1 year; additional contributions will move individuals to a different category in the following year(s). For each of the categories, there are a number of ways NEHA recognizes and thanks contributors to the foundation. If you are interested in contributing to the Endowment Foundation, please call NEHA at (303) 756-9090. You can also donate online at www.neha.org/about-neha/donate.

Thank you.

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Vince Radke