

Presidents Message 2015
Theme: Broaden Our Horizons Together

First, I want to thank God for all the blessing he has bestowed upon me! I would never have ever dreamed I would be standing here right now. I also want to thank each of you who even considered me capable of taking this job and those of you who voted for me. I really cannot believe I am standing here in front of you in this position. The main reason this is possible is the mentoring that so many of you have shown to me over my years of involvement. My true involvement came 4 years ago at this level. I really did not know anyone except names I have read over the years from being an ADHA member my whole career. I am proud to say that my membership started as a student back in 1977. Therefore, to all you students in this room please continue your membership to the professional level. I have been a member now for 38 years. I really also want to share with all of you that it is okay to be involved for a period of time but then life situations get in the way and you may have to step back. Some of those situations involve spouses, jobs, children, church, family, sports, health, and day-to-day stuff. However, through all of that we do manage to get through the challenges we all face every day. That is exactly how it has been for me. Early in my career, I helped to form our component, Muskingum Valley, with the help of 3-4 others who sat in the old health department in downtown Zanesville. We put together the component bylaws and Darla Longstreth and I made our way to Columbus for the ODHA Annual Session in 1983 to become a component. We had no idea what we were really doing but we did meet with the right officers and we became the Muskingum Valley Component!! We are still going and have been able to recruit a recent graduate to be our Trustee for the next 2 years. Therefore, the mentoring begins to educate her, encourage her so she does not get discouraged just as I received mentoring from so many of you.

Throughout those early years, I felt very comfortable serving at the component level. I served in every office except the Trustee position because I never felt I could handle the position. We had so many members that were more qualified to be the Trustee, or so I thought. It was 4 years ago that I finally decided it was my turn or time to step up and take the Trustee position. Yes, I was very nervous in doing the job, but I took one meeting at a time. I began by taking it all in. Then I met Beth Tronolone and Nichole Occuma. This is when I was swept off my feet!! I started saying yes to things I really had no idea what I was getting into. However, they kept assuring me I could do this. Nichole invited me to a Legislative Committee meeting to see if I would be interested in taking the Government Relations Council Chair. They said all I would have to do is collect all the council's reports and send them to the secretary prior to all the BOT's. It was at the LC meeting that I met Jeanne Huber, what a mentor she has been. Now that I have my first LC meeting under my belt, I accept my first major position as the new Government Relations Council Chair. The mentoring these fine ladies have shown me is far beyond awesome. That year was so amazing.

I learned so much and found myself doing things I never dreamed of doing. I began attending all the LC meetings and working with my legislators when we dealt with HB 463. I was advised that we needed to do testimony on the bill. Nichole was scheduled to give the testimony but I wanted to go to observe and see how this process worked. I planned my day to go and I met Nichole and our lobbyist Matt Whitehead at the capitol building. The problem with giving testimony is you never know what time you will give the testimony or the number of testimonies that are to be given. As we sat there and waited our turn, Nichole was running out of time to be able to give her testimony because she had to be back at work. I noticed Matt and her talking to each other and they looked at me. Yes, I was now the one that had to give the testimony. My turn arrived. I stepped up to the podium in front of the 23 house members sitting there. I just took a deep breath, and began to read the testimony. After I read the 8-page document, I had to face questioning from the house committee members. I was really sweating that! I did get two questions and I answered them to the best of my ability. The main reason I am

sharing all of this is to encourage each one of you to be involved. Talk with your legislators. They really do not know what we do or are what we are capable of doing. Isn't life a daily learning process? We should not be afraid to try new things. Everyday has many challenges in itself. Dental Hygiene is going to take on a new role. Our scope of practice is on the verge of change. We all need to be united, we need to spread the word to all hygienist the changes we are facing. We want to open up doors for hygienist to utilize OHASP better, to possibly work in a hospital setting or a doctor's office. We are looking into Medicaid reimbursement. We do think we are the answer to help solve some of the Access to Care problems within this state. Not to mention Ohio leads the nation in infant mortality. We have seen articles that can link dental care and pregnancy problems when the mother isn't getting the proper care. We have that ability and voice to help those who need that extra TLC to put them on the right track.

Over the past year, I have been the Legislative Committee Chair. Therefore, I did change my positions with the encouragement of Beth Tronolone, Ann Naber, Linda Wilson, Deborah Stevens and Amy Kinnamon. Once again, I did not feel qualified! However, with all the mentors in this group I have put in another great year. The encouragement and support is unbelievable. I am sure there have been others but forgive me for not mentioning your name. I began to work with UHCAN closer. I met with David Maywhor several times. They wanted ODHA to be on board with them so we could guide them in putting forth legislation for a dental therapist in Ohio. The main reason we agreed was to have a voice on the duties that a dental therapist would have. We are in favor of a dental hygiene track. We were able to put Ann Naber on their steering committee, Jeanne Huber and Cindy Leverick on their rules committee and Beth Tronolone and Denise Bowers on the education committee. We have not always agreed with everything but we are at the table with them and continue to be that voice guiding them along the way. There are plans to introduce a Dental Therapist bill to the legislators very soon. There is a sponsor to make this happen. Therefore, we will be working very hard over the next few months to encourage all of you to meet with your Senator or Representative to talk with them to support this bill. There is a link on our web page to connect you to your legislator. We also have several members of the Legislative Committee who would be glad to help you. Trust me they want to hear from us, you. Let us educate them. Do not leave it up to anyone else to explain our job to him or her. We are the ones who know our job. We have to be on fire!!

Some of you may not realize that we have 3 hygienist sitting on the Ohio State Dental Board. This is a huge asset to all of us. We have Connie Clark, Susan Johnston and the newest member in Jeanne Huber. The knowledge these women have is superior. There have been some changes in the board over the past few months. They are looking into cleaning up some of the language in the policy.

I have also been to ADHA Annual Session and gain a lot of knowledge there. This year was the first time I was able to do that. I met with Jose Rodregus the Government Relations contact with ADHA. He will be a big help as we deal with the legislation that could be coming our way. I have learned and have been reading that Ohio is not the only state dealing with some of the same issues. Several states have already made changes in their scopes of practice. We also met with Jennifer Hill regarding membership. Membership is a big concern for us. Our dues are what help to run this association. I would like to challenge each of you to bring one new member in this year. If we think about that, we would automatically double our numbers if we each bring in that one new person!! There are around 9000 hygienist in our state. Talk with your friends and co-workers.

I have also taken it upon myself to work with a nurse at our local hospital. It was 3 1/2 years again that my one employer retired. I wanted to see if I could somehow educate pregnant parents. Therefore, I spoke with my current boss about working on a power point presentation. He thought it was a good idea. I made contacts with the nurse who was in charge of educating pregnant parents at the hospital. I sat in on her class and she allowed me to share my presentation. We have been working together ever since. We take up to 10 couples per class, once a month.

In summary, some of the concerns we will be dealing with this next year will be possible legislation regarding Medicaid reimbursement, a dental therapist, working to our full scope of practice and to continue to work with our lobbyist. Membership is another concern for us.

So as we begin this New Year together! I encourage all of you to step outside your comfort zone so we can "Broaden Our Horizons Together"