Lead in Continuing the Journey, Enjoying Successes

What would you attempt to do if you knew you would not fail?—Robert Schuller

To say that serving as ADA’s 2010-2011 President has been a personally remarkable and transformational year is an understatement. The opportunity you have given me to serve as your president is humbling and an honor, and I thank you. I have worked hard to represent you well, to understand the issues that affect our profession and our members, to support our strategic plan, to encourage you to take leadership and service to higher levels, and to promote all of us as the food and nutrition experts.

A benefit of serving as president of the American Dietetic Association is meeting many of the individuals who make our profession what it is. Traveling throughout the states, participating on committees and conference calls, and attending local meetings and visiting ADA’s offices in Chicago, IL, and Washington, DC, has given me a view of members’ dedication that is inspiring. Thank you for your commitment to ADA. I end my term happy and confident that our profession and organization will grow and prosper. Why? Because our members and ADA’s Headquarters Team accept nothing less and willingly commit with the dedication, perseverance, intelligent planning, and work that are necessary for our success.

YOU STRENGTHEN OUR PROFESSION

As president, I have been able to see how well the work you do—especially members in volunteer positions throughout ADA—positions us as the known experts and leaders in food and nutrition and strengthens the profession and all our colleagues. ADA’s Dietetic Practice Groups (DPGs) help members develop specialty and advanced practice skills (thank you DPG leaders!). Educators are seeking ways to improve the educational process, such as the new internship application process (thank you to Ellen Shanley, MBA, RD, CDN, and all others involved in this transition!) and through ADA’s upcoming Education Summit. Member Interest Groups are important cultural brokers and resources. The ADA Foundation is constantly seeking opportunities to provide scholarships, grants, and support initiatives such as the new Kids Eat Right. The House of Delegates and the House Leadership Team deliberate and create action plans for hot issues affecting our profession. Our ADA staff work hard and smart to make us the go-to source for nutrition policy in Washington, DC; improve member services; and ensure that ADA’s educational, credentialing, and professional development programs are top quality.

If you are now or have ever been involved in your local or state association, a DPG, a Member Interest Group (MIG), or a committee, thank you for your service. If you are not, please become involved. Not only are the rewards of service unimaginable, you may likely meet your next best lifelong friends. I have!

THANKS TO FRIENDS AND MENTORS

Through participation in ADA, I have found mentors, met people who encouraged and inspired me to do my best, and reminded myself how lucky I am to have a supportive family, colleagues, and friends. During the past year, many people gave me help and advice; I have space to mention only a few: My colleagues at the University of North Florida; Past Presidents Jessie M. Pavlinac, MS, RD, CSR, LD; Marty Yadrick, MS, MBA, RD, FADA; Judy Gilbride, PhD, RD, CDN, FADA; and Julie O’Sullivan Maillet, PhD, RD, FADA; and ADA’s chief executive officer Pat Babjak, MLS. Perhaps some of these are your friends and have mentored you, too.

SHAPE OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our profession and organization are in excellent hands thanks to the work of prior presidents and boards, who set forth the strategic plan we are now following. ADA’s incoming president, Sylvia Escott-Stump, MA, RD, LDN, and the Board of Directors have a passion and love for our profession, our organization, and our members, and they will work diligently to make hard decisions for our benefit and continue implementation of the strategic plan. Be proud and confident in their skill and dedication, as well as those who work behind the scenes for ADA.

In the words of my friend and colleague Linda Lafferty, PhD, RD, “Instead of responding to our environment, we must begin to shape it.” You and I are ADA. We create the future. Our leadership matters.

As many of you know, diversity—in all its forms—is one of my areas of interest. We may all look different, but if we all think alike or do the same work, there is no diversity. A house divided will fail, but we cannot fail—in fact, we will all benefit—if we use our differences as strengths and work on our goals together. Our goals are not an end, but a journey. Let’s enjoy the trip and the successes, together!

—Judith C. Rodriguez, PhD, RD, FADA, LDN

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