

Good People Doing Good Things

My term as PCSO President is coming to an end. It has been a quick, yet busy and productive year, with many major issues being resolved thanks to numerous leaders within our constituency. I have learned much during my involvement with PCSO as I watched these volunteers meet their challenges by working together with precision.

Though it is said that great leaders are made, not born, the PCSO volunteers I admire sure seem to have been born leaders. However, the above saying must be true when we are all born with the same faculties. The differentiating factor may be the drive or passion developed at some point in their life, unique experiences, be it education and/or training that causes them to change, and the relationship they develop with others.

Leadership requires involvement—in a community, religious circle, educational institution, or another organization. In this case, I am speaking about leadership within our PCSO constituency. The leaders within PCSO are very busy in their professional lives, as well as in their personal family lives. So the question you may ask is: “What drives them to do more by getting involved in volunteer work?”

In my pursuit to find the reason why busy people still get involved, I conducted a bit of research. There is a mystery to all this, but a correlation does exist between when one feels needed and competent and when one gets involved.

It has been long observed by psychotherapists, physicians, and scientists that those who give to others have happier and healthier lives. Bioethicist Stephen G Post, PhD, coauthor of “Why Good Things Happen to Good People,” made a scientific finding that “... activation (volunteering) releases feel-good

chemicals, triggering a surge of physical energy.” One of these chemicals is dopamine, the neurotransmitter that reinforces the human tendency to do whatever makes us feel wonderful. Perhaps this is why orthodontists seem more at peace with themselves because they are constantly improving the lives of their patients, and that makes them feel better about themselves.

This is evident in my friends, Dr. Rich Litchfield and his wife Jacquie. For the past 10 years, besides being involved in church and their community in Eugene, Oregon, they have been teaching western orthodontics and English in the Orthodontic Dept. of the National Institute of Stomatology in Hanoi, Vietnam, under the auspices of HVO (Health Volunteers Overseas). They shared: “Through volunteering, we have developed some wonderful relationships and special friendships. As we experience and witness their growth and understanding, we truly feel a sense of contributing and that we are helping to fulfill the ancient proverb, ‘You can give them a fish and feed them for a day, or teach them to fish and feed them for a lifetime.’”

It has been found that those with emotional or physical wounds, in an effort to heal others, find themselves healing. Peggy Thoits, PhD and Professor of Sociology at Indiana University, reported: “People of all ages who did community service were happier and experienced better physical health and less depression.” Albert Schweitzer, a physician/philosopher, stated: “The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.” These are pretty good endorsements for getting involved and giving back to a group of people who need your assistance!

PCSO keeps progressing because of the positive influence of proactive, visionary leaders. Our organization has many leaders. This year, PCSO is honoring two such individuals—Dr. Gary Baughman and Dr. Earl Johnson—for their outstanding contribution to the orthodontic community.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dr. Kai

Most leaders exhibit an internal drive. When one project has been completed or one challenge has been met, they take on another. A good example of this internal drive is evident in Dr. Gary Baughman, this year's Annual Session Honoree. Gary was PCSO President 11 years ago and continues to be an active member since his presidency. He is currently the Chair of the PCSO Delegation to the AAO—a very responsible position. And, as if that wasn't enough of a challenge for one year, he acted as Chair of the Doctors' Program for this year's Annual Session and has done an outstanding job.

I have noticed that the involved leaders have integrity within them and strive to satisfy their own high standards. They lead by examples, accepting responsibilities, and developing trust and respect along the way. Those in leadership do not seek public recognition, but rather their reward comes by serving others. "Earl the Pearl," Dr. Earl Johnson, this year's Award of Merit honoree, is a shining example of "Leadership by Example." He has touched many through education delivered in classrooms, lectures, and publications. But, he has still found time to be involved with several professional organizations in many important ways.

These leaders are believers of "giving back," and they are feeling great because they are making a real difference. An instructor at UOP and a fellow Angle member, Roger Boero, noted that volunteering satisfies his curiosity and provides direct knowledge of current issues. As a bonus, he meets new and interesting people who, in turn, enrich his life.

In PCSO, there are many opportunities for involvement with varying levels of time commitment. You could become involved in meeting planning, editing and managing websites, working with political action groups, developing strategies, setting policies, collaborating with other organizations, or a myriad of other initiatives. There is something to fit everyone's interests. I invite all of you to be more involved

whether it be with PCSO, your component society, your community, a school/university or another organization to make a difference. You will be rewarded many times over.

Your new President for 2009-2010 will be Dr. Lili Horton from Honolulu, Hawaii. Among numerous leadership positions, she sat on the AAO Committee on Credentials and is a PCSO Director as well as a Delegate to the House of Delegates. Having observed her work, I know she is very active and gets very much involved; she will lead you well as our new President.

As for me, I am truly blessed to be involved with PCSO. No words can describe what I have experienced as your PCSO President this year. It has been an honor to work with all the volunteer leaders we have in our midst. I am extremely proud of our specialty for what we do. Thank you very much for the opportunity to serve you.

*Gratefully yours,
Kenneth Y. Kai, DDS, MSD
PCSO President*