

December 17, 2013

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As 2013 comes to a close, I am reminded of the words of the late Nelson Mandela: ***It always seems impossible until it's done.*** Change is hard work. Just when you think you have things figured out, something comes along to “change” your thinking. Change takes patience, diligence, and sometimes luck. At times, change does seem impossible. Quoting author Alan Deutschman: “Could you change when change mattered most?” For ASHA, change matters and it is not a choice but a necessity.

ASHA is continuing its efforts to streamline the organization's structures and focus on its mission. This requires changes to ASHA's by-laws and operating codes. These changes will impact the way the organization does business. Here's what's happening:

- The ASHA election will be open until December 25, 2013. If you have not yet voted, please go to [ASHA Board Election](#) to cast your vote.
- On December 10, 2013, the Board of Directors approved the annual budget. I want to thank the ASHA Finance Committee (Sharon Murray, Barbara Donica, Terry O'Toole, Susan Clark, Kelly Wilson and Joe Dake) and Lee Lowery, ASHA Transition Director, for their hard work developing and reviewing the budget.
- Also at the December Board meeting, Erin Fuller, Coulter President, presented a business plan matrix that defines the timing and key areas of focus for both staff and volunteer leadership. As you may recall, over the last two years, ASHA convened a Governance and Structure Committee that focused on ways to reduce organizational bureaucracy and streamline processes while maintaining the interdisciplinary nature of the Association. The committee also carefully considered ASHA's capacity to carry out the proposed changes. On December 17, 2013 Ty Oehrtman, Chair of the Articles and By-Laws Committee, and I met with Colleen Eubanks, Coulter Vice President and “governance guru” to discuss next steps in this very important process. An ambitious agenda is planned with several opportunities for member review and feedback in March-April 2014. Updates will be provided monthly via a new ASHA newsletter.
- Behind the scenes, ASHA membership data is being migrated into a new management system that will align with a new and improved website.
- ASHA's conference planners have been hard at work planning the 2014 conference in Portland, OR. The conference will be held October 9-11, 2014 at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower, situated in the heart of downtown and surrounded by restaurants, tax-free shopping and entertainment venues. The hotel is one block from the MAX Light Rail system for quick and easy access to popular Portland attractions, nearby cities, and Portland International Airport. More information on the conference will be posted on the ASHA website in early January 2014.
- Information on how to submit a 2014 conference workshop proposal will be released in early January 2014.
- One way to get involved with ASHA is to volunteer to serve on a standing committee. There are many “new” faces on ASHA's committees and while all positions have not yet been finalized, here are the appointments that been confirmed:
  - **Advocacy Committee:** Catherine Vowell, Kayce Solari-Hall, JoEllen Tarallo-Falk and Michelle Wallen
  - **Awards Committee:** Brittany Rosen and Monica Webb
  - **Finance Committee:** Michael Mann and Holly Moses
  - **Nominations Committee:** Elisa Beth McNeill and Pete Hunt
  - **Professional Development:** Tammy Wynard
  - **Conference Program Planning:** Deb Christopher and Amos Adujora

If you are interested in serving on an ASHA standing committee, please send an email with a brief description of your background and interests to me at [lapd8082@gmail.com](mailto:lapd8082@gmail.com).

To be sure, the New Year will continue to bring many changes but there is one constant: our unwavering dedication to children and to the field of school health. Let's not forget why we chose to become school health professionals. Perhaps the late Nelson Mandela said it best:

***Give a child love, laughter and peace, not AIDS.***

Wishing you and your family love, laughter and peace throughout the season!

*Linda L. Morse, RN, MA, CHES, FASHA*  
*ASHA President, 2012-2014*