Growth, Gratitude and Looking Ahead

Frequent visitors to these pages will notice a considerable difference between the photo that used to be on this spot and the mug you see smiling back at you here. Dr. Beverly Largent concluded her three-year term as Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children President last month and I now have the honor of serving as HSHC President.

Transitions are a time of both reflection and looking ahead so here’s a little recap of the Foundation’s accomplishments during Beverly’s tenure:

- HSHC’s annual Access to Care Grant portfolio grew from $300,000 grants made in 2012-2013 to more than $1 million in grants and commitments made each year.
- HSHC’s Access to Care reach grew from 17 to 29 states, plus the District of Columbia.
- Most important, HSHC grantees provided dental homes to more than 200,000 children.

Since 2010, HSHC has issued more than $4.1 million in grants and commitments to 81 organizations.

And, as the Foundation increased its grant commitments to help more children across the country receive needed dental care, our assets grew – from $13.5 million as of July 30, 2013, to more than $16 million as of July 30, 2015 (our most recent complete audit on file).

If ever there was a case to be made for someone “making the wood pile higher” during her time in a leadership spot, it’s Beverly.

Now, Beverly would be the first person to tell you it’s not all her. She’d say it’s our volunteers, our grantees, our members, or our Board, but for me it would come back to what she’s been able to help HSHC accomplish.

There is one point in her rebuttal that I would agree and that’s the Foundation’s success really is attributable to you – the AAPD members who generously support Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children.

Pediatric dentists are the finest people in dentistry. In my 41-year career, I’ve been amazed by the warmth, generosity and humanity that AAPD members exude. It’s what I love about our field.

Looking ahead, I am grateful to everyone who played a part in getting Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children to be where we are today. I also am grateful to everyone who will play a part in taking Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children into the future.

This coming year for the Foundation is not only a transition year for governance, but we will continue our ongoing evaluation for how we can continue to serve the oral health needs of our nation’s children.

Yes, we will continue our efforts to support community-based initiatives that provide Dental Homes to underserved children. But, we also will explore other ways Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children can harness the expertise and generosity of AAPD members to help all children.

It’s with great gratitude and humility that I begin my term as Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children President. I am honored to have this opportunity and I look forward to building upon the legacy of those who have come before me.

Thank you for all you do for the kids!

Dr. Savide, AAPD Past President (2005), is a retired pediatric dentist residing in suburban Chicago.