

An Update from the OPA Executive Director

As I type this, it is the last of August in Oklahoma and the temperature outside is 84 degrees midday.... Feeling blessed beyond belief....for now...but don't blink, we do live in Oklahoma and it surely will change. That is how I feel about the last few months and summer....blink and something will change or is over.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Executive Director for the last two years. I believe, with your continued help, we can make OPA bigger and better. But, your help is still needed and in order to grow YOUR professional organization, we need "all hands on deck" just like what is being done in Texas with the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. We have weathered the storm but if we don't learn from the experience, we will be caught defenseless.

OPA has experienced some membership growth so thanks to those of you who helped refer members. However, if you remember I stood in front of you last Annual Conference and challenged you to bring in new members so membership investments would be able to stay the same next year. Your help is still needed. As we move into the planning part of the year, the OPA Board and Committees will be shoring up program income and expenses for next year. While we have been blessed by APAPO CAPP grants for the last three years, OPA must be able to stand on its own without this aid. The only way we can sustain that is through providing value to YOU, our member, so that you will continue to invest and refer others to join our organization and take part in our programs and events throughout the year. Here are the top three benefits of OPA as seen through my eyes as an Association Professional:

- **Legislative Advocacy and Influence:** This is the easiest and hardest thing to provide. As small business professionals, your time is limited. While many of us feel savvy about our level of political knowledge, even I fall short when it comes to the minds that make up our house and senate and elected leaders not to mention state agency heads and staff. Our lobbyist Clay Taylor has been working hard since coming on board in December of last year. With the budget shortfalls that are facing our state coupled with all agencies and organizations fighting to survive cuts for critical services, next year's legislative session will be increasingly complex and many things will be misrepresented in the media. OPA strives to keep our members informed and get first-hand knowledge and that is a value to you our member as Clay advises us of things that can impact the

profession of psychology. While Clay will share what we may see in the papers, until one experiences the political games that happen for everything that is discussed at the Capitol, it is easy to point fingers instead of getting involved to make a difference. Please take this fall to get to know your legislator(s). OPA is going to be much more effective through the expertise and connection of The Taylor Group and YOU our grassroots voters....all are critical players in the political game and with 2018 being an election year, we all need to be on our toes watching and deciding who is best to represent us. Fall brings signing up for Psychologist of the Day. Remember, you can easily shadow someone who has done this before to give you a level of comfort. We hope to provide you with more materials to help with this awesome and influential program as part of OPA's advocacy game.

- **Continuing Education and Networking:** We are working hard to schedule activities and events for 2018. We chose the 2017 locations we did in order to help control expenses while still providing CE opportunities and networking events. Thanks to our partners at OU Health Science Center and my connections in the OKC area, we were able to host events that were both of value to the membership and vendors while allowing OPA to have resources for ongoing program planning. We are working to host an event(s) in the Tulsa Metro Area and our Diversity and ECP Committees are working toward hosting a joint event as well and both are sensitive to the needs of members in all areas of Oklahoma. Thanks for being supportive of the planning and thoughts behind our past programs and hope you will look forward to our "Bridging the Gap" Annual Conference that was re-scheduled for OKC on Nov 16-17, 2017. President Elect Dr. Day has worked very hard with her committee to maximize your CE opportunities while providing valuable programs at this event.
- **List Serv and Member Interaction and Involvement:** Many hours have been spent to revise the List Serv rules. This is to ensure that the information that is posted on the listserv is shared hopefully without jeopardizing your opinion of OPA as siding with one political view or opinion. Please know that in order to show support to APA and to maintain healthy partnerships, we strive to share what OPA Board and leaders feel will be helpful to all involved. I encourage you to use the list serv to network with colleagues on relevant issues, help patients with needs and share information that will make the profession healthy. As we go into the fall election and nomination cycle, we are hopeful that you will consider nominating or self-nominating for one of the positions currently open. It is healthy for an organization to have new ideas, new leadership skills and resources. Therefore, we are seeking new people to get involved in Committees and Divisions so that we can grow our future leaders from the work done at that level. After all, OPA is YOUR professional association and without YOU, there would not be an OPA!

As I close, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that my heart is heavy for those impacted by the path of Hurricane Harvey. Thanks to all of you who have kept them in your prayers and for the work you do every day. I commend you for your patience and skills you provide to those in your care. Have a safe fall and I look forward to seeing you November 16-17th at our "Bridging the Gap" Annual Conference.