

President's Message (cont.)

Viki Points, RDH, MPH

During my time at Mt. Hood I developed a sincere appreciation for the profession and the possibilities for making a positive impact in the lives of people. I graduated from Mt Hood in June of 1990 and failed my clinical board the first time. This actually was very good for me as I took a position in Vancouver WA as a hygiene assistant and worked for 6 months conquering my fear of patients. Following licensure in December of that year I worked for Willamette Dental Group for the next 15 years and raised my children. In August of 2001 I fell while riding my bicycle and crushed my left elbow necessitating 5 surgeries and 9 months off work. Needless to say this event startled me into seriously thinking about my future. I had started at Clark College in their degree completion program the previous year so continued through their program, received my Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene and went on to Portland State University and earned a Master Degree in Public Health June of 2005. In September of 2006 I began my teaching career in the Dental Hygiene department at Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls.

So how did I get to this position as President of the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association? I credit most of where I am today with those dear friends and colleagues who believed in me, prodded me, and encouraged me. I look out over the body of the association and I see people that have been very instrumental in my successes, ladies that I admire and look up to. Imagine my surprise when I learn that some of you think the same of me. I have never seen myself as someone special or admirable and I suspect that many of you do not recognize your potential either. What is potential? Webster online says that potential is "capable of being or becoming". So potential is the capacity to be or become something that you currently are not. I am here today because people at different times in my life have recognized something in me that I did not see and took the time to encourage me to explore my horizons. That is the kind of person I aspire to be – an encourager, a mentor.

I see potential in two forms – personal potential and group potential. I see individual potential in the eyes of some of you who have been reluctant to get involved for fear of being overburdened and the same great potential in our students. You all have something to contribute to our profession and to our organization. We have great things to accomplish as individuals – bringing quality care to our patients, pursuing LAP credentials or restorative endorsement, and advancing our education for example. We also have large mountains to climb as a body – for instance state-wide fluoridation and the introduction of ADHP into Oregon. There is so much talent and energy present within our ODHA that if harnessed we can accomplish anything together. Helen Keller said "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much".

This year I would like to focus on these areas:

- Encouraging the participation and involvement of existing members and reaching out to our fellow hygienists and encouraging membership and participation in our Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association.
- Beginning to lay the groundwork for the establishment of the ADHP designation in Oregon
- Continuing support of the state-wide fluoridation effort.

I think the biggest reason that we do not accomplish great things is fear - fear of getting in over our head, fear of looking stupid, fear of failing. I also have those same fears, and I am counting on support from all of you to make this a great year for our Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "It was high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, "Always do what you are afraid to do". Let's not let fear stop us from being a driving force for ourselves, our communities and our profession.