



You Are Not Alone

By Peter Strazdas

Have you ever felt like your job consumed your day and you didn't get a chance to reflect on the goals of your institution? And if it happens often, have you ever thought you were alone with this challenge? Surely, your facility management peers must be more organized and have the time and resources to stay ahead of the daily grind. I think all facility professionals need a reality check, and the best way to do it is to talk to their peers. Listen to them share their daily challenges and issues. After a few of these conversations, you quickly learn that you don't have it that bad after all and that they have similar problems and challenges. Someone once told me that conversations with their peers are better than talking to a psychologist. These conversations in a social environment reveal success stories as well as struggles that you can empathize with.

FINDING YOUR PEERS

So, if networking with your peers can help keep your sanity and support your growth, how can you connect with your educational facility peers? APPA is the answer. Membership in APPA provides the networking opportunity that you need. You can meet your peers locally at a Drive-In Workshop, or at a state chapter meeting. You can be exposed to a broad-

er group of peers at an APPA regional meeting or the annual conference.

JOIN IN

For those of you who get it and need your regular reality check-up by attending your APPA conferences, I urge you to call one of your peers at a neighboring school and invite them to a meeting. It's a great opportunity to mentor a fellow facility professional—or at least expose them to the value of participating in APPA. Remember the first time you attended an APPA conference, or when you first talked to a group of your peers? You had the feeling that you were not alone, you learned a few new things, and

you left the conference saying to yourself, "I don't have it that bad after all." APPA gave you the opportunity to be a better facility professional, and you now have an obligation to share the wealth by helping others experience the same thing.

EDUCATION IS KEY

Of course APPA is more than networking. We all need to "sharpen the saw" on a regular basis, and APPA has the best professional development programs and opportunities. The APPA U program was developed specifically for professionals in the educational facilities industry. APPA U also provides a forum for the foundational credentialing



programs—Educational Facilities Professional (EFP) and Certified Educational Facilities Professional (CEFP). The goal of APPA U is to expose facilities professionals to the vast offerings that can be found through APPA.

Finally, all six APPA regions offer generous scholarships each year to individuals who have achieved a notable level of professional growth and are looking to take the next steps. I know that our facility budgets are tight, but that should not be a deterrent to your professional development.

THE UNSUNG HEROES

I know and appreciate that so many educational facility departments are performing at a high level. You are the unsung heroes of our campuses. You are deserving of proper recognition at your respective institutions and among your peers. APPA understands this need and

offers several awards and recognition. The newest award is the Sustainability Award in Facilities Management. It is designed to recognize and advance sustainability excellence in educational facilities. Many institutions have received APPA's Effective & Innovative Practices Award. It recognizes programs and processes that enhance service delivery, lower costs, increase productivity, improve customer service, generate revenue, and otherwise benefit the educational institution. There are several other awards, but the Award for Excellence is APPA's highest institutional honor and provides educational institutions the opportunity for national and international recognition for their outstanding achievements in facilities management. As an APPA member, you can take advantage of awards and recognition that you deserve.

So, if you feel like you have been in the salt mines too long and need time away

to recharge your professional batteries, APPA has exactly what you need. The therapy of networking, the stimulation of new ideas with educational programs, the stature you deserve with credentialing and certification programs, and access to the best research and publications for education facility professionals—these are all part of the full package you get with membership. The value of your APPA membership will pay dividends over and over. We need to expose everyone in educational facilities to APPA, and the infection of its value will be clearly demonstrated and spread to others. ☺

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