

Membership—It's More than Just the Dues

By Nancy Yeroshefsky

By the time you read this article, I will be retired. Just like that, 28 years in educational facilities, over. Actually, it is not over—and it will not be over anytime soon. Because of my membership in APPA, the Eastern Region of APPA (ERAPPA) and the Maryland/DC chapter (MDDC APPA), it is certainly not over. My affiliation with these organizations has been so fulfilling that I plan to continue my involvement for many years to come.

My message to you is that membership really does matter. Membership in APPA, your region, and your local chapter can be as rewarding as you allow it to be. Make the most of your membership—and that does not mean just reading the magazines, attending annual conferences, and perusing email blasts. It means *getting involved*.

When I joined the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) in 1990, my first exposure to APPA was because of my boss, Wally Glasscock, who was on the board of directors for MDDC APPA, our local chapter. The chapter was hosting the ERAPPA 1990 annual meeting and he encouraged me to get involved; in fact, he put me on the program as a backup presenter, and I didn't have a clue what I was getting myself into. Little did I know that this was just the beginning of an APPA journey I will never forget. (Thanks, Wally!)

INVOLVEMENT = REWARDS

Over the course of my tenure in facilities human resources at UMCP, I was actively engaged with APPA at all levels. I served on a workgroup that developed APPA's Supervisor's Toolkit; I became a Master Trainer for the Toolkit; and I served more than a decade on my chapter board of directors, became a faculty member for APPA U's Institute for Facilities Management, presented at a host of regional and chapter conferences, served on my regional board, and on multiple committees. With the support of my institution, I can honestly say that I received the full benefit of APPA membership and have been able to share the wealth with hundreds, if not thousands, of facilities professionals.

People have joked that I am the poster child for APPA.

I am not sure the "child" reference holds true anymore, however, I do feel that I have done my best to champion the value of APPA membership and to epitomize what a member can gain from engagement.

Did I mention friendships? I would be remiss not to mention that in addition to all the educational and professional development perks a member can receive from APPA and APPA-related programs, an engaged member will make friends and build relationships that will last a lifetime. I can honestly say that some of my best and closest friends are individuals whom I met through APPA.

My career in facilities has been rewarding and fulfilling, not just because of my role at my institution, but also because of my affiliation with APPA. Membership is so much more than paying dues, attending conferences, and reading publications—it is about being engaged with others in the industry; networking with institutional and business partner members; learning about best practices in your field; sharing war stories; and most of all, building relationships.

IT'S YOUR APPA

APPA is your association—make the most of it. Learn more about your local chapter, your region, and APPA International. Find out how you can get involved. If you are a young professional in educational facilities, check out the new APPA Young Professionals offerings; if you are a seasoned professional, consider becoming a mentor through the APPA Mentoring Program; if you want to demonstrate your knowledge in facilities, explore the credentialing program. I repeat, make the most of your membership—the value and benefits are endless.

I am so thankful for my institution's support of my APPA journey and for the friendships, relationships, and professional growth I experienced because of it. Membership really does matter. ☺

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