To volunteer

Karen Zulkowski
DNS, RN
College of Nursing, Montana State University Bozeman
MSU Billings Campus, Box 574, Billings, MT 59101, USA
Email drkarenz@aol.com

I googled the word volunteer and it produced 282,000 possible sites. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a volunteer is “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service”. Other definitions I found included unpaid helper or worker.

What these definitions don’t tell you is the number of hours the WCET board and committee members give for free to our organisation. These volunteers come from across the globe. They may be board members giving many hours each month, committee members asked to do things, international delegates (IDs) getting messages to their country members or it can be individuals writing for the journal, submitting abstracts for our Congress or promoting WCET to their colleagues.

Any of you can become involved as much as you would like. You can be members of the education committee or an editorial board member. You can help the Norma N Gill Foundation through local fundraising, NNG day activities, or you can sponsor a member from a developing nation or your own country. Sure there are language barriers at times, but with today’s technology we always find ways to communicate. This open communication and openness between countries to share time and knowledge is what makes WCET special.

Some of us are “newer” members and don’t know the history of WCET. Those that have been members longer help us newbies understand the great work that has been accomplished in the past which, in turn, helps shape our future. Some of our dedicated, long-term members are life members. To be a life member, people must have shown distinction and eminence in his/her contributions to the field of enterostomal therapy nursing. Our life members include Patricia Blackley (Australia), Judy Chamberlain (South Africa), Dianne Garde (Canada), Heather Hill (Australia), Katherine Jeter (United States), Mary Jo Kroeber (Australia), Marilyn McManus (South Africa), and Prilli Stevens (South Africa). Some of you may have noticed that the last Journal (June 2015) listed Elizabeth Ayello as Executive Editor Emeritus. This was approved by the WCET board to honour her for her exemplary volunteer service to the journal. If you have the opportunity to meet these women, please be sure to thank them.

The slate of candidates for the 2016 board positions is included in this issue. These are the people (volunteers) that will represent WCET and that means they represent you. When you come to the Congress, look for them and get to know them. Talk to your country’s ID about them. Anyone can come to the meeting and express opinions, but only your ID can vote for the board positions, or other items. One vote per country. This insures countries with fewer members have equal say.

Above all, consider how you can volunteer. This strengthens our organisation, helps all of us learn from one another and brings new ideas to the WCET.

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We would like to keep WCET members as well as the ostomy, wound and continence community up to date with news and special announcements from our organisation.

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