

The Dermatology PA Foundation: Giving Back to the Dermatology Community

Now in its third year, the DPAF continues its focus on philanthropy, education, and research.

BY JENNIFER M. CONNER, MPAS, PA-C

This year marks the third year since the Dermatology PA Foundation (DPAF) launched as an extension of the SDPA's philanthropic efforts. Over the past three years, we have made great strides in fulfilling the pillars set forth by our founding trustees in research, education, and philanthropy.

PHILANTHROPIC FOCUS

During the SDPA's summer conference in Seattle, we hosted the DPAF's annual charitable run/walk/sleep-in. Each year we choose a patient advocacy group or project to support with our event. In the past we have supported the Melanoma Research Foundation and National Alopecia Areata Foundation. This year, the DPAF selected the Hidradenitis Suppurativa Foundation as the beneficiary of our 5K run/walk/sleep-in and were thrilled to have more than 50 SDPA members, industry supporters, and family members attend our early morning jaunt along the beautiful Elliot Bay in Seattle. Many others who weren't able to be present contributed to help us raise nearly \$4,000 for the HS Foundation. The DPAF Board of Trustees voted unanimously to match those donations, bringing the total contribution to the HS Foundation to approximately \$8,000.

Our philanthropic efforts shined last year in the aftermath of the devastation hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria brought to Texas, south Florida, and Puerto Rico and the surrounding islands. The DPAF led a donation drive that generated \$10,000 in donations in just two weeks from SDPA members and supporters. The DPAF and SDPA each also donated \$5,000, for a total \$20,000 donation to AmeriCares from the dermatology PA community.

AmeriCares serves to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. They donated more than \$40 million in medicine

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and supplies to communities badly affected in Puerto Rico, Dominica, and the Virgin Islands last year. While we were incredibly saddened by the cancellation of the SDPA conference slated to be held in San Juan, we couldn't be more proud of the way we pulled together to support those in need.

In Orlando, we also held our third annual silent auction to benefit Camp Wonder. Funds raised from the auction are used to sponsor children with severe skin disease for a week-long camp in California designed especially for children just like them. They take part in typical summer camp activities, along with special events, such as a prom, that they may otherwise avoid, due to the severity of their skin disease. Each year, we aim to help send 10 children to Camp Wonder and also sponsor travel accommodations for two PAs to attend as volunteers. We had many amazing items in this year's auction and are proud to note that we raised more than \$14,000 to support Camp Wonder initiatives in summer 2019.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The DPAF has also set our sights on ramping up our role in education and research for and by dermatology PAs. In summer 2017, we conducted a clinical research panel at the SDPA's summer conference in San Diego to provide useful tips on how to get started in the research arena. We recently launched a research task force to further our goals in leading research initiatives reflecting on the positive impact PAs have in dermatology and supporting PA-led research projects. We are thrilled to announce that we just received a generous research grant from Sun Pharma during the SDPA's fall meeting in Orlando, and we look forward to launching our research grant award program in 2019.

Our educational projects have continued to expand with the addition of sponsored sessions both onsite at SDPA conferences and remotely recorded sessions. In November 2017, we recorded a session on Mental Health Comorbidities in Psoriasis and hosted another sponsored session on psoriasis at the 2018 SDPA summer conference in Seattle. Our special session for Orlando covered atopic dermatitis pathophysiology, new information on comorbidities, and current and emerging state of the art treatment options.

THANKS

As we move into the end of another exciting year, I would like to thank our individual and corporate donors who have made the launch of the DPAF a success and encourage those who have yet to make a contribution to consider doing so. Even a small donation makes a significant impact on our ability to continue fulfilling the vision set forth for the DPAF and broaden our impact on the dermatology community. ■

Jennifer Conner, MPAS, PA-C, currently serves as the Chair of the Dermatology PA Foundation (DPAF). She is a past president of the Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants (SDPA). She lives and practices in Indiana.

