

Passion, Volunteers Drive ENA Foundation Success



Chairperson Chris M. Gisness, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP, CEN, FAEN, credits the members for her successful first year as 2016-2017 ENA Foundation chairperson.

From breaking a record-setting fundraising goal, to distributing scholarships to deserving applicants, to brainstorming and implementing new fundraising opportunities, to revising the bylaws, Gisness wants ENA Foundation volunteers to know their work is appreciated.

You have to be passionate about ENA and emergency nursing to do this. But it's great work for a great organization, and when you really feel strongly about it, it's easy."

"When you get 270 applications for scholarships, it takes several people to review those," she said. It's a very time-consuming process to ensure those who deserve a scholarship receive one. It's not unusual for one person to review 40 applications and spend many nights after dinner hunched over the computer looking for areas where the candidates stand out.

"I think the people who help do that should get some credit. I just want them to know how much I appreciate them," she said.

Of course, scholarships cannot be awarded unless the funds are raised. This year, Gisness and the Foundation Management Board decided to set a goal of raising \$125,000 from the State Challenge. Not only was the goal met, it was exceeded, reaching more than \$129,000.

"Our team just really went out there and got our states to get busy and donate, and they did a very good job."

The fundraising success was one of many efforts allowing the foundation to award \$10,000 in scholarships in the non-RN

category, \$23,800 in the undergraduate category, \$158,000 in the graduate category, and \$60,000 in the doctoral category, plus 43 conference scholarships.

"What was really nice, I thought, is seven of those (conference) scholarships came from the staff members at ENA. They believe so much in the Foundation they gave their own money, which I thought was great."

The staff members were recognized with a luncheon in July.

A new fundraising opportunity will be the foundation's first golf classic, planned at a PGA golf course during the Emergency Nursing 2017 conference in St. Louis.

New Opportunities for Volunteers

The foundation has three new committees where volunteers are needed. As part of updating the foundation bylaws – which also led to Gisness's two-year term as chair – the foundation instituted the new committees to streamline the fundraising and distribution processes.

The Fundraising Committee will work with the Management Board to help raise money for academic scholarships and research grants for emergency nurses. The Research Committee will review and score research grant applications and strategize ways to maximize research funding. The Scholarship Committee will review and score scholarship applications and strategically plan a scholarship road map.

Foundation chairs usually serve a one-year term. Once a chair is selected, the chair chooses someone to serve as chair-elect. That person then trains to take over the following year. Because the foundation planned to revise its bylaws this year, the ENA Board of Directors wanted someone with experience to guide the foundation through the changes and serve a two-year term, Gisness said. Gisness previously served on the Foundation Management Board in the early 2000s.

For all the work that goes into raising money and deciding who should receive scholarships, Gisness said it's rewarding and invigorating.

"You have to be passionate about ENA and emergency nursing to do this," she said. "But it's great work for a great organization, and when you really feel strongly about it, it's easy." ■