

**AHVRP Member Spotlight**  
**January, 2018**



Robert Toonkel, CAVS, CDVS  
Manager, Volunteer Services  
2018 AHVRP Annual Conference  
Planning Committee Chair  
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Elmira, New York

Ever wonder why you always see Rob wearing running shoes? [Check out this video](#) and you will definitely understand!

We also asked Rob these questions:

**The Call for Concurrent Session Submissions closes February 8, 2018. As a former speaker, do you have any advice for someone who is thinking about submitting?**

*"If you're thinking about submitting, do it! We earned our roles because we have a unique ability to derive solutions to the many opportunities that confront us each day. What you believe is something you "just do" may be the answer for dozens of others who are struggling with the same matter. We earned our roles because we have the ability to share with a wide range of volunteers. Speaking in front of your colleagues is an easy extension of what you do each day. We earned our roles because of our willingness to take things to the "next level." Presenting on an topic where you've had success can be an eye-opening examination that can lead to even greater success in that area. When I decided to present on enhancing volunteer orientation, I believed I had a few tips that would assist colleagues in upgrading their orientations. In creating my presentation, I discovered ways to improve on my own tips. When I presented, I heard from others with great ideas. Afterward, I had new connections made over orientation that spilled into a sharing of ideas on other topics. Two years later, that single speech remains at the root of leadership opportunities, working relationships, and speaking invitations that have sprouted from coast to coast, along with the responsibility to present five hours of enhanced material at our system-wide general orientation.*

*Whether it is to grow yourself, grow your program, grow your future, or grow those around you, presenting a concurrent session offers a myriad of benefits. If you've ever thought about sharing your knowledge – even for a moment – I'd highly recommend taking the plunge."*

### **Any advice for 1<sup>st</sup> Time Attendees?**

*"My number one piece of advice for a first time attendee is to experience everything. Look at the schedule and plan to attend every single event, keynote speech, and networking opportunity. Everything is a "must do" as you step foot into this organization, and this is your opportunity to try a bit of everything that is on the menu. I have become a part of AHVRP leadership because of the discussions and connections that occurred while waiting for a keynote to begin. I was moved to grow as a presenter by the individuals with whom I shared breakfast or a networking table. I found a vendor who supplies me with my volunteer recognition awards from making my way through the exhibit hall for the third time (even though I don't have a gift shop).*

*Just as you do in your day job, put your life on hold. Check your e-mail during lunch. Hit the bar after the schedule is complete. Sleep in next weekend. Enter this conference with an open desire to do everything and take advantage of every opportunity. You'll grow more than you ever thought possible."*

### **What are you most looking forward to at the 50th Annual AHVRP Conference & Exposition?**

*"Being the 50th anniversary, and being in the middle of the nation, this conference will have the largest, most diverse gathering of volunteer leadership ever assembled. This is our chance to learn from colleagues, discover best practices, find an ally that has the solution to the problem that most vexes us. At a time when we continue to face challenges from every angle, this conference is our chance to both show our strength in the field and make us stronger as individuals. This is a conference where we will recognize our past that took us to the amazing 50th anniversary, celebrate our present leadership that has our organization positioned for even greater growth, and discover our future that will carry us into the future.*

*I am very excited to be part of what will be an electric atmosphere, and I look forward to the hundreds of new connections I will make even as an experienced DVS."*