

I don't know about you, but I am a list maker. I find gratification in writing down my to-do items and crossing them off the list. Technology is wonderful, but I still find satisfaction in the 'ole fashion check mark, it's done. While looking at my list, I realize that, while it includes those must do items, it also includes items I want to do, wish to do and stretch goals for me personally and professionally.

How many of you have a to-do list of sorts where you list your professional goals? A place where you record your wishes and dreams of where you want to be professionally? I started this years ago and find it helpful when I determine what my focus is going to be for the next week, month, quarter and year.

I recall the first time I placed attending the Annual Conference on my to-do list. At that time it was a wish on my list, but I knew that professionally it was something which was important to me and would be worth my effort. I worked diligently that year to figure out how I was going to fit it into my budget, found a roommate to share some expenses and ultimately was able to attend. I wasn't disappointed. I walked away mesmerized.

What I found the most rewarding about attending the annual conference was the satisfaction knowing that all my hard work to reach my goal of attending was worth the effort. Not only did I get to network with likeminded individuals, I was able to walk away with more ideas and wish items for my to-do list! Whether you are a new Volunteer Manager, a Gift Shop Manager, an Auxilian or Volunteer, there is something for each of you to gain personally and professionally from attending the annual conference. When I was a new Manager, I walked away from the conference with the clarity of knowing the processes necessary to run a good volunteer program. At each subsequent conference I was able to attend I left with tools to create innovative programs I could implement, as well as tweaks to our current programs to make what we were already doing well, even better.

What I find the most rewarding is that even as a 21 year veteran of volunteer services, I still walk away from our annual conference invigorated by our profession, by the services we creatively provide and by the mission to serve our communities better.

Hopefully by now, each of you received the beautiful flyer showcasing our Opening and Plenary Speakers for the annual conference September 28th – October 2nd at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. All I can say is WOW! With that kind of line up you can bet you will not be disappointed with the additional 40 peer lead learning sessions offering 8 different tracks. I hope many of you have been able to check "attending the 50th annual conference" off your list. If you haven't registered yet, to sweeten the deal, If you register before August 30th, you can save \$100.

While I wish I could see each and every one of you in Chicago, I understand, unfortunately, that not everyone can attend the conference this year. If this is you, and attending an Annual Conference is on your professional wish list, I hope you will take steps now to realize that goal in the future. You won't regret it and I would love to see you.



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