



# President's Perspective

by Alisha Saavedra, MA, CCLS

As we enter the season of falling leaves, crisp air, and the first frost, I am reminded of how symbolic this time of year is. It is humbling to think about how nature influences our environment, routines, and even our transformations. Fall represents a time of harvesting seeds, literal and figurative, that were planted earlier in the year. As we move forward into the final quarter of 2023, I am pleased to provide you with recent updates, including the next steps for our bylaws revisions, highlights from our August board meeting, and a reflection on this past year as we look ahead to 2024.

One of the most critical aspects of our organization is the governing framework that guides our operations – our bylaws. Earlier this year, our dedicated bylaws workgroup made up of key representatives from Nominating, Governance, Board Diversification, and the President level, worked diligently to incorporate feedback from legal consultation and an external DEI consultant. The voting period for proposed revisions to the bylaws opened in August and closed at the end of September. Results indicated the majority were in favor of the proposed revisions; however, the number of votes received did not meet the threshold according to our current bylaws. The bylaws workgroup will reconvene to review additional legal consultation and formulate next steps in the revision process. As we move forward, an update on the next steps will be shared in the first quarter of 2024. Your active engagement in this process is appreciated, as it will help shape the future of our organization.

I am excited to share that we welcomed two new public members to the board, Stacy Palmer and Jeff Salvon-Harmon. Stacy is the Senior VP and COO for the Beryl Institute and has great involvement in advocating for integration of the patient experience as a core element in healthcare conversation. Jeff Salvon-Harmon is the Vice President, Safety, for the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and IHI Fellow. He has a longstanding history of implementing change to promote a culture of safety and belonging for patients and the healthcare workforce. Earlier this year, Stacy and Jeff attended the Emotional Safety Summit II hosted by ACLP. Their shared passion for patient advocacy instantly aligned with our profession's core value of improving the lives of children and families. We are looking forward to their contributions and perspectives as we work to advance the ACLP, our profession, and emotional safety.

Our August 2023 board meeting was a productive one. The board continues to focus on the outcomes of the Staffing Crisis and Pathway to the Profession Think Tank and voted to approve charters for the newly formed Pathway to the Profession committee and Child Life Leadership Development and Internship Excellence task forces. The formation of these groups is well underway. We are grateful to bring together passionate minds across all stakeholders to put this work into motion and address the challenges that continue to be a part of our profession's landscape. You may read more about the decision outcomes and future work in Welcome to the Board Room.

This year has been a testament to the continued resilience and commitment of our members. I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to pause and acknowledge the current crisis happening in the Middle East. These tragic events remind us of the world's vulnerability to violence and trauma, especially in children. The impact that this crisis has on the physical and emotional safety

of children and their families, which is essential to their livelihood, is devastating. Despite the ongoing global challenges and pain felt among our colleagues and in the communities we serve, child life specialists have continued to provide vital support, ensuring that children and families receive the help they need to cope during these difficult times.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you – our members, supporters, volunteers, and staff – for your unwavering dedication to the many children, families, and communities you serve. Our child life profession has many cultures, identities, and origins, and we value each one of you. Let us move forward with hope and determination, knowing that we have the power to create a difference by harvesting the seeds of change we have planted through the year. Thank you for your continued support, and I wish you a bountiful season of transformation.

Warmest Regards,  
Alisha Saavedra

