

President's Perspective: Signing Off with Gratitude and Hope

Sarah Patterson, MSc, CCLS, President

As I prepare to conclude my term as president of the Association of Child Life Professionals, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude, pride, and a profound sense of awe at all we have accomplished together. It has been an honour to serve this incredible community of dedicated professionals, advocates, educators, and leaders—each of you united in your commitment to child- and family-centered care.

This past year has taken me to places I never imagined—both literally and professionally. From presenting on emotional safety during my travels to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to connecting with peers at the Child Life Directors Conference, I have witnessed firsthand the global reach and evolving impact of our work. Each moment reinforced how vital it is to elevate the voice of child life on every stage—local and international.

Together, we've leaned into bold conversations around emotional safety, equity, and inclusion. We've deepened our commitment to child- and family-centered practice, and explored new pathways to support the professionals who carry out this work every day. Our initiatives—from innovative educational programs to strengthening international partnerships—have been grounded in listening to our members and acting on what we've heard.

It has also been a year of compassion in action—from supporting colleagues through our contribution to Child Life Disaster Relief, to advancing new benchmarks that celebrate excellence in our field. These efforts are more than milestones; they reflect our shared values and unwavering belief in the power of child life to make a difference.

One of the most rewarding parts of this role has been the opportunity to listen—to truly hear the voices of members across regions, disciplines, and stages of professional growth. Your insights, passion, and stories have been the compass guiding many directions. I've learned from each of you, and I leave this role forever shaped by the relationships, challenges, and collective aspirations we've shared.

As I pass the gavel to our incoming president, Elana Brewer, I do so with immense confidence in her leadership and vision. Elana brings a deep well of experience, empathy, and insight, and I look forward to seeing the Association thrive under her guidance. I do so with full confidence in the strength of our association and its future.

I am deeply grateful to the ACLP staff and Board of Directors for walking alongside me on this journey and offering their unwavering support every step of the way. I am excited to see new voices rise, new ideas take root, and new possibilities unfold. Though my title may be changing, my commitment to this association and the field remains steadfast.

Thank you for the trust, support, and inspiration you have given me. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your president.

With gratitude and hope,

Sarah Patterson, MSc, CCLS

President, Association of Child Life Professionals