



CEO Shares

by Alison E. Heron, MBA, CAE

As we entered the new year, the ACLP staff grew and changed. We welcomed Alexandra Campbell, Director of Education; Sylvie Messavussu, Manager of Education; and Stephanie Schultz, Senior Manager of Conference and Meetings. Recently, we said farewell to Ame Enright, Director of Certification. Ame has played a pivotal role in the certification program for over 16 years. While we are sad to see her leave, we are thankful for our time together, both personally and professionally.

In recent months, the ACLP staff has encountered challenges and doubts regarding our contributions to the child life community. Recognizing the emotional toll that criticism and skepticism can take is essential. Despite these hurdles, our team has remained steadfast, but it's important to acknowledge that it hasn't been

without its difficulties. There were moments when we had to rely on each other for support, leaning in to safeguard our mental and emotional well-being.

We are deeply invested in the well-being of the child life community and continuously strive to improve and enhance our contributions. Our dedication to this cause remains unwavering, and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside such passionate individuals.

We are a small team of 13 individuals managing over 4,800 members, over 6,000 Certified Child Life Specialists certifications, more than 25 committees, task forces, and work groups, as well as other programming such as scholarships, awards, education, and more. While CLCC is legally and financially separated from the parent organization, ACLP, the Commission cannot sustain itself independently without shared resources from ACLP, such as staff, office space, office equipment, technology, etc.

Each team member brings unique association management skills, knowledge, and abilities, such as marketing, education, membership, and governance. While we may not all be child life professionals, we are dedicated association professionals who take great pride in our continued education and training to carry out our responsibilities effectively. Many staff members hold credentials and certifications in their specialty and rely on organizations like the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), the American Marketing Association (AMA), and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) for their continuing education, networking, and resources. We are committed to executing and implementing products and services approved by the ACLP Board of Directors, understanding their critical role in supporting the child life community.

The ACLP team, volunteer committee leaders, and Board of Directors are working towards initiatives to enrich our community and

empower professionals in the field of child life. As CEO, I am delighted to share a preview of what lies ahead, including our upcoming annual Child Life Conference, meetups and class calls, and the forthcoming call for volunteers.

First and foremost, I am thrilled to announce the 2024 Child Life Conference, a cornerstone event that serves as a platform for collaboration, learning, and innovation in child life practice. Scheduled May 23-26 in San Antonio, Texas, the conference promises to be a transformative experience for attendees, featuring engaging workshops, thought-provoking presentations, and networking opportunities with fellow professionals. Registration is now open, and I encourage all members of the child life community to secure their spot early and take advantage of this unparalleled learning opportunity.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce the continuation of several member benefits that will enhance our community's professional development and connectivity. One such benefit is our series of ACLP Class Calls, a virtual session ACLP staff offers. During these dynamic sessions, we cover topics ranging from certification and eligibility to membership benefits and other opportunities ACLP provides. Academic leaders can request a Class Call for your students today, and we can inspire future child life specialists together!

Additionally, we are reintroducing Affinity Groups (formerly known as Meet Ups) that provide

a welcoming space where individuals with shared identities, experiences, or interests can connect to support and empower each other within the shared community.

As we approach Child Life Month in March, I am filled with gratitude and admiration for the incredible work you do daily to support children and families in need. This month serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of our mission and its impact on the lives of those we serve.

Looking ahead to spring, our annual ACLP Call for Volunteers will occur in April. Volunteerism lies at the heart of our association, embodying our community's compassion and selflessness. Whether you're a seasoned professional or new to the field, there are countless ways to get involved and make a difference.

In closing, I invite all members of the child life community to join us in embracing the opportunities that lie ahead. Whether by attending our conference, volunteering for a committee or workgroup, or participating in our member benefits, let us continue to support one another with empathy and understanding.

Together, we will continue to advance the field of child life, championing excellence, advocacy, and inclusivity at every step.

Thank you for your continued trust and support as we navigate this journey together.

Warm regards,

