



President's Perspective

by Alisha Saavedra, MA, CCLS

As the new year began, it brought with it a unique opportunity to grow and stretch in different ways. During the last week of January, ACLP held its first-ever Member Solution Sessions. Over 300 individuals were in attendance during the four scheduled sessions which were facilitated by volunteers from the Board of Directors, past presidents, Child Life Certification Commission (CLCC) chairs and staff. Through active listening and engagement, these sessions and a corresponding survey have provided invaluable insights into the needs, concerns, and wants of our members.

Input from the solution sessions and the survey have captured a range of themes, such as interest in additional information about the new Child Life Leadership Development Task Force, navigating challenges when using the Child Life Professional Data Center, the need for critical data with a roadmap to demonstrate that child life services are essential and linked to decreased costs in pediatric care, and many more. Overall, participants expressed a positive response and an interest in increased relationship building opportunities between ACLP and stakeholders in addition to seeking clarity about ACLP's advocacy efforts and understanding the distinction between ACLP and the CLCC.

It was a remarkable experience for ACLP leadership and staff to foster deeper connections and understanding between our organization and its members. At the February meeting, the Board of Directors is primed to keep a strong focus on the feedback gathered from our members and the child life community while exploring how ACLP can be a strong voice of advocacy in addressing the challenges that stakeholders are currently experiencing. One primary topic of discussion is the development of a pilot program for regional meetings with members. This was a Staffing Crisis and Pathway to the Profession Think Tank recommendation in addition to being shared by attendees during the Solution Sessions. We are at the threshold of possibility and have an opportunity to enhance member satisfaction through continued relationship building, strengthening trust, and driving positive change within our profession.

Additionally, during the February board meeting, the board will begin discussing preparations for the upcoming 2025-2027 strategic planning meeting taking place prior to the 2024 Child Life Conference. As a Board, our duty of care reminds us to be forward-thinking and strategic while supporting the well-being of our members.

The process for filling positions for the 2024-

2025 ACLP Board of Directors is also currently underway. The four open positions are President-Elect, Secretary, and two Directors. Leadership reviewed the current composition of the Board matrix and found key criteria to be prioritized for the current cycle of applications. To support diverse representation on the board, the following criteria were identified: a CCLS with 6-15 years of experience, male, non-binary/non-gender conforming, racial diversity, Southeast United States region, CCLS from small programs or one-person programs, and child life director or child life program leader at the director level. Following the October board application deadline, the Nominations Committee has reviewed applications and completed all candidate interviews. The Board of Directors slate will be made public for a membership vote on March 1st.

March is quickly approaching, and we proudly recognize and celebrate Child Life Month. This is a special time dedicated to honoring

the extraordinary contributions of child life specialists in healthcare, academic institutions, and community-based settings around the world. I am continuously inspired by the dedication and care provided by the child life community as they support children and families experiencing stressful life events. Your expertise makes a profound difference during their healing journey, helping to bring normalcy, coping support, and comfort during times of crisis and uncertainty. This Child Life Month, join me in expressing heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable work of child life specialists, academicians, and aspiring professionals whose compassion and commitment to providing psychosocial care embody the true spirit of caring and advocacy for children's health and happiness.

With Gratitude and Appreciation,
Alisha Saavedra MA, CCLS

