WSLHA PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE – April 2020

WSLHA Members,

Many good wishes for health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic to you, your families, co-workers, and patients/students. Unfortunately, it is a trying and unprecedented time for all of us filled with several “unknowns”, and I wish only the best for you all. It is the end of the first quarter of 2020 and already it has been quite eventful to say the least. Please see below for a summary of what WSLHA has been doing for you:

Leadership:
- Sent letter coordinated with ASHA to WA State Senate for increased funding of IDEA Part B, IDEA Part C, full funding for EHDI, increased funding for National Institute on Deafness and Other Communications Disorders (NIDCD), increased funding for National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)
- Networking: ASHA contacts, telepractice practitioners, several other WA colleagues interested in collaboration for ASD individuals (e.g. other SLPs, psychologists, BCBAs, OTs, social workers, individuals diagnosed with ASD, parents of individuals with ASD, etc.)
- Created WSLHA Volunteer Coordinator job description and appointed Lindsay Williams in this position; Welcome Lindsay!
- Appointed new SEAL (WSLHA/ASHA liaison), Katie Christensen; Welcome Katie!
- Extra Board session on April 18th to update Bylaws and WSLHA Policies & Procedures documents
- Strategic Planning: proposal to have Board work with Eileen Crowe, ASHA State Association Relations for our state in August 2020
- Plan to have a 2020 WSLHA Annual Report shared with members by end of year

Lobbyist:
- Immediately available for consult by WSLHA committees and board during COVID-19 pandemic about changes happening in Olympia and all over the state regarding telepractice, governor’s proclamation and order to stay home, defining essential critical infrastructure workers, and how funders were responding to the pandemic issues so that services could continue
- Weekly updates on legislative session
- Ongoing legislative connections and networking at the state level for WSLHA for the past 20+ years

Most recent update from Melissa Johnson, WSLHA Lobbyist at 4/21/2020 at 6:18pm (please see other COVID-19 and Telepractice information on the WSLHA home page of the website): “Governor Inslee addressed the state this afternoon to outline a high-level plan for lifting COVID-19 restrictions. Here are the highlights of his message:

- The spread of the virus is declining, according to Washington public health data.
- Most restrictions will not be lifted by 5/4.
- When restrictions are lifted, it will be a slower process (a dial, not a switch) where steps taken will be monitored for effectiveness.
- Elective surgeries will be allowed if adequate PPE is in place (no date yet).
- A limited return to construction will be allowed (no date yet).
- In order to successfully contain further virus spread, we will test widely; isolate cases quickly; identify contacts with COVID-19 patients; and quarantine these contacts.
- Businesses will re-open in phases, with rigorous cleaning, PPE, and social distancing protocols.
Three workgroups have been created to assist with lifting restrictions: public health; return to work; and social supports.

Communication through WSLHA Website and Social Networking:
- Several additions to the home page (including COVID-19 Related Information, telehealth, total membership numbers each month), Member Portal
- Professional Practice tab “Clinical” and “Educational” sections will have the ASHA/WSLHA liaisons summary reports posted by each three times annually with the STAR and StAMP reports already posted
  - SEAL (February, May, August)
  - StAMP (April, July, October)
  - STAR (March, June, September)
- Postings made on WSLHA Instagram and Facebook

Financial:
- 2020 Budget: -$6698.00 Indicating that WSLHA is short this amount of money for the year
- Total memberships: 279 (gained 15 new members in the first quarter)
- Switched phone conference line to Zoom video conferencing, saving an estimated $15-20 per month for 2020
- Several speakers declined honorariums in light of WSLHA’s financial “crisis”
- Feb 15, 2020 Dementia workshop with Carli Barrios 12 participants, net earnings of $1683
- Attendance of 24 registrants for March 28, 2020 Language & Literacy workshop with Dr. Ginger Collins Spokane when WSLHA quickly switched to an online video conferencing platform because of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Attendance of 122 with $85 in donations from telepractice webinar Q&A during week of March 23, 2020
- 54 attendees and 63 registrants for April 13, 2020 “Hitting the Ground Running: Q&A with Experienced Teletherapists” with net earnings of $950
- Board brainstormed fundraising ideas and will create a fundraising task force under Treasurer, Kelley Ford Flood

Future Workshops and Learning Opportunities:
- May 2020 Q&A for Stuttering Awareness week (Zoom)
- June 27, 2020 Dysphagia workshop with Samantha Shune at UW SPHSC Eagleson Building, Seattle – register here https://wslha.org/events
- July 2020 Q&A for Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness month (Zoom)
- October 3, 2020 Edythe Strand at Seattle Children’s Hospital
- 2021 workshop on collaboration in process of planning with WA State ABA and Psychology organizations

WSLHA Needs:
- Current open positions: Chair for Honors and Awards and Committee members, Nominations Committee members, Budget Committee members, Schools Committee members
- NEW: creation of Fundraising Task Force (need members)
- Seeking for 2021: President Elect, Secretary, Member at Large, Clinical SLP
- Presenters/speakers for Q&A sessions, mini seminars, ½ to full-day workshops

Please Contact Us at office@WSLHA.org or (253) 525-5162 for:
- Leadership, collaborating, and networking opportunities with your WA state colleagues
- Making WSLHA YOUR WSLHA
Take care of yourselves,

Nichie Lessard, MS, CCC-SLP/L
Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist
WSLHA 2020 President