

President's Message
Summer 2011

Hello Everyone:

Sharon Grandinette and the other CAPHI officers have been up to some activities this summer on behalf of our organization. First, we have an officer ballot for you. Please complete and email back to Susan McCrary at Mcfmly4@yahoo.com. Please note that Sharon appointed me as CAPHI President for 2011-2012 as there were no "takers" for this officer position. Second, CAPHI members have been invited to a MOVE training at Pacific Boulevard School in LAUSD early this fall. Please send in your confirmation as soon as possible if you plan to participate.

As many of you have experienced firsthand, teaching positions in the field of physical and health impairments (known to many of you as orthopedic impairments) have been shrinking. Some of you have seen your programs closed; some of you have been shifted to other teaching positions or "pink slipped." I am coming to dread the month of March as I hear back from my teacher colleagues that they are losing their positions, sometimes after years of service. Even more heartbreaking is the loss to children and youth with physical and health impairments and their families as valuable services disappear. We know that your knowledge cannot be replaced by a teacher with the Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe credential, much less an OT or PT. These professionals are skilled in their fields but are not replacements for the PHI teacher.

At the university level, teacher training is threatened as our budget continues to be eroded. So far there has not been any talk of program closure and I am doing all I can to grow and adapt the program at CSULA to respond to pressure at my university and at the state level. We are moving forward with the added authorizations in Orthopedic Impairments and Other Health Impairments. I will write about these and have my comments posted on the CAPHI website.

I believe that CAPHI members can do much to support the field at the local and state level. Here are my ideas:

1. Raise the CAPHI website profile. We have new CAPHI members helping with the CAPHI website and need to think of how we can make this an important spot to check for what is happening in our field. The web designers (Nicole Klymkiw and Anne Merrel) are adding new links including one for job posting –sometimes we know about a job before it gets to Edjoin. People can also use it to ask about job openings. I would like your input about other changes to the website.
2. An insidious practice is cropping up in some districts: that of "re-designating" students whose primary disability is Orthopedic Impairments to either Multiple Disabilities or Other Health Impairment. This allows placement of the students with a teacher who has the M/M or M/S credential. As numbers of students served by a PHI credentialed teacher dwindle, classes and programs are closed. If the student's primary designation is truly orthopedically impaired, then there is no need for such a change. You might want to have a pre-conference with parents if you suspect that this proposal for re-designation will come up at an IEP meeting. Remind parents

that low incidence funding is lost with a re-designation to OHI or MS. Remind them that teachers with the PHI credential are specially trained to work with their children. Re-designation is an IEP team decision, not just a school psychologist or assistant principal decision!

3. Celebrate the school district, SELPA, and county office of education programs that continue to support students with physical and health impairments through appropriate hiring/retention of teachers with PHI credentials. I have had very positive interactions with representatives from the following (in alphabetical order) :
 - a. Claremont Unified School District
 - b. Bakersfield County Office of Education
 - c. Fontana Unified School District
 - d. Fresno County Office of Education
 - e. Parajo Valley Unified School District
 - f. Placer County Office of Education
 - g. Santa Clara Office of Education
 - h. San Diego City Schools
 - i. Sulphur Springs Unified School District

Administrators in these programs have found ways to sustain and even enhance services to students with physical and health impairments. This month I will be collaborating with the principal at Danbury Elementary School to write a profile about this school, its programs, and its innovative solutions to meeting student educational needs and posting it on the CAPHI website. If you teach in any of the other programs I have listed, or are willing to contribute a profile to the CAPHI website, please contact me. I think we need to give credit where credit is due.

4. CAPHI is planning a conference in 2012. This is sooner than we think. CAPHI officers will be getting together via online web hosting to plan presentations, a conference venue, and other conference details. If you have suggestions please send them to me at sbest@calstatela.edu.

I sometimes think that technology has done much to add to our stress burden with its associated pressure to take on more duties, respond faster to requests, absorb new technologies, and maintain social connections that are increasingly less personal. As a digital immigrant and a person who is entering her "mature years", I find myself pulled by competing work and life priorities as I strive to master new skills (and remember the old ones). As the 2011-2012 CAPHI President, I will only be as effective as those members who step up and help this organization. We are all too busy with our commitments to family and work. I know. Me too. So let's all do just a little bit for CAPHI and together we will move mountains.

Sherry Best