

Build Your Network and Pay It Forward through Mentoring

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The title above is the advice I give to environmental health specialists just starting out and what I strive to do in my own career. Even now, after 21 years in the environmental health profession, I believe in aiming high when translating big-picture ideas into real programs for public health protection. From my start as a housing program specialist in the San Francisco Bay Area to my current position as Deputy Environmental Health Division Chief for Sacramento County, I owe much to my many mentors along the way.

And I continue to be inspired to grow as a professional by the dynamic network of environmental health leaders that NEHA offers. There is always someone who has tried something innovative or can share similar experiences. In turn, I do my best to offer assistance and inspiration to incoming professionals; I find serving as a mentor a truly rewarding experience.

I have learned that becoming involved is the only way to make a difference. It is not enough to make suggestions or recommendations and hope that someone will turn those ideas into changes for the better. As NEHA Region 2 Vice President (serving California, Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada), I have committed to working on many special projects and partner organizations to ensure that NEHA continues along a path of excellence.

And, now I am running for NEHA 2nd Vice President. My goals, if elected, are to see the following efforts made to better serve NEHA members and the practice of environmental health:

Educational Opportunities: Increase online, remote site and regional educational opportunities and develop additional "tool kits" with easily adaptable handouts

Food Safety Network: Develop a comprehensive repository of current information, Establish a network of food safety experts; Track food safety initiatives; and Make positions on legislation and policy

Communication: Expand capabilities by using more digital communication forms including e-mail, social media and networking sites

Workforce Development: Grow our profession by outreach to university students

Together, we can make NEHA an even stronger organization. I'd appreciate your support for NEHA 2nd Vice President. For additional information about my candidacy, please visit my website at www.ehleadership.com or contact me at (916) 875-8566 or EnriquezA@Comcast.net.