Finally, the calendar indicates it's spring although the weather in some parts of the country is slow getting the message. Spring represents a time to grow and another opportunity for the beautiful trees and flowers that lay dormant all winter to become revived. It's actually a second chance for growth and rejuvenation. How can we as Mended Hearts benefit from this second chance and renewal? Can we still grow, learn, and change?

The bigger question is, when you receive your second chance, what will you do with it? As Accredited Visitors, we watch amazing transformations happen every day as we continue to bring hope and encouragement to heart patients and their families.

Most of our newsletters have this message or one very similar. "We hope your Mended Hearts Visitor made a positive difference during your cardiac experience. As you recover and again become active, we invite you and your family to attend meetings as our guests. We hope that you will like us enough to want to join Mended Hearts and help us to help others".

When we provide this peer-to-peer support, our intent is that the heart patient will see this as a chance to help others. What we are providing is the opportunity and someone to walk alongside them with compassion. It is true that not everyone takes advantage of this kind of opportunity. But the ones who do are an inspiration. I'm grateful that Mended Hearts provided me the second chance to make a difference in the lives of others.

As accredited visitors, we are all part of this important and wonderful work done by volunteers for Mended Hearts. When I think about all that volunteers do today - and the lives we touch - it makes me very proud to be part of such an incredible group of people.

Every volunteer has a unique story about how they personally became involved. I'm always intrigued to learn from others about their passion for giving. Our individual stories make up such a critical part of the breadth and strength of this organization.

Our 2018 annual reports have been submitted by chapters and they continue to showcase how Mended Hearts Accredited Visitors inspire hope and improve the quality...
of life for heart patients and their families. Our goal is to increase our **reach and retention rates** of new members. Of course, our numbers for reaching patients have greatly improved, thanks in large part to you, the Accredited Visitors. The task for us now is to retain those patients and caregivers whom we met during a heart event.

Many of you have success stories on how you are retaining those patients as members in your various chapters. The good news is that these new members represent a potential gold mine for your local chapter as they bring added value and a new dimension to the existing group. Consider these questions to ensure your chapter is doing everything possible to welcome new members:

♥ If your chapter has a newsletter or web site, what do these communication tools say to potential new members?
♥ Do other members openly welcome newcomers?
♥ Do you have a greeter for new members?
♥ Are your programs conveniently located for potential members?
♥ Do you have a member designated as a public relations person to recruit members?

Mike Weber, Southern Regional ARD shared a "First Timer Form" used in his chapter.

First Timer Form (PLEASE PRINT)
Date: 
Name: 
Address: 
Phone: 
E-Mail Address:

How did you find out about this meeting? (Please check all that apply) 
_____ I received a flyer in the mail telling me about the meeting 
_____ I received an e-mail telling me about the meeting 
_____ I learned about this meeting on the Mended Hearts web site 
_____ I learned about this meeting from a flyer I received in the hospital 
_____ I learned about this meeting from a Mended Hearts volunteer who visited me in the hospital 
_____ I learned about this meeting from a staff member at the hospital 
_____ I learned about this meeting from a flyer that I received at my cardiologist's office 
_____ Other

Let's all continue to work together to fulfill the 2019 Mission Statement.

"**To inspire hope and improve the quality of life of heart patients and their families through on-going peer-to-peer support, education and advocacy**".

Heartfelt Regards,

Dr. Fredonia B. Williams  
National Visiting Chair  
Southern Assistant Regional Director
Future Questions/Topics

We want to hear from you!
Other challenging questions for this newsletter may be emailed to fredoniabw@att.net.