The Path Ahead and the Promise of the Future

Jennifer Schmitz, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CNML, NE-BC, FNP-C, EMT-P

It is an incredible honor to be the incoming 2022 ENA President and one I never dreamed would be a reality for me. Often, we don’t see what may be possible in our future when we’re busy standing in the moment. I’m here now as proof you can create your own path and do anything you desire.

Nearly twenty years ago, I started as a new nurse in the emergency department. Today, I’m the Chief Nursing Officer at the same hospital and about to embark on my year as the ENA President. While anything is possible, it takes grit. It takes persistence. It takes a true belief that something bigger, something better, is always out there if you seek it and work for it.

The last two years have tested us like no other time. We persist with the hope of brighter days and a drive to learn from this experience so that we are better educated, better prepared, and better equipped for the next challenge. To make that happen, and borrowing from my predecessors Mike Hastings and Ron Kraus, we must believe that each of us, as individuals, can make a difference and know that we can elevate ourselves and the people around us.

We have seen and dealt with so much during this pandemic. We are tired, we are all struggling with something, and we are all trying to figure out how to keep moving forward. The forward motion requires us to rekindle the inner fire that drives emergency nurses to be the amazing people you all are. Moving forward means using that take-charge, get-it-done attitude that we all have and applying it to our own careers and lives. Most importantly, moving forward requires a little help, and our willingness to seek it out no matter the circumstances. We all know we can do these things ourselves, but that doesn’t mean we have to.

ENA continues to be here to support you in many ways: advocating for a healthy nursing work environment, creating ENA University for your continuing education and skill development, and offering volunteer opportunities to help you grow within the organization. Your emergency nursing peers are also here. This community is built on shared experiences, deep bonds and colleagues who are like family. Use those around you and offer your support to others. We need one another, and our patients need us. ENA is uniquely positioned to help you build these connections.

We all know that 2022 will continue to bring new challenges, and plenty of old ones, to our profession. We should look to what is ahead and use the struggles we have endured over the last two years as motivation to plot a course. This should happen both individually and together, and reinforce what emergency nurses need to be successful, to amplify our voices about what’s most important in health care, and to continually demonstrate how this community is the epitome of exceptional.

With that goal in mind, if we each push forward down the path toward our highest hopes and aspirations, the momentum of the emergency nursing community will build toward positive change. It starts for each of us today. Find your inner fire and prove to yourself that persistence pays off. Choose your journey and follow your dreams. Maybe you’ll end up somewhere you never would have imagined, too.

Jennifer Schmitz is President of Emergency Nurses Association.

For correspondence, write: Jennifer Schmitz, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, CNML, NE-BC, FNP-C, EMT-P, ME, 1 Medical Center Drive, Biddeford Maine, ME 04005; E-mail: Jennifer.schmitz@ena.org Twitter: @Jenn_Schmitz_34

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