

## *The Essence of Volunteer Leadership*

People volunteer for a number of reasons. Most often one thinks of volunteers as only doing so to help others. It is perfectly okay for volunteers to want something for themselves also. It seems out of the “norm” the idea that a volunteer could actually benefit from doing volunteer work. The best of volunteerism does involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations as well. WSGNA, as well as SGNA, is lead by volunteer leaders, that is, leaders who do not receive monetary compensation for their work. These volunteers are committed to the future of the art and science of Gastroenterology Nursing. What motivates these leaders? What are the benefits? After doing a personal inventory of motivating factors, the writer has come up with the following list:

- To demonstrate commitment to the specialty of GI nursing
- To assure a progressive dynamic organization
- To gain satisfaction from accomplishment
- To be challenged
- To be part of a team
- To learn new things
- To gain leadership skills
- To network with colleagues
- To make new friends and to have FUN

This is by no means an exhaustive list and other leaders surely would have additions.

WSGNA, as with many organizations that rely on volunteer leaders, find the search for future leaders often comes up empty handed. We all bring different skills and talents to the leadership table. It is this diversity that keeps boards alive and vital. Do these commitments take time? Yes, they do. The question to ask is: Do I have a few extra hours a month to donate to the growth and stability of my professional organization? Please consider volunteer leadership as an exchange, benefiting both you and WSGNA.

Your Board of Directors is committed to succession planning, success of the organization and all this will be accomplished by mentoring new leaders. WSGNA is dedicated to the professional development and advancement of its members.

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