

## Nancy Creaghead – Speech-Language Pathologist

My path to volunteer leadership was paved by a desire to be involved in the issues that affect our professions, my eagerness to collaborate with other speech-language pathologists and audiologists to create change, and my readiness to volunteer in ANY capacity. It was fueled by the opportunities that presented themselves or by mentors who told me about those opportunities and then encouraged and advised me about how to get involved.

Initially I became aware of volunteer opportunities at the local level. My first professional volunteer leadership role was in our local Southwestern Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association (SWOSHA). There was a need to develop a scholarship fund for speech-language pathology and audiology students at local universities. I loved working on this project and wanted to stay involved. I started as the lowest level volunteer: Representative at Large, then Secretary, Program Committee Chair, Honors Committee Chair, Ethics Chair, and President over a ten-year period. The rewards from accomplishing a task in collaboration with professional colleagues and the networking that resulted from involvement in SWOSHA led to regular attendance at the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association and again taking whatever role that might be available to get involved, which led to wider networking, the opportunity to address issues at the state level and finally leadership positions. My path to President of ASHA was the same, starting with attending, presenting, and volunteering at ASHA conventions and volunteering wherever I could be helpful – not necessarily the committee that seemed most interesting to me.

I don't think volunteer leadership can be thought of as holding office. It's about hard work, but doing that work well may lead to more work, which is what leadership is. The rewards from volunteering have been enormous -- amazing friends and colleagues, opportunities for learning about the professions, feeling that I have contributed and perhaps actually created change. It is truly worth the hard work.