

A Conversation with Barbara-Anne: CSPA Board Member | Secretary



Barbara-Anne Hodge

Chair, Canadian Burn Survivors Community

Chair, Mamingwey Burn Society

Occupational Therapist (retired)

I worked as an Occupational Therapist on the Burns and Trauma Ward at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg for about 30 years. During that time, I worked with hundreds of burn survivors and witnessed their pain, their healing, and eventually a return to life. I really enjoyed being a part of their journeys as they healed. Part of my job was to assist them in their physical and emotional recoveries. This led me to becoming involved in a few not-for-profit organizations, one of which is the CSPA. I first came to a CSPA meeting in 2008, where I was representing the Canadian Burn Survivors Community (CBSC). As I learned of the important work done by the CSPA, I decided to join the board. I have seen such growth in the organization since that time!

I have learned a lot by volunteering with the CSPA, where do I start to explain all the benefits? Learning about other patient organizations that exist to help people with specific skin conditions, and how they operate, has been invaluable information to me in my role with the CBSC and other boards I have been on. As a CSPA board member, I have learned much about our Canadian health care system and how it all works. As the former Chair of the Board, I had to take on duties that were new to me, like running a board meeting or hiring a staff person. So, I can say that I have grown as a person and learned new life skills!

Why do you like volunteering with CSPA?

I am always wanting to learn new skills, be it how to master planning a complicated Zoom meeting, using more than just the basics in Microsoft Office (I did not previously know a PowerPoint file could be referred to as a 'deck'), or learning about various skin conditions and how they affect people's lives. I have met and worked with people at the CSPA who are now my lifelong friends!

Why would you tell others that they should get involved with CSPA?

This organization does very important work! It is great to learn all about that, and it is also a fact that at some point in the life of every resident of Canada, they will have to deal with some kind of issue related to their skin, hair, or nails. Becoming a part of the CSPA allows one to learn about the conditions, what peer support one can find in their community, and how to access care for themselves or their loved ones, just to name a few benefits. It is a great feeling to know that one's efforts will benefit so many people in the future.

Barbara-Anne was the CSPA Board Chair from 2013-2018. She was the Conference Chair of the Skin Matters Conference (hosted by the CSPA, Toronto 2012). She was also the Chair of the International Dermatology Patient Organization Conference (hosted by the CSPA, Vancouver 2015) as a part of the World Congress of Dermatology.