Before assuming the presidency of the AED in June this year, I thought I had a good sense and overview of all the activities that were going on within the AED. However, shortly after having stepped into my new role, I suddenly realized the whirlwind of activities on so many levels, within committees, SIGs, Board members’ portfolios, and more. I had a short moment when I thought I could not keep my feet on the ground anymore. By getting weekly updates from our amazing Executive Director Elissa Myers, the whirlwind of activities and information turned into an enjoyable breeze though. This has been an amazing journey so far. It has made me realize exactly how much has been accomplished thanks to the amazing volunteer efforts of all our Board members, Committee Co-Chairs, SIG Co-Chairs, and all AED members who have achieved an incredible amount of work in the past four months. They are contributing so much to this COMMUNITY, even in times of a pandemic when we face multiple difficulties every day. First and most importantly, my sincere appreciation goes to all of you!

Thanks to the dedication, initiative, and creativity of members of the AED’s various committees, SIGs, and task forces, I would like to devote this Forum column to an outstanding series of new educational offerings. These offerings vary in format, targeted audience, and volume, which is consistent with the AED’s strategic goal to provide platforms for promoting understanding, sharing knowledge, and integrating research-practice in eating disorders. Furthermore, the educational offerings discuss various medical, nutritional, and psychological aspects across multiple eating disorders, and include the following:

- A timely publication, “A Guide to Selecting Evidence Based Psychological Therapies for Eating Disorders” created by our AED Psychological Care Guidelines Task Force, that has just been released on our website publications page.
- Our Nutrition Guidebook for the Treatment of Eating Disorders, a comprehensive new resource developed by Julia Cassidy, Leah Graves, Marcia Herrin, Jillian Lampert, and Therese Waterhous from the AED Nutrition Working Group. This excellent resource contains basic information about elements of nutrition care for individuals with eating disorders. The guideline is intended as a resource to clinicians who are providing nutritional interventions as part of a multi-disciplinary team or are otherwise involved in the care of these individuals.

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Six additional webinars, among them one on “Suicide in Eating Disorders” (in honor of the United States National Suicide Awareness Month in September), by Scott Crow, Emily Pisetsky, and Lucene Wisniewski. This webinar attracted more than 500 registrants! Consistent with our mission to strengthen our dialogue with professionals and researchers in other healthcare communities and to share important information about eating disorders and the intersection between their work and ours, the AED co-sponsored a webinar on “What Every Emergency Room Physician Needs to Know about Eating Disorders” with the American College of Emergency Physicians, featuring Suzanne Dooley Hash and moderated by Annemarie van Elburg.

A new contribution to our 9 Truths series has been added: “Nine More Truths about Eating Disorders: Boys and Men”, in collaboration with and based on Jason Lavender’s “Where to from here? Bringing Males into the Eating Disorders Fold” sociocultural plenary discussion at the Virtual ICED 2020. Another contribution to this series, Nine Truths about Anxiety and Eating Disorders, in collaboration with Walter Kaye and Stephanie Knatz-Peck, will be added soon.

A series of unique Medical Pearls -- great 30-60 seconds videos -- featuring some of the leading physicians in the AED community discussing specific medical issues that arise around the treatment of patients with eating disorders in a comprehensive and succinct way. These videos are available in several languages. The Medical Care Standards Committee (MCSC) created these videos, and additional videos are being developed.

Minimum Standards of Care - Cross-Cultural Action Guidelines for Eating Disorders: This guide from the Partners, Chapters, and Affiliates Committee (PCAC) is intended as a resource to provide direction to health care professionals who do not have access to specialized treatment for their patients with Eating Disorders. It is also available in Russian.

We have also expanded our publications from our Partner, Chapter and Affiliate Organizations, including guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of eating disorders from around the world on AED’s website. Recently, we added the Joint German Guideline “Diagnosis and treatment of eating disorders” in the English language. Thanks to PCAC members, the number of publications being translated into many languages grows every year.

Although you can still enjoy all of the great content from our Virtual ICED 2020, the AED is gearing up for the next Virtual ICED on June 10-12, 2021. I very much hope that you will join us for ICED 2021 again or maybe for the first time, if you are new to AED! Our conference co-chairs, Emilio Compte and Jason Lavender, together with our Director for Annual Meetings, Ross Crosby, and the Scientific Program Committee are doing a fantastic job preparing what will be an outstanding meeting again. The conference theme is “Cultivating Inclusivity & Diversity across Research and Practice.” All four of the AED’s Chapters will be hosting Annual Educational Meetings on the Tuesday before the Virtual ICED. We look forward to stimulating presentations, workshops, poster sessions, and discussions with colleagues from around the world, as well as welcoming all of you again virtually! The deadline for scientific abstract submissions has been extended until January 3, 2021 to ensure you will be able to carve some time out to prepare given these demanding and busy times. The same applies for the application for Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships -- the deadline has been extended until November 29, 2020.

I also want to mention that we are steadily moving forward, based on our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Committee to the Board’s recommendation, to hire a DEI consulting firm to lead training for the AED Board and to offer us expert guidance on required changes in policies, procedures, programs, communications, and culture within our organization to make meaningful progress toward becoming an equitable, inclusive, and antiracist organization and community. An ad hoc Request for Proposals review panel has been convened, a Request for Proposals has been prepared, and it was sent out to a number of firms that had been recommended to us. We also shared it more broadly to cast a wide net for applicants.

Within these first four months, multiple activities and initiatives set forth by my predecessors, former Board members, committee, and SIG co-chairs have come to fruition. It is a pleasure to see all the seeds that have been planted quite some time ago now blooming. I am looking forward to the coming months with many ongoing and planned activities in place and being able to report to you on them in future issues of the Forum. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or feedback, I would love to hear from you!
Message from the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the AED Forum. This issue begins with a message from President, Ursula Bailer, who discusses new educational opportunities offered by the AED. Next, Caroline Meyer and Rebecca Cashmore pay tribute to Robert Palmer, who unfortunately passed away in September 2020. Executive Director Elissa Myers discusses the role technology can play in counseling, diagnosing, and treating eating disorders. You will also find updates from multiple committees and a book review by Abigail Matthews on Treating Black Women with Eating Disorders: A Clinician’s Guide, which is edited by Charlynn Small and Mazella Fuller. We also welcome new AED members and have additional announcements you will not want to miss.

Thank you to everyone who submitted articles to this issue of the Forum. Please submit your articles, letters, announcements, and suggestions (no more than 250 words per entry) for the next issue of the Forum by January 15, 2021 to Melissa Munn-Chernoff at Forum@aedweb.org.

A Tribute to Robert Palmer

Caroline Meyer and Rebecca Cashmore

Bob Palmer was a lovely man.

He worked as a consultant psychiatrist at the Leicester Eating Disorders Service for many years and was Honorary Professor at the University of Leicester and Loughborough University. Bob was Editor of the European Eating Disorders Review for 14 years. As a gifted writer he was famed for his ‘Winding Up’ piece that ended each publication, which many of us always turned to first! This passion for words continued into his retirement when he wrote fiction and poetry. Bob was a fellow of the Academy for Eating Disorders and received two awards, a Clinical/Administrative/Educational award in 2005 and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. These awards were in recognition of his distinguished contribution to the field of eating disorders.

Bob was an open and curious clinician. He was an early implementer of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for eating disorders and collaborated in major multicenter clinical trials of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, including being a key collaborator in the trial of CBT-E. Alongside his exceptional clinical team, Bob grew the Leicester service from a small local service to an extensive and comprehensive outpatient service, with a regional anorexia nervosa inpatient unit, serving five counties across the middle of England. Bob was fierce in his commitment to holistic care; he believed an eating disorder service should “consume its own smoke” and manage all aspects of service users’ mental health. He was committed to working collaboratively with his patients. This philosophy at times was at odds with others in the field, but Bob maintained that patients who retain responsibility for their illness and recovery did better than those who become embattled with clinicians who enforced treatment. To this end, Bob was an admirably brave clinician who spoke openly of the significant anxiety he had to bear over many years, managing patients at critically low weights as he tried to help shift them psychologically to a position in which they were willing to accept treatment.

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Greetings from the Executive Director

Bob never gave up on patients. He was old school in his belief that it was appropriate to see people for prolonged periods, using a technique he irreverently called “tickling trout”. Many such patients, whom others would have tired of, or treated coercively, eventually came to accept treatment voluntarily and reached recovery.

As well as leading a fantastic clinical team, Bob was passionate about education and research. He regularly ran courses in Leicester to train others in treating patients. He wrote two editions of a very well-regarded book on helping people with eating disorders and co-edited a leading book on EDNOS. He had been a researcher in the field since the mid 1970’s, starting his career in Arthur Crisp’s team. He was very magnanimous. Indeed, having invented the term ‘dietary chaos syndrome’ in 1979, publishing it two months before Gerald Russell published the first paper on ‘bulimia nervosa’, Bob always had the grace to say that Gerald’s term was better.

Bob Palmer was an inspirational man whose philosophy influenced a generation of clinicians and researchers. He will be remembered not only for his work in the field, but also for his ability to make us smile. Bob had a true talent for booking holidays in remote places just as natural disasters hit, an unrivalled ability to invent terms (such as ‘cheese trousers’ to describe halloumi -- it was in Greece!), and an incredible ability to present an enthralling one-hour keynote, based on a dozen single-word slides, leaving the entire audience feeling much more inspired than before.

His dry sense of humor, kindness, and generosity will be fondly remembered. He will be hugely missed.

In an article published on October 23, 2020 in IEEE Pulse, a magazine of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society, Saanvi Arora at Keck Medicine of the University of Southern California, wrote, “Citizens’ dissatisfaction with the scope of the United States healthcare system has been a hot topic for many years. In a country where patient to nurse ratios remain 6:1, even universal health care coverage cannot guarantee adequate patient care.” Of course the recognition of the need for improved access to evidence based care is not exclusively a problem in the United States. Is there a country where there are enough trained providers to meet the national need? Enough dollars to fund healthcare for everyone? If so, I have not found it. However, even in the best system, technology promises to improve conditions.

As Ms. Arora says, “These issues were further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, where inadequate hospital funding and lack of attention to patients led to challenging situations in hotspot areas. Although this pandemic will shape us for many years to come with far reaching impacts, social distancing norms have accelerated technologies that enable services to be delivered remotely, a capability even more necessary in our healthcare system. By providing care that can be delivered remotely, we can focus in-person care in our hospitals to only the ones who really need it. This allows us to scale our systems, protect lives, and safeguard economic activity.”

The goal of Ms. Arora’s work was to study areas where technology could be leveraged to improve the patient care value chain without raising costs, reduce hospital visits, enable remote patient monitoring, transfer medical supplies within minutes, and avoid irreversible damage due to lack of prompt care. She studied nine areas across the field of medicine, and one of them was Psychological patient monitoring.
She wrote “psychological parameter monitoring can be used to monitor those with psychological conditions (depression, paranoia) who aren’t admitted into the hospital in order to prevent sudden harm. This technology would track mood changes and immediately alert doctors of any issues. Implemented 24/7, continuous psychological parameter monitoring could immediately detect suspicious behavior... Besides the concerns regarding patient privacy and information security, doctors also agreed that online forums and social networking for psychologically impaired patients would be effective, as frequent social interactions are beneficial to the patient’s health.”

In the United States, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) certainly confirms her observations. They write “Technology has opened a new frontier in mental health support and data collection.” In a section of their excellent website, Technology and the Future of Mental Health Treatment, the NIMH describes a task force, created in 2015, called the National Advisory Mental Health Council Workgroup on Opportunities and Challenges of Developing Information Technologies on Behavioral and Social Science Research. The purpose of this task force is to track and guide the cutting edge development of information technologies for mental health, with respect to counseling, diagnosis, and new ideas in treatment, to name a few. In 2017, the task force released a report reviewing the opportunities for -- and the challenges of -- using new information technologies to study human behaviors relevant to the mission of the NIMH. Currently, the interest in this area is growing -- accelerated no doubt by pressures for social distancing due to COVID-19.

Using technology to treat patients with eating disorders presents unique challenges. One AED Special Interest Group that is especially timely and relevant is the Technology and Innovation SIG. At their meeting during the Virtual ICED 2020, co-chairs Brittney Lauro and Limor Weinstein led a lively discussion beginning with a poll on “What Interests you in Technology & Innovations?” Participants responded:

- Potential for reaching underserved communities
- Development of apps for the treatment of eating disorders
- Citation database/eating disorder information gateways
- Communication/education for companies who promote calorie tracking apps
- Health information to assist with making informed decisions
- Web-based research
- Virtual meal support
- Telehealth
- And more!

The SIG community on the AED website includes the “Discussion of Technology & Innovation amid the Global Pandemic”, and poses questions for thought and thoughts about responding:

Questions?
- How has your organization adapted?
- What barriers/challenges have you faces?
- What have you learned through this experience?
- What opportunities can be created through the “new normal”? 

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Greetings from the Executive Director continued

Responses:
• Adapting to new work environment vs. the ability to transition smoothly if already technology based
• Need for government approved platforms -- as limitation for expediting services
• How to track weight via telehealth -- limitations with self-reports, sending photos, and client self-weighing while in telehealth session
• Family meals -- transition to videotaping meals as a form of adaptation

If the intersection of mental health and technology intrigues you, or if you are achieving breakthroughs in the use of technology in identifying and treating eating disorders, consider joining the Technology and Innovation SIG. And while you are at it, take a look at the other 20+ SIGs. Some of the most interesting things happening in our field are getting addressed in these specialty communities.

Did you know? You can support AED while you shop! Designate “Academy for Eating Disorders” as your recipient on Amazon Smile.

Help bring joy this season
Buy your gifts at smile.amazon.com or with AmazonSmile ON in the app and Amazon donates

Get Social with AED
Follow AED on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube and add your voice to dynamic discussions.
Visit www.aedweb.org and access our social media channels at the links at the bottom of the homepage
We look forward to tweeting with you soon!
SIG and Committee Updates

Electronic Media and Social Media Committees Update

Danyale McCurdy-McKinnon and Mirjam Mainland

The Electronic Media Committee (EMC) and Social Media Committee (SMC) are excited to present a joint AED Forum update. We have been working closely together on the upcoming AED Website Refresh and are eager to share the ongoing progress. The co-chairs of both committees (EMC: Britt Bohrer and Danyale McCurdy-McKinnon; SMC: Jessica Barker and Mirjam Mainland), along with our amazing portfolio holder, Millie Plotkin, are collaborating on some exciting new efforts.

The EMC continues to review the AED website to ensure its content and visual aesthetics are up-to-date and user-friendly. Both committees recently put together a Website Survey, which can be found in the Main Discussion Community and on our social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Members may also email any observations or feedback about the website to EMC at info@AEDweb.org or webmaster@AEDweb.org. Finally, the EMC is thrilled to welcome our new Co-Chair, Britt Bohrer, who has enthusiastically stepped in to collaborate on the website refresh and all things EMC!

The SMC is excited to work with a diverse group of members who are able to post content in multiple languages, including German, Mandarin, and Spanish. We are currently preparing for more Facebook Live events and the ICED 2021. If your committee is interested in working with us, please reach out to Jessica Barker (barke040@umn.edu) and Mirjam Mainland (mirjam@coconut-collective.com).

As always, please be sure your member profile is current. Your profile information may be updated from the My AED tab on the homepage. Our “how to” tutorials are there for additional assistance.

Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee Update

Vivienne Hazzard

Thank you to everyone who participated in the ICED 2020 Mentor/Mentee Event! The virtual format of this year’s conference offered new opportunities for the Mentor/Mentee Event, which was co-hosted by the AED Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee and the ANZAED Membership Committee.

A total of 279 participants were matched this year, making this the largest ICED Mentor/Mentee Event to date! The virtual format made it possible to accommodate such a large number of participants, as well as to have a diverse group of mentors and mentees -- participants in this year’s event represented nearly 30 different countries! Because of the generosity of our mentors with their time (even during a pandemic), we were able to match most mentors and mentees with a 1:1 ratio. In combination with the virtual format, this ratio allowed for one-on-one conversations between mentors and mentees, an aspect of the event that participants highly valued. In sum, although we were unable to provide an in-person breakfast for the event this year, the virtual format contributed to an extremely successful ICED 2020 Mentor/Mentee Event!
SIG Oversight Committee Update

Julie Trim

We received our annual reports from the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and there were definite themes that emerged. Arguably the most consistent theme was that although some SIGs have had difficulty engaging their members on the online community, holding virtual meetings has been tremendously successful!

Due to the virtual nature of the ICED this year, attendance was way up at this year’s ICED SIG meetings, with some SIGs having as many as 70 members in attendance. Additionally, co-chairs were extremely pleased to see more international representation in their meetings than in previous years.

To capitalize on this momentum, the SIGs found several creative ways to serve their members in the virtual space this year:

- Several SIGs hosted webinars.
- The Early Career SIG hosted virtual happy hours, as well as virtual drop-in hours for individuals needing mentoring advice.
- The Sport & Exercise SIG used the online library to engage members in networking with one another.
- The Transcultural SIG posted video introductions from the co-chairs and solicited videos from members to increase engagement.
- The Weight Stigma & Social Justice SIG created a Google Sheet for their members with members’ names, contact information, interests, and skills, which has facilitated collaboration between members who share similar interests.
- Some SIGs are now holding monthly consultation meetings to exchange ideas, problem-solve, and provide support to each other.

Keep up the great work, SIGs!! We see lots of “roses” in the future!

Stay connected with fellow eating disorders professionals and advocates from around the world when you renew your AED membership!

Renew today at www.aedweb.org

An individualized binge eating prevention plan to help:

- Break free from diet mentality
- Eat and live mindfully
- Connect to values

ENTER TO WIN A FREE COPY
One of the many strengths of Treating Black Women with EDs is its frequent use of direct recommendations to facilitate culturally competent care for Black women with EDs. This straightforward approach presents the reader with tools that can be implemented immediately. A recurrent theme is that providers must ask Black clients questions that encompass racial differences and identity issues, despite potential fear and discomfort among providers. Failing to address critical factors like colorism, hair and body ideals, acculturative stress, violence, historical trauma, and injustice, renders these factors ‘invisible and not meaningful (p. 21)’ when they may very often be at the core of ED symptomatology. The authors emphasize that existing ED assessment tools are insufficient to identify and understand needs among Black clients because they were primarily developed and validated on White populations. As such, the reader is encouraged to create a list of topics to discuss with Black and other culturally diverse clients to comprehensively assess and conceptualize issues. Further, the reader is provided with specific assessment questions and topics throughout the text via accessible bullet-pointed lists.

An additional strength of the book is its breadth of topics that offer a holistic approach to working with Black women with EDs. The use of short, succinct chapters, coupled with the integrated use of personal stories, case examples, research findings, and didactics facilitates the reader’s connection with and understanding of presented topics. Through its diverse content matter, the reader gains appreciation of the complexities of Black women with EDs, which has not been broached in existing ED guides. For example, one chapter focuses on challenges associated with being a Black woman in an ED treatment facility, drawing the reader’s attention to how Black women can be unintentionally excluded and tokenized (i.e., feeling that they must speak for the entire race), resulting in the need to “wear a mask” in treatment due to fears of stereotyping by staff and other clients. As such, strategies are provided to avoid a “color-blind” approach when identifying an appropriate treatment program for Black clients. Another chapter highlights the extant lack of training materials about Black women with EDs, which greatly perpetuates inadequate assessment and treatment among trainees. In response, seven YouTube channels are suggested, each depicting Black women.

Book Review Corner

Abigail Matthews, AED Book Reviewer


This book is a much-needed resource that provides multicultural considerations for the assessment, diagnosis, and holistic treatment of eating disorders (EDs) in Black women. The invaluable nature of this guide cannot be overestimated and highlights the crucial need for improved ED recognition, treatment, and prevention among Black women. Over the course of 20 chapters, the authors, all of whom are Black professionals, provide wide-ranging education and recommendations regarding complex racial and identity issues that often mediate ED symptoms in Black women. Further, potential barriers to seeking and receiving effective care among Black women with EDs are discussed at length, through topics including the impact of trauma, acculturative stress, colorism in EDs, stereotypes and body image development, food insecurity, mental health stigma in Black communities, spiritual needs, and considerations for non-Black providers who work with Black women.

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throughout their journeys with EDs, as well as discussion points to facilitate critical thinking that will guide multicultural competence in training environments.

Without question, *Treating Black Women with Eating Disorders* provides tools to expand the assessment, treatment, and understanding of EDs among Black women. Numerous clinical considerations throughout the book are also applicable for culturally diverse populations, beyond Black women. As such, it is a highly recommended resource that will undoubtedly offer new insights to even the most experienced provider. In fact, the book’s content was so beneficial that I will be sharing key concepts with colleagues at an upcoming multidisciplinary eating disorder team meeting within my institution.

New Members Corner

*Melissa Munn-Chernoff*

Welcome new AED members! Our membership is increasing, and we would like to take a moment to recognize all of the new AED members. Below are the 43 new members from July 2020 to September 2020, who represent 6 countries. Please join me in welcoming them to the AED!

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Bodywhys
Harriet Parsons

Bodywhys, The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, recently launched a dedicated body image website. This website is a one-stop-shop for information, tools, video content, quotes, and research/podcast recommendations for understanding, improving, and helping individuals of all ages, races, genders, and abilities with body image concerns.

Distorted body image and over-evaluation of shape and weight are key aspects of eating disorders. Body image is a key issue affecting youth mental health, and body dissatisfaction is additionally associated with alcohol and substance misuse, anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide. The pandemic has also meant that many of us are spending more time online. Building resilience in ourselves and others is critical for teachers and clinicians alike.

Fiona Flynn, the Bodywhys youth development officer, developed this website as part of her research on social media and body image. To ensure the content was relevant, focus groups of young people were asked what issues they struggled with and what they needed from a body image website. Furthermore, Fiona developed school programmes for 6 to 12 year olds called “Happy to be Me,” and for 13 to 18 year olds called “More than a Selfie”. Resources for 3rd level students are also available. All lesson plans and classroom resources can be downloaded from the website.

Supporting parents is key to supporting individuals with eating disorders. The website has a section for parents that provides helpful advice and guidance on how to talk to their loved one about social media, body image, and identity.

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Submit your Application for AED Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships by November 29, 2020!

Abstracts for ICED 2021 will be accepted through January 3, 2021.

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The Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative
Cynthia Bulik

The Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) is a global initiative to discover the genes that cause anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. Researchers in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Denmark are collecting clinical information and saliva samples from over 16,000 people with a history of eating disorders and individuals without an eating disorder. The goal of the study is to transform our knowledge about the genetic and environmental causes of eating disorders to work toward greater understanding and ultimately a cure. EDGI is also underway in the United Kingdom and Sweden. We are working toward additional sites in Mexico, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, and Taiwan.

Anyone who has ever had anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or binge-eating disorder is invited to complete a survey. Eligible participants are sent an easy-to-use “spit kit” to collect a saliva sample for DNA. A series of online questionnaires ask about eating disorder history, anxiety, depression, and other topics that may be relevant to understanding the causes of eating disorders.

Our goal is to compare the DNA of people with and without eating disorders to identify genetic risk factors. Our hope is that the results will help us develop new treatments that target the biology of the illnesses and help us to move toward personalized medicine instead of a “one size fits all” approach to the treatment of eating disorders.

Support AED with your giving! AED will be participating in #GivingTuesday, an annual day of global giving. You don’t have to wait until December 1 to give. Visit www.aedweb.org/donate to hear from some of our year-end giving ambassadors on how your support will help the Academy.