

## **2023 ASPAN National Conference – Denver, CO**

**Traci Gujer, BSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA**

I am extremely honored to be a recipient of the \$1000 National Conference Award for this year's 42<sup>nd</sup> ASPAN conference in beautiful Denver, Colorado. The generosity of the scholarship made it possible for me to have a wonderful conference experience with little expense out of my own pocket. I am so very thankful.

The theme of this year's conference, Heart and Science of Caring, was a perfect match for the sessions I attended. My favorite start to the conference is the opening ceremonies with President Connie Hardy Tabet. Connie delivered an excellent morning session, with many awards and accolades to so many amazing and talented nurses. The keynote speaker was one of my favorites over the years. She had grace and humility and discussed some wonderful ways to thrive with change. This day continued in greatness with the CPAN/CAPA celebration luncheon. A wonderful event to celebrate all the certified nurses and connect with the ABPANC board and the many components winning shining star awards. The speaker, Karen Allen, was passionate and moving. In addition to her wonderful words of wisdom, I was able to take home a signed copy of her new book.

Some other conference highlights for me was the ASPAN standards lecture. I find it fascinating how we change standards, update, and re-word practice guidelines so we all can have the best evidenced based practice at our facilities. I found the NORA update also very interesting, as this is the way we are heading. Saturday was all about staffing pacu's, regional anesthesia block information, recovering same day total joints, and having a strong workforce. Saturdays' meet and greet was a great finish to the day. I spent some time with my Region 3 colleges and then introduced myself to the Region 5 director and a few of her colleges. I have recently moved to Tennessee (just 4 days prior to the conference) and will now be apart of Chris Bucks' team. I am excited with this group of talented nurses and the possibility of setting up a conference in my new hometown of Johnson City.

Sunday morning I attended the development breakfast. It was emotional, and so well spoken by Dolly Ireland. She did a beautiful job of presenting all the past conferences and themes. I walked away feeling a bit more connected to Lois Schick, enjoying many stories of her kindness and wealth of knowledge that she shared to many over the years. I continued on to learning about the ABC's of PeriAnesthesia, and marijuana updates. I was able to visit and read the poster presentations in the exhibit hall and see all the vendors and their products prior to heading back home.

Again, I am so honored to have been chosen as a recipient of the scholarship for 2023. The conference was nothing short of amazing and inspiring. I am so very proud to be a member of ASPAN and all the talented nurses standing for excellence.