



## Members Making a Difference



### Robert Brodell, M.D.

**D**ermatologist Robert Brodell, M.D., has been volunteering at the community level since he returned to his home town of Warren, Ohio, in the mid-eighties to set up a practice after completing his dermatology and dermatopathology training. Dr. Brodell's volunteer activities have included both professional work as a volunteer at Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, where he served as chair for the dermatology department for 14 years and currently is a professor and Master teacher. He has also done charitable work as a leader and organizer with



For the past 11 years, Robert Brodell, M.D., pictured here with his family, has organized highly successful fundraisers for the American Cancer Society.

ter opportunities, he said, will find the experience allows them a chance to meet colleagues, get involved with research projects, or enjoy the pleasure of teaching, all things that he has participated in over the years.

In addition to this work, Dr. Brodell has long been a volunteer with his local chapter of the ACS. This relationship, he said, started simply with him delivering twice-yearly lectures on skin cancer on behalf of the society. Soon, however, he concluded that the group needed much more from him. "They needed someone to accept a leadership role and try to help the whole organization. I decided to accept that challenge," he said.

He explained that after struggling for a number of years to find a fundraising opportunity that resonated in his community, he decided to hold a Relay for Life event in his county. While prior events may have resulted in a few thousand

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dollars in donations, the first relay realized \$28,000. Last year was the eleventh such relay hosted by the local chapter of ACS, and \$900,000 was raised. Next year they hope to bring in \$1 million. Reflecting on his many failed fundraising attempts and ultimate success with the Relay for Life, Dr. Brodell commented, "All of a sudden we found an event that captured the imagination of my community, and the next thing you know we were going like gangbusters!"

Dr. Brodell urged any dermatologists not currently involved in volunteer work to "just do it." Although it takes a time commitment, he said, the rewards, in terms of people you meet, friends you make, the example you set for your children, and the development of leadership skills, make it well worth the effort. "Nothing I have done has enriched my life more than the friends I have made through volunteerism," he said. ■

### Neil Prose, M.D.

**P**ediatric dermatologist Neil Prose, M.D., has been involved with improving dermatologic education and treatment in the developing world for over a decade. With a variety of projects through the Society for Pediatric Dermatology (SPD) and the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), he has spearheaded the organization of efforts to provide educational materials where needed, build facilities, and bring physicians to the United States for educational opportunities.

These efforts have included helping to found and serving as the chair of the SPD's international committee. The group has overseen projects to donate subscriptions to *Pediatric Dermatology* to medical

volunteer dermatologists to small towns in rural areas of the Guerrero province to lecture on dermatology for a day to young doctors who are required to spend a year serving a rural population. The volunteers then spend a second day treating patients in a clinic. "Basically it is a very inspiring model of how dermatology might be taught and practiced in very poor areas of the world," said Dr. Prose.

Dr. Prose recently spent time serving as one of Dr. Estrada's volunteers and discussing how the Academy can assist in the program. As he speaks Spanish, he was able to deliver some of the lectures, for which he provided additional slides. He also helped to treat patients in the clinic.

Although he said that he feels the best contribution he can make to people is organizing the donation of resources and aid to initiatives like the Community Dermatology Program, he finds the opportunity to observe their needs first hand to be an invaluable



Neil Prose, M.D., examines a child with dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa during a recent trip to rural Mexico.

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libraries and children's hospitals in more than 30 countries. The committee also raised and donated \$25,000 to construct a building for housing guest teaching faculty at the Regional Dermatology Training Centre in Moshi, Tanzania. Dr. Prose has also been active in organizing the AAD's efforts to donate the AAD's National Library of Dermatologic Teaching Slides to institutions in developing countries.

His most recent project has been working with the AAD's Task Force on Skin Care in Developing Countries to investigate the feasibility of contributing to a project currently underway to bring dermatologic education and care to a rural area of Mexico. The Community Dermatology Program, founded 15 years ago by Acapulco dermatologist Roberto Estrada, M.D., brings

inspiration. "It is very important to visit these places to get a sense of what it is all like and to realize the importance of what is going on in certain areas and how difficult the situation is," he explained.

He added that the benefit of volunteering does not just accrue to the people who receive the aid. The volunteer, he said, is rewarded by seeing how much can be accomplished in these areas with very little. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for Americans to improve their country's reputation in the developing world. "As I travel, it's a worry that this country, for various reasons, is not seen as being the most generous and thoughtful country in the world. Anything that we do that can help others to understand how we feel as a people is very valuable," he said. ■

The American Academy of Dermatology's Ad Hoc Task Force for the AAD Leadership Circle for Volunteerism is interested in receiving information about volunteer activities by AAD members. If you or a colleague has been involved in ongoing volunteer efforts serving the profession or its patients, please submit the name of the individual, contact information, and a description of 50 words or less of his or her activities to the AHTF via e-mail at [volunteer@aad.org](mailto:volunteer@aad.org). Subjects for *Dermatology World's "Members Making a Difference"* column may be selected from among the names submitted. ■