

The Blessings and Benefits of CPFI Membership by Fred Starling

To be equipped. To be knowledgeable. To be an asset. To change the lives of those I come in contact with. Who knew that the same purpose and motivation for going into pharmacy exists for the faith I have in Christ? They come together both in ethics and principle, producing an interesting perspective on their utility in the healthcare system. I joined CPFI 2½ years ago with the hope that it would offer a form of support and Christian fellowship that I was previously exposed to in my undergraduate experience. At this point in time, CPFI defines who I am as a student, but it could amount to so much more. I have seen how being challenged and challenging others to be a faithful steward of God's Word and His principles can produce different forms of fruit. CPFI is an organization based on Biblical principles and, because of that, challenges many societal opinions on issues such as end-of-life choices or abuse potential for medications. Being a part of CPFI has given me the opportunity to learn how men and women of faith have tackled these issues in their practices and how it has strengthened their testimonies. It's encouraging to have an organization that supports your Christian beliefs; which is why I feel that remaining a CPFI member once I become a professional is essential to my spiritual life and my pharmacy practice. There are so many opportunities for faith to penetrate the healthcare system, especially in the area of pharmacy.

As pharmacists, we are one of the primary means of consolation, education, and care for our patients. The benefit of CPFI is two-fold: it gives pharmacists a platform to be a bold witness for Christ wherever they practice, and it also gives support beyond what I experience with other professional pharmacy organizations. CPFI is a spiritual family; and just like any family, active members know each other by name and

are willing to serve one another. I have been living for the Lord for the past 6 years, and I have noted much opposition to the Christian faith in my up-and-coming profession. CPFI has not eliminated the opposition, but it has reinforced the need for me to live for Christ in every situation. It allows me to challenge others to live by Christian principles, as "iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17, NIV). It challenges me to live by God's Word, even if it creates pressure or difficulties in my profession. Following Christ holds a greater priority than the career I will soon be practicing. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33, NIV). For me, a current student and soon-to-be professional, CPFI is a necessity. It empowers me to live for Christ in this profession and to be continually supported by those who strive to live the same way I do. CPFI is more than an organization; it's my community and my spiritual family.



Fred Starling is a current P3 student at the University of South Florida College of Pharmacy. Fred will be graduating in May of 2019. Fred has been a member of the College's CPFI student chapter since he began pharmacy school and has served as chapter president during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 schoolyears. He was the NSC publicist for 2016-17 and currently serves as the NSC Membership Transitions Coordinator for 2017-18. Fred wants to pursue a career in hospital pharmacy with a focus on population health initiatives and health disparities.

The Big Step: Becoming a Pharmacist by Sarah Palacio

When I started pharmacy school, everyone told me graduation would be here before I knew it. I certainly found this to be true; however, there were times in the midst of studying that I thought the day would never come. On graduation day, I was so happy to finally be done with school but there was still the stress of the upcoming law and board exams. I knew that if I didn't pass these crucial tests, then I would never be able to practice the profession that I love. When it came time to register for these exams, what surprised me the most was how much everything cost! The exams themselves are around \$754, and that's on top of the cost of preparation books and review courses.

After graduation I pursued a residency and also worked part-time in retail. Although residency is not for everyone, I can honestly say it was one of the best decisions that I ever made. Throughout residency you are exposed to many different avenues and choices where you not only learn more about pharmacy, but also about yourself.

It is the best time to explore new areas of pharmacy and challenge yourself to go beyond your comfort zone. One of the best parts of residency is the relationships that you are able to develop with patients, preceptors, and co-residents. Even now in my PGY2 residency, I still reach out to my old co-residents for help and support.

After graduation, one of the greatest challenges I faced was transitioning from a student to a practicing pharmacist. After graduation I became a graduate intern; and even though I had been an intern with this particular company for many years, I still had so much to learn. However, after I passed my exams it was go time. I remember the first day I stepped into the pharmacy, beaming with pride to finally do what I was trained to do. All I can say is that it was such a whirlwind! You realize just how slow you are... and you really appreciate how awesome the pharmacists who trained you are! What I learned from this experience is that I knew more than I thought and that it is okay to

ask for help. My advice to new graduates: remember to give yourself a break and reach out to your mentors and the pharmacists who helped train you.

Speaking of important relationships, I cannot express the value of the relationships I have developed through my involvement with CPFI. There is something special about CPFI and the bonds we share as pharmacists and believers. For me, matching for a second time and moving to a new place was challenging. After a whole year of building relationships during my first residency, I had to start all over again. However, I was invited by one of my co-residents to be involved with the CPFI chapter on campus, and I cannot express what a blessing this has been. Throughout my first few years as a pharmacist, it has been my fellow CPFI members who have reached out to me the most. Whether it was a friendly greeting before a certification test or an invitation to be involved, CPFI has continued to encourage me and help me grow as a pharmacist and a follower of Jesus. I plan