

## 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.



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## 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

to continue my membership with CPFI and I hope that my story will encourage other students to do the same after they graduate.

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*in Salisbury, NC. Her current interest areas include Diabetes, Hypertension, and Smoking Cessation. Dr. Palacio is currently completing a PGY2 Residency in Ambulatory Care with*

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## Relying on My 3 F's by Julie Kidd

Throughout my career in pharmacy, I've had the honor and privilege to practice in many unique and creative ways. I'm forever grateful for the opportunity to have received my education, to serve God, and to give back to my community, wherever that may be. In looking back over my journey thus far, I have processed some of my life's lessons and teachable moments. I want to share a few bits of advice or encouragement that I have told myself over the years. A lot of these lessons I've had to learn over and over again, starting with childhood and I still struggle with today. I have to remind myself of the reason why I was created. Yes, as pharmacists we have a responsibility to use the gifts and talents God has given us to care for our patients; but my purpose in life is to simply rest in the fact that I am the Lord's daughter and He is equipping me for His work. I can rest in this identity alone. No other identity will sustain me or give me peace. I often struggle with the amount of responsibility I have been given as a pharmacist, a mother, a wife, friend, daughter, and the list goes on and on. I often feel as though I can't measure up to everyone's expectations. But I don't have to. While it is a privilege and blessing to have these responsibilities, I can rest assured that my only identity is in my Creator. He adores me and is making me more like Him as I walk through this life and take on these responsibilities. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9 NIV). He's showing me how to walk in grace for the many times I fail and try to do things on my own power. I am so grateful for His everlasting love and guidance, and I find comfort in the truth that the only thing that truly matters is my identity in Him.

I want to give you a bit of perspective on my life's journey, both professionally and personally, and how these situations have molded me into the person I am today. I was born into a loving family that worked hard to give me and my sister as much as possible. From a young age, I became an athlete and really found my sport in softball. I joined a club travel team by the age of nine and all summer we traveled across the country, competing in tournaments with my softball family. Being a member of a team sport on this level taught me so many life lessons about commitment and hard work and working together as a unit to achieve a common goal.

When I was a young girl, my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer. She fought for almost a decade for her life but eventually the cancer metastasized to many parts of her body and the cancer won the battle. I was angry and extremely upset that she was taken from us at such an early age and made it my life's goal to find a cure for this disgusting disease. My sister was the first one in our family to graduate college, so education was really encouraged by my father. As my time to apply for colleges approached and I had to think about my life endeavors, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in medicine so that I can help people like

my grandmother. The Lord guided my steps to college and pharmacy school. Since then, there have been many unexpected turns in my career which have provided me the honor and privilege of meeting so many wonderful people. Along this journey, I have discovered specific issues that I have struggled with and areas where I needed to ask the Lord to take control of my strongholds; but in the end, it has made me grow into the person I am today. There are areas that I would like to encourage all of you, no matter where you may be in your life journey. Perhaps you are just starting pharmacy school and feel like you will never graduate... or you're in the middle of a very strenuous residency year... or you're at the peak of your pharmacy career... or you are retired... I pray that my life lessons will encourage you and help turn your eyes more towards Jesus. The three life lessons I would like to share are: 1. Focus on YOU! 2. Don't believe in lies, and 3. Don't forget "Why" and "Who" you are.

### Focus on YOU!

It's a fact that as a pharmacist, you will be busy. You have an upmost responsibility to take the best care of your patients in whatever arena you work. Not only does that mean you are to work hard in the workplace, but you need to work by staying up-to-date with the latest treatment strategies and counseling techniques. In order to sustain these responsibilities and present your best at all times, you must take care of YOU! No one else is going to do this for you. Only you can carve out time to take care of yourself. If you are not healthy, how can you take care of others? What does focusing on YOU look like? It's important to figure out what makes you, you. What makes you tick? Don't just be busy to be busy. Be intentional. Henry David Thoreau said, "It's not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?" For me, that is spending time with my family and most importantly, spending time with Jesus. I confess that on a busy and stressful day, Jesus is the first to go. I cut Him out of my routine and guess what...I feel terrible! But why must I re-learn this lesson every time I go through a stressful and hard season? In order to be grounded, I MUST keep my time with Jesus as the number one priority in my schedule. I have to keep my roots in the Lord. Other things that make me tick are exercising and being outside in nature. What are the things you need to stay healthy? Do you, like me, cut those things out every time the stress level starts to rise or its finals week or you start a new transition or a new job? What I am learning is simple: I cannot live without quality time with God. And I have to make the time, by intentionally scheduling that time, to take care of myself. This takes sacrifice on my part. In order to minimize distractions during my quiet time with the Lord, I wake up early in the morning before my wild and adorable boys wake up. I take a lunch break and go on a quick run. I schedule time to meet with my friends so I don't allow our fellowship fall to the side. It takes a deliberate effort, but I am spiritually, mentally, and physically healthy when I do this... and quite the opposite when I don't. I've learned to put up borders in order to protect myself and my