



Hank Carbone
AHE 2012-2014 Industry Liaison

BECOMING TRULY CONNECTED TO AHE

AHE is the organization of choice for professionals responsible for caring for the patient and resident care environment across all care settings; including hospitals, long-term care, continuing care retirement communities, and ambulatory care. AHE represents, defines, and advances over 2,000 professionals working to ensure quality outcomes and healthy communities. This is the official description for AHE—the one you find when you go to our organization’s website. AHE is all of these things, but our organization is also about making and fostering connections.

I attended my first ASHES (now AHE) conference in 2009 in Reno, Nevada. I can still remember feeling overwhelmed at the new member/first-time attendee orientation and welcome reception. There were many people, all of whom seemed to know each other. As I stood there, more than a bit hesitant to walk up and introduce myself to others, long-time member Allen Rudd walked up to me, introduced himself, and started a conversation. He then took me around and introduced me to others. That one introduction—that first connection—showed me that AHE was a special organization.

I had been to plenty of other conferences and trade shows in the past, and my impression of the conference world was that people generally moved around the conference in groups from their facility or company, people they already knew and worked with. It was my observation that people largely kept to the cliques they knew and weren’t readily willing to go out of their way to enter into discussions with someone new. My experience at this first AHE conference was so very different from what I had experienced elsewhere. As I’ve continued to attend conferences for AHE, as well as for other organizations, I’ve come to realize that it wasn’t just my experience that was different; it is AHE that is different.

AHE is about connecting people. Whether it be through sharing ideas through the AHE email ListServ, LinkedIn discussion group, or MyAHE bulletin boards; whether it be through meeting fellow members by taking one of the best-in-class (and free to members) online education courses or by participating in one of the various AHE committees; or whether it be meeting other members face-to-face at a regional chapter meeting or at the annual conference—AHE has many ways for you to get connected.

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By becoming connected with the network that is AHE, you immediately gain access to a membership base of over 2,000 professionals, all with knowledge and expertise to share. Trying to engage and celebrate your team on a shrinking budget? There is a member at AHE with whom to share ideas. Need a dashboard to help you better track your linen program? There is a member at AHE with a spreadsheet they’ll happily send you. Having problems with hand sanitizer staining/damaging your floor finish? There is a member at AHE who has had the same problem and has a list of alternate products to recommend.

By becoming connected, you’ll also make friendships. I’ve now attended six AHE conferences, and while each one is like a mini-reunion catching up with old friends, it is also an opportunity to make new friends. I make it a point to look for the blue New Member and pink First-Time Attendee ribbons and say hello to these people. A smile and a welcoming greeting can make a difference. For myself, it all started with Allen Rudd walking across the room and saying hello.

Reach out. Get involved. Get connected. ●

Best regards,

Sr. Product Development Program Leader,
Ecolab, St. Paul, Minnesota

