



**An Interview with Jerry Boster:
How to Plan, Prepare, and Implement a Community Event**
Davis Phinney Foundation

Angelina Arrington (Education Senior Program Manager – Content and Curriculum, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Hi there everyone. I'm Angelina Arrington. I am a Senior Program Manager in the education department at the Davis Phinney Foundation. And today I have the pleasure of interviewing Jerry Boster, who is the president of the Hawai'i Parkinson Association and a Davis Phinney Ambassador, and I'll be talking to him today about the organization's first major hybrid event, which was held this past April. It was its first major event in two and a half years. And the theme of the event was Parkinson's and mental health. The event was well attended. There was a total of 182 attendees, 96 in person and 86 virtual viewers in 46 unique locations. And today, I'm going to talk with Jerry about how he ideated the symposium, got people on board, created the agenda, and delivered the event. We hope that the HPA Symposium will serve as an inspiration and as a template for other community organizations that are trying to plan their own event. So here we go. Hi, Jerry, and welcome and thank you for being here today. And why don't we start by having you briefly introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about the Hawai'i Parkinson Association.

Jerry Boster (President of the Hawai'i Parkinson Association, Davis Phinney Foundation Ambassador):

No problem. Good morning and Aloha. Thanks for having me on. On the personal side, I'm a retired Navy officer. Now I work as a Navy, for the Navy as a federal civilian. In my off hours, I volunteer as the board president of the Hawai'i Parkinson Association. In addition to this, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's at age 47 in late 2013. The Hawai'i Parkinson Association's primary mission is to assist other Parkinson's patients live the best life possible, educate anybody who will listen, and then we facilitate research where possible.

Angelina Arrington:

Let's talk about the event. Shall we? So, the theme of the symposium was Parkinson's and mental health. How did you decide on this theme, Jerry?

Jerry Boster:

This was kind of a roundabout evolution process. The topic came up when I was in a couple conversations with good friends who are also people with Parkinson's. They told me of their struggles with anxiety and depression and got me thinking about mental health challenges. And I reflected on my own situation, my own journey, and I realized in hindsight that I'd had two mild bouts of depression. Now talking to the psychologist, they didn't meet the clinical definition, but they were depression. And after being a Navy officer for 24 years, I consider myself a pretty strong individual. And I looked at it, if they, my two friends, and I can all



experience some form of mental health challenge, and we're all pretty strong, that means good chance that a lot of other folks are having it too. And so, we needed to talk about it because it's a hard subject and nobody wants to talk about it. And so, I decided this is something that we needed to go after. And so, I pitched it to our board and they all kind of looked at me like I had a third eye to begin with. The more I more I talked about it, the more enthusiastic they got, because it made sense. We find that support groups like to go after the easy stuff, but nobody was really going after the hard stuff. And so, we were trying to, as an organization, to go after a lot of the hard things.

Angelina Arrington:

Okay. And so, in a conversation with you earlier, you and I talked a couple months ago, you mentioned that people with Parkinson's may have significant mental health challenges along their journey. And you referred to this as our "dirty little secret." And I found that very intriguing. Can you tell us more about what you mean by that?

Jerry Boster:

Yeah. "Dirty little secrets" have a habit of being there and everybody knows about them, but nobody wants to talk about them and that's exactly the way mental health challenges are. About, approximately 50% of Parkinson patients will experience a significant mental health challenge during the course of their journey with Parkinson's. But how much do you hear about these talked about? Maybe a little more than when I first was diagnosed back in 2013, but you still don't hear a lot. So, it's this little "dirty little secret" that everybody knows, but nobody really wants to talk about and something that I felt I feel strongly now that I'm glad we went after.

Angelina Arrington:

Absolutely. And so, taking this idea of needing to highlight the connection between mental health and Parkinson's, you then stepped into planning a pretty large event. What was your overall goal for the event?

Jerry Boster:

The main goal of the symposium that we do every spring is education. And so that had to be number one. We wanted to educate people on what are mental health challenges, but if I'm going to show them what a mental health challenge looks like or talk to them about it, then I need to give them some tools to deal with it.

Angelina Arrington:

You did something very unique to share the stories of mental health and Parkinson's. Tell us a little bit about your unique approach in this particular symposium.

Jerry Boster:

I'd read this summary of a study that said, if you give people death by PowerPoint, they retain about 10%. You want them to retain more than that, but if you can engage them in a discussion and they ask one question that jumps that retention to about 40%. But if you have a robust discussion, it jumps it to 80%. And so, I got to thinking and somewhere I had this, this idea pop up into my mind, well, we need to show them what they look like. Well, how do you show people what mental health challenges look like? Well, you have to, you get somebody up on stage, an actor and you show them. So, I decided to do two skits, one young onset, one more advanced. We came up with these two skits and then maintain the goal of education, we didn't want to go too long because it doesn't take very long to actually show some of the mental health challenges. Skits can be fairly short.

But what we really wanted to do was talk about it. What did they see? And then what, how do you give them tools? So, we put together a team of subject matter experts to lead a discussion. And so, the team was a neurologist, MDS neurologist, a geriatrician, who is a palliative care specialist and then a psychologist itself, because these are the people that you would typically see, and they're going to help you along anyways. And so, we spent about 10 to 12 minutes doing the skits and about 45 minutes in the discussion. And they were amazingly good discussions. I tried to prep the doctors on what we wanted to do and what we wanted to accomplish but taking questions from the audience and having this discussion, it's always very, let's say, risky, because you never know what you're going to get.

Angelina Arrington:

Well, you know, as a former educator, I feel like role playing is one of the best ways to teach concepts. And we do it a lot with children. And a lot of times when we get older, we think we don't need that tool. But we do and clearly it works. And it works to impart the information that you wanted to share about the mental health in Parkinson's. I want to lean in a little more about the details of the event, because I'm sure we have people who are community organizers who may want to hold their own event. So, what tools did you use to organize your event?

Jerry Boster:

You know, a variety of tools that I've gained over a career in the military, which helped. First one is you got to get organized. This is what I call my "Book of Knowledge."

Angelina Arrington:

Okay. I love it.

Jerry Boster:

I'm going to open it. You can't see it very well.

Angelina Arrington:



There it is. I can see it right there.

Jerry Boster:

That's the table of contents for my "Book of Knowledge."

Angelina Arrington:

Wow.

Jerry Boster:

And it's a working document. And so, stuff comes in and goes out and it's constantly updated, but this helps you stay organized and keep track of everything. And then as far as tools, I used anybody that has any expertise in any of those fields that I need, and I try to go to the experts because I don't, I'm not the expert in all this stuff. So, I try to go to the people that are.

Angelina Arrington:

So, who was on your event, team, Jerry; who helped you coordinate, execute the event, put it together?

Jerry Boster:

It's kind of, I'd say anybody I could get, twist their arm to help me out. No, I mean, there's a lot of people that were actually pretty enthusiastic and it was pretty amazing. I ended up having about 40 volunteers help me put on this event, including seven doctors which we, there were both psychologists, MDS, as well as geriatricians. And then I had five of my board members. I had six members of the Pre-Medical Association; they do a lot of volunteer work with us. I had a prominent local TV personality. I had facilities crew. And then I just had some general volunteers, all the way from high school students, all the way up to the seniors. But then we, because I wanted to do something special with this and tape it and distribute the taping very broadly, I did hire a professional film crew and I paid them. And then the director and the actors, I ended up paying them, even though they probably would've done it for free. But after talking to them for a while and some of the other expectations that are put onto them by their own industry, I felt I needed strongly, I needed to pay them. And it worked out well because they did a phenomenal job and they want to come back anytime I need anything now, since we did pay them.

Angelina Arrington:

How did you come up with the idea of the role play?

Jerry Boster:

It really goes back to my own personal life. Janice, my wife, and I, when we lived in San Diego, used to go to the theater pretty regularly. And one day when I was thinking about how do we



show people things, all of a sudden it popped into my head back when we used to go to theater, when people were walking out, everybody's talking about the play one way or another, they either liked it or they hated it or they're debating it. And just, I thought about, and it's like, man, that's what we need. And so, I'm like, well, why can't we do it? And so that's when I came up with the idea of putting on a skit. I had no idea how big or how little it was going to be. And I had no idea how to find the actors. And from a good idea, it was a lot of luck in some respects that I pulled it all together.

Angelina Arrington:

Well, you know, that's event planning, right? It's part planning hands on and then just part luck. So, I'm glad that worked out on your behalf. Tell me a little bit then about outside of the actors, outside of the unique aspects, you also did both in person and a virtual event. How does, how did you organize that and what does the tech look like for that?

Jerry Boster:

It's actually easier than you think. We did have a little bit of experience on this. Cause during the pandemic we were doing virtual events and so kind of started out with, actually the Michael J. Fox Foundation. I attended a policy event, and they had this beautiful virtual event and I started pulling the string to see how much that would cost to see if I could bring it to Hawai'i. When they, the first quote I got was \$50,000. I said, oh no, no, that's a little, little, little too much. And so, they said, oh, we have something for nonprofits. It's a little more, little more in your price range probably. And they said \$15,000. And I said, eh, that's still a little bit much. And so, we were using zoom meeting at that point, just for the regular stuff like everybody does. So, I called up zoom and started talking to them about what capabilities they had.

And I started using zoom webinar for our symposium last year and then the virtual walks. And symposium works out pretty well and it's fairly inexpensive. And so, I decided to use that as our kind of our platform here, but, and that allowed us to stream on Facebook and YouTube. And we've tried to do it strictly on Facebook for, to kind of control it. And what I found is there's a lot of people that don't like Facebook streaming or don't want to use it, but everybody seems to like YouTube. And so, we decided to go ahead and stream it both ways to give people multiple people access. And then it's kind of, okay, here's the event. I'm in charge of the event. I'm also the emcee. How do I run this? Well, I say, I can't. So, I picked, I took two guys, one was local. There's an IT guy that volunteers with us a lot, and I said, Jay, you're in charge of the AV working with the TV personality, because the TV Personality's been doing it for 35 years, phenomenal guy, extremely professional and he knows all the, the microphone setups and how to use them and make, work them to your advantage. So, I put those two guys in charge of the AV crew, and I gave them, I set them down with, and said, here's the concept, here's what I want you to do during this event. And here's what we're trying to accomplish. And then I just let them go because I trust them. And if you go back and watch our YouTube video that's on our YouTube channel, it, they did a phenomenal job. There was a lot of stuff I had not envisioned.

They went and did a bunch of; we took a break in between the two skits to give the actors a rest and let people visit the resource fair and they're going around and doing interviews, getting sound bites. They're doing all this stuff that a good crew does, but I didn't have to ask them to do it because I trusted them, and they know what they're doing. So, it was just a phenomenal team. And the AV crew was extremely professional. They showed up, they were the first ones there that morning. I mean, we were there at 6:30. They got, they rolled in about 5:45 to start setting the AV up so that they would be ready because you never know what, we were in a courtyard, but we had tents and we'd had a lot of rain the night before. And so, you don't know with weather in Hawai'i, what it's going to be. So, it worked out really well and giving them the concept and not micromanaging was the key; letting, entrusting them to do their job, which they did.

Angelina Arrington:

The video was really well done. I saw it as well. And they had different angles of the camera, different cuts. They did a really great job. A follow up question is then how did you engage the virtual participants and make them feel like they were present and included in the event, in the skits, in the discussion?

Jerry Boster:

The biggest thing I could say there is you have to treat them as if they're sitting in a chair in the event. A lot of times what happens is people forget about them. And so, they don't, when they ask a question online, there's nobody monitoring and so they don't get to them for a while. And by the time you get to them, it's a lot of time, you're past it and moving on. So, I treated them like they're sitting in a seat. When I was, did my opening remarks, I went around and welcomed people that I knew. I made sure I reached out and there were a few people I knew that were going to be online. So, I reached, I welcomed them on online, right up front when I was doing everybody else. When we're doing the skit, I had part of the AV crew, they were monitoring both Facebook and YouTube for comments and questions.

So, as they're coming in, I'm taking them in real time and I'm taking accurate, we're not going out and summarizing their words because you know, a person that stands up in person, they ask the question. So, we wanted the questions to be the same questions that they are asking with the same, you know, you have to change a word here or there just to make it make sense sometimes, but I didn't wait. The questions came in, we, my TV personality and I were both, we were texting back and forth as questions are going, or we also had hand cues. And so, he knew he would signal me that he had a question if I was in the middle of one. And I was, if I put him in line with the in-person people and a few questions I had, just points I wanted to raise, but I made sure they got asked. And so, you be as inclusive as possible. And it worked out really well. I was really surprised.

Angelina Arrington:



That's a great soundbite in itself because during the pandemic we were on zoom a lot. And we had to really think through how to make people feel included from a distance. So, it sounds like you had your own team and really your own system for making sure that they were engaged. So that's awesome. I'm going to remember that if I ever have to do any online events as well. What materials did you provide the attendees?

Jerry Boster:

Like a lot of events, we had a participant bag at check in. You had a welcome letter and literature from our sponsors and vendors. We had food coupons, save the date flyer for our next big event. We had, because we were in a courtyard in Hawai'i, we had little hand fans made to help people keep cool. Then of course a critique form. But one of the things that I do, that's kind of, I think unique, is I put together a sponsor and vendor directory. And this kind of came out of the pandemic where sponsors want people to get the information and it's hard virtually. So, I decided to let everybody submit an ad. I bound it together and I mailed it out to everybody after the event. We did the same thing in the in-person events, but I do them afterwards because people are so bad about hitting timelines and getting it in and getting it printed ahead of time.

But also, because you don't know how many people are going to show up that day, even with pre-registration, that saves me, because I can get a more accurate number, but it's, so afterwards I'd send out the directory, with more food coupons and then any late arriving sponsor info. But I did the same thing for the virtual. I took almost all that stuff that came in the participant bag, and I put it all in an envelope and sent it to the virtual participants. So, they got the same thing. The only thing I didn't include was a couple of the goodies that were bulky, like little bottles of hand sanitizer or pins. Those, I just, you know, it's not worth the time of money to mail those, but the important things, the information from the sponsors and vendors that you want to get in their hands, that's what we made sure we either sent before or after the event.

Angelina Arrington:

So, you're saying that even the people at home then who were virtual participants, they also had a sort of conference goody bag.

Jerry Boster:

They got it, but not until after the event.

Angelina Arrington:

Okay. Okay. That makes sense.

Jerry Boster:

It goes back to that inclusiveness. When they get it, they'll remember all the stuff we talked about and it'll be like, yeah, no, they felt. It would've been nice to send it ahead of time but sending it ahead of time to get it to everybody when I have people on the mainland, I think I even had a couple international people, it's just really hard. And I, you know, I apologize to the people online for not getting it to them ahead of time, but at least they got it and felt like a part of it afterwards.

Angelina Arrington:

Yeah, absolutely. So, let's talk little bit of the meat and potatoes. I'm sure people are thinking while this was a great, there was a lot happening, there were a lot of hands on. What were the event costs?

Jerry Boster:

You know, it's not as bad as you would think, because being a nonprofit, a lot of people volunteer time, a lot of people give you discounts on events. So, our total cost was just under \$15,000. The single biggest cost was the audio visual, which total for everything was about \$6,000. If I hadn't gone with that professional crew, I would've saved a lot of money, but for the goals I had, what I wanted to do with this, with the videos, I wanted a professional crew. And so, I was willing to spend a little more. The second highest cost was equipment rental. We had to, like I said, we mentioned, or like I mentioned, it was in a courtyard. And with the weather here, we had to bring in tents and tables and chairs to make sure that everybody stayed dry, and it worked out. So that was about \$2,500. The director and actors, that was an interesting discussion because they don't have a set rate. And they're, so I'm asking how much do people normally pay you? And the director told me how much he recommended, he gave me a range to pay the actors. And it worked out to be \$250 an actor, which was actually on the high range, because they normally get about \$200. But after the skits, I saw how they came off, they were worth a little bit extra.

And then I had to, but he wouldn't give me a number to pay himself. So, I had to go to his associate dean at the university and say, "Hey, how much do you normally pay the director?" But I paid him handsomely because he was not only the director, he was also the writer. And so, he took on two roles and so I paid him as such for each individual role and I rolled it up. But I paid him \$750 because of the amount of time that he put in to make this happen. And it wasn't just, you know, one or two meetings type thing, it was scripts going back and forth. And then I'd, we'd farm them out to the other, to the actors as well as other Parkinson's patients and caregivers to make sure we got this just right. Other costs, printing and mailing about a thousand dollars. One thing we do that most people don't, because we have sponsors, we do a reception the night before the event to thank all the sponsors and major players for their support. And I've heard from a lot of the sponsors who are a lot of the drug companies, they don't get this elsewhere and they love coming to Hawai'i because of that.

And I've seen it pay off in financial gains and how much, what kind of sponsor levels they come in at. Most of the time they don't come in at the bare minimum, they'll come in a little higher because we treat them well. Then we add other things that are more unique to Hawai'i. We give leis of different types. And so, we spent a lot of money, we spent almost a thousand dollars on leis because the amount of people we gave them to. And then, because we are also geographically dispersed, we bring any of our board members over from the neighbor islands. So, we had to pay travel costs there, but we only had one. So that was about \$400. And then there was just all my supplies, the print, the local printing and all the different things, about \$1,200. So, all said and done about \$15,000, not too bad.

Angelina Arrington:

And I heard you say something about sponsors and making sure they were highlighted throughout the conference and also in your conference packet. Can you tell us a little bit about your sponsorship and if you had different levels of sponsorship and what did that look like for you?

Jerry Boster:

Yeah, this is something that's evolved over time, and I view my sponsors as partners and the way I deal with them is I give them a fair value for their money. And so, I don't owe them anything. They don't owe me anything at the end. It's a fair exchange. Now, I do structure it and I basically have five levels of sponsorship and I require a sponsor to start at the bronze level, which is a thousand dollars per event. Then it's, then I go silver \$2,500, gold, \$5,000, platinum \$7,500. And then if anybody really wants to pay me a lot of money, they can become a presenting sponsor. And that is negotiable. And so, for this event, we normally run between 12 and 15 sponsors. We had three of the local health systems came in at the gold level. Four industry partners came in at the silver level, three industry partners at the bronze level.

Then the University of Hawai'i came in at the bronze level. But one thing that I would say about the sponsor packages is when you put them together, be creative and recognize that everything is negotiable because there are things that they need in the packages, there are things that you may have in there that they don't need. So, if I have somebody come to me and say, "Hey, I don't really need this, this and this item, but I really need this." We talk about it and see what we can do because I really want to get them on board. So, our total sponsorship funding for this event was right, was \$24,000. And so, I, we brought in 24 and we only spent 15. My goal is always to pay for the event first and foremost, and then any residual funds just going into our programs. So, we ended up with about \$9,000 going into our organizational programs, which is great.

Angelina Arrington:



Now that's quite a successful sponsorship campaign. Congratulations on that. And speaking of successes, would you consider your event a success and how, and if so, how do you measure success?

Jerry Boster:

The goal, well, the event was a success. It was more successful than I'd anticipated, which is phenomenal. I love it. And we wanted to leave people with a better recognition of what a mental health challenge looks like if they're not seeing it. And sometimes they see it and don't recognize it. So, we want them to be able to recognize the health challenges and then have some tools available to deal with those challenges. And then, you know, we always want to lower the stigma. If you have mental health challenge, we want to make them understand that they're not alone. And so, when we wanted to see if we met these goals, we did it a couple ways. We put critique forms in everybody's basket or everybody's bag, and ask them to fill them out. But a lot of people don't like to fill out stuff, some do.

So, we got a few of those back. I got a lot of email comments, believe it or not, folks, just out of the blue, just sent me a note to say it went well. And then I got some anecdotal feedback. So, we ended up having about 35 people input information in one form or another, this included on YouTube and Facebook comments coming in. And for the first time ever, I had zero negative comments on anything. Even the logistics. I've never had this happen before, but the two most anecdotal comments that told me about my success. One came from a couple that he's been diagnosed for, I guess about a year now. And they're very heavy church goers as well. We did our event on a Saturday morning, but they were going to come for a couple hours, because our event's four hours, they were going to come for the first half and then leave to go to their church event that they had planned on.

And after the first skit, the young onset skit, the husband, or the wife looked at the husband and says, "call our church friends, tell them, we're not going to make it because we're staying for the rest of this event," because she felt that strongly about what we were doing. And it was that useful to her that she really wanted to stay. So that was a pretty big comment from my friend. The other one actually came from one of the doctors and I involved her, she's the MDS, and I involved her very early on in the planning. And she says, told me after the event, she says, "when you first came to me, I wasn't sure you were going to be able to pull this off. This is a pretty big concept, big event." She goes, "but you did it and you just didn't do it, didn't just pull it off, you pulled it off really well." And so, you know, I've got a doctor, 20-year MDS doctor that's been to all sorts of stuff, giving me a big thumbs up as well as the newly diagnosed saying, "yeah, this was great, really useful." Those were anecdotally both, those made me feel really good that we actually hit the mark for what we were going after.

Angelina Arrington:



Well, congratulations on such a wonderful event on so much good feedback from your attendees as well. And we want our other community members to be able to plan events as successful as this one. So, what suggestions or advice do you have for other community organizations that would like to plan an event for their community?

Jerry Boster:

Sure. I've got a number of things. First one is realize that this is your event. You structure it how you want it, and you don't have to follow what everybody else has done. And so, you want to pull the best parts from all these different events. And I talk to a lot of the drug reps who go to a lot of events. I talk to national organizations like Davis Phinney and Fox for good ideas so that you can pick the ones that fit with what you're trying to do. And then don't recreate the wheel. You don't have to be the good shell answer, man, good idea, guy, go out and take out, take steal from what other people are doing. There's a lot of people have put a lot of brain power, a lot of money and a lot of work into a lot of these events.

So, take what they're doing and then ask the experts. I mentioned this earlier. I'm not an expert on a lot of this stuff, like on the AV stuff, I had to meet ahead of time with the AV guys to understand what they need so I can tell them, I described what I'm trying to do. And they said, okay, then we need this many mics and this many cameras. And basically, I said, okay. I mean, because I'm not the expert, let the expert do their job. Book of knowledge, invaluable to keep track of everything, create your own, make it look like what you want. This one works for me because it's a way I think. Communication always the key. You have to communicate your vision, what you're trying to do, what your expectations are, the timelines. And then you want to have clear and concise coordinating instructions.

You want, don't flood a person's email with little things. Every once in a while, put out a big comprehensive document that covers everything from soup to nuts. Maybe like a month out, maybe two weeks out. And then a last one, a couple days out, just so everybody has that one document to go to because I just did an event, a big expo for seniors and they were flooding our inbox and the guidance was always changing and their goal was to give us the latest and greatest, but all it did was confuse a lot of people. Empower your people and don't micromanage. You hear me talking about that with the AV guys. Pick a few key people that you know, and you trust and put them in charge of the critical areas like I did with AV. My wife ran the food and drink, and I didn't even have to deal with that because she knew what she wanted.

She had her plan and I just, I pulled out the credit card and I was the money guy for that, but I just let her run it. Participant bags, I've got a friend of mine who just recently retired that's great at it. And so, she put all those together. I just give her all the stuff that I needed in the bags as it came in and she put them together. And so, it's very important to have those few key

people, but you can't do it all yourself much as some of us try you can't. But then you want to have a few volunteers in a manpower pool. There's going to be problems on the day of the event, inevitable. And so, you need to have a few people just kind of set to the side that you can throw at the problem.

It's usually not money on the day of the event. It's usually, anything is solved with an application of manpower. And then, because things are going to happen, you got to be flexible. You know, you don't know what's going to happen. I had set up things because we're, we were doing this our event at a healthcare system. We had pandemic procedures in place. I had it all lined out, what time I needed my people there to be in place so that when visitors started showing. And you know, people run late, traffic, just getting up early in the morning, because I needed them there like at a lot of them at 6:30, that means they had to get up at 4:30 and 5:00 to get ready to get there. And people run late. Some of that, you can plan for. Because I planned an extra 15 minutes in the schedule for that kind of stuff. And then I had people show up 30 minutes late and they weren't there when I needed them. So, I had to grab other people. So just be flexible and don't play the blame game. You can always look at what happened afterwards, solve the problem first. Those are a lot of them.

Angelina Arrington:

Excellent, excellent advice. That's really good advice. I am learning so much here too. Because one of my jobs is to help with conference agendas and plan conferences. So, I'm taking a lot of mental notes, Jerry. I appreciate all of the good tips here. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you want share with us today?

Jerry Boster:

A couple things that that I thought about when we were talking about this question ahead of time. No matter how much work that goes into this, you got to have fun. You can't be the curmudgeon, which is our inclination and be the old tyrant. Have fun because its, people key off you as the event coordinator. So, use your imagination. Think out of the box, try to do different stuff because if you do it right, the event can be very rewarding. And this one was. Last two are how you deal with yourself that day. Because I have Parkinson's and I have temperature regulation problems, I dehydrate easily. And at these events you're usually so busy. You forget to eat; you forget to drink. So, one of the things I did this year, and it was really worth it, was I took one of my close friends and designated him as my personal assistant.

His job was to make sure I took care of myself. I didn't have to run and get a bottle of water or something to drink. He brought me food. He brought me drink to make sure that I could stay up and running so that we could make the whole event work. Because I realized that I was kind of a linchpin on a lot of this stuff. And if I go down, then the event doesn't, it'll happen, but just not as well. So, I made sure for the first time I took care of myself first. And the other thing is



being the key guy, a lot of people are going to want to chat with you. And so I, the other thing I did this year was I parked myself from one place and I did not leave. The inclination is there's a problem over here, run over here and try to take care of it.

Well, that's what I had that manpower pool. And I had some good people, it wasn't just, you know, college students or high school students. I had some experience in that pool. So, if I had a problem, I could send them over knowing that they would more than likely take care of it. They may have to come back and ask me a question on an adjustment or something. But I stayed by the podium as the emcee and people came to me and that was key. One, it actually let people know where I was so that I was easy to find gave them better access. But as people are coming just to chat, because you get a lot of, especially the drug reps or other business people want to chat about business. You can do like you do with kids. If you have a group of kids, you're sitting there chatting with somebody, maybe another adult, but you're still watching what's going on around you.

And it was really interesting at one point, we did the first skit and then we had, like I said, we had about a 45-minute break so people could visit the resource fair and the tables and I'm sitting there chatting and I ended up with a break from visitors and I looked around and kind of took stock of how things were going. And I noticed something, everybody was engaged in a conversation, laughing, having good time, but getting information. The thing was doing what it was supposed to do. And it went right and I'm sitting there going, "Holy smokes. This is actually working!" And so, it gives you that opportunity. I'm sure you, if you have kids, you run into it at party stuff where you get that 15 seconds where no kids running up to you, no adults are begging your time. You look around and say, "yeah, so yeah, this is working." So, park yourself in one area, take care of yourself and keep yourself functioning so that you can keep the event on track. Those are kind of the last things that, my pieces of advice. I don't always take that advice, but after this year and how well it went, that's definitely going to be part of my setup from here on out.

Angelina Arrington:

So, you have set yourself up for, I'm sure, many more successful events after this. This was all great information, excellent advice and excellent tools for people who also want to have some sort of event for their own Parkinson's community. So, we really appreciate your time and your wisdom today, Jerry. How can people reach out to you if they'd like to connect and hear more about the Hawai'i Parkinson Association Symposium?

Jerry Boster:

The symposium itself like I mentioned earlier is on the YouTube channel for Hawai'i Parkinson Association. You just search on Hawai'i Parkinson Association and our YouTube page will pop up



and on the top line right now there's a four-hour video, which is the entirety of the symposium, but we also broke out the two skits and each one is right at an hour long. One has a YOPD in the title and the other one hallucinations in the title. So, I would encourage folks to go watch. Four hours is a long time, and you can fast forward, but you can see a lot of the, the other stuff that went on, you can see my TV personality, what he did on the break and really get a feel for the stuff. The skits were the important piece.

And that's what I want most people to carry away. But as event planners, I would encourage you to watch all four hours of it. As far as getting in touch with me the best one, because I work my 40 hours for the Navy and then I do another 20, 25 hours on Parkinson's and I'm in Hawai'i, so, there's time zone changes for most people is by email. It's jboster@parkinsonshawaii.org. And we're on the Parkinson's website, which is parkinsonshawaii.org. You can always link through there or the ambassadors, Davis Phinney Ambassador's website. I am routinely getting emails from people I'm helping there too, so.

Angelina Arrington:

Thanks, Jerry, for your contact information and making yourself available, and again, for your time today. I am going to conclude our interview here. Again, folks, my name is Angelina Arrington. I am a senior program manager in the education department at the Davis Phinney Foundation. And you can stay connected with us by going to www.davisphinneyfoundation.org. We have a very robust website. That's full of information about Parkinson's, whether you are a young onset person with Parkinson's, whether you are an older person living with Parkinson's. We have blogs that keep you updated on the most recent advances in exercise, in medications and treatment. We also have manuals for those of you who are newly diagnosed, for those of you who are care partners, for people with Parkinson's, and other wonderful resources that are available to you. And we really appreciate you listening today and joining us, have a good one, take care.

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