



Background: Chairman's Theme: Make A Difference

The 2007 – 2008 Chairman's Theme relates to the power of the individual to contribute by becoming engaged, involved, and passionate about *making a difference*. It urges us to not be complacent with the status quo, but rather to become involved – to be willing to give back of our time, talent, and gifts for the benefit of our communities, our organization, our profession, and ultimately ourselves. Often it relates to an individual act or series of acts that influences another person or group.

Most of us can remember a person who made a difference in our lives. This person helped us make the right decision when we were at a crossroad. It was someone who urged us to recognize our own worth and to move outside of ourselves to make a difference. Often examples are simple, and related to a career move or enhancement. Other examples, however, are massive and have societal impact. Either way, this theme urges us to give back by becoming such a person to someone else.

Mentoring someone or helping someone after that person lost a job is an example. Urging someone to become a volunteer with HFMA is another. Or on a large scale, Erin Gruwell is an example of someone who did this in a Long Beach classroom. She touched the lives of 150 throw-away kids, who themselves will touch others, and so on, and so on. Another example of this is the story of a high school boy who was seen by another boy leaving the school with all of his text books. The other boy asked if he could help and eventually befriended the first boy. As it turns out, the first boy was contemplating suicide because of a feeling of isolation and hopelessness. The simple act of kindness saved his life.

It follows Joe Fifer's theme of "courage in leadership" which identified the need for financial leaders to step up and do those things they think they cannot do because it is the right thing to do. It also is a logical progression to recognizing the need to provide the resources necessary for high quality and safe patient care – the "business of caring" as advocated by Richard Rodriguez.