2021 Annual Conference – August 11-14

Report to Chapter 99, Silicon Valley NAWIC
By: Laura Grabar, 2020-2021 President

Kayla Alvarado, Shawna Alvarado, Laura Grabar, Marlene O'Donnell and Angie Ramos represented Chapter 99 at the 2021 Annual Conference.

The conference began Wednesday evening August 11 with the opening networking reception. However due to weather all five of us were unable to make the reception. As we were stuck in Chicago overnight due to weather. We had to wait until Thursday morning to catch the next flight out of Chicago to Charlotte NC. We arrived to the hotel at 1:30pm. We missed the opening keynote speaker and the lunch but we were able to participate in the remaining sessions of the afternoon.

I attended the breakout session given by Dave Devlin who was the opening keynote speaker. He led us through a nine step process of self-discovery to identify what is most important. This process can be used both in your personal life as well as your professional life. This is a lifelong process because as we grow we often find that our pathway may change over time. This was followed by a panel discussion on how embracing our differences can help build a stronger workforce through diversity, equity and inclusion.

Friday morning I attended the breakout session aligning leadership and communication for a positive life outcome. Since you see things as you are and not as they are, it is just as important to have good listening skills as well as consistent and correct communication. Good leaders are usually humble, decisive but also empathetic.

Friday's luncheon was the installation and recognition ceremony. I look forward to President Doreen Bartoldus and her theme of Envision Equity.

The afternoon session was on building, growing and developing a Spartan team. In order to have a collaborative team it is important to get the right members on the team. The first step is in effectively interview in order to build your team.

The evening ended with the Gala Banquet followed by music and dancing. There was to be activities outside on the patio but due to rain and thunder the festivities were cancelled.

Saturday morning's session was on how to create a PD & E (Professional Development and Educational) program. A chapter's success comes from members that feel they are getting real value. By creating a strong, organized PD & E program it builds member value.

The conference ended on a strong note with the closing keynote speaker Stacey Hanke on how to "Communicate with Influence". You should speak slowly in bullet point sentences while avoiding speaking crutches "um, uh, like" between sentences. Pause between sentences. Make eye contact with the audience while speaking. Pick one person in the audience say your sentence, pause while you find the next audience member then say your next sentence. Using the time between to think of what you want to say next in silence without using bridge words. This creates a more powerful

communication style.

I look forward to next year’s annual conference in Minneapolis Minnesota.