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Massari to Pharmacists: “Every single thing you do on behalf of another human being counts.”

Allison Massari was a young, vibrant, talented artist with her whole life ahead of her when a sudden, life-threatening event threatened to destroy it all. The drive home from a late-night movie ended in a tragic, high-speed car crash that left her life hanging in the balance. Massari's car exploded into flames, searing off her scalp, her backflesh melting into the vinyl upholstery of the driver's seat, and skin burning to the bone. The highly flammable turpentine she'd picked up from the art supply store earlier that day remained nestled in the back seat—a ticking time bomb for a car already shooting flames 20 feet into the air. Fully conscious at the time, Massari began thinking what she believes were abnormal thoughts for someone who was about to die.

“I was shocked to see that the anguish of my loneliness was more potent than my agony and begged God not to let me die alone,” she recalls. “This tells me how much human beings need each other—a depth of that truth I had never known until I endured the fire.”

The profound revelation of the need for human connection would follow the young artist throughout the many months of an agonizing recovery pro-

cess. During the first 24 hours after the accident, physicians worked to determine whether she had sustained a spinal cord injury. Throughout that time, no pain management medication could be administered. It was also during this time that the Massari would undergo her first debridement—also without receiving any pharmacological agents to help manage a pain so excruciating it left her unable to speak or move.

Having sustained second- and third-degree burns to more than 50 percent of her body, a long road to recovery lay ahead of her. Despite enduring the insurmountable agony of numerous debridements, skin grafts, and more than 400 days of physical therapy, a mantra remained steadfast in her mind. This thought was planted from the moment she locked eyes with the man who broke through the driver's side window to save her life: Love and kindness.

Massari believes that simple acts of love and kindness can transform the patient experience and are not limited to healthcare professionals. Everyone has the power to heal.

“It can be something as simple as a gentle smile, a hand on someone's back, or holding someone's hand so



Allison Massari delivers Saturday's keynote address.

they know they are not alone,” she says.

Despite enduring extreme physical pain, Massari was able to feel the love and positive energy of the nurses who cared for her and people who sent her get-well cards. Just knowing that people had lined up outside her room to see her at a time when she was re-

stricted from human contact gave her a boost. Years later, she still can feel the warmth and positive energy of the people who supported her during her arduous recovery.

The daughter of a surgical oncologist and a nurse, Massari believes

Continued on page 7



Keynoter Allison Massari urges pharmacists to understand the reach of their healing abilities.

Keynote

Continued from page 1

the combination of her upbringing and life-altering car crash have given her the opportunity to help patients and medical professionals alike see the link between giving and receiving medical attention.

"It's important to me to say that compassionate care isn't just about being kind," Massari told the audience during her ACCP Keynote address. "Being an expert at your job is compassionate care. Double- and triple-checking your work is compas-

sionate care. Being up to date on the most effective treatments that minimize pain and discomfort is compassionate care."

Massari encourages pharmacists to recognize that the reach of their healing abilities transcend the act of providing pharmaceutical care.

"[Pharmacists] are the healers of the world. Anyone who eases pain is a healer—whether you are working directly with a patient or behind the scenes in leadership, education, administration, or in the lab. Every single thing you do on behalf of another human being counts."