



Terence D. McDonald, DPM is the President of the Florida Podiatric Medical Society (FPMS)

## Effective Altruism

by Terence D. McDonald, DPM

Recently, I read an article in *The New York Times* about a young graduate from Princeton University. This young man was at the top of his class and had won an award for his senior thesis from Princeton’s philosophy department. Instead of starting a career in philosophy or travelling the world to do good works for deserving people, he took a job at a major trading firm on Wall Street. To many, this would appear to be a “sell out”. But this young graduate had decided to make a living in finance and contribute half of his earnings to charity. He reasoned, analytically, that he could “do the greater good” by contributing large amounts of his wages (he donates one half) to charities that were making the most difference in the world. This type of thoughtful philanthropy has been termed “effective altruism”, and it is a growing philosophy among young wealthy donors. It makes sense that when we are contemplating where to spend our charity dollars, we analyze where our donation may do the most good.

This made me more interested in how the Florida Podiatric Medical Society spends its money. I am proud of the “effective altruism” the Society has shown through its projects with the American Diabetes Association, the Florida Diabetes Camp and the Florida Special Olympics. But I am most proud of how our student scholarships have impacted the lives of young Podiatric Physicians as they begin their careers. There is no better time to shape a person’s perspective on the Association and its importance than in the student years of their formation. Giving a student \$1,000, \$500, or even \$100 seems miniscule compared to the mountain of debt they are accumulating during their schooling. However, that small amount can pay electric bills, travel expenses to an internship or residency interview, or, as it did one year, medical expenses a student incurred due to an unplanned cancer treatment. It is an impactful way of distributing the small amount of money we have raised, and it is the most effective way to introduce our Association to a young practitioner.

Our newest student scholarship, the Past President’s Scholarship, will be given to a graduating podiatric student from Barry University this May. This scholarship will provide \$1,000 to a new graduate who begins his or her residency training with little income and a world of debt. It attempts to recognize a future leader of our profession and help them in some small way. The scholarship has been fully funded by Past Presidents of the FPMA, who recognize the importance of fostering and nurturing a new career.

It is my hope and dream that through continued “effective altruism”, the FPMS will be successful in making an impact here in Florida. Please consider standing with Past FPMA Presidents and supporting the future of our great profession by making a contribution to the FPMS.

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