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ONE- ON -ONE

A closer look at members of the fundraising profession

Kathleen Mooney-Stuhec



How many years have you been involved in fundraising?

Seventeen years.

When did you Join AFP? In the late 1990s.

What is the biggest change you have seen in the profession since then? The biggest change would have to be the speed of the electronic environment in which we and all other industries do business. I believe it is still very important to pick up the phone and have one-on-one meetings with donors and sponsors. Make time to invest in your donors' interests and your sponsors business. People matter.

What has been your most memorable experience as a fundraiser?

My most memorable moment to date as a fundraiser would have to be when I worked in Montreal, Quebec, as the director of development at the Old Brewery Mission. One day a gentleman "on the line" (a homeless individual) who said hello and opened the door for me and other staff every morning reached into his pocket and gave me \$5 and said, "Make sure a kid gets to go to camp so they don't end up like me." For me, memorable moments take place every day in fundraising.

What advice would you give to fundraisers about working in today's uncertain economy? Stay connected to the people who care about your organization—donors, sponsors and volunteers—and continue to cultivate these important relationships. Make sure that you keep in touch with the people who have supported your organization and remember that, just as times have been uncertain in our business, times may very well have been uncertain in their business, too.

If you could change one thing about the fundraising profession, what would it be? I would like to see a greater understanding of what the fund development field is about internally—engaging board members and staff about fundraising so that they can truly understand the fundraiser's role. In turn, everyone benefits. After all, anyone who says, "I raised \$xx," is usually speaking about the groups and many individuals who are working together to make it happen!

What is the best career advice you ever received? Follow your instincts—they will never steer you wrong—and don't take anything personally.

What do you wish you could do better than you do now? Create more balance between work, family and friends.

What is your motto? It's not where you're from. It's who you are!

What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were younger? Well, I still think I'm young! Seriously, having the wisdom to know that all things in work and life usually work out and not to stress about the small stuff.

What advice would you give someone just starting out in the fundraising profession? Shadow a professional, take contract work to gain experience in a variety of fundraising activities, volunteer in your community for a cause that you are passionate about, take calculated risks and never compromise your values. Be passionate about making a difference in your community, understand that you have a responsibility as a fundraising professional to be transparent, ethical and honest—don't just take money because your organization needs it. Be donor-centered at all times. Also, get involved with AFP because the members are truly supportive (I am naturally referencing the Edmonton & Area Chapter)!

Lifetime Highlights:

Being happily married to Stanley Stuhec, a Canadian Forces member who has served in Afghanistan

Aspiring to achieve the CFRE designation in 2011

Serving as a volunteer AFP Essentials instructor/coach

Coordinating a Stay in School government-funded program for high-risk youth when working with the Boys & Girls Club

Do what you love, and the money will follow. Listen to seasoned individuals and learn with them.

If you could start your career over again, what, if anything, would you do differently? I would not put myself last on my list. I would focus more on my fundraising career goals, i.e., submitting and writing my CFRE exam much earlier.

What do you hope to do that you haven't done yet? Secure a \$1 million gift for YWCA Edmonton.

What book are you reading now? *She Inc.* by Candia N. Financia, a guru Kelley Keehn, who is also my friend.

Kathleen Mooney-Stuhec is fund development manager for the YWCA Edmonton (www.ywcaofedmonton.org) in Edmonton, Alberta.