



Fundraising Fact of the Month:

First-Time Donors Need Early Connection

National data continues to show that first-time donor retention rates average below 25%. In other words, most new donors will not give again unless they experience timely, meaningful engagement beyond their initial gift.

February is a strategic moment to focus on connection. A personalized follow-up email, impact story, or brief check-in can significantly increase the likelihood of a second gift. When donors understand how their support is already making a difference, they're more likely to stay invested. Strong fundraising isn't just about acquisition, it's about building relationships that last beyond the first transaction.



AFP NWA Education Session
Join us on Wednesday, March 11, 2026!

Advocacy in Action: Learn from **Lauren Marquette**, LSW from Susan G. Komen, **Laura Kellams** from Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families about effective advocacy and lobbying at the state and federal levels. Moderated by Tyler Clark.

Engaging Your Board: **Stephanie Brown** from Milestone Leadership will share strategies to identify and leverage individual strengths for stronger, more effective board engagement

[Register Here!](#)

Meet our Speakers!



Laura Kellams joined Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families as its first Northwest Arkansas director in 2008. In this role, she works to call attention to challenges facing children in the region and to build support for policy solutions that can help all children thrive. Before joining Advocates, she was a newspaper reporter for 15 years, mostly covering politics and government for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. During that time, she served as a journalism fellow on the staff of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee as part of the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship Program.

She is a past recipient of the Georgetown Center for Children and Families' national "Bulldog of the Year" award for her advocacy to extend health coverage to immigrant children in Arkansas. She is a longtime board member of the Economic Opportunity Agency of Washington



Lauren Marquette has twenty years' experience working in the nonprofit field. In her 15 years at Susan G. Komen, Lauren has served in various roles in the organization all dedicated to helping patients have access to quality healthcare, specifically breast health. Lauren is a licensed Master Social Worker and started at the local Komen affiliate managing grants and community programs and then served as the Executive Director in charge of signature events such as Race for the Cure, More than Pink Walk and Pink Ribbon Luncheon.

Lauren is a past recipient of the "Advocacy Champion" award from Susan G. Komen and a NWA Business Journal's 40 under 40. She has served on the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board for two terms as well as on the board of Arts Live Theatre and Arkansas United organizations. She caught the political bug early in life, going to speeches, campaign



Stephanie Brown serves as an Associate at Milestone Leadership, serving as an Executive Coach and Facilitator. She first joined the organization in 2010 as a Graduate Fellow, earning a Master of Science in Leadership and Ethics. Following graduation, Stephanie worked in the nonprofit sector before rejoining Milestone Leadership.

She is passionate about developing future leaders and fulfilling Milestone's mission to build leaders worth following. Stephanie holds certifications in The Birkman Method and CCL's Benchmarks 360 Degree Feedback tools. Stephanie is married to Andrew Brown, and is mother to Ellis.

County as well as the League of Women Voters. Laura has a journalism degree from the University of Arkansas, and she and her husband Kyle have lived in Fayetteville for more than 35 years.

stops, rallies and meetings and even wrote her first advocacy letter to President H.W. Bush when she was in Elementary School. Lauren is a native of Van Buren, Arkansas and currently resides with her husband, Daniel Balls, her spunky 5-year-old Gwyndolyn and her dog, Dolly Parton.

IDEA!

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access **IDEA** is how we build communities where everyone can thrive, and how we invite people into the joy of giving.

Inclusion welcomes supporters as they are.

Diversity strengthens our work by bringing many perspectives to the table.

Equity ensures everyone has what they need to participate fully, because generosity isn't one-size-fits-all.

Access removes barriers so every person can engage with confidence and joy.

Together, these principles create a community where giving is shared, meaningful, and open to all.



Faces of Fundraising

If you haven't met **Peggy Boyles**, please allow us to introduce you!

Peggy serves as AFP NWA's IDEA Chair and is a passionate advocate for inclusive, relationship-centered philanthropy. With a leadership style grounded in curiosity, connection, and community, Peggy brings both heart and strategy to her work. We're grateful for her commitment to strengthening our chapter and fostering generosity that makes everyone feel seen, valued, and inspired to give.



Peggy Boyles
The Amazeum

Peggy's path into fundraising didn't begin with a grand plan, but rather by accident and a job in a development office. What started as a practical solution quickly became a meaningful career rooted in connection, storytelling, and helping people invest in something larger than themselves. Today, Peggy brings both heart and strategy to her work, creating space for generosity to feel joyful, inclusive, and deeply personal.

Throughout her leadership journey, Peggy has learned that strong fundraising begins with listening. She believes the most effective leaders blend clarity with curiosity, asking thoughtful questions, staying calm under pressure, and creating environments where people feel valued and welcomed. Guided by Maya Angelou's reminder that people remember how you make them feel, Peggy approaches philanthropy as relationship-building at its core, cultivating trust and community one conversation at a time.

Her involvement with AFP NWA reflects that same commitment to growth and connection. Peggy values the chapter as a space to collaborate, sharpen her skills, and strengthen ethical, community-centered fundraising across the region. She encourages emerging professionals to stay curious, invest in relationships, and lead with authenticity. Outside of work, Peggy recharges through time with friends, daily texts with her sorority sisters, a good book, and the occasional true crime story, all reminders that community and connection fuel both her life and her leadership.

[Click here](#) to keep reading about Peggy.

Thank You 2025
Be The Cause Donors!

Thank you to AFP NWA's

2025 BE  CAUSE donors!

Alison Hiatt
Allison McElroy
Amy McGovern
Angie Albright
Brittney Gulley
Bryan Collom
Cadi Stair
Carol Cooper
Casey Cowan
Christina Hinds
Courtney Voigt
Danica Stout
Dee Vaughn
Elizabeth Brown
Elizabeth Shackelford
Emily Ironside
Emily Rappe Fisher

Eva Terry
Frankie Rankin
Joy Morris
Gay Prescott
Jaclyn Keeter
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Mallory Garrick
Megan Cuddy
Michael Williams
Natalie Burgess
Nicole Benedict
Peggy Boyles
Peyton Stewman
Rhonda Bramell
Sadie Organ
Sara Eichmann
Stacy Paper
Stacy Seger
Steven Hinds
Sydney Bright
Tyler Clark
Vanessa McKuin

Made a 2025 BE the CAUSE gift but don't see your name listed?
Email Lauren Husband at lhusband@springdalear.gov.

BE CAUSE

Empower. Strengthen. Transform.

BE the CAUSE is the Foundation's annual, unrestricted fund that supports all four pillars of our Case for Support. BE the CAUSE helps to fund local, national, and international programs including scholarships, leadership development, education and much more.

A portion of every donation that a donor makes goes back to their local chapter to support local programs.

[Donate Here!](#)



Save the Date!

Wednesday,
March 11, 2026
Education Session

Wednesday,
May 20, 2026

AFP ICON is scheduled for **April 26-28** in San Diego, CA.

Our Chapter President, Amy McGovern, will be hosting a chapter dinner during the AFP ICON conference. Email amcgovern@umfa.org if you plan to attend AFP ICON.

Register for AFP ICON

Chapter Webinars

Webinars are FREE for Members of AFP NWA!



AFP Webinars are free for members, last 60 minutes, and each qualifies for 1 CFRE credit. To register, click the webinar link, log in to your BlueSky Path account (or create one), add the session to your cart, and enter the discount code below to zero out the price. The webinar will appear in your Purchased folder to watch live or anytime through December 31, 2025.

2026 Webinars

AFP NWA Job Board

Looking for your next opportunity?!

Be sure to check out the AFP NWA Job Board for the latest fundraising positions in our community! Don't miss out... new opportunities are added regularly!

The latest job opportunities:

Development Coordinator - NWA Children's Shelter
Community Outreach Coordinator - Habitat for Humanity NWA

If you have a job opening you would like posted on the website, please send either a link to the job or a pdf of the job description and contact information to afpnwa@gmail.com.

More Jobs Here!

Need to Join or Renew

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Northwest Arkansas Chapter of the AFP offer members the opportunity to connect with colleagues, engage in creative thinking, network with new friends and achieve great results in their work.

Membership Value Highlights

- AFP NWA Chapter Monthly Education Sessions
 - AFP National Webinars
 - Mentorships
 - Networking with area fundraising professionals
 - Monthly Chapter Newsletters
 - Add more: AFP NWA Chapter
- Website: <https://community.afpglobal.org/afparnorthwestchapter/home>

For questions about your membership, please contact
Amy McGovern, AFP President.

Join/Renew Now



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