



## San Diego Delivered

### Carrie Coan, 2026 Chamberlain Scholarship Recipient



As Executive Director of a small nonprofit, I wear a lot of hats. On any given day, I might be working on housing strategy, public transportation logistics, donor relations, grant writing, event planning, staff support or solving whatever fire is burning hottest before 9am. Like many nonprofit leaders, I've become a jack of all trades, master of... aggressive Googling and figuring it out as I go.

Fundraising is one of the most critical parts of my role, yet I never had formal training in it. Like many in this field, I sort of stumbled into fundraising years ago and have spent a lot of time self-teaching, learning through trial and error and occasionally convincing myself that “winging it” is a legitimate professional development strategy.

That's why attending AFP ICON 2026 in San Diego was such a valuable experience. Thanks to the Chamberlain Scholarship through AFP, which covered my registration and provided a travel stipend, I had the chance to spend several days focused entirely on fundraising education. It was a rare opportunity to step away from the daily nonprofit circus and sharpen one specific skill set.

One standout session was From Scratch to Sizzle: Crafting Major Gifts Through Purposeful Relationships with [Marcy Heim](#) and Janet Johnson. Marcy opened by ad-libbing fundraising songs, which briefly had this introvert questioning my session choice. Turns out, I was exactly where I needed to be. Their message centered on authentic donor relationships, and one line stuck with me: raise relationships, not money. It was just the reminder I needed.

I came home with new ideas, tired feet, and after three days of fresh seafood, enough fish to last me until at least next conference season. More importantly, I returned energized and incredibly grateful to AFP and AFP Montana for investing in me and the work we do at the [West Yellowstone Foundation](#).

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## AFP Montana Lunch & Learn

### *Human Work Wins: Finding Your Value in the AI Era*

*June 11, 2026 | via Zoom*



Nonprofit leaders are being encouraged to “adopt AI,” but buying a tool doesn't guarantee meaningful results. True impact comes from changing how fundraising work happens—through clear standards, thoughtful oversight, and strong leadership.

In philanthropy, where trust is everything, donors expect authentic, mission-aligned interactions. This session explores how to keep the human element at the center—using AI to support, not replace, the relationship-building that drives major and principal gifts.

Join us as we welcome Scott Rosenkrans, Head of AI Growth at EverTrue. At EverTrue, Scott helps nonprofits apply AI and analytics to strengthen donor engagement and drive mission impact. He's a Certified AI Governance Professional (AIGP), co-host of the Fundraising.AI Podcast, and co-author of *Nonprofit AI: A Comprehensive Guide to Implementing Artificial Intelligence for Social Good*.

This live virtual event is free for members and \$25 for non-members. The Lunch & Learn will take place over the lunch hour from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., allowing participants to log into Zoom, participate in the educational program, and enjoy lunch at the same time.

Attendees are also eligible to earn 1 hour of CFRE continuing education credit.



[Register Today!](#)



## Apply for the AFP Montana Membership Scholarship

AFP membership opens doors - to resources, connections, and professional development that make us all better at what we do. We want to make sure cost is never the barrier that keeps a great fundraiser from walking through them.

AFP Montana awards one annual scholarship to cover the cost of dues for a deserving member. Applications are open now through June 30, and the process is simple by design - just a short form that takes about five minutes to complete.

[Apply Here](#)

## Supporting the Future of Fundraising: The AFP Foundation & BE the CAUSE

**BE  CAUSE**  
Empower. Strengthen. Transform.



We ALL know how important unrestricted annual giving is to our organizations. It's the backbone for all of the work we do for our missions, and without it, we are essentially Montana jumping slugs, right?

BE the CAUSE is the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy Foundation's annual, unrestricted fund that supports all four pillars of our Case for Support.

It helps to fund local, national, and international programs, including scholarships, leadership development, education, and much more! AND...A portion of every donation that a donor makes goes back to their local chapter to support local programs!

The AFP Foundation for Philanthropy plays a vital role in strengthening the fundraising profession by investing in people, research, and ethical practice. Through leadership development programs, scholarships, and initiatives that advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA), the Foundation helps ensure that fundraisers at every stage have access to the tools and training they need to succeed.

Think: Chamberlain Scholarships, Diversity Scholarships, leadership training, and the critical research that shapes the future of philanthropy and the work we do every single day!

Remember when we said that a portion of every donation goes back to the chapter? Well, it's true! And these dollars support the education, mentorship, and programming our chapter provides right here in our state!

When you give to Be the Cause, you're not just supporting a campaign—you're investing in the strength, inclusivity, and future of the fundraising profession.

*Gretchen Gordon, CFRE, is the Chair Elect for the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy Fundraising Board. Professionally, she is the General Manager of KUAC Public Radio and Television Interior Alaska. The photo above is Traci Weller, President of AFP-MT Chapter and Gretchen Gordon, during AFP ICON 2026 in San Diego.*



## Connect and Reflect Takes Root in Bozeman



AFP Montana's first Connect & Reflect gathering was everything we hoped it would be. Good people, real conversation, and a reminder of why it helps to be in the room with others who get it. It was great to see fundraising professionals from across Bozeman pull up a chair and actually talk about the work. What's shifting, what's hard, and what's helping. That's exactly the spirit this was built for.

A special thank you to Sonja Bahr for helping bring this new concept to life, and to everyone who joined us for this thoughtful and energizing conversation.

If you missed it, here's your next chance: join us **September 16** at the Bozeman Public Library. Same vibe, new question, new connections. It's free and AFP members and non-members welcome. More details coming soon. Hope to see you there!



[Click here for more information](#)

## Save the Date: AFP Montana Educational Summit

*October 22-23, 2026 | Billings, MT*

Mark your calendars! Fundraisers from across Big Sky Country will gather in Billings this October for the AFP Montana Annual Educational Summit and Chapter Meeting. This year's program will focus on planned giving, with a special 4-hour session hosted by AFP Global on Donor-Advised Fund Essentials: Maximizing the Power of DAFs.

More details on speakers, registration, and hotel information will be shared soon. We hope you'll plan to join colleagues from across the state for learning, networking, and connection.

## Faces of AFP Montana

*Getting to know the people strengthening philanthropy across Montana*

Member Spotlight is a new feature highlighting members of the AFP Montana community. Each month, we'll introduce a member so readers can learn more about the people behind the important work happening in nonprofits across Big Sky Country.

These conversations celebrate the diverse experiences of our members while showcasing how connection, learning, and collaboration through AFP support their work in strengthening philanthropy across Montana.



<b>Name:</b>	Emily Frazier
<b>Organization:</b>	Helena Area Community Foundation
<b>Title/Role:</b>	Executive Director
<b>Years in the Profession:</b>	19 Years
<b>AFP Member Since:</b>	2012

Tell us about the organization you represent. What mission drives your work?

I serve as the Executive Director of the Helena Area Community Foundation. We inspire and lead collaboration and investment for compassionate, safe, healthy, and resilient communities. What I love most about community foundation work is that it sits at the intersection of generosity and problem solving. We get to help connect people who care deeply about Helena with opportunities to create lasting impact—whether that’s through grants, collaboration, philanthropy, or building permanent resources for the future of our community.

**How did you first find your way into the nonprofit or fundraising profession?**

Backwards and accidentally. I started out as an Outreach Manager for the Student Assistance Foundation (now Reach Higher Montana), and then learned that I had a skill for grant writing. That turned into a love for fundraising, and I got my masters in Philanthropy and Development from St. Mary’s of Minnesota in 2016, and my CFRE shortly after. Interestingly—I’ve never actually been a full time fundraising professional! I’ve either worn several hats or the only hat (was a single staff member), but fundraising is a large part of our work at HACF.

**What keeps you passionate about this work after all these years?**

The people and the sector keep me engaged. Every day I get to work alongside people who are trying to make our community safer, healthier, more connected, and more compassionate. I also love seeing what happens when a community truly comes together around a shared goal. Those moments remind me that philanthropy is really about belonging and belief in one another.

**What inspired you to join AFP, and what do you value most about being part of the chapter?**

I became an AFP member EARLY in my fundraising career. I really connected with the Code of Ethical Standards—I believe they provide an important framework to honor the trust necessary in this profession. I think being an AFP member is a standard that elevates our sector, and all fundraisers should be a part of it.

**Is there a fundraising success or meaningful moment in your career that stands out?**

While I have a Master’s degree and CFRE, fundraising still takes focused effort and dedicated time to build relationships. There was a point in time when I absolutely was not doing it often enough or well enough. Over the last year, I have refocused on fundraising and let go of other tasks to make sure we give relationship-building the space it deserves. Toward the end of 2025, I made a bigger ask than I had in the past, and seeing our donors rise to meet the needs of our community meant the world to me. It also made me realize I should be doing it more often. With our community counting on me, I don’t want to be the person who isn’t brave enough to ask for what we really need.

**What advice would you offer someone just beginning a career in fundraising?**

Everything, literally everything is about relationships and follow through. Be curious, be present, and for the love of everything, call back in two weeks if you said you would.

**What you’re not working, what do you enjoy doing, or what’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

People might be surprised to learn I also run a candy business as a side quest. I love creating fun, over-the-top candy experiences for parties, events, or at expos or markets. It’s a completely different creative outlet from nonprofit leadership, but honestly, both are about creating connection. The HACF board hasn’t minded getting treats at most of our meetings either!

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## Member Benefit Spotlight



### Are You Using This Member Benefit?

As a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, you have access to the Fundraising Effectiveness Project - one of the sector’s leading sources for fundraising data and

insights.

The FEP offers regular reports on donor retention, giving trends, and overall fundraising performance, helping you benchmark your results and make more informed decisions.

If you're looking to strengthen donor relationships and plan with greater confidence, this is a resource worth exploring.

Take a few minutes to review the latest findings; you may uncover insights you can use right away.

[Learn More & Get Started Today](#)

## Curious About Serving on the AFP-MT Board?

Serving on the AFP Board is rewarding and can be a lot of fun, too! AFP Montana is run by a volunteer board, and we are always looking for new talent and fresh ideas to join our amazing Board of Directors or serve on one of our committees. In true Montana fashion, we believe in pulling up an extra chair, membership scholarships may be available for those looking to engage.

If you are interested in learning more, [send us an email anytime](#). And if you're ready, you can submit your application today!

[Explore Board & Committee Service](#)



*Some of the links below may require active AFP membership and login to AFP Global.*

- 6/1/26 [Emerging Leaders Affinity Group Meeting](#)
- 6/3/26 [Working Parents and Caregivers Affinity Group Meeting](#)
- 6/3/26 [Fundraising Without Fear: Activating Your Diverse Board with Equity & Intention](#)
- 6/4/26 [AFP Deep Dive - Are You Ready for a Capital Campaign? Get Ready, Set, Go!](#)
- 6/10/26 [Development Operations Affinity Group Meeting](#)

- 6/11/26 [Grant Writing USA & Helena Police Dept. Grant Writing 2-Day Workshop in Helena \(June 11-12\)](#)
- 6/11/26 [AFP 101: Why Fundraisers Join and Stay Free Informational Webinar](#)
- 6/11/26 [AFP MT Lunch & Learn - Human Work Wins: Finding Your Value in the AI Era](#)
- 6/15/26 [AFP Deep Dive: CFRE Exam Compass Review Course \(4-day series\)](#)
- 6/15/26 [New Member Orientation](#)
- 6/17/26 [Shifting Generosity: What Younger Donors Want and How to Respond](#)
- 6/17/26 [Environmental Affinity Group Meeting](#)
- 6/18/26 [Maximize Your AFP Membership: New Member Orientation](#)
- 6/24/26 [AFP Deep Dive - Gift Acceptance Policies](#)
- 6/24/26 [The Evolution of Peer-to-Peer: Engaging the Next Generation of Donors \(Sponsored Webinar\)](#)
- 6/26/26 [African American/Black Affinity Group Meeting](#)

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