

## AFP Member Profiles



Name: Mary Feller

Date Joined: 11/91/1991

- How did you get into fundraising?
  - After working in urban planning, I went back to school for my Master's Degree and worked for faculty in the department as a graduate student. During this time, I helped with writing grants so when some of the faculty heard of a fundraising position open at nearby Fontbonne College, they encouraged me to apply for the position even though I didn't feel I knew anything about fundraising. I needed a job and had rent to pay so I sent my resume in, interviewed and got the job! I was fortunate in that Fontbonne College had a grant that was allocated specifically for fundraising training for smaller education institutions and I benefitted greatly from this by attending various trainings, conferences, grant writing workshops, etc. This introduced me to the many facets of fundraising and allowed for me to dabble in the different areas of Prospect Research, Major Gifts, Annual Gifts, etc.
- What keeps you in the field and loving it?
  - I love being able to help people make the impact they want to make in the programs that they care about: it's about being able to develop relationships with people who want to give back and make a significant impact. I enjoy helping to bring the pieces together, allowing for donors to make a legacy gift to an organization that has such significant meaning to them. I also appreciate the diversity of what we do in the world of fundraising.
- Can you provide any advice to other fundraisers about fundraising during times of uncertainty?
  - I've been in fundraising for over 35 years and I've lived through other times of uncertainty, but I'm not sure if I've seen anything compared to this in the terms of the impact that it's having on every facet of life! That said, I do believe in the good will of people. Even when times are tough, there are people who are willing to give back to help others. I do feel like philanthropy will continue, and this will certainly require some innovation on our end, but I do think that people want to help when there are obvious priorities for their resources and when they know that they are needed to make a difference. We need to keep a positive attitude that people will step up and we need to continue to ask!
- What is one thing you enjoy doing when you're not fundraising?

- Hiking and exploring the outdoors with my husband. Colorado is the perfect place for this!