

AFP Member Interview

Madeleine Binsfrahm from The Women's Bakery



- How did you get into fundraising?
 - Over a decade ago, I was volunteering for an animal shelter in Duluth, MN and there was a job opening for a position that involved both communications & fundraising. I was working in corporate marketing at the time, and so during the interview, the Executive Director, Jim Filby Williams, asked me, “Have you ever asked anyone for money?”, to which I responded, “Do my parents count?” Jim took me on and gave me the chance to step into fundraising, which I found to be the perfect fit. I believe in building meaningful relationships with people and in the amazing work that nonprofits do.

- What keeps you in the field and loving it?
 - There are two things that keep me in the field and loving it:
 - 1) Seeing the direct impact of my work. I love knowing that I’m able to make a direct connection between the donors and the work that’s happening in the organization, watching the dollars at work every single day. I find it rewarding to ask people for money and then being able to turn back around to them to say, “Here’s the project you funded and the impact you had in this community.”
 - 2) The relationships that I’ve formed with people. Every single day, when I work with donors, I get to hear what people are passionate about and what they care about so deeply. I’m the conduit to helping people achieve their goals with their giving. Personally, it gives me joy to support other organizations, so I love being able to witness this similar joy in other people.

- Can you provide any advice to other fundraisers about fundraising during times of uncertainty?
 - In this unprecedented time, it’s all about taking some of the tried-and-true fundraising practices and trying new things that are out of the box. This time serves as an opportunity for fundraisers to get really creative and to not just step out of the box but to *create your own box*: re-creating our fundraising strategy, implementing new ideas

and building unique opportunities and avenues to connect with our donors. For example, with The Women's Bakery, we had to temporarily pause our operations and the work that's happening in our Rwandan bakeries because of COVID. With everyone being remote, we took this as an opportunity to further invest in technologies that better connected us to our team. This has presented us with different ways to strengthen our donors' relationship to our mission, plus it has given the women the chance to further share their unique stories through our [social media accounts](#). The response has been phenomenal, and we wouldn't have featured our management team this way if it weren't for the pandemic!

- What brings you joy through your membership & involvement with AFP?
 - One of the many benefits of being an AFP member is that you have unique opportunities to connect with other fundraisers in a deep and meaningful way. This year, I am co-chairing RMPI with Ann Goldman which has been an absolute honor. I have gotten to know Ann both personally & professionally and I deeply respect the work that she's doing. Through co-chairing, we've been able to lead a volunteer committee to develop an incredible conference that elevates the fundraising profession in Colorado. My AFP membership has allowed me to step into a role that provides both leadership and learning opportunities.

- What is one thing you enjoy doing when you're not fundraising?
 - Hiking! I love getting outdoors & exploring, especially with my 4-year old son, Zeb, and my husband. There's something renewing about being in nature and being able to get lost in the woods, whether it's for a two-hour hike or a five-day long camping trip. Hiking brings me back to my center and connects me back to the world.