

2023 AFP ICON – An Exciting Time for Fairfield County Board Members

Two AFP, Fairfield County Chapter board members attended AFP ICON in April and found it rewarding, informative, and engaging: Caroline Owens, Associate Director, Parent Engagement & Philanthropy, Sacred University and Shaye Anne McCormick, Senior Development Office, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County. Caroline attended as a Chamberlain Scholarship recipient for the Chapter. It was a time of learning, inspiration, networking and a celebration of fundraising.

The Chamberlain Scholarship program honors Ralph E. Chamberlain, CFRE, who had a long and distinguished career of service to the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), beginning in the 1960s until his death in 1999. The AFP Foundation offers every AFP chapter one Chamberlain Scholarship, which covers the recipient's conference registration. The scholarship is available to individuals who have never attended AFP ICON.

"I must say that I was taken back by the scope of the event and was certainly spoiled by the talks and presentations (Donor Research, Ethics, Leadership & Management, Relationship Building, Rebels, Renegades, and Pioneers, Securing the Gift, and Volunteer Involvement) I attended," said Caroline, who could not have been more appreciative of the opportunity. "Each presentation was better than the last. People could not have been more friendly and collaborative, and running into fellow AFP Fairfield County Connecticut Chapter folks was icing on the cake."

Shaye Anne McCormick, who serves as the Fairfield Chapter's IDEA director, knew AFP ICON was the conference to attend to immerse herself in the educational sessions and learn from experts in addition to meeting other professionals. "This was my first-time attending AFP ICON and it was wonderful! There were so many educational sessions, social events and kind and interesting attendees – it was overwhelming in the best way! AFP offered a "Know Before You Go" webinar a few weeks before that I would highly recommend to anyone attending in the future –no matter how many times you have gone. It was a live webinar and I met other attendees and speakers before it even began.

I knew about transportation and how to navigate the AFP ICON 2023 app before I landed. Sitting at a table in my hotel restaurant I met some wonderful and seasoned speakers. We talked about how many sessions are offered at the same time and they shared their sage advice, which put me at ease – 'Don't feel obligated to stay through an entire session. It isn't rude to leave to catch another session of interest because slides and materials are all accessible online this year.' That was very helpful as there were so many sessions of interest: from creating more supportive cultures after the burnout, we all feel after the last three years – to the art of using technology to enhance your integrated fundraising campaigns – to how to diversify your revenue streams during this time of great economic uncertainty. The variety of topics discussed made it well worth the trip.

Meeting so many other AFP members anywhere and everywhere – from events, to the hotel lobby, on the shuttle and in the halls, I found myself in great conversations with other AFP members struggling with similar challenges such as creating planned giving campaigns, operating

with a small staff, finding and managing donors, and evaluating which platforms are worth the investment etc. It was wonderful to connect and learn from so many other members- I highly recommend attending next year and am grateful for the experience,” says Shaye Anne.

It was an amazing three days of learning, connecting and inspiration for these women. AFP ICON 2024 is scheduled for Toronto, April 7-9. Please join us for our monthly AFP events, volunteer or become a member. Learn more at <http://www.afpfairfield.org>.