

2017 August Newsletter

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The mission of Women in Development, New York is to empower, connect, and engage women in a community that fosters professional growth and leadership while advancing the field.



August 2017

Focus on our Members:

A Conversation with WiD's Outgoing and Incoming Presidents

Jane Karlin and Nicole Thigpen Felix



Jane F. Karlin, Ph.D.
Immediate Past President



Nicole Thigpen Felix
President

Every organization passes the torch from one leader to the next. It is a time for reflecting on lessons learned over the past year and setting goals and making plans on how to meet them for the next year. It's a familiar transition, but in every era of its life as the only organization for professional women in fundraising, WiD has evolved to meet the needs of its growing membership. This year, that is especially evident as Jane Karlin, among the early members of WiD, when its leadership was so small that it met in living rooms of Board members and organizers, turns over the presidency to Nicole Felix, a member since 2010, who will lead WiD in the coming year.

"WiD is in a generation transition," Jane observes. "I saw this during my presidency. As more new members join, we need to engage in self-reflection and offer programs that are relevant to younger members while also recognizing that there may be different objectives for women who have been in the work force for a long time."

“I agree. I believe WiD needs to position itself as an organization for everyone,” Nicole adds. “We must offer opportunities that serve every member in order to grow our membership. Early members know WiD in its most organic state. One proposal I think would be beneficial is to develop an “emeritus group.” Those women have experience that can help the next generation. Likewise the new generation can help our older members. Weaving the two together will make WiD stronger.”

“Yes,” Jane agrees. “I call it Gen 1 and Gen 2. Our mutual journeys are not necessarily linear. We have different strengths. Gen 1 often doesn't have the facility with technology or the same language as Gen 2. As I leave the president's position, I see the need for customizing programs. I think we need ways to teach and learn from one another more than ever.”

“One outgrowth of the Board's self-study this year is the recognition that the role of women in New York fundraising is changing; there is, for example, a growing cohort of professional fundraising volunteers, who we can serve through new programming,” Jane reports. “We recognize that while we want to continue our signature events – speaker luncheons, The Woman of Achievement Award – we need more variety, programs that are inclusive and that have value added for all our members, ones that will provide answers to the question: What's in it for me?”

“Absolutely,” adds Nicole. “Our programs have to be interesting and resonate with everyone, but even more critical, clearly put the focus on our members, to engage them by providing opportunities in the coming year to meet the unique needs of women in the development profession at all stages in their working lives.”

Reflecting on the year now past, Jane feels optimistic about the self-reflection the WiD Board engaged in. “The Board is a combination of generations, a great blend of Gen 1 and Gen 2. We can continue serving our members when we have vision and creativity that address each and every one of our members. We have great volunteers and great energy going into the next year.

“We also have recognized the need for serving the more diverse communities outside Manhattan in the metro area. It is not just about working with organizations in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island where WiD does not have strong representation, but we want to encourage diversity within the profession. Therefore, we need to be thoughtful about providing programming that is relevant for women of all backgrounds. We created a new Board position – Vice President for Diversity – to address all constituencies in the nonprofit community.”

“Yes,” Nicole concurs. “It's a great time to work together to discover programs that put our members first. I look forward to keep building on the momentum Jane has inspired.”

“I have been working with Nicole all year,” Jane responds, “and I hope that we have created the kind of WiD that Nicole will be proud to lead. The strategy we have developed as a Board is more encompassing than just one year of work.”

“Thank you, Jane, for all your hard work,” Nicole adds. “You will still be involved! You have a vital role to play to help me bring WiD through yet another successful year since you are serving as our Vice President for membership. WiD is all about collaboration to support our members with the best and most helpful programs for every one of our over 400 members and counting.”

I to I: A Structured Networking Workshop

More than 100 women, eager to exchange ideas, filled the Cosmopolitan Club on March 16th. The sold-out event, I to I, created a safe space for women in development to learn from one another and share experiences common to fundraising in the New York City – Metro Area. Each of the eight round tables had an assigned moderator who led structured conversations on one of the following topics:

1. Women and Philanthropy: Building on Research that Women Give Differently than Men and Lead Philanthropic Decision-Making in Their Families
2. The First 90 Days on the Job: Ensuring a Successful Transition from Fundraiser to Leader
3. Managing Up: Succeeding with Your Boss, Her Boss and Leadership Volunteers
4. Creating a Culture of Philanthropy: Building Partnerships Within Your Organization
5. Q&A with a Career Coach
6. Q&A with a Recruiter
7. Transitioning Leadership Annual Donors into Major Donors
8. Succeeding in Cold Calling / Other Methods for Getting Meetings with Prospects

By the end of the evening, attendees left equipped with tools to address challenges in the workplace, encouraged by feedback provided by fellow development professionals, and having nurtured and expanded their networks.

I to I is an ideal workshop for anyone seeking to bring her career to the next level!

Human Rights Watch: Global Challenges in Fundraising in the Age of Populism



America's current political landscape has created challenges and opportunities for non-profit organizations across the country. November 8th marked a defining moment when donors began to turn to organizations whose missions and values aligned with their own during a time of great change and uncertainty.

Michele Alexander, Deputy Executive Director for Development for Human Rights Watch, addressed over 100 women on April 3rd at the Princeton Club on this topic. Margaret Holman, of Holman Consulting, interviewed Ms. Alexander, who shared insights into fundraising growth under her leadership and donors' responses to the presidential election.

Human Rights Watch started off as a \$7 million organization when Ms. Alexander came on board nearly 20 years ago, and has since grown to raise \$80 million a year. Her focus: major gifts globally. Today, Ms. Alexander concentrates much of her energy on gifts of \$100,000 and more, of which 60% is given by donors within the U.S. That is changing, though, as emerging markets in Asia and Australia become more active philanthropically and as Human Rights Watch expands its reach through its 23 strategically located committees across the globe.

The current election, Ms. Alexander noted, has broadened the organization's donor pool. "People are not waiting to give," she shared with enthusiasm. The recent surge in civic engagement has led many to see Human Rights Watch as a venue through which to take action. In her words: "We have a base, and now they're finding us."

Photo credit: © Galina Kurlat 2017

**Robin Merle, CFRE, Honored at Women in Development, New York's
2017 Woman of Achievement Award Luncheon**



Women In Development, New York (WiD) honored one of our own at the 2017 Woman of Achievement Award Luncheon held on May 5th in the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza Hotel. Event Co-Chairs Andrea Brown, Dee Dee Mozeleski, and Mary Ann Routledge led event planning.

Robin Merle, CFRE, Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS), longtime WiD member and former WiD Board member, was celebrated by colleagues, family and friends on the 30th Anniversary of the Woman of Achievement Luncheon. This event holds the distinction of being the only one in New York City that recognizes and celebrates the role that women play in fundraising.

With almost 300 women present, it was a wonderful time to acknowledge the importance of fundraisers. As WiD President Jane F. Karlin said, we salute the development professionals in the room who “make communities safer, more accepting, and increasingly sustainable; comfort victims of terror and natural disasters; touch our emotions through art, music, and dance; make education the engine of opportunity; ease the burden of those who protect us at home and abroad; restore our faith when we despair; and help extend and enhance the quality of our lives through scientific and medical advances.”

Over the course of her 20-year career at the Hospital for Special Surgery, Robin has made an indelible contribution to the growth of this extraordinary center for patient care, research, and teaching. Robin brings more than 30 years of strategic leadership to the development field and hundreds of millions in support raised for non-profits, from grassroots organizations to world-renowned institutions. She has advanced the mission and vision of HSS as the global leader in musculoskeletal healthcare for 20 years. Prior to joining HSS, Robin raised significant private support for academic institutions, including New York University and Rutgers University, where she received the CASE Award for Excellence in Educational Fundraising Leadership for the first campaign dedicated to multi-cultural education.

As a WiD Board member, Robin served on the Executive Committee and co-chaired the organization’s governance and volunteer committees. As chair of a strategic task force, she led the organization’s development of the first new statement of mission, vision, and values in over 10 years.



Robin Merle (center) with luncheon attendees

Robin has a master's degree from The Johns Hopkins University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Rutgers College, where she was a member of the first class of women.

Attendees heard testimonials on Robin's accomplishments from the leadership of the Hospital for Special Surgery: Lara R. Lerner, Trustee; Louis A. Shapiro, President and CEO; and Todd J. Albert, M.D., Surgeon-in-Chief and Medical Director. All shared that Robin, while being as successful as she is in advancing the institution, never loses sight of the patients.

In her remarks, Robin recounted her journey as relishing every experience from "funny moments" that all fundraisers remember to the "unforgotten moments that led to transitional change".

A trusted mentor to many women in the field, she noted the importance of leading by character and influence, and developing leaders who are honest, thoughtful, and exhibit mutual respect with colleagues.

In closing, Robin stated she will forever treasure WiD. Those in the room whose lives have been touched by her, as a fellow WiD Board Member, colleague, mentor, and friend, will always be thankful for what she has accomplished for our profession.

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WiD Member Survey

Upcoming Events

WiD wants to know what YOU think! Please take a moment and complete our seven-question survey so WiD can better serve our members. Thank you!

Click [here](#) for the Member Survey

For questions please feel free to email WiD at widny@widny.org

October 2, 2017 - Luncheon - Princeton Club
November 6, 2017 - Luncheon - Princeton Club
February 5, 2018 - Luncheon - Princeton Club
April 9, 2018 - Luncheon - Princeton Club

Registration details to be announced in August.

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Our mailing address is:
Women in Development, New York
555 Eighth Avenue
Suite 1902
New York, New York 10018