

## FACES OF WID



**Name:** Ellie Spaulding

**Title:** Regional Director, Capital Giving, Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences

**WID Role (or prior WID role):** Member, Programs Committee

**Hometown:** Chestnut Hill, MA

**Lives Currently:** South End

**Education:** Deerfield Academy, Trinity College

**Hobbies:** Running, reading, traveling, sailing

**When and how did you join the development field? What path brought you to your current role?**

I was first introduced to fundraising as a student caller and chair of the senior class gift committee at my alma mater, Trinity College. I loved connecting with alumni and I was passionate about the College so I actually enjoyed asking for money. I was an art history major and hoped to work in a gallery, but the Advancement Office at Trinity encouraged me to explore what a career in Development might look like. I pursued a summer internship in the Development Office at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and loved it. Spaulding was a small shop at the time, which allowed me to wear many hats and gain exposure to all areas of development. I identified early on that I wanted to be in a frontline facing role fostering relationships with people, and set my sights on major gifts. While I enjoyed healthcare fundraising, I found that I missed the world of higher education, and moved on to Annual Leadership Giving roles at Boston University and MIT. BU had just launched their first-ever comprehensive university-wide campaign, and MIT was in the quiet phase, gearing up for their largest campaign to date. In both roles, I learned how to manage a portfolio and a region, and gained a lot of great experience on the road. After four years of honing my solicitation skills, with increased responsibilities and opportunities to partner with major gifts officers, I made the transition to my present role as Regional Director of Capital Giving at Harvard University.

**Why did you join WID and how long have you been a member?**

I joined WID in 2011, per the recommendation of my manager. I was new to the Development field, and we didn't have a large budget for professional development, so WID was my training ground. I learned so much from those first brown bag lunches, including information about other areas of Development I would not have been exposed to otherwise: managing a board, planned giving, events, etc. I actually have WID to thank for a networking opportunity that led to my second job in Development!

**Do you have a favorite WID moment or memory?**

I co-managed a WID brown-bag lunch program focused on frontline fundraising, and was surprised to see a very senior male member of my organization in the room. He came up to me after the event and said that it was the best frontline-focused event he had ever attended, and he learned a thing or two! I was so excited to hear this from someone who had been in the industry for 30+ years. He was impressed with the speakers, but more so with the women in the room who asked engaging, thoughtful, and candid questions that lead to a great discussion. This is what WID is all about, and it also points to the fact that anyone can benefit from a WID event, regardless of your experience level.

**Describe your biggest development success story to date.**

I consider my most successful gifts not to be the largest ones, but the ones where I feel like I have overcome objections and truly moved a donor along the donor cultivation cycle. I know that I have really done my job when I am able to align their passions and interests with the needs of the institution, and lead them to a gift that is most meaningful to them, as well as the institution.

**What advice would you offer to someone new to the field of development?**

- Find an organization you are passionate about and the rest will fall into place.
- Shadow colleagues as much as possible, and find mentors in and outside of your organization who can help you develop and improve along the way.