

# RISING STAR

## Hello Again, My Friend

BY ERIN PRICE-SCHABERT



**I** imagine very few of us are lucky enough to fall into the career of our dreams right out of college. Most of us work to find our path by plodding along a rough, rocky

road full of potholes, road blocks, and distractions. We learn quickly there is no GPS app for life. Sometimes we veer off course, looking for a detour. Sometimes we are pushed off the road by an oncoming hazard — sometimes with airbags, sometimes with collateral damage — but regardless, we keep going, looking for the right turn, and sometimes, but not always, enjoying the journey.

At age 31, I've finally made it to the correct course after a few wrong turns and collisions. I spent the first seven years of my career soaking up knowledge and experience in the direct marketing industry, working at consulting firms, meeting incredible mentors, and learning what I wanted from life. I was so concerned with finding the correct path that I was blindsided when I hit a huge roadblock. At age 27, I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

After completing an overwhelming course of treatment, I quickly discovered that, while I couldn't control everything, I did have the power to navigate my journey.

Through this process of discovery, I landed a development position at the Washington, DC, nonprofit, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, which works to develop and promote healing practices that explore physical, emotional, and mental resources that lead to life-affirming

changes for people affected by cancer. Sounds perfect, right?

I've spent the past two years at Smith Center, raising money for a cause I am truly passionate about, using my experience to help others navigate, and serving as a champion for young adults diagnosed with cancer. It's amazing. And even outside of work, I've found numerous opportunities to provide support to others—from volunteering as a mentor to newly diagnosed women to running a monthly support group for young women diagnosed with breast cancer in the D.C. area. In May, I begin work on a Master's of Social Work so I can enhance the level of psychosocial support I can provide those diagnosed with cancer.

The point is: Take advantage of the opportunities life presents to you. When I was first diagnosed I made a promise to myself that I would not let cancer take anything from me, but I would take everything I could from cancer. I started small. I got involved with local support groups and met other survivors. I began to learn more about cancer resources and volunteered my time. Eventually I was ready to take the plunge and make it my career.

We can all start small and make simple changes toward work that we are passionate about. You don't have to be a passenger; you can be in the driver's seat. Just realize that once you make the commitment, it takes time, patience, and a willingness to listen to yourself. But it's well worth it and, once you get to your desired destination, you may look back and think the journey was just as beautiful.

*Editor's Note: Erin Price-Schabert was DMAW's 2011 "Rising Star," so we wanted to check back to see how she is doing a scant two years later. Wow. The answer is, obviously, "better than terrific." As the development manager at Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, Erin is realizing her dream. We couldn't be happier for her. Send your congratulations to Erin Price-Schabert, [erin@smithcenter.org](mailto:erin@smithcenter.org).*

# DMAW CALENDAR

Deadline for registration is 24 hours before the event, space permitting. Cancellations must be received 48 hours in advance. No-shows will be billed. Register online at [www.dmaw.org](http://www.dmaw.org) or call 703-689-DMAW (3629)

**DMAW Monthly Lunch & Learn**  
12 - 2 pm  
City Club,  
555 13th St NW, Washington, DC  
Metro: Metro Center



Thursday, March 20

### Acknowledgement Welcome Series

Acknowledgements are crucial to the success of an organization but are frequently the unsung heroes. Do you have a stellar acknowledgement program? Are you proud of the additional revenue your acknowledgment is generating? Has this program successfully cultivated that ever important "2nd gift?" If not — the March 20 Lunch & Learn promises to demonstrate how to get that second gift through acknowledgements.

### DM101

Wednesday, March 19

8:30 am - 5 pm  
USA Today/Gannett Building  
7950 Jones Branch Dr, McLean, VA

The full-day DM101 Workshop provides attendees with a thorough understanding of proven techniques and useful knowledge of the essentials of a successful direct marketing campaign.

### Test This...Don't Test That

Thursday, May 1

8:30 am - 10 am  
SEIU  
1800 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC  
Metro: DuPont Circle

This Breakfast explores case studies, results, and proven approaches that will help you answer the question: "I've tested everything before, what should I test in my mail, email, and/or telegiving program?" There are some things you don't have to test. There are other things that can really move the bar; hear from people who have "been there, tried that" and found out what worked!

### DM201

Wednesday, May 14

8:30 am - 5 pm  
USA Today/Gannett Building  
7950 Jones Branch Dr, McLean, VA

This full-day workshop continues to take DM101 to the next level by providing a thorough understanding of proven techniques and essentials from a lineup of industry pros who present insight and ideas to new hires and industry veterans alike through shared fundraising knowledge and expertise.