



Story of
a Young
Board
member

Stephanie
Dameshghi

Growing Up & Giving Back

When she was young, Stephanie Dameshghi moved with her mother and siblings to her mother's home of Ireland, which is where Stephanie's interest in helping others began.

Now an attorney and in her third year as a member of Astor's Young Professionals Board, she shared some highlights on her road to philanthropy.

What is your first memory of fundraising?

My first memory of fundraising was from when I lived in Ireland. There really aren't bag packers at grocery stores, so I was part of group that fundraised by packing groceries and collecting spare change from the customers when done bagging. We also collected change in buckets in return for things like bunches of clover during St. Patrick's Day. This was, of course, in the rain most of the time, as the rain falls 364 days of the year in Ireland.



**Young Professionals
Gala Reception**

What were you fundraising for at that point?

The group I worked for was part of an anti-bullying campaign. We supported an effort to educate people about bullying, as well as the general welfare of less fortunate children.

You were a child yourself. It's unusual for someone so young to be fundraising for other children, no?

I've always felt compelled to give back. I didn't come from a wealthy family, and I didn't feel any more or less privileged than anyone else, but I still always felt a desire to help others.

Do you come from a legacy of fundraising in your family?

My father used to own a construction company, and I recall one day that my mother told me how he built houses for families of disabled children without any cost to the families. I remember being so proud of that. This may have been the kernel of something in me.

How did you end up on the Young Professionals Board at Astor?

I worked with one of Astor's main Board of Directors, James Vitiello. As he shared a story about Astor and the good work that the organization does for children with mental health challenges, I could literally feel his passion. At this meeting, we first discussed the potential of a Young Professionals Board of Directors. It was explained that Astor was interested in adding more diversity in terms of age and geography amongst its board representatives. I was involved from the earliest days.



You're a young professional--do you have a lot of friends who also sit on boards?

As a matter of fact, I didn't know anyone who was on a board when I first joined Astor's Young Professionals Board. I wasn't at all sure of what I could bring to the table. Having just returned to the US six months prior, I had no network and not much money.



**Young Professionals
Board Orientation**



Young Professionals
Board Cocktail
Reception

What I found was that giving my time was the answer. I am the first one to jump in and lend a hand organizing, creating or whatever else needs to be done to make a project happen.

After three years on Astor's Young Professionals Board, what is your impression of this experience?

It's great to work with people who have a passion in what they do. I particularly love that Astor is doing work on behalf of children who truly need the organization's help. It hasn't always been easy, and we have had a learning curve on our board, but we are in a groove now. I have gained so many skills, like grant writing, large-scale event planning and community contact. On top of all that, our board loves to hang out together. It truly has been an experience that I would recommend to others, and I do.

If you would like to learn more about Astor's Young Professionals Board of Directors, contact Maliha Khan at mkhan@astorservices.org.

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