

*One of the most frequent comments we hear about the strength of ANCA is the total willingness of ANCA members to nurture and support the development of emerging leaders. The journey of Ruth Lundin into the position of president of the Jamestown Audubon Center and Sanctuary is testimony to this core value of the ANCA culture.*

Ruth has an MBA from the University of Oklahoma and worked in the manufacturing industry. After awhile, Ruth decided that if she were to invest a significant portion of her life in the working world that she needed to find a new profession – one in which she could make a real difference. Her childhood experiences, hunting, fishing, and bird watching, gave Ruth a love of nature. This combined with a love of children, concerns over our education system, and her management background led Ruth to research nature center administration. And... she found ANCA in a directory of nonprofits!

Ruth then visited centers along the eastern seaboard and wrote letters to every ANCA board member asking for advice. Much to her delight, doors were opened to her everywhere. Charity Krueger, executive director at Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm, offered Ruth an administrative internship, which provided the unique opportunity to learn all aspects of managing a nature center under the mentorship of one of ANCA's Nature Center Leadership Award recipients.

Within a few months, Ruth attended the very first ANCA Summit in 1995. "The experience of participating in a Summit with a wonderful workshop on fundraising and a key note speaker outlining the challenges facing our profession was inspiring." The next year, Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm hosted the second ANCA Summit and from 1996-2007 contracted with ANCA to have Aullwood serve as ANCA headquarters. Assuming many major responsibilities for ANCA administration, Ruth said "that interacting with ANCA board members and witnessing the way ANCA was managed played a huge role in my professional development."

In 1999, the position of CEO at Jamestown Audubon was posted and with encouragement from Charity, Ruth applied for and got the job and still serves as CEO. Charity stated "Ruth came to Aullwood with the drive to learn and succeed. She was enthusiastic about assimilating as much as possible through hand-on experiences. Ruth took advantage of every opportunity to expand her skills and she was a tireless employee. I am so proud of her accomplishments and of course I learned a lot from her as well."

Ruth has remained connected to ANCA by attending Summits and by serving on our board of directors and peer consult teams. She stated that she is always looking for information to bring back to her board and appreciates the different perspectives offered in the ANCA newsletter. She noted that serving on a peer consult team was one of the best learning experiences that ANCA provided her and that the ANCA network was her "go to" source for advice.

Ruth Lundin successfully managed a career change due to her tenacity and drive to achieve her goals. Ruth stated "Aullwood is an organization that encouraged learning all aspects of nature center management and operated in a very professional manner following best practices. Charity was a marvelous mentor who allowed me to shadow her and gain insight into the behind the scenes operations of a nature center. That, coupled with the exposure to ANCA, did an excellent job of preparing me to become an executive director." And by-the-way, Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm continues to offer the administrative internship!



*Ruth Lundin & Charity Krueger*