



## Ruthann howell

President & CEO • Wellspring Family Services

**AGE:** 53

**HOMETOWN:** Post Falls, Idaho

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Arts in sociology with a minor in Russian studies, Whitworth College; Master of Social Work with a concentration in administration and family and children, University of Washington

**BUSINESS BACKGROUND:** I have been very fortunate to have been driven toward social work — and especially working with children.

**CAREER TURNING POINT:** While working at a battered women's shelter as a children's advocate, I saw children and women making courageous decisions to change their lives every day. I then experienced what happened to them as they encountered systems that continued to be barriers to living those decisions and making new lives for themselves. That led me to think about how to manipulate and change those systems for good so that they would

not be barriers but would be more responsive to the lives of the women and children. Additionally, it seemed to me that the way things were organized in the agency prevented staff members from being able to give fully of their talents and creative energy. It just seemed to me that there must be (better) ways.

**NEXT BIG THING:** In business, we are working on fulfilling the promises we made to the community through our capital campaign and building on the momentum we have as a result of the campaign.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Currently I am the co-team manager of the Vashon Eagles soccer team; founding member and past board member for The Executive Alliance; active member of The Alliance for Children and Family's Resource Development Services Committee.

**HOW YOU MENTOR OTHERS:** I am hoping that living my values and being fortunate enough to work in an organization with people who share my values, where we are making a profound difference in the lives of so many families, provides encouragement and support for others.

**SECRET TO BALANCING CAREER AND NON-WORK LIFE:** I think this is a myth and we don't do ourselves any favors actually thinking this is possible — especially for women. ... Get over it and keep your sense of humor.

**TO RELAX:** I enjoy time with friends, swimming — especially some place hot and sunny — reading, and travel.

**OTHER JOB YOU WOULD WANT:** Anthropologist or diplomatic corps. Although, in third grade, I was sure I was going to be an archaeologist in Egypt in the wintertime and a detective in the U.S. in the summertime.

**WORDS OF ADVICE:** Follow your passions and your heart strategically.