



Member Spotlight: Sandra “Sandy” Brashear



This month, we're excited to shine our Member Spotlight on **Sandy Brashear** - retired Administrative Staff Specialist from the Virginia Department of Social Services and a **long-time SGMP superstar**.

Meet Sandy

Sandy lives in **Richmond, Virginia**, and has spent much of her career helping create meaningful and memorable events.

5-minute read

SGMP Involvement

How long have you been a member of SGMP?

Sandy has been with SGMP since 1992, which makes her one of our most experienced and committed members.

What inspired you to join the Old Dominion Chapter?

Her SGMP journey started when someone from the Norfolk CVB stopped by her office and invited her to a chapter meeting. Sandy decided to check it out - and immediately loved the vibe. The people were welcoming, knowledgeable, and genuinely enthusiastic about the industry. She got so excited she asked her manager the very next day if she could join. Not only did he say yes, but he also paid her membership and approved overtime so she could attend meetings.

What roles have you served in?

Sandy has jumped in and served the chapter in so many ways, including:

- Historian
- Photographer
- Director of Hospitality
- Director of Fundraising

Plus, she's helped out on the Hospitality, Fundraising, and Communication Committees, and supported Host Committees for NECs held in Virginia.

A favorite SGMP memory?

Her first Chapter Conference! She loved it so much she borrowed some ideas: like the silent auction - when planning her first national conference. That silent auction ended up raising money for a local charity.

Professional Background

How long have you worked in meetings/events/hospitality?

Sandy has an incredible **40 years** in the field.

What do you love most about your current role?

She loves the learning, the networking, and the freedom to grow professionally. Meeting diverse people across the hospitality industry has always been a highlight for her.

How did you get your start in this field?

Her event planning journey began in the **U.S. Army**, where she handled everything from parties to tours to fundraisers. Later at VDSS, she planned meetings and conferences at local, state, and national levels. SGMP helped her take her skills even further, leading to awards, promotions, and new opportunities throughout her career.

A professional accomplishment you're proud of?

Sandy played a major role in a huge statewide conference that lasted five days and involved multiple agencies and four hotels. She started on the Hospitality Committee but was eventually asked to chair it - giving her the chance to help pick keynote speakers and entertainers, some of whom she met at SGMP's NEC.

Fun Facts & Personal Interests

What do you enjoy outside of work?

Traveling, spending time with family and friends, helping others, taking nature photos, shopping, and enjoying good books.

Favorite travel destination?

She absolutely loved the **French Riviera** and **Alaska** - both trips she'd happily repeat. She also enjoys road trips through **New England**, especially during the fall foliage season.

Something people might not know about you?

Sandy and her daughter **served together in the same Army Reserve Unit**. Both worked in medical fields, and her daughter preferred Sandy to give her shots - nobody else!

Favorite quote?

"Everything happens for a reason."

Final Thoughts

What advice do you have for newcomers to SGMP or the meetings industry?

Get involved, show up, and take advantage of everything SGMP offers. The more you participate, the more you'll grow.

Anything else you'd like to share?

Sandy says SGMP has opened countless doors in both her professional and personal life - and she's grateful for the friendships, opportunities, and experiences the organization has brought her.