

ASU graduate uses communication, fundraising skills to aid nonprofits

School of Community Resources and Development Outstanding Graduate Madison Barton raises money for human-trafficking survivors

By Ayrel Clark-Proffitt, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [fall 2025 graduates](#).

Phoenix-native Madison Barton was inspired when she heard the founder of [Love Never Fails](#) speak about her vision for creating a world where every person can live free from exploitation.

Last April, Barton joined the organization — a Bay Area nonprofit dedicated to preventing human trafficking and empowering survivors to rebuild their lives — as the its special events and donor care manager. Barton said it felt like a natural continuation of her work addressing homelessness and homelessness prevention in San Francisco, where she witnessed the link between trafficking and vulnerable communities, such as unsheltered people.

She wants to see a future where “every survivor of human trafficking is given the chance not only to recover but to lead a life defined by freedom and purpose.”

Barton is the fall 2025 Outstanding Graduate from the [School of Community Resources and Development](#), part of the [Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions](#). She is graduating with her master's degree in nonprofit leadership and management.

Barton has worked exclusively in the nonprofit sector for the past eight years, using her background in marketing and communications to help organizations focused on service. She enrolled in the nonprofit leadership and management degree because she saw the program as an opportunity to combine her interests in storytelling, strategy and dedication to further positive social outcomes.

After graduation, she plans to continue expanding the impact of Love Never Fails, where she leads community engagement initiatives that sustain housing, workforce development and prevention education programs for human trafficking survivors.

“I am passionate about strengthening Love Never Fails’ community partnerships so that every survivor we serve has access to the long-term care, resources and opportunities they need to thrive,” Barton said. “My graduate studies at ASU have equipped me to approach this work strategically and with heart, making sure our mission can continue for generations to come.”

Barton knows that a safe place is not enough for victims’ recovery. Instead, safety must be combined with community, opportunity and long-term support that provides housing, as well as education and employment pathways to empower survivors to rebuild their lives.

“Each day I’m reminded why I chose this path: To use my voice and my skills to create meaningful, lasting change,” she said.

Read on to learn more about Barton’s ASU journey.

Note: Answers may have been edited for length and clarity.

Question: What was your “aha” moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: During my freshman year as an undergraduate at ASU, I interned for Make-A-Wish America as their social media and marketing intern. I had the opportunity to collaborate with major airlines and corporations to help make wishes come true for children with critical illnesses. I realized that my communications skills could be used to make a tangible difference in people’s lives. From that point forward, I knew I wanted to dedicate my career to the nonprofit sector.

Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at ASU?

A: I was fortunate to have [Jaime Freidrichs](#), faculty associate in the School of Community Resources and Development, for three different courses during my master’s program. She is a phenomenal instructor who constantly connected theory to practice. One of the most valuable lessons I learned was when she introduced the Pareto Principle — the idea that roughly 80% of results come from 20% of the causes.

This concept transformed how I approach my work in fundraising. In a sector with limited resources, the Pareto Principle helps me identify and cultivate the top donors and partners who drive the greatest impact. I’ve also been able to apply the principle to volunteer engagement and marketing strategies.

Q: Why did you choose ASU?

A: ASU made the most sense. As a first-generation college student, ASU offered me the opportunity to pursue an education that was both accessible and affordable.

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate career at ASU, its commitment to public service and innovation never wavered, and neither did mine. I invested in my education, but ASU invested equally in me by providing the resources, mentorship and flexibility that made my goals possible.

