

What is the FPA NexGen Gathering?

It's not filled with vendors, PowerPoint presentations and lots of old white men wearing blue shirts

By Sophia Bera | *June 25, 2014 - 2:01 pm EST*

I attended a financial planning conference this past weekend, but it wasn't what you might imagine a conference to be. Most conferences are held in big cities, at fancy-schmancy convention centers with overpriced hotels attached to them. They are filled with vendors, PowerPoint presentations and lots of old white men wearing blue shirts. (I'm not sure why "blue" is the official color of men in financial planning, but it is).

I am generally one of the youngest people at these conferences by about 15 years. Sometimes I can find a group of other people in their 20s and 30s and then we end up sitting together, which can only look like "the kids' table" to the baby boomers in the room. But NexGen was a totally different experience.

The Financial Planning Association's NexGen Gathering was a conference for planners under 36. This year there were about 60 attendees, almost double from last year. It was held at Augustana College in Moline, Ill. There were only a few presentations for CE credit and the rest of the time we sat "in circle" and shared. It was a time for young planners to connect personally, professionally and intellectually as we discussed what's at the top of our minds.

One of the unique things about the gathering is that the group decides the agenda once we get there, creating a different experience each year. This year we broke into groups to discuss succession planning, launching our own firms, overcoming fear, our favorite technology tools and much more. In the evenings, we hung out together. Whether it's going to a local minor league baseball game together or coordinating our own game of touch

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football (yes, I played!), we spent a lot of time laughing and talking (and of course, adult beverages were added to the mix).

It was a time to connect with other financial planners who get our world, share our struggles and have an unbelievable excitement for the future of this profession. The FPA NexGen Gathering happens every summer, but there are more and more local [NexGen](#) groups that are starting across the country within FPA.

If you're a young planner who feels like you've been missing out on connecting with others like you, I encourage you to attend a NexGen event. I can guarantee that you'll make new friends who will affect your life for years to come.

Sophia Bera is a financial planner and for Millennials and founder of [Gen Y Planning](#). She works virtually with clients in their 20s and 30s across the country.

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