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Final Internship Paper

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The Good, the Bad, and Well Enjoyed

Make-a-Wish Utah is a highly competitive foundation. Employees and interns go through a twostep interview process as well as a background check. Due to the nation-wide and very familiar organization, many people apply to become a part of their team. When brainstorming what I would say in my first interview, I listed bullet points on what I’d like to focus on. However, as soon as I walked into that building everything in my mind went blank. Remembering back, I’m glad I did not remember my original words, I feel like what I was truly genuine and that was their best chance of seeing who I am. I ended up saying something along these lines,

“I am very aware that I am not perfect and that there is always room for improvement, however I love that about me. It motivates me to never quit knowing that I can do better and that I have not reached my fullest potential. I am not molded into a stereotype rather I define myself and strive to reflect that image so others may see it as well. I am not the best, but I do my best and for me that measures success. I consider myself to be a well-rounded individual. I love experiencing new things and pushing myself to overcome everyday obstacles. From anything outdoors to a social atmosphere to buckling down and working with all my might. My talents and skills vary on a wide scale; however my core passions remain the same. I keep my heart close to the gospel and my family”. I also mentioned that I speak Spanish and am attending the University of Utah. About 2 days after I finished the process, I received a call that they would like me to be their intern and that as I was their first choice they would willingly work around my schedule.

Make-A-Wish Foundation is nationwide but branched off into states, Utah being one of them. This organization thrives with the help of volunteers, donors, supporters and internships like me. The vision of such an organization is focused on granting life memorable experiences for children diagnosed with life-threatening medical conditions the majority of which are terminal. Wishes granted by this non-profitable organization are not just gifts for the kids involved but impact everyone around including, the kid, families, volunteers, interns, donors, sponsors, communities and medical teams. It’s something that goes far beyond our scope of imagination.

As a special events intern, I work under the Special Events Manager to help with events and programs, solicitations, implementation, and evaluation. I work with wish forms collecting information and processing it, as well as making contact with wish families for various reasons. I maintain up-to-date event documents, databases and lists. I make and answer phone calls, send email correspondence, file documents, organize supplies and perform other duties requested and assigned. I am training to become a “Wish-Granter” whom meets with a wish child to discover, plan and fulfill a wish. My internship falls directly under two people of the company, my priority is to them and they oversee and direct my work. Overall Make-A-Wish Utah has approximately 10 employees that spearhead individual major departments of the organization.

Wishes are granted from the organization after they go through four main steps, depending on what evolves around the wish, as well as the medical condition of the child it takes around 4-6 weeks to 6-8 months. Step one is the “referral” stage where children 2 ½ -18 years of age are eligible to be submitted by medical professionals, children, parents or even friends. Step 2 is the medical Eligibility, where the child is proven to have a condition that is putting his life in jeopardy. 3rd, the search begins in finding the suitable wish and connecting the ideas into action. Lastly, the joy is created and an unforgettable experience takes place.

At the beginning of this class and my internship I was asked to come up with three learning objectives that were achievable task oriented goals and that would reflect my learning and new responsibilities. The ones I chose and had authorized included; 1st, I will learn how to maintain and keep up o date event documents, database and lists. 2nd, I will organize/support and attend fundraising events and programs, including planning, promotion, solicitation, implementation, and evaluation. And 3rd I will contact auction donors, events sponsors, vendors, guests, hosts, ect to confirm information and coordinate details. As well as provide Spanish translation for phone calls and email correspondence.

I have learned primarily that reaching out in a service to others is very fulfilling. The type of environment I get to be in everyday is nothing short of the best. Everyone there knows what their purpose is, as part of the big picture, we all do our best and with a cheerful perspective. Every life, every wish is equally important and unique. I have learned to have a more accepting outlook on life in general and I have a new motivation to look for a career that focuses on others and always placing them first and foremost. Taking calls is probably the second largest area I’ve felt my personal growth in. Through observation and experience I have evolved my lingo to adapt with the listener/responder as well as how to make quick connections over the line. Those in charge of Program Services at Make-A-Wish are quick to help me as soon as I ask. They are always training me on new things before I attempt them for the first time and assisting with my unanswered questions.

While an intern for Make-A-Wish I assisted some events and got a back stage glance at what goes on into making each wish possible. The diverse atmosphere of the internship makes me better-rounded and more outgoing as an individual. I am more confident in what I want to do and achieve goals than I was before. I believe my resume will better reflect my top priorities in life and those hiring me would be even more so able to see it in an interview. I am able to apply to various situations and could use in correspondence to my resume and interview questions. I have improved my ability to promote, organize and evaluate in more useful and effective ways to the benefit of myself and the company for which I work for.

Every task completed at make a wish was assigned to me, every one unique and specialized to the day competed therefore it wasn’t hard for me to find something to do. I chose to show my efforts and ability to go above and beyond in completing things timely and demonstrating the quality of my work. Most assignments my boss would mention that I didn’t need to do something to a certain degree. That simple was acceptable, but to me these moments became opportunities to do more. I tried my best to go the extra mile in my powerpoint presentation, my wish board, my “past to present” project and organizing 12 different albums. Some projects I worked on as an intern were very time consuming and it quickly became apparent to me that I could spend days on them and only accomplish a portion. One thing that I became more aware of in my personality with work and my internship is that I don’t like to leave a job unfinished. I lose time having to pick it up again the next day and retracing my tracks to emergence myself repeatedly. I would much rather accomplish a significant portion and find a decent quitting place where I can easily pick it up again the next day. That being said, I used the maximal creativity in searching for easier ways to accomplish such tedious tasks.

Make a wish helped me understand that everything I do is useful, if not now than in the future. In some form or another every insignificant detail of the assignments I am given become applicable. I like the saying “there is a productive way to kill time and an unproductive way to kill time”. Neither one of the tasks I was given were appealing, in fact they were both miserable in a way. However, I learned to do what was asked and think proactively. Someone had to accomplish them and that person was me. For the reasons listed above I am able to justify that this objective is very useful to my future career and helps me accomplish goals. No matter what I end up doing, it can’t all be incredible. There will be times where I will push through work or fill out paperwork that doesn’t appeal to me but I’ll do it in a similar way. The lessons I learned and will continue to learn, whether directly related to my major or not, are all useful in accomplishing my purpose and/or goals.

Towards the end of my internship Abbi, the lady over my internship, announced that she would be switching jobs. In the process her and I ended up discussing the option of me applying for her job position at Make-a-Wish. I was thrilled, as I would love to work for this company at the conclusion of my internship. Unfortunately, they need someone who can work full-time and my degree also requires other work necessary for me to graduate. Although I would have liked to take the offer I signed up to volunteer regularly with the company instead. Maybe further down the road I will make my old internship into a career. Until then at least I know I showed sufficient worth ethnic that I was able to make an impression of such a wonder organization.

Now that my internship is over I look back at some improvements I could have done differently along with what Make-A-Wish. I would say their program isn’t quite as organized as it could be. I also would suggest to the foundation the importance of assigning out meaningful tasks. What I did helped out multiple areas of the company, however I felt like they could have had more of a structure when assigning interns as well as opening up to us. Often I felt like they would’ve just rather done everything their selves instead of allowing someone else to help them out. I think it would have been more beneficial if that barrio was broken down from the beginning, after all I was there to make their jobs easier. I would have liked to improve with my social skills. Due to the sort time allotment I had each day, I quickly began working every day without meeting and greeting with other employees. I would have preferred to form more meaningful relationships which I think in the long run could be very beneficial, especially if I want to return to Make-a-Wish. Small talk isn’t my strongest suit, but I think in many situations it can be very useful.

To make this internship program better, I would suggest a continual grading of the students work instead of completion of a grade at the very end of it. I believe this would have helped me stay more motivated to complete assignments in a timely matter and help me focus more on my objectives. I did however appreciate the availability and quick responses of my counselor to any questions or comments I had through the semester. I thought the syllabus was clearly outlined and I did not recognize any flaws or misleading information. Internships are a wonderful way to get to know different companies and helped me on my journey of career exploration. I appreciate the flexibility and willingness of the University of Utah to allow students to obtain credit for such opportunities.

Although I will miss my internship I have plans to stay involved with the foundation outside of an internship setting. I would like to return shortly, and have already contacted to the volunteer coordinator, as a wish granter/volunteer. This involves at least a one year commitment and completion of 2 wishes within that year. They also hold quarterly meetings for training and information. I believe it to be a good way to build my resume and stay with an incredible company. This makes it a little easier for me to say goodbye, because in reality I will still be around such wonderful people.