

## Career Plans and Aspirations

The architecture/engineering field is varied and complex. As I'm beginning my fifth year as a project coordinator, my immediate plans will be to continue in this role and take advantage of learning/teaching philosophy in place at Shive-Hattery. I have been a team member on a variety of projects, differing in both size and scope; however I would like to expand my knowledge by working with other sectors and on other types of projects. While I continue in this role, I also intend on learning more about project management.

Early in 2015, I attended several hours of internal training called "PM Essentials" at Shive-Hattery. Since that training, my position has been altered to better utilize my new and developed skills. At this time I am assisting existing project managers in the office with their planning, budgeting and contract negotiation tasks. My aim is to become a full time project manager as soon as possible. As I continue to learn more about this industry, I feel I'll be able to make a better decision on whether to continue in the architecture and engineering field or look into other areas of management.

## Leadership

When I started at Shive-Hattery, I reached out to Tina Carstensen regarding involvement in the community. At the time I was working as administrative support at Shive-Hattery and wanted to learn more skills to move my career forward. She suggested I begin networking to learn of opportunities that are available within our community. This suggestion became the reason I became involved with New View (West Des Moines Chamber Young Professionals). I went to a planning meeting and volunteered to co-chair a committee. I volunteered to chair the Outreach committee for three years. In 2013, I served as the Advisory Committee Chairperson, which included a seat on the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce board as well.

With New View being a relatively newly-formed group at that time, I felt it was important to help grow the New View name as well as help develop a solid purpose beyond networking. Introducing a service aspect to the group felt very important to me. At the time, we had established after-hours networking and professional development luncheon events. Millennials/Generation Y are sometimes described as "Me-centric," and I don't believe that generalization is fair, especially here in Des Moines metro area. I've found many young professionals have a deep desire to get involved in their communities, but they want to connect to the mission of the group before committing. New View has the opportunity to provide a variety of ways to get involved in the community and provide value to the member at the same time.

In 2014, I was accepted into the West Des Moines Leadership Academy. As part of the curriculum, the class is to choose a service project. Our class was divided into three groups with different service projects. The group I was in selected to help Booster Pak gain awareness through a new marketing plan, fundraising, and a meal packing event held during a West Des Moines bicycle riding event. Booster Pak is a non-profit organization that creates meal packs for children in the West Des Moines school system who are on the free and reduced meal plan. They may not have food available on weekends and school breaks, so Booster Pak gives them enough food for easy meals during that time.

During the bicycle event, each team of cyclists had to complete a task before going onto their next stop. One of the stops was a timed meal packing activity for Booster Pak. I coordinated the volunteers from our group that would help set up the activity that day. We were also responsible for hauling all the food packs to and from the event location in West Des Moines. Working with my classmates on that project is not something I'll soon forget. Each classmate made time for the event in their busy schedules and Booster Pak gained valuable awareness during the event.

In my career, I help lead a team of co-workers throughout the design and construction of several projects at the same time. The project coordinator and manager positions are not personnel managerial positions, so it's essential to develop teams, communicate well with them and get them to communicate with each other in order to deliver successful projects to our clients.

I have found that regardless of position in a company or organization, leaders rise to the top because they lead by example. I find people who exemplify leadership are often able to prioritize and focus on objectives as well as motivate others to gather support to achieve goals.

## **Volunteerism**

I started volunteering in college through Big Brothers/Big Sisters. I had a little sister for about two years. I then sat on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Warren County Advisory Board briefly before the Warren County Big Brothers/Big Sisters office was closed. In college, I worked part time at Kids West, a before/after school program in West Des Moines. I enjoyed working with the children so much, I considered a career in child care/development after college. When my degree in Rhetoric and Speech Communications didn't lend itself well to working with children full time, I researched volunteer opportunities. I reached out to Children's Cancer Connection around 2009 and briefly sat on a committee to help plan a Childhood Cancer Survivorship Conference. The committee dissolved after the conference was canceled for that year. After that, I did volunteer tasks for Children's Cancer Connection (working a few hours at their holiday wrapping station in Valley West Mall and donating used prom dresses).

I enjoy volunteering, and I knew I could devote more time than to simply perform an occasional task. This led me on a search for more involved volunteer positions. I checked the United Way website and found several opportunities listed for Beacon of Life. Beacon of Life is a transitional housing facility exclusively for women. Beacon provides a structured environment and supportive services along with shelter. The Beacon exists to provide hope, healing, and recovery for its residents. Beacon of Life is a local non-profit, staffed by local people, helping local people and benefiting our community through its mission.

I emailed Beacon of Life in 2011 and was brought on right away to help revitalize their social media presence. I began their Twitter account and started posting regularly to Facebook as well. I also joined a Quiz Bowl Fundraising committee and brought co-workers and friends to the event. I felt so energized by my involvement that I've helped plan seven fundraising and awareness events for Beacon of Life including three Cake Galas, the organization's signature fundraiser. Each year the event has grown in attendance and funds raised. In July of 2013, I joined their Board of Directors. Now, after being involved for over four years, I am the President of the Board of Directors. I feel my ability to bring the board together to brainstorm and execute ways to further the mission of Beacon of Life has been my greatest contribution. The board of directors and staff for this organization are such a dedicated and talented group of professionals with whom I am so fortunate to serve.