

Nestled beneath the Brooklyn Bridge lies an emerging public park that has striven to revitalize a 1.3 mile section of Brooklyn's post industrial waterfront into a space of recreation, community, and interconnectedness. The six piers of the park flourish with many tourists and attract residents from all five boroughs of New York City, resulting in a vibrant intersection of culture. In an effort to accommodate every desire of the park's visitors, each pier alternates between active and passive space allowing for both active recreation and serene, nature focused space. The creative architecture, artwork, and breath taking view of the Manhattan skyline found in the park beckons many visitors, however it is the myriad of free programs offered by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy that are truly at the heart of the park's success. Over the past decade, by partnering with other organizations, the conservancy has established a multitude of free programs including but not limited to: fitness classes, concerts, workshops, educational programs, stargazing, clinics, and kayaking. As a Summer Associate for the conservancy, I had the pleasure of working for an incredible organization, in a fantastic place, resulting in an invaluable experience that has greatly assisted in shaping my aspiring career path.

Like the wide variety of people visiting the park, most of my responsibilities as a Summer Associate changed daily. The majority of these responsibilities revolved around facilitating the various free programs the conservancy offers to the public throughout the summer.

Depending upon the difficulty of the set up for the event, some events required most of the

eleven Summer Associates, while others only required one or two. Supplies for every event were stored in a large metal container located about half a mile away from the office of the conservancy. In order to set up an event Associates were expected to retrieve everything on the “pull list” and take all supplies to the location of the event via rolling bin or hand truck. More often than not, this required a lot of heavy lifting. Although at times this was grueling, sweaty work, to my delight by the end of the summer, the pains of my labor were noticeably visible in my physique. The actual set up for an event was often more complicated than I originally anticipated due to technology issues and setting up a PA system as well as a generator, a skill upon arrival that I did not possess. After set up was complete, Summer Associates were obligated to be present at an event, which usually entailed diligently checking to make sure everyone signed a waiver for every fitness class, operating sound systems, and answering questions. An interesting privilege of the internship that I did not expect was the ability to practice my foreign language (German). As stated before, tourists from every continent visit the park daily and to my surprise I had many opportunities to practice German through answering questions for visitors.

Another main responsibility of the internship was surveying. Just about every day after an event, Summer Associates were asked to go out to certain locations in the park and survey visitors. The survey questions mostly consisted of demographic questions such as ethnicity, sex, place of residence, and whether or not they enjoyed the park. Although this was not my favorite aspect of the internship, the skills that I acquired from conducting the surveys were very valuable. While conducting the survey it was important to approach every person politely and warmly and even approach people I otherwise wouldn't have in order

to capture the vast variety of visitors in the park. Many people did not want to be disturbed while enjoying the park so it was pertinent to sell them on taking the survey. Lastly, quite a few people were disgruntled with the new construction of the hotel and business spaces being built on the park property. Some felt they were being cheated out of more park space and that the construction would negatively impact and even ruin the ambience of the park. Quite a few of these visitors used the surveys as a platform to voice their frustration and it was necessary to quickly develop the skills to navigate these conflicts into positive conversation.

The last responsibility that was required for this internship was office work. I really enjoyed this aspect of the internship because it required more creativity or thought than most of the other responsibilities. Office duties would include anything from simple office tasks such as inputting data into a spreadsheet or writing media posts and posting them on various promoting websites.

All in all, the internship was incredible and will be an experience that I never forget. The hard work of creating, operating, and promoting programs in a public space is probably one of the most difficult jobs in the world, but probably one of the most rewarding. The obvious positive effect on the wider community and on truly grateful consumers was extremely gratifying to see and provided an invaluable experience.