

## Abby's Splash Park Notes

This internship has offered me real experience in the widest array of professions and skills. The title of Splash Park Coordinator includes a multitude of roles that were essential in the Park Running smoothly.

### **Marketing Role**

Alongside the marketing intern, the amount of Canva creations is large. Every free day requires a new, creative sign just for the business sponsoring it. I recommend going through templates on Canva on slower days and starring them to use later. Make sure you resize them to 24x36 inches. It seemed like the free days would pour in one after another. Because I started later than the other intern, she covered much of the face-to-face promotional stuff with businesses in town. She did an outstanding job compiling a mailing list and sending mailers too. Without her hard work right away, we wouldn't have had nearly as many free days. It is important to stay on top of sponsors and their application, as it seems to slip the minds of many.

Posting these on Facebook was key as well. I attempted to have at least one post a week in advance of the free day, and then one the day before and one the day of. Oftentimes, free days ended up being right on top of one another. I would have the first free day post go out at 7 am and then the one for the following day at 6 pm when we closed. It was also helpful to have the post scheduling feature on Facebook as well. Utilizing this feature allowed posts to be purposeful and well timed. People also seemed to like having a free day calendar for each month on Facebook and at the park. We thought at first this would decrease revenue on non-free days due to people only coming on free days, however because we don't always know all the free days right away anyways it ended up working out fine because it was a lower number on the calendar.

I tried to be very active on Facebook, posting at the very minimum every other day. I think this helped to boost our posts' reach on the platform. However, the overall reach for each post seemed like it was completely random. Tagging the sponsor sometimes made the posts gain a huge reach too. We ended up doing a promotion for free freezies during rum river fest, and then another time at the very end of the season to get rid of freezies. We also are doing a buy one get one free day on the last day of the year.

We did put out an ad in the paper, however it was quite expensive, and I really don't think many people even see it to be honest. I wouldn't recommend doing that again. I updated the about section on Facebook this year a well. Be prepared for a lot of people to come on warm weather days, as well as right away in the season, especially if you open on Memorial Day weekend. Promote it everywhere!! Mary Lou was helpful in putting our free days on the sign in town too!

### **Supervisor Role**

I can't say I've been in a "boss" like position other than in high school clubs and sports. This internship developed my leadership skills in working with the attendants at the park daily. We had an outstanding group of kids this year, and only had problems with one who ended up being fired. Make sure you are documenting any poor behavior and strange money disappearances.

The kids will need lots of practice with the money. It will be over or under frequently right away, and you will probably have to bring out change a lot. It was helpful to always have \$150 in change on hand in the office. Once we reached July, most of the attendants had the till down. When you explain it to them, tell them to count all the money, minus 250, and whatever that number is put it in the envelope. Also say to start with big bills and go down until you can get that number exactly. Don't overcomplicate the explanation, just give them instructions.

They will also be nervous about the water testing, but they will just need practice. Being with all the kids for their first opening and closing shifts was beneficial in their learning. Locks are also tricky for young kids, they really have no experience, so be patient and let them do it themselves so they can get ample practice.

Towards the end of the year, scheduling becomes tricky because of sports. To combat this, it was great to have a couple kids who are not in any fall sports. 3 would be a good number. We had plenty of resources in the concession stand for the kids to access schedules, as some couldn't at home. Having sling on the iPad was a great addition.

Making a positive connection with every one of the attendants really helped throughout the season, I think it made them much more likely to pick up shifts and do more tasks at the park. Even just hanging out and talking to them for a few hours really made a great environment. I enjoyed getting to know all of them through this internship. Some of the kids will have personalities that can handle more at the park, while others can only do the bare minimum. This is okay, because you will have the kids that end up being your go to person in helping with little things.

It was also important to have a free day and party schedule out at the park for the kids to look at. Remembering to update this was hard, however it was helpful. Also, the timecards need to be picked up every other Monday, and I normally had the new batch available out there on Thursday or Friday the week before. Scheduling shifts was one of my favorite parts of the job, because it was a fun puzzle every week. I posted this every Monday or Tuesday two weeks in advance so the attendants can have lives. This worked well, but you must communicate with them they need to give you two weeks' notice for days/time off. If they do not do this, it is up to them to find coverage for their shifts. The fourth of July weekend was one with lots of time off requests, so you may need to schedule this in advance. This year, the fourth fell on a Tuesday I think, so the weekend before everyone was out of town.

### **Stocking Role**

Due to the popularity of the park, we sell a lot of concessions. It seemed like I was at Walmart every two to three days. We went through Dylan and "Viking Coke" with a guy named Patrick Hensley for pop, water, and Powerade, but couldn't get root beer or orange in small bottles through them. They were not the most reliable in getting us our products, as it was forgotten a few times. Overall, they were good, and the speed of delivery was good too. If you order by noon Monday it will arrive by noon Tuesday...hopefully. You can pick it up at the city liquor store.

We got ice cream, chips, and most candy from Walmart. We also got swim diapers and sunscreen there too. Great Value was the brand for Ice cream cones and ice cream sandwiches. We got the plain sandwiches and the vanilla cone with nuts on the top. Ice cream cones were by far our most popular item. I could fit 8-10 boxes of cones in the big freezer and 3 boxes in the little freezer. I wouldn't

need as many sandwiches at one time because there are so many in a box, so normally there were 3 boxes in the little freezer and 3 in the big one. We got Icee brand ice tubes from Walmart too. People LOVE the blue ones. They like red too but will buy blue first. We kept a lot of these in the big freezer, normally like 5-6 boxes, and had them out of the box in the door of the little freezer sorted by color. Eventually, you will run out of blue and have like 30 red ones left, so we just were “out of stock” of blue until the red sold a couple times throughout the season. We bought bomb pops from Walmart too and had the name brand. These did not sell as much, but when they did someone would buy like 7 at a time. We had on average like two boxes in the big freezer and two in the little one. We also had pop-ice freezies. These sold like crazy. The kids sorted them by color in boxes in the big freezer. Again, the blues will sell like crazy, and you will have TONS of orange left. That is why we did a couple free freezie days. All frozen stuff was \$1 and freezies were \$0.50. People complemented our low prices all the time. We sell so much ice cream, I think it is a good thing to have the price so low.

We bought two variety packs of chips, the purple and blue big box from Walmart, and had just Smartfood popcorn box, Lays classic box, and Funyuns box. People love their funyuns. We also had a goldfish variety pack, but nobody likes the pretzel ones, I guess. I ended up finding packs with just color goldfish and just cheddar ones, I would recommend getting those little kids liked the goldfish a lot. Be prepared to have lots of red Doritos, Crunchy Cheetos, Original Ruffles, and Chili Cheese Fritos leftover. That is why we are doing buy one get one free. We sold chips for \$1.

This year, we had small packs of gummy bears and individual Laffy taffy for \$.25. I think this was a great idea because the kids could bring their own money and buy candy. It doesn't seem like we were selling a lot, but we ended up making more on this than on some of the candy bars. It could be fun to add some other small candies next year like sour ropes or Jolley ranchers. Candy bars were priced at \$1. This included M&M packs too. People bought lots of Twix, Peanut butter m&M's, regular m&M's, and three musketeers, but didn't buy as many snickers and peanut m&M's. Milky way was more in the middle. Finding candy bars to sell at a dollar was hard, we might end up needing to raise that price to \$2 unfortunately.

Having pictures of the food available for people was great, especially kids who love to point at what they want. This was posted low on the concession stand for that reason, and the normal menu was higher for adults. Also, having the size of the pop and Powerade on display helped to sell more Powerade, as it was priced at \$2 because it was a bigger bottle. We sold quite a bit of Powerade, coke, root beer, sprite and water. Diet coke and orange were more in the middle. Coke zero was never really bought.

### **Speaking With Public**

People can be jerks. They will sometimes even be a jerk to 14- and 15-year-olds too. Although this is unfortunate, it is a part of the job. Tell the attendants they can always say things like “sorry I don't make the rules I just work here” or “I can call my manager for you if you'd like.” People will be mad they have to pay to be inside the fence even if they don't plan on getting in, the kids can let them know they are welcome to sit up at the picnic shelter or in the grass. This is something that needs to be enforced because most parents do end up going in. In addition, everyone could say that and then get in. Babies under 6 months were free though. People will also be mad they have to pay at all. Quite a few people were upset about dogs not being let in. Who would think to bring a dog to a waterpark anyway? We put up a sign. One lady was even mad we wouldn't let her kid play in the water while it was lighting out.

Some people are nice though. Yay! It is important for the kids to be open and charismatic with the visitors at the park. When there is weather delays, give free admission cards freely. On free days, walk around a bit smiling. Finish admissions purchases off with something like "Have fun!" Things like this build great community relationships. We also posted about our great attendants on Facebook and had a little meet the attendant series for our followers.

Promptly responding to questions on Facebook was important too. I think it helped to show we cared. A lot of times people were planning on going that day or the next and were asking questions about their upcoming visit.

Having parties available to book was fun too. I think people enjoyed having the opportunity to have the park to themselves. We had parties like pretty much every day during the prime season. Hours for parties/free days were different than normal, and I left a sheet with what we found to be the best layout for scheduling.

The Chamber/This is Princeton was helpful in connecting us to the public as well. They reposted many of our posts and made a tourism video that included the park. We also presented splash park data at a park board meeting. I attended a city council meeting too for my own curiosity.

People at the park ended up helping me see a problem with our park, it wasn't wheelchair accessible through our main gate. We ended up putting in for a paved entrance and a wider gate by the booth. I would also say having some awning for the attendants and elderly to escape the sun would be helpful too.

### **City Hall Helper Role**

It was also fun for me to break out of what I normally do and have tasks for those at city hall and the city in general. I made posters for public safety day as well as Nite to unite for the police/fire stations. I also did random things like driving the surrey bike to the fair. I found it great to see the interworking's of a government office, as well as I just enjoyed everyone here. Listening in to conversations was a highlight of this job. Maybe I'm a bit nosy, but I liked to see what people are doing. Everyone was also helpful in assisting with splash park tasks throughout city positions as well.

### **Princeton Swag**

Finding/creating Princeton swag was a part of this internship too. We made little goody bags for the kids at the end of the year and gave them Princeton cups and random items. I found cheap cups at Joann fabrics and put a sticker on each one. I also ordered cute summer themed bags from oriental trading and some small notebooks to give them with Princeton pens. We also made T-shirts for the kids at the start of the year. I wasn't here yet, but I like the blue because it looks nice on everyone. Unlike the neon yellow tanks from previous years. They were nice to have though on hot days, even though they weren't so stylish. I would say to get two shirt options for every attendant, because sometimes they are working multiple days in a row. It could also be fun to have visors for them while their working that are optional to wear, sometimes the sun got bad in the booth, especially in the afternoon.

### **Finance Reporter**

Another unique role in this internship was checking in with sales reports on square. It was enjoyable to see what is selling, on what day of the week, and what time even. I liked putting together

averages and tracking item sales with the information provided in square. It takes a while to figure it all out, but once you do information is easily tracked down. It was helpful in watching things like employee snacks and what items might need restocking. I was amazed by how much money the Splash Park made this season.

### **Shopper Role**

There were a variety of items that needed to be purchased weekly for the park. Dollar tree was the place to go for balloons. Usually, we had new ones for every free day, if they weren't twice in a row. I noticed that if you add an additional layer of packing tape to where the balloon meets the string, it won't fly away as easily. We bought root beer and orange pop at Coborns because Patrick didn't have the small bottles. They were more expensive at Coborns, and Coke is super expensive at Coborns, so if you see Orange or Root beer ever at Walmart buy as much as you can.

We bought everything else at Walmart. I outlined regular stocking earlier in the notes, so I won't go over it again. I will remind you, though, that checking out at the guest services counter is much easier than a regular lane with the Tax-Exempt card. Some of the workers might be crabby about it but others are totally fine and nice.

### **Water Chemist (Kinda)**

At the start of the season, testing the water was a huge hiccup every day for the kids. Honestly the whole system was a pain. The instructions we ended with were the best possible description, and the kids did fine once they were updated. Just know that the water will almost always be off in the afternoon from a day running, but the Public Works people will fix it in the morning. There is so much room for error with the chemicals out there. It is a bigger issue if the water isn't pumping right, which is the second number on the screen out there.

Additionally, the kids found that on long, especially hot, days, the water will literally shut off and not come back on with the remote. They told me that if you go into the room and shut it off and back on with the button on the screen it works again. Probably just gets overwhelmed and needs to restart.

Tim informed me that when chemicals are off, usually the "solution to pollution is dilution." Which means if there's too much bad chlorine add water and reset the system with the fill thing on the screen. I recommend having him walk you through it a few times.

When the water isn't right and people are waiting, know that it is ok. They can wait for safe water, just communicate that with the people there and they will understand. Some of the on-call people for weekends don't even know the Splash Park system that well, so I would just always try and get ahold of Tim first.

### **Weather Forecaster**

In the event of severe weather, I found it is best to have the workers stay at the park instead of sending them home for them to come back an hour later. They have been going in the bathrooms or water testing room for lighting. This way, everything doesn't have to be shut down. Just tell them to hang tight and play on their phone for a while or something. Obviously if there's like a tornado or something they shouldn't stay.

Rain is a different story. Sometimes it says its going to rain all day long and it never does, and people are mad your closed. And sometimes if you stay open you make like nothing that day. Whatever you determine is fine, but the kids like hours so I opt normally to stay open rainy days and the sun will come out sometimes. Have the kids clean or do some organizational tasks. (This also depends on the personality of the kid working).

### **Splash Park Coordinator**

I have thoroughly enjoyed this position, especially because of its many roles. I was never doing the same thing all day, and it kept my brain busy. My favorite day of the week was always Monday because I had the most tasks to do. I liked when I went from posting on Facebook, to scheduling, to restocking, back to fixing the schedule lol, to problem solving, to looking at finance reports on square, then making posters, talking with coworkers, and going home.

The most difficult part of this job for me has been having conversations with the attendants when they do something wrong. It was hard for me to learn how to have hard conversations on the "leader" side of things. I still am working my way through how to do that.

Overall, though, I am sad to leave but excited to be able to do it again better than ever next year. :)

-Abby

2023 Splash Park Coordinator Intern