Uncharted Waters: Navigating a Summer of Transitions

My Summer Internship at the Mayborn Museum

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• Mayborn Museum Complex brings together in one location the resources of hands-on discovery rooms and interactive natural science and cultural history galleries, including outdoor exhibits.

• The Mayborn opened in its current state in 2004.
Duties as an Intern

• Coordinating birthday parties
• Providing customer service
• Training and supervising student workers
• Performing other duties as assigned
Summer of Transitions

• Recent staff reorganization within my department
• Trained as a student worker
• Trained as staff
• Trained new student workers
• Supervisor goes on maternity leave
• Trained replacement on birthday party procedures
• New museum director, Charlie Walter is hired
• Dr. Caston retires and Mr. Walter begins
Birthday Parties

• Worked with birthday parties all summer in different roles
• Trained to temporarily assume coordinating duties
• Took over earlier than expected
• Trained new employee to assume coordinating duties upon my departure
• Handed it all off
Customer Service

Mom says, “Peter I told you we have to use our big boy hands not our t-rex hands.”

Visitor asked me, “well why do you work here if you can’t even flip over a turtle over?”
Student Workers

• Assisted in training
• Prepared the weekend student worker schedules
• Enlisted assistance from student workers to field test a project
Other Duties As Assigned

• Greeting visitors on my weekly exhibit shifts
• Helping the VE Pod with summer groups
• Exhibit troubleshooting
• Keeping the museum clean
• Created birthday party scavenger hunt
• Helped with free Sunday
What I Learned

• Museums are people oriented and flexibility and diplomacy are essential.
• We are an educational institution not just for the public but for staff and student workers.
• Questioning is okay but do so respectfully.
• Teamwork is what keeps the museum going.
• I learned a lot by listening.
• Communication is key but always a challenge.
• When a situation occurs sometimes the only control we have is our own reaction.
• Transitions are a part of all successful organizations. You can resist change or you can learn from it.
“While I am exhausted after working eight days in a row, I would not have ended my internship any other way. I feel as if I have learned so much and maybe even figured out what I want to do in a museum once I am finally in the “real world.”
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Questions?