

Career Profile: Shane Mize



Job title:

Interim Assistant Director

What led you to your career in Parks and Recreation?

I was aware very early on in college, that recreation programming could have a significant impact on quality of life. That was something that intrigued me.

What skills, experience and qualifications are necessary for you to do your job?

I think in parks and recreation industry that we should take our job seriously without taking our life seriously. I could say education, certification and experience in the field, of course, are all necessary to do my job; but to be honest – just a desire to serve is all you need. A desire to make an impact on the lives of the people your agency serves. It could be with trails, open space, programs or special events, but if you are doing it to serve the consumer they will take notice and appreciate it.

What challenges do you face in your job?

I think the political part of the job is something we all face. Also balancing what your customer base is asking for vs what they actually need. Those are the two things that can make this job difficult at times.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

We enjoy impacting our customer's lives. It could be providing that safe, fun afterschool or summer day camp option that allows the parents peace of mind while they are at work, or even the casino field trip that helps a senior meet new people their age in the community.

What advice do you have for job seekers interested in your position?

It's not an 8-5 job (especially early in your career) and it's not a brick and mortar business you can pass down to your children. This job is public service, and even though you aren't voted in to your position you will find yourself answering to the public over time. Also if you have the opportunity, take the time to learn about the diverse areas this field offers. Do your job, but also learn about the aquatics side, or the operational side. Take a senior session at the next workshop or conference you go to. It will make you a well-rounded leader when the opportunity presents itself.

How has NRPA helped you in your career?

They allowed me, as a young professional in the field, to have a voice in our industry. They provide opportunities to learn about industry trends, set up networking between myself and other members and put me in contact with professional vendors in my field that are waiting to help me get the job done. NRPA has been invaluable to me.