

## Reflection

I found my time with Keep Durham Beautiful to be informative, interactive, and educational. This was my first internship experience in the field of public relations, and I was taken aback by the amount of journalistic writing I was able to do. I feel that the university separates the two tracks, and while I love the strategy and planning that goes into public relations, I have always had a love for writing and telling stories. I had the opportunity to do this through my blog posts which included a piece about the Bulb Blitz event and a feature piece on a veteran volunteer. In addition to this, I really enjoyed writing the profile on Tania Dautlick, the executive director of KDB, because I was able to find an angle in which I wanted to take the story and profile and navigate my way through the piece using her experience and interview. In addition to the public relations learning, I was able to learn about the mission and details of KDB, and the things they do for the Durham community. Through talking with Tania, the volunteers, and reading about their events, I was able to truly buy in to their mission, and I hope to volunteer for them at future events.

I believe the most valuable aspect for me was being able to actually work with Tania and Abby and actively communicate with them. I doubt my work often and feel like it will be judged if it is not up to par. However, working with Abby in particular, I was able to take her recommendations and criticisms and work off them to create a better piece. Her responsiveness to questions and feedback really helped me feel comfortable. I think they did a fantastic job working with us, but my one recommendation would be to give more tasks that could be seen and used in real time on the website and at events. The timing is not ideal with COVID-19, but the only piece that was posted or sent out was my Bulb Blitz blog, and I think

there would have been a deeper sense of pride and accomplishment had we seen more of our work being used.

KDB has a great mission and website, but they need to continue sharing their name, brand, and mission with the community. Just based off one interview I had with a volunteer, I could feel the passion and dedication that is felt by those who serve the community through this agency. That passion and commitment should be better utilized and publicized to the community to get more people involved. In addition to this, Tania said they had lost a lot of connections with local news outlets, and I think they need to try to create and maintain more of those reliable contacts so they can be a go-to for quotes on the environment, local nonprofits, and the Durham community in news pieces. In addition to this, it will make it easier to get upcoming events and stories published in real time.

I believe that KDB is a fantastic APPLES client because they are not only easy to work with but also help students get involved in the community. Being a college student, it can be hard to feel connected to Chapel Hill and the surrounding towns and cities; however, this agency is a way for us to get involved and give back to a community that welcomes us and serves us as students. I believe it is an agency that the university should maintain a close partnership with and encourage student involvement in.