

Viner Scholar Maia on interning with Make A Wish Foundation



1. How did the opportunity to intern with Make A Wish come about?

“I applied to the internship directly online.”

2. What does this internship mean to you? Did you have a personal connection to the foundation?

“Yes! The Make-A-Wish foundation has a very special place in my life. I received a wish from the foundation when I was 16 years old after battling a chronic gastrointestinal disease since birth. After receiving my wish, I started a club in my high school called Kids For Wish Kids in order to raise money for the foundation. It was a really awesome way to give back to an organization that gave so much to me. Now, coming back as an intern was really incredible. I was able to really use my skills to make an impact on the lives of children and their families.”

3. What are some of the tasks you did as an intern?

“I worked as a development intern on the national alliances team. The Development/National Alliances Intern provides assistance and support to annual fundraising campaigns that include cultivating, soliciting and stewarding individual and corporate donors to help build relationships with our local and national alliances. As an intern, I played a role in the coordination and implementation of fundraising initiatives including promotions with national corporate partners, and learned how for-profit corporations partner with nonprofits to further their initiatives.

Additionally, there was event planning assistance, which included an opportunity to participate in and organize logistics for wish celebrations and donor cultivation events. This role allowed me to directly participate in the coordination of key national partnership campaigns including Subaru's Share The Love & Macy's Thanks For Sharing campaigns. Through a combination of learning experiences, work projects and group collaborations, I gained an understanding of nonprofit fundraising, community outreach and marketing."

4. Biggest takeaway from your time with the Make A Wish Foundation Team?

"I definitely learned a lot of useful skills during my time at Make-A-Wish. I feel like the biggest takeaway I learned was about how important building relationships is. By creating positive symbiotic relationships, both organizations benefit immensely. This is extremely important in the nonprofit world."

5. What are some tips for students who would like to apply for an internship?

"Applying to internships can be really stressful. I would treat it like an extra homework assignment and dedicate a specific time to put a lot of effort into the application. It's also useful to use the resources available from your university such as writing labs and resume help. My university also provides help with interviews and professional clothing for interviews."

6. What is your current major? What made you choose your major?

"I'm currently a public relations major with a certificate in graphic design. I'm pursuing a combined master's degree in public interest communication from UF. I choose PR because of my strengths in writing and building relationships."

7. What are some of your goals?

"In the future, I hope to combine my desire to help others with my global perspective to work for an NGO, a nonprofit organization or the United Nations. After taking two combined degree courses, I'm excited for the opportunity to pursue my Master's in Mass Communication. This degree would give me the necessary skills and qualifications to succeed in a world that is becoming more and more globalized. I believe that my past experiences coupled with my current academic success, make me an ideal candidate for this program."

8. Was college everything you imagined?

"College has definitely been a learning experience! I'm so grateful for the opportunity to attend an awesome school and receive such a top-quality education."

9. What's the most surprising thing you've learned in college?

"I've learned a lot about the importance of managing your time and making time for important things."

10. What's your advice to new scholars?

“College is a crazy time filled with so many new opportunities. Find the ones that make your soul happy and your heart sing. Be genuine in your choices of involvement and only do things that you are passionate about. Don't waste your time in college trying to be anything but yourself. It is easy to get caught up in the culture of being over involved in college. Overall, focus on what matters most to you, not to anyone else. There's no right or wrong way to “do” college. Throw away your expectations and take advantage of the opportunities given to you. Don't be afraid to say no but definitely don't be afraid to say yes.”

11. What campus organizations are you involved in this year?

“I'm a PR Intern at UF College of Education, and take part in Women's Club Ultimate Frisbee. I'm also a English Language Institute - Conversation Partner.”