***My Experience with Summer Bash 2020***

***​***

*My experience with Summer Bash over the past four months has been nothing short of an adventure. Our team was able to organize and execute an overwhelming number of events during one of the most difficult times in history to do so, during a global pandemic. When I began my orientation as a Summer Bash Summer Student, I was excited to see what we could pull off in terms of events during these unprecedented times, but I truly had no idea what I was in for. What started off as a small idea to do a few socially distant drive-in movie nights quickly spiralled into three of these events per weekend, all summer long. In addition to the movie nights, we also hosted a weekend of drive-in concerts in partnership with Folk Fest, as well as a successful two-day Summer Market. As challenging as it would be to pull off this number of events under normal circumstances, our attempts were made ten times harder by the extremely dynamic, yet necessary, rules and regulations that were put in place by the provincial government and health authorities surrounding COVID-19. After going through more than a few permit applications, location changes, and movie selection revisions, I am proud to say that I was part of a team that was able to bring a plethora of events to Regina and the surrounding communities when they needed it most.*

*What stood out to me the most about being a Summer Student with Summer Bash is how many new skills I was given the chance to learn in such a short period of time. I was responsible for creating and updating tickets to the events using Yapsody, an online event ticketing system, and I also made updates to the summerbash.ca website using Wix. In addition to this I used Square to create the product listings and keep track of inventory for our canteen items. I was also introduced to event management software such as Planning Pod and ClickUp, which we used to create to-do lists and organize tasks, contacts, templates, and much more. I am grateful for the skills I was able to develop by being introduced to these applications because I believe they will be highly relevant in future jobs that I pursue in the marketing field after graduation. I also value the fact that this position provided the opportunity for constant growth and improvement, whether it was being introduced to new applications, or streamlining the way we handled movie nights, we were never stagnant in our methods and this collective mindset led to increased efficiency and an overall better experience each time we attempted an event. This job was many things, but boring was never one of them.*

*This year presented many unique challenges as a result of COVID-19, and I believe that the way these challenges were approached and the attempts to mitigate them are what made this such a successful summer for Summer Bash. The following are some suggestions and things that I believe were done well this year that should be implemented for next year as well. First of all, having a distinct schedule of which hours students are expected to work would not only allow students to plan their daily lives around work and therefore increase morale during working hours, but it would also ensure that all parties are aware of when work would be getting done. I personally appreciated the schedule that was in place this year when students would work together in one location for a set number of hours each work day, from 10am to 3pm for example, and then also have some flexibility where we would be expected to complete the remaining hours from home. Secondly, assigning tasks to each student seemed to work best when each task was written down in a Google Doc under the assigned student’s name, and everyone was able to view which tasks had been assigned to whom. Having important information such as what tasks need to be done written down rather than relayed over the phone was extremely helpful because the document could be used as a reference and tasks could be crossed off as they are completed. By sharing which individual was assigned to each task with the entire team, everyone was clear on the overall tasks that needed to be completed and it also ensured that there was no overlap in who was completing each task. COVID-19 certainly made organization and planning difficult, and I think this year was a learning curve for everyone, but overall, I believe these challenges were handled quite well given the circumstances.*

*There were many highlights from this summer, a few of which include: being involved with Folk Fest and getting to see and interact with local artists, the Summer Market where I was impressed by how many talented local crafters and business people we have in our community, and seeing the happiness and excitement on citizen’s faces when they attended one of our events after being stuck inside for so long. But overwhelmingly the absolute best thing about this summer was getting to work with an amazing, talented, diverse group of people. Everyone in the Summer Bash team was a joy to work with, and I can’t imagine this summer without each and every one of them and their unique traits and qualities.*

*​*

***Maya Potter, Sept 7, 2020***