

KALENE GRIFFITH

President/CEO of Visit Bentonville

We could have been lawyers. We could have been dentists. We could have been accountants. But no, we decided to pursue careers in tourism. In our Dream Jobs series, we interview some of the best and brightest within the tourism industry about how they broke in and get their advice to the next generation of tourism leaders.

Today, we feature Kalene Griffith, President/CEO of Visit Bentonville.

How long have you been at your job?

13 years

What's your favorite thing about your job?

I have a couple of things that are favorites for me. First and most importantly, are the people that we get to work with daily; our staff, our community leaders and our friends in the tourism industry. Secondly, the opportunity to share our story of Bentonville experiences to the rest of the world.

What's your advice to young people looking to break into tourism?

My advice is to be open-minded and you will find the right opportunity that fits your passion and interest. Tourism has many different opportunities or pathways which include marketing, attractions, tours, sales, and operations. Most importantly, tourism creates passion and positive experiences. The industry leaders are there to assist you, do not be afraid to pick up the phone or meet with someone in the field of interest to help guide you or support you in your efforts.

First job?

Babysitting was the first paying gig. But my first real job was with our city Parks and Recreation. I had the opportunity to have three different experiences in my first summer job. I started every day as a Park Activity Coordinator; I planned the organized game in a local neighborhood park five mornings a week. After lunch, I worked the wading pool as a lifeguard in a local neighborhood park, and following dinner, I umpired for young girls playing softball. It was the start of my hospitality career.

Worst job?

I have loved every job I have ever had, truly the job and the people made my career opportunities some of the best experiences. Fun Fact: I have not appreciated every task assigned to me, but at the end of the day, I loved the people and the job as a whole and it all made me the person I am today.

If you didn't work in tourism, what industry would you want to work in?

My initial guess would be a teacher as my major in college was Early Childhood Education. It was fun, creative and I enjoy the caring and loving minds of little ones.

Want a career in tourism? Check out our [jobs board](#) filled with great jobs located all over the Southeast.