

Alumni Voices – LIGHTs On Winter 2023
Alyssa Larsen '19

Sarah Grady (SG): Hello! My name is Sarah Grady. I'm. The Assistant Director of the Lloyd

just want to make sure that we give the best experience to them to make sure that they're coming on our property next time. And it's difficult like I said, with all the other casinos.

SG: Competition is fierce in this market, even just within the market, let alone outside of it with New Jersey, adjacent to Pennsylvania and New York, and all of those other businesses as well.

How do you feel that your experience at Stockton prepared you for this challenge for this experience?

AL: Yeah, that's a great question. You know, in the hospitality program specifically at Stockton, they really encourage you to think outside of the box – try new things. It's okay to fail. You got to fail to see what works.

Hospitality is not black and white. It's about being creative, and you know, just thinking outside the box and doing things outside the norm.

Even when it came to looking for internships or projects, or anything like that, we really always were encouraged to just give it a shot. See if it sticks. And that's really important, when I'm at work, and I'm thinking of things just to try. I'm reminded that it's okay to try things and fail and see what works. And the only way you're going to get better is by trying new things and that's what's going to separate us and set us apart from the competition.

SG: Great observation. Certainly, the idea that you can adapt, and you can, you know, not ad lib. But you can try to be creative. Different approaches to things.

And that leads us to the fourth question. **Do you have any advice for people that are seeking a career in the industry, or someone that's trying to follow in your path of banquet services at a casino?**

AL: Sure. So, everybody's post-grad job search looks different. A lot of people have internships lined up, and that sets them up. But I would just say, overall, for anybody – Just keep your mind open. The last thing I wanted to do was work in food and beverage in a casino. I was not interested in the hours, the chaos, any of it. I was like, 'that's the last thing I want to do.'

Whether I liked it or not, food and beverage was kind of just always on my back, and I'm happier than I ever thought I would be in this role. So, I'll just say, get creative with your job searches. You know the hospitality industry stretches far beyond dining rooms and kitchens and hotels. There's something for everybody. So, just keep your mind open. Keep your eyes open. Keep your ears open, you know, and give something a shot. It may be a better fit than you think.

SG: Excellent, excellent advice. I think we all need to be thinking on our feet with some of these things.

So, do you have any other comments, any other thoughts that you'd like to share.

AL: Sure, I guess I would just say, for the students who are lucky enough to be enrolled in the hospitality program at Stockton, and are still current students, take advantage of that network. Take advantage of the help, take advantage of the ways to get involved, you know. Take the time to build those relationships because it really does make a difference – especially post grad, especially when you're looking for jobs – to have that network. Opportunities may be presented to you that otherwise wouldn't have. So, get your name in there and make those connections, and just take advantage of it while you're there. Because the community is real, it's genuine, and everybody wants to help you succeed.

SG: Absolutely. Excellent words to share with our audience. Thank you so much, Alyssa, for spending time with us today, and for sharing your reflections and your experience. So, thank you, and I thank our viewers again for joining us for this Alumni Voices Interview. Thank you so much, and have a great day.

AL: Thank you, Sarah. Thank you.