

Alumni Interview: Breanna Young '20

Founder, Owner, and CEO, Tower Investments, Inc.

Sarah Grady (SG) - Good morning and welcome to the alumni voices. Alumni interview for lights on. I'm Sarah Grady, the Assistant Director of LIGHT and I'm here today with Bre Young previously Betts of Good Time Tricycle Company. So Bre, could you just tell us a little bit about yourself?

Breanna Young (BY) - Hi, Sarah thanks so much for having me join you this morning. So I am, Bre - Breanna. I went to Stockton University. I work for Good Time Tricycle Productions. Now I transferred in the fall of 2017, after taking a conferences, conventions, and special events, course at community college, Ocean County College, and fell in love with it.

Realized that I really wanted to work in live events, not knowing what that meant and what capacity. I think I only realized that casinos were an option. I didn't know that there was a whole world beyond that coming to Stockton, and Stockton really helped introduce me to the world beyond that which is the world that I'm in now, which is a small business we have under 5 full time employees.

I'm the event coordinator and project manager. We produce the Atlantic City Beer & music Festival, the Downbeach Seafood Festival, Knee-High Knucklebusters - micro wrestling, Witchcraft AC Tattoo Expo, The Atlantic City Cigar Social – So, we really focus on lifestyle events. We bring over 100,000 people into the market each year. And it's all based here in South Jersey. All our contractors, our employees. We hire Stockton interns. It's full circle.

(SG) - Excellent, wonderful! So, I always like to ask people, what would you consider your current challenge or current success?

(BY) - I think my current challenge is trying to stay relevant. It's an ever-changing market and things are always trending differently. So, I think in this post pandemic world every festival came back, every band is touring, and you want to make sure that you're staying relevant, that you're having the coolest experiences that you're having – The coolest beers, the coolest entertainers, the coolest seafood trucks, the coolest tattoo artists – that you just want to make sure that you're saying at the top of the game. So, you can compete against your other festival producers in a way, but also make it a fun and engaging experience for your attendees, so that they continue to want to come back every year.

We have that loyal, loyal customer base. But we don't want to keep it stagnant. We want to keep it moving and keep it entertaining. And that's our job is to create an experience for them like none other.

(SG) - I imagine that's an incredible balancing act and trying to be at the cutting edge of these things and still honor what elements your clients really respond to?

(BY) - Yeah. And I think that's a big success of ours – that we have kept it consistent to the point that we do have that loyal fan base that we have those new people that come every year, but at

the heart of AC Beerfest we still support and love New Jersey craft, beer and all craft beer, and at the heart of Seafood we just want to eat lobster rolls and clam strips and tattoos... that we support and uplift unique lifestyle groups that aren't otherwise supported. So, Cigars, Tattoos, Halloween – all of it. I think that's a major success of ours.

(SG) - And how would you say that Stockton prepared you for all of this?

(BY) - I think the biggest thing that Stockton prepared me like – preparing me for this role was being part of a team. I dove in headfirst when I transferred into Stockton. I became a board member of the Hospitality Society. I was in Stockton Event planners. I was an orientation leader. I was at Talons, I worked in housing. Those were all team roles, none of those positions were ever anything that you had to do on your own.

I work well on my own, but I work better with the team and Good Time Tricycle is the ultimate team. We go from a team of 3 in the office full time to 50 plus during events. So, Stockton really prepared me to work with all walks of life, to work with different people, different expectations, different learning styles, different teaching styles, and really making those connections. I wouldn't be here if it were for Stockton.

Spring of 2020 was my internship here. As I was graduating, the pandemic happened, but I saw John, who's my boss now? I saw him on a panel in Fall of 2018 at Stockton. I had no idea who he was. He was just the Executive Producer of Good Time Tricycle and little did I know that I would help put on the first Witchcraft with them and work Downbeach – it was Atlantic City Seafood Festival at the time, now Downbeach Seafood Festival – and then intern for AC Beerfest and come back as a show producer for AC Beerfest. It really went full circle from just sitting in an auditorium, in the main hall on the campus, to just sitting here in Linwood now.

So, like I said, Stockton really prepared me – becoming part of a team, becoming really making. I guess, how I want to say it, that your voice matters... And then Stockton uplifted those voices and allowed us to share opinions and work together.

(SG) - Excellent! Excellent! What better endorsement could they ask for? You know?

(BY) - Yeah. And I really, I really thank all my advisors and staff and all my employers on campus, because they really allowed us to have that freedom.

(SG) - Absolutely. Do you have any advice for anyone seeking a career in your field – live entertainment live events.

(BY) - Yeah, I said, I just get I did. I'm sorry, Oops.

(SG) - You're fine.

(BY) - I was just the keynote speaker for the Young Leaders Expo and with the School of Business and the Hospitality program in April. So, the same question was asked, and I think my biggest piece of advice is to pretend that while you're at Stockton you have a minor degree in networking. To meet everybody, shake everybody's hands, take everybody's business cards – make connections.

Because, they may not be in your segment of the industry, but at the end of the day the entire industry is about bettering consumers' experience, and whether that's in housekeeping or banquet serving marketing communications, PR, event producing, corporate, hotel ops. – No matter what, we're just here to make the consumers – yes, we want to make money. We want to grow our brand – But if the consumers' experience is better, that's all that matters.

And networking with people at Stockton, getting to this position, I now have friends who work at the Convention Center who work at Tropicana, who work at Ocean, who work at Hard Rock – that I can lean on. If I didn't network with them while I was at Stockton, I wouldn't have those experiences. I wouldn't have those connections that I do now.

And I think my other piece of advice is that no matter what you're a lifelong student, you have to keep learning. You have to keep being a sponge to absorb everything.

That's my biggest, like my favorite Anecdote – be a sponge. Just take it all in, and then ring it out. So be a sponge, take it all in, wring yourself out, share all of your knowledge, and then go learn more.

Because there's younger students, there's people that are going to take your job. There are people that are coming up under you and looking up to you. You need to share your knowledge with them. But there's also people above you that you need to learn from. So just keep moving and keep learning and keep going with the market and being an innovator in the industry.

It's super, super important to be an innovator in the industry.

(SG) - That's Excellent advice. Any other comments, anything else you'd like to share today?

(BY) - I think you don't have to know what you want to do right away. I changed my major 3 times at community college, I started going in as an architecture and engineering student, and then changed to social work and art therapy, and then fell in love with events and hospitality. So, you don't have to know, and I'm 27, and I might change my life path again in 10 years or 20 years.

You don't know, and that's the joy of working in – it's such a fun industry – is that you can. I can transfer and work in a different part of the sector anytime. I don't want to. I'm very happy, happy, happy working my 8 weekends a year in my 9 to 5 job.

But you don't have to decide right now as a student, or even as a fresh alumnus. You don't have to know, like this is what I must do. I'm stuck working in casinos, or I'm stuck working for a small business. I'm stuck at the Jersey shore. You're not because you can go wherever you want, and that's the biggest plus side of the hospitality industry. It is a global industry that you can really do whatever you want where you want at any time in the world.

(SG) - Yeah, I mean, it's incredible. All the opportunities that are coming to the fore these days.

(BY) - It's amazing.

(SG) - I want to thank you Bre, for making the time to talk with us today and for doing this interview for our LIGHTs On. It's wonderful to reconnect with some of the alumni, especially our hospitality alumni that are still local.

(BY) - It's very nice.

(SG) - And I want to thank you.

(BY) - Yes, thank you, Sarah. I really appreciate it.