

# “I would not be the person I am today without it.” South Carolina Business Week

*Editor's Note: Once in a while, we check in with our South Carolina Business Week alumni to see where they are and how they're doing. Kenzi Parker was one of those fascinating young individuals who will tell you her success in life can be traced in part to her being nominated to attend Business Week, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce's prestigious summer camp for future business leaders. When Parker checked in with her Chamber family from her job in New York City, we were excited to seize the opportunity to have her tell us what she's been up to, and more importantly, why Business Week should remain relevant to businesses in South Carolina.*

BY KENZI PARKER

## 1. Why did you enroll in SC Business Week?

My mother, a Greenville County school teacher, learned about the camp through meeting Robbie Barnett at a teachers conference. We then registered for my first year of Business Week in 2007. I was very excited for my first ever summer camp, although concerned about my quiet nature. I was most excited to learn about entrepreneurship and public speaking. Little did I know that Business Week would change my life forever and mold me into the young adult I am today.

## 2. What was the most important lesson you learned?

Out of all the lessons that Business Week has to offer, the most important one was having confidence in myself. They have a talent show each year for students, and I signed up my first year. I showed a short music video that I had animated. It was when I turned around to a standing ovation, that I knew where I wanted to go in life.

## 3. Who were your greatest mentors?

Although every volunteer I've met has had a huge impact on my life, the greatest mentor I had, and still have, is Matthew Capelli. I was very shy my first year and he would chat with me to bring me out of my shell. He is also the one who helped me muster up the courage to show my animation at the talent show. He and I have stayed in touch throughout the years since.

## 4. Were there any major ramifications from attending (e.g. scholarships, jobs)?

After attending Business Week for two years as a student, I was privileged enough to be contacted to come back as an assistant, and eventually, the intern. This helped build my leadership skills. Helping to run the camp was an amazing opportunity. I feel like I have helped plenty of young adults in South Carolina realize their potential in the business world and many have kept in contact with me over the years. It's amazing to see how far my previous attendees have gone in their lives.

## 5. What was your progression afterward?

Since I began my association with SC Business Week, I have attended and graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia with a degree in animation. After working at the S.C. Chamber of Commerce, I moved to New York City, where I was hired as a junior Flame® compositor at Method Studios in their commercial branch.

## 6. What are you doing now? Have you utilized any of your lessons from SC Business Week in your current work?

Every tool that I learned at Business Week has been used since moving to New York City. People here compliment me on my leadership, drive and organization. I also have been pushed forward, working with clients because of my acquired people skills.

## 7. Why should a company consider sponsoring a student to attend Business Week?

Sponsoring a student to attend Business Week is investing in the

future of all industries. Not only do they have a chance to further their education of the business world, but they have the opportunity to learn from respected educators from around South Carolina. Schools from every county are represented allowing students to make friends from everywhere. I truly believe that my experiences at Business Week, made possible by the companies who sponsored me and the other students, have made me the successful person that I am today. I would not be the person I am today without it, and I am personally looking forward to becoming a sponsor myself.



Kenzi Parker

To sponsor a high school student from your hometown to attend SC Business Week 2015, contact Robbie Barnett, associate vice president of workforce, education and manufacturing policy at (803) 255-2625 or [robbie.barnett@sccchamber.net](mailto:robbie.barnett@sccchamber.net).

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