



CRFP Spotlight

Kristy Alleman

What other restaurant companies have you worked for prior to your current position?

I started out as a hostess at Marie Callender's in high school, then became a server during my first two years of college. I transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara, and was a server at Chili's, until I became a manager after graduation. I changed career paths in 2003 when I got into commercial property management. I managed the day-to-day operations, repair and maintenance and capital projects for a portfolio of office, industrial, retail and historic properties along the Santa Barbara coast. I moved to Texas in 2010 and started with Starbucks in real estate and had the opportunity to pilot a new program in facilities. I jumped at the opportunity to get back into the wonderful chaos of project management. I love nothing more than a challenge to inspire creative problem resolutions.

After spending so much time in restaurants, do you cook? If so, what is your best dish?

I love ethnic foods, so I try to learn a new dish each year. Mongolian beef was my specialty this past year. I am no Betty Crocker, but I am an accomplished coffee maker, thanks to Starbucks!

What was your first car?

My first car was a tan 1969 VW Bug; my sister and I named him Chuck. All of my cars have had names, such as Fancy, Betty White, Olaf and Ruby Sue, all with a funny story behind them. I take great pleasure in making the most mundane things in life

What is your all-time favorite movie?

My all-time favorite movie is "Christmas Vacation." It was a staple in my house growing up, where there was never a dull moment, lots of laughter and an abundance of friends and family.

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job?

How did you handle it? Years ago when I was in commercial property management, I worked very closely with my HVAC contractors and consultants when needed. There was a building that was sitting over a plume of ground water that was contaminated by a printing press in the early 1920s. Only recently, it was discovered that the high water table was moving the contaminants closer to the surface and a construction site a few blocks away had tested positive for PCE and TCE in the soil.

After some environmental testing, we needed an immediate solution to keep ground vapors from penetrating the building, so we ran the HVAC system on 100-percent outside air 24 hours a day so we could create enough pressure to keep soil vapors from entering the building through the slab. This worked immediately and it was a temporary solution until the remediation work was able to begin. I have since used building pressurization to also help with paint or epoxy vapors from entering an adjacent space while neighboring tenants were remodeling. When I look back on all my complicated situations, they were best solved by good relationships with great vendors, open communication and having well-established service-level expectations.

If you weren't a restaurant facility professional, what you would be?

I think I would be a designer, building creative spaces to maximize the fun in each square inch. Why take the stairs when you can go down a slide, right? When I was young, my dad made an 8-foot-tall giraffe rocking horse that was big enough for me and my three older sisters to ride together. I think creativity, the desire to build and the need for fun runs in the family.

What was your very first job?

In junior high school, a friend's dad was a firefighter and ran a Christmas tree lot during the holidays. My sister and I were both "tree girls": We would help people find their trees, fresh cut the trunks and tie the trees to their cars for tips. The first one we did, we ran twine through the windows of a car and the driver had to crawl through her window to get in. I love the smell of Christmas trees to this day.

What is the best advice you ever received?

My dear friend and mentor Ray Deleгарde once told me "Life is to live, not to contemplate." I try not to dwell on things I cannot change, but focus on what I can positively impact. I believe that at the end of the day if you live life well, all will be well.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP?

I was new to RFMA in 2014 and just learned about the CRFP program at the Dallas conference. I wanted to further my career and thought the CRFP designation would be a great start. Being in restaurant and property management for years, the materials was very approachable. I used my iPad to navigate the online prep course and found the format to be very user friendly. As with all things, having a game plan will set you up for success.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues?

Why? Absolutely! No matter where you are in your career, the CRFP program is a great tool and resource for learning or establishing your level of expertise in our industry. There are so many aspects about facilities, restaurant and property management that you have to know in our particular field. Getting your CRFP shows initiative, diligence and the ability to articulate your proficiencies and knowledge. We often see our operators move into facilities roles, and I think the CRFP course is a great introduction to real scenarios they will encounter and helps to establish a base line of knowledge among the entire facilities team.

What has been the most significant change in the restaurant industry, and how has it affected your job?

Overall, technology is changing so many aspects of the restaurant industry. Buildings are being designed more efficiently, EMS systems are more common and mobile technology is changing how we communicate and manage our business. Having access to mobilefriendly software and apps is the greatest change and impact I have experienced, and I think we are just seeing the beginning of technology boom for facilities management.

What do you do for fun in your spare time?

My husband Michael and I just started golfing, and I absolutely love it. He was shocked that I can hit the ball more than 200 yards; I guess those years of softball paid off!

What's the one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you?

Despite my fear of heights, I have reverse bungeed, bungee jumped, been on a bungee swing and ridden the tower ride on the top of the Stratosphere in Las Vegas. I don't think fear should ever limit your experiences in life. Through these experiences, I no longer feel the need to prove to myself that I can do anything.