

In a crowd of runners and volunteers, a development assistant at Note in the Pocket places orange traffic cones onto the pavement in preparation for the annual Socks & Undie 5k Rundie.

The fundraiser was held in support of Note in the Pocket; a nonprofit organization that seeks to provide clothing to impoverished children and families in Wake and Durham County. NC State University student and part-time employee with the nonprofit, Hattie Altmann, utilizes her education and internship experiences to benefit the organization and its events.

“I’m definitely learning more things now [at Note in the Pocket] than I was at previous internships,” Altmann said. “I can do way more than I expected too because I’ve built up my time and proven myself to get more trust on the projects I work on now.”

Majoring in Communication Media with a minor in Nonprofit Studies, she plans to continue applying her knowledge outside of class.

Altmann’s courses at NC State reviewed topics like media history and theories; critical analysis of communication media; interpersonal skills; and examining the intersection between technology, culture and communication.

“Sometimes it [having a job] is very necessary and while it may not be fun as a student, I think it’s important to think about starting to work towards your career as a senior,” she said.

“When the job correlates to your major, it can have a lot of great benefits – even though it may be really hard, it’ll end up working out in the long run.”

Altmann began working at Note in the Pocket in December, after stumbling upon the job posting online.

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“I decided that it was somewhere I could kind of see myself spending some time working and getting my foot in the door in the working world a little bit more while still being a student,” she said. “It’s been challenging but it’s been really fun.”

A typical day for Altmann consists of answering phone calls and emails; creating graphics and content for the nonprofit’s social media and website; entering donations into the system; and assisting with preparations for school drives, fundraisers, and volunteer opportunities.

“I sit in my office, and I see out the door and hear people coming in, picking up their bags that are ready to go,” Altmann said. “And that’s just been really nice to kind to see and witness how frequently bags of mini wardrobes are being sent out the door.”

While Altmann is set to graduate this summer and pursue a full-time job, she intends to continue supporting Note in the Pocket in some capacity.

“My current plan is to continue working with note [in the pocket] until I find a full-time job,” she said. “And I’m doing a couple other side jobs while also working with note [in the pocket]. I’m kind of keeping my options open because there’s so many different directions I can go in with this major. So, I’m just kind of looking to see what catches my interest and going from there.”

Altmann mentioned that when or if she leaves Note in the Pocket for a full-time position, she would find a way to help and to stay connected.

Reflecting on the importance of volunteering and community connection, Altmann notes that it’s changed her view and made her more grateful for everything she has.

“...I'm very lucky and privileged to never have had to worry about clothing insecurity,” she said. “So, it's also made me think I need to be more aware of what I'm doing with my clothes. Don't just throw them out, don't just take them to Goodwill -- think about where they can be repurposed and then also kind of think about [the] direct community because you never know who's around you. And if they could be struggling or not.”

Altmann's passion for volunteering and helping those in need is evident from her efforts at Note in the Pocket and educational pursuits at NC State.