

Shelly S. Whitaker, APR

PROFILE

An accredited, award winning, public relations professional with over 20 years of experience, with extensive specialty in special events, communications and media relations for local government, non-profit and corporate organizations. Demonstrated strength of media relations skills with an accomplished track record of providing effective media results. Experience in all aspects of Public Relations including Media Relations, Internal and External Communications, Investor Relations, Special Event Planning, Community Affairs, and Government Relations. Successfully operate educational enrichment franchise, ranked 16th in the country in 2016.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

3/15– Present

Owner, Bricks 4 Kidz Franchise, Roanoke, Virginia

- Operate Bricks 4 Kidz[®], an educational enrichment franchise, with classes that are designed to teach the fundamentals of S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education using LEGO[®] bricks, built around proprietary model plans, created by engineers and architects for children ages 3 to 13.
- Operate preschool and afterschool enrichment programs at over 40 schools and education centers around the Roanoke Valley
- Conduct numerous educational camps around the Roanoke Valley in partnership with schools, localities and church organizations
- Sponsor and participate in numerous special events around the Roanoke Valley
- Oversee daily operations, financials, sales, marketing, public relations and staffing

8/17 – Present

Special Events, (Part-Time), Faith Christian School, Roanoke, Virginia

- Oversee the Fall Festival and Silent Auction, a \$22,000 fundraiser for the school, with attendance of over 250 and coordinated efforts of dozens of volunteers
- Oversee the annual Grandparents' Day Celebration through working with volunteers and the Development office, with attendance of over 300
- Oversee Project Faith, a \$200,000 fundraiser and day of community service for the school, which includes a volunteer force of over 500 students, staff and parents in partnership with a local agency in need of support
- Oversee social media and other school special events as needed
- Serve as liaison with outside marketing agency on comprehensive digital marketing campaign

1/07 – 3/15

Manager, Public Communications, Advance Auto Parts Inc., Roanoke, Virginia

Reported to Vice President of Investor Relations

- Served as primary company spokesperson and media and public relations contact publicly traded Fortune 500 Company, during business hours and after hours, including contact made to all of the Company's nearly 7000 locations, distribution centers and facilities.
- Protected and managed the company's reputation and public image by communicating company objectives and initiatives with clarity, while protecting competitive and other sensitive information.
- Delivered value targeting support through insightful analysis providing recommendations to leaders on external communications issues and opportunities and build relationships, as trusted advisor to executives and senior management for external issues that arise.
- Coordinated external communications projects on-time and on-budget to build and enhance company's reputation with the public and investors.

- Built and developed relationships with local, regional, national and trade media outlets to expand and enhance coverage for the company.
- Managed relationships with various vendors, including wire service provider, public relations firms, investor relations software provider and conference call providers.
- Researched, wrote and edited communications materials across mediums
- Drafted, edited, and revised company press releases and media advisories and coordinate distribution.
- Coordinated and facilitated company's annual report from conception to delivery to over 20,000 shareholders
- Drafted, revised and updated content for investor relations section of corporate Internet website.
- Provided guidance and coaching to company subject experts on external communications best practices, messaging, strategies and tactics.
- Developed strategy and executed company's public meetings and/or conferences; including; annual shareholders' meeting, annual Investor Day and quarterly investor conference calls, (including ringing of closing bell ceremonies at New York Stock Exchange to celebrate company milestones)
- Developed stories, target appropriate media for coverage and facilitate interviews for a variety of topics with company executives and subject experts. Gather and confirm information for interviews and general media questions.
- Managed workflow of undergraduate or graduate student interns year-round

8/04 – 1/07

**Director of Public Relations, Angels of Assisi, Roanoke, Virginia
Reported to Company Owner/President**

- Coordinated public relations, community relations, and marketing for non-profit animal welfare group
- Maintained agency website content
- Coordinated all media coverage and served as agency spokesperson
- Developed and coordinated volunteer program
- Coordinated education and outreach programs with local schools and nursing homes
- Directed fundraising activities, including presentations for corporate sponsorships, writing and applying for grants, organizing direct-mail campaign and maintaining follow-up correspondence with donors
- Wrote, and designed agency print publications
- Designed and wrote quarterly newsletter
- Designed direct-mail materials as well as follow-up correspondences
- Wrote and distributed press releases and coordinated media relations
- Planned and coordinated special events, including preparation and follow-up
- Managed workflow of undergraduate or graduate student interns year-round

3/99 – 8/04

**Education/Information Specialist, (PIO) Roanoke City Police, Roanoke, Virginia
Reported to Chief of Police**

- Served as chief media spokesperson for the department, during business and after hours.
- Remained on-call to respond to critical incident scenes to manage the media and respond to on-camera media requests
- Coordinated special community events
- Developed and distributed weekly newsletter to department
- Promoted department initiatives and public awareness campaigns through the media
- Coordinated the release of information with other agencies involved when necessary
- Wrote letters, memos, speeches, and articles for the department as necessary
- Interacted with citizen groups on key issues between the community and police
- Scheduled and coordinated press conferences
- Coordinated department website
- Wrote, designed, and distributed annual report
- Coordinated launch of new department programs and initiatives

- Managed workflow of undergraduate student interns year-round

9/96 – 3/99

Media Buyer, Circuit City Stores Inc., Richmond, Virginia

- Purchased spot radio and television for a variety of markets
- Provided post-buy analysis quarterly for all television buys
- Monitored rotation and make-goods for all schedules placed
- Secured added value for necessary promotions

7/95 – 9/96

Assistant Media Buyer, Circuit City Stores, Inc., Richmond, Virginia

- Assisted media buyer with placement of spot television and radio schedules
- Input quarterly available time slots for radio and television
- Purchased spot radio and television for select markets

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AWARDS

- **B.S.**, Radford University, Radford, Virginia, May 1995
Major: Speech Communication, Concentration: Public Relations
- Accreditation by the Public Relations Society of America, Achieved July 2002
- Received over 30 Public Relations Society of America Summit Awards for work in media relations, public relations campaigns, special events, annual reports, community partnerships and print publications
- Speak regularly to students at Virginia Tech, Radford University, Roanoke College and others as requested about crisis communications and media relations
- Developed successful internship programs at multiple organizations and have supervised and mentored over 60 college interns

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

4/99 – Present	Member , Public Relations Society of America
4/99 – Present	Officer and Past President , Blue Ridge Chapter, Public Relations Society of America
08/01 – 12/12	Professional Advisor , Public Relations Student Society of America, Radford University
4/99 – 8/04	Member , National Information Officers Association
6/15 – 12/16	Member , Bricks 4 Kidz Corporate Steering Committee
6/16 – Present	Member , Bricks 4 Kidz Corporate Curriculum Committee

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

06/11 – 06/15	Board Member and Communications Chair , Greater Blue Ridge Chapter, JDRF
07/13 - Present	Member , Children's Discipleship Committee, St. John's Episcopal Church
4/00 – 8/04	Member and Vice-Chair , Roanoke Valley Crime-line
5/05 – 8/11	Outreach Committee , St. Thomas of Canterbury Anglican Church
8/05 – 8/11	Adult Education Committee , St. Thomas of Canterbury Anglican Church