

## **Baker column: Promise Neighborhood the real deal**

Ava Baker Guest column

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Ava Baker

While a USC Lancaster student, I had an opportunity to start an internship near campus with the help of Bridgett Plexico, USCL's internship coordinator.

As I aspire to be a graphic designer, I wanted to get my foot in the door and begin interacting in my field and community. One of the most important aspects of design is understanding the demographic that you are reaching out to, thus I wanted to start a job that would allow me to do just that.

At the time, I had already completed an internship at an e-commerce company, however, I simply worked out of an office with little communication within the entire staff. I so wished to work in a communicative and collaborative environment that would allow me to see my work affect people around me.



Luckily, I found that at Lancaster Promise Neighborhood! I started my internship to help with my second-semester design classes since creating yers and social media posts for a commercial purpose would not only allow me to understand my skills better, but also expand my understanding of design software. While it did so, my internship also provided me the avenue to experiment with styles, typefaces and layouts.

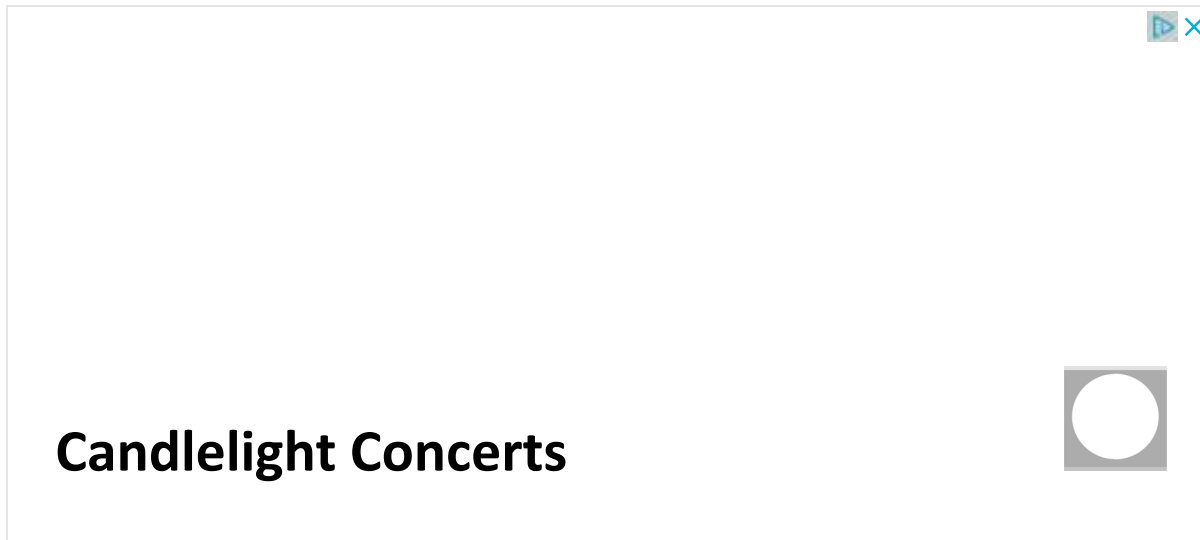
One thing that I did not know before starting my job was that even though the work toward getting the grant for Lancaster Promise Neighborhood was in progress for over a decade, the process of getting an office was new for everyone, including me.

Seeing my designs printed and handed out certainly changed my perspective of being a designer. Normally, you see working designers in an office surrounded by people who only work because they are assigned tasks, not because they want to see the effect it has.

As the lobby begins to fill up with yers and pamphlets, the more I feel included within the team, which makes such a difference in me completing my work and the field in which I work.

All the members of the team make sure I feel included and want to ensure we all are getting every opportunity to engage with the leaders of the community and see the change through every event.

As time has gone on, I have been given more responsibilities, including maintaining consistency throughout all social media platforms and attending various events, such as kindergarten and fifth-grade graduations, company meetings and community luncheons.



I have gained a deep understanding of the community and the people that are a part of it, and through attending special events I have seen first-hand how Lancaster Promise Neighborhood is working with the community to bring transformation within a generation. This is why, when I was allowed to continue my internship through the summer, I took it.

The words “Whatever It Takes” aren’t just a slogan but instead, it’s a promise in which I am grateful to have been a part.

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Ava Baker is a Rock Hill resident who is transferring from USC Lancaster to USC Columbia this fall.