

WHY SHOULD GEN Z WORK IN SENIOR LIVING ?



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From the Editor

I am excited to write about my time working in senior living and why I would encourage others in my generation to consider working within this industry. The only experience I have with older adults prior to my internship was from being a barista and seeing my grandparents once in a while.

I was drawn into senior living as it is a purpose led industry where we want to help make residents feel as comfortable and good as they can be. I have gained so many experiences and met so many amazing people that no other opportunity could have given me.

It was genuinely a surprise that senior living has so many working factors at play that most of my Gen Z peers do not think about or have the chance to experience in other spaces.

Hannah Bazar



"I saw firsthand how strong leadership and organized operations are essential to providing quality care and building trust with families, team members, and residents."

A green, handwritten signature that appears to be 'Hannah Bazar'.

WHAT IS SENIOR LIVING?

Senior living refers to a range of housing and care options designed for older adults, typically aged 55 and over, that offer varying levels of support and services to meet their individual needs. These options can range from independent living in age-restricted communities to more intensive care settings like assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. The goal of senior living is to provide a safe, comfortable, and engaging environment for seniors to enjoy their retirement years.

- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects:
 - Increased demand for RNs, food service managers, facility directors, and especially Memory Care Specialists
 - Career paths are open to people with high school diplomas, certifications, or college degrees—and many communities offer tuition reimbursement or on-the-job training
- By 2030, all baby boomers will be over 65—that's more than 73 million people in the U.S. alone. Senior living communities are growing fast to meet the demand.
- Senior living includes independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs)

WHAT YOU CAN DO



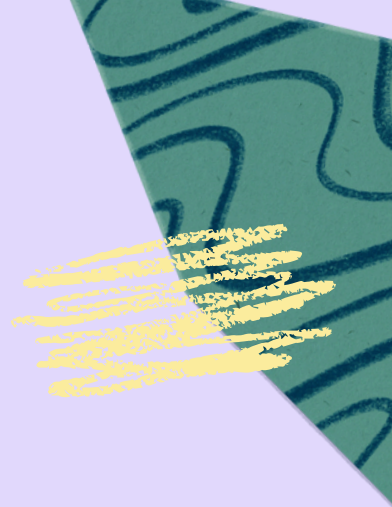
MANAGEMENT, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, SALE & MARKETING, HR, AND BUSINESS



ACTIVITIES, LIFESTYLE, EVENT PLANNING



DINING AND BEVERAGE SERVICES



HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS



MAINTENANCE AND TECHNOLOGY



ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION

MYTH VS REALITY

1. Myth

Senior living work is only about “nursing home” care.

1. Reality

Senior living includes a broad range independent living, assisted living, memory care, life enrichment, culinary services, sales, admin, and more. There are career paths far beyond just bedside care.

2. Myth

It's emotionally draining with little reward.

2. Reality

You build real connections, grow people skills that last a lifetime, and make a meaningful impact every day. The reward isn't just the relationships — it's the growth, purpose, and community you find along the way.

3. Myth

It's just a transitional job — not a career.

3. Reality

There's real upward mobility. Many executive directors, regional managers, and VPs started as caregivers, servers, or activity assistants. The industry is actively investing in career development and leadership pipelines.

4. Myth

It's only for older professionals, not a place to start young

4. Reality

There's always important work to be done in senior living, and every generation has a role to play. From students to seasoned pros, people of all ages bring value — and the need for passionate, reliable team members isn't going away.





My Experience

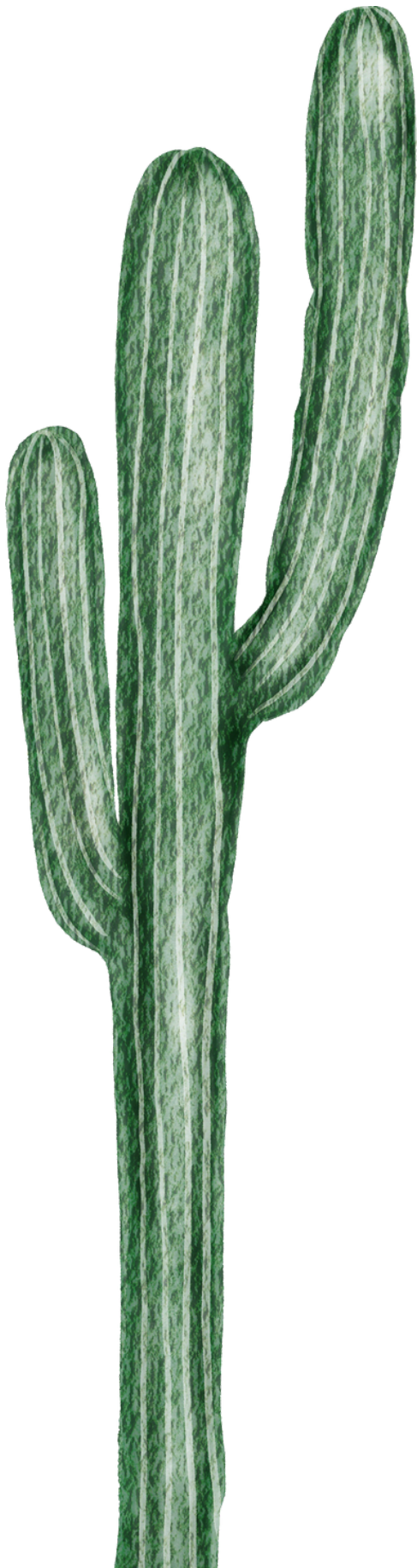
I am spending 10 weeks working in the senior living industry. Here's how it is going.

Starting in June, I began a 10-week internship rotating between four different senior living communities. At each site, I worked with a variety of departments: activities and lifestyle, operations, marketing, health services, and more. The goal of this program is to introduce Gen Z to the senior living industry and show how broad, meaningful, and fulfilling this field can be. What I've discovered is that senior living is much more dynamic and rewarding than I expected.

My first rotation was at Parkshore Senior Living in Seattle. I worked closely with the activities team and residents, helping plan and execute events, trips, and wellness activities. I participated in a planning meeting with other community directors for a joint picnic, contributed to a summer social event by designing promotional materials, helped with decorations, managed beverage stations, and took photos at the event. My tasks ranged from hands-on event setup to administrative

work like making sign-up documents for outings, creating activity packets for assisted living residents, and preparing movie schedules. I even helped out in the fitness center and joined a swimming session with residents when a team member was out.

One thing I noticed is how much intentional outreach the lifestyle team does. They visit residents in person to encourage participation, help with accessibility needs, and coordinate closely with other departments and vendors. Behind every successful event or program is detailed work, such as sourcing decorations, organizing transportation, troubleshooting technology, or reaching out to guest lecturers months in advance.




I spent a few weeks learning about operations and administration in the Senior Living Industry. This was where I saw how every part of a senior living community connects and operates. I shadowed the Health Services Director, Business Office Manager, Executive Director, HR team, and front desk staff. I learned how the Health Services Director oversees med techs, caregivers, CNAs, and nurses. This role also involves working with families, hospitals, transportation services, and pharmacies. At one location, I observed a new resident assessment to determine their level of care and whether the facility could meet their needs. The Business Office Manager handles budgets, invoices, rent, banking, and internal purchasing. I helped with mailing invoices, data entry, and other administrative tasks. I also observed HR processes like hiring, onboarding, and maintaining team culture. The Executive Director is at the center of it all, overseeing every department, ensuring compliance, handling


emergencies, guiding the team, and being the go-to for both residents and staff. I shadowed them in several leadership meetings, including one with a new resident and their power of attorney to review and sign lease documents. I even joined a meeting between the directors and Bellevue firefighters to review emergency call logs and discuss protocol for justified 911 calls. A lot of the work in operations is detail-oriented, like paperwork, systems, finance, and logistics, but it's what keeps the community running smoothly and responsibly. I saw firsthand how strong leadership and organized operations are essential to providing quality care and building trust with families, team members, and residents. And despite the busy, behind-the-scenes workload, everyone still made the effort to laugh with residents, get to know them, and build real relationships. It reminded me that business and kindness don't have to be separate—they can go hand in hand.

In marketing and community relations, I got to see how much creativity, outreach, and behind-the-scenes work goes into promoting a senior living community. I worked closely with the community relations director to update lead records in Salesforce, do data entry for outreach and thank-you notes, and call back potential leads to help gather information. I also did more tedious but important tasks like organizing updated contact lists for residents, which helped the team stay connected and responsive. At one community, I supported a Google review campaign by asking residents and families to share positive experiences. I helped assemble goody bags for a neighborhood dog party and saw how thoughtful events and partnerships, like drive-through breakfasts for first responders, create a strong presence in the local area. I also learned that community relations directors need a good understanding of finances, insurance, and the different senior living markets, since they are often the main point of contact for families navigating move-ins and care options. The way they combine business strategy with empathy really stood out to me.


The culture in senior living is something I didn't expect to love so much. Each community I've been to has its own rhythm and personality, but what they all share is a team of people who are real, wise, and honest about what it takes to work in this industry. There are difficult moments, like navigating family dynamics, health changes, or strong personalities, but there's also a lot of laughter, care, and connection. The staff make an effort to get to know the residents, share stories, joke around, and make their days meaningful. I've gotten to hang out at dog shows, play quick games of Scrabble, sit in on live music performances, use the swimming pool, and help watch over a resident during their gym time. If you enjoy hospitality, it really is like working in a hotel, but one where the connections run deeper and the impact stays with you.



Senior living is a huge, multifaceted field that offers many ways to contribute



Working in senior living has opened my eyes to how big and complex this industry really is. It's not just about caring for older adults; many communities provide services for refugees, immigrants, low-income populations, and even unhoused individuals who are going through transitions. I've seen that access and quality of care can vary widely depending on finances, insurance, and market differences. Unfortunately, not everyone has equal opportunities to receive the care they need, and communities often lack diversity. This makes the work of improving accessibility and inclusivity especially important. Beyond the day-to-day care, there is a whole corporate side that supports these communities through marketing, compliance, finance, and operations to keep everything running smoothly and ethically. Reflecting on all this has made me think about the kind of support I want for my loved ones and myself as we grow older. Senior living is a huge, multifaceted field that offers many ways to contribute, whether through hands-on work, business operations, outreach, or leadership—all focused on creating welcoming, caring spaces where people feel valued and supported.



YOU ARE A GOOD FIT IF YOU...

Communicate well and build strong connections

Like making a positive difference in others' lives

Are self-motivated and enthusiastic about your work

Want a stable career with purpose and work-life balance

Enjoy working with many different types of people across all ages





GALLERY

Some photos from my internship

Disclaimer

I am not a photographer

Gifted flowers, pastry from
resident, kayaking, and helping
set up covid tests



View, provided lunch, picking out movies, and my poster displayed



TAKE AWAYS:

- There is a role for every kind of person in this industry such as analytical, creative, caring, organized, hands-on.
- All departments work together to serve residents and support families.
- You will learn so much, not just about work, but about life.
- This is a field where you gain experience in leadership, communication, and problem-solving.
- Residents appreciate you and often just want your company.
- The work can be emotional, but it's incredibly rewarding.
- If you enjoy helping others, connecting with people of all backgrounds, and want to do something that matters, senior living is worth considering.
- Working in this industry helped me grow as a person and think about the future in a new way. I encourage anyone who is curious, compassionate, and motivated to take a closer look.

ROAD INTERN



Thank you for reading!