

Learn How Kanisha Williams Plans Your PDX Experience

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Enjoy the shops, restaurants and services at Portland International Airport? Meet our Kanisha Williams, whose planning helps make them that way, as she describes one of the unique jobs you'll find here.

How would you describe your job to a first grader?

I get to make things pretty, sparkly and vibrant! When you and your family come to Portland International Airport for fun times ahead to go and see Grandma or are on your way to Six Flags—I make your experience great as soon as you step into the airport by giving you a children’s play area, a movie theater, sweet treats to eat and fun things to tug at your mom’s shirt to buy for you. You’ll enjoy all of the signs, the lights and the excitement of seeing everyone coming and going. And my job is to make sure everyone is well cared for as you fly away and come back home to our dear Portland home.

What’s the coolest part of your job?

As a part of the Port of Portland’s collective of architects, I get to influence and affect PDX, our gateway to the world.

What’s one thing about you that would surprise people?

I don’t plan to retire, but plan to open a spiritual retreat center that serves as a bed and breakfast when not filled with retreatees and yogis. Also “on the side” to that in my “non-retirement,” I am really excited to be an activities director for seniors—I love seniors.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

When I was growing up, I wanted to be a secretary like my mom. For much of my life when I was a little one, this was her profession. In the ‘70s and ‘80 to be a black woman secretary was the coolest! And my mom did it with class. She cared so much for the people she was responsible for that it influenced me to be beautiful, strong and affable just like her. Even though I didn’t become a secretary—I think about how I can bring honor and service to what I do in the same manner that my mother did. It’s important to note that I was decorating, designing, and building things while I watched my mom be strong and be a leader. Ultimately, I just blended my thing and hers!

How did you land this job?

The story of landing my job is novel worthy. It’s one of great faith, serendipitous connections and synchronicity—sprinkled with kismet. With all of that magic, I showed up to receive my blessed job. Those close to me know my story in detail, it’s too much to share here—again novel worthy. What’s important to know, is not a day goes by that I don’t appreciate the opportunity that I have been given.

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