



NAME
Kimberly Hurd

TITLE
Senior Director of Residential Services

COMPANY
Milhaus Management

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY
19

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS
Indiana Apartment Association (IAA) Midwest Multifamily Conference Committee Member and Chair, IAA Volunteer of the Year. NAA Next Gen Committee, Operations Task Force, Leadership Lyceum, Region 3 Delegate. NAAEI Program Administration and Curriculum Development Committee, Subject Matter Expert for NALP curriculum. Teach NALP and CAM classes, as well as educational sessions for IAA and other local affiliate chapters.

Each month, units profiles one of our industry's rising stars to give you a preview of multifamily's bright future.

units: What was your first job in the industry?

Hurd: I was a leasing consultant at a large and challenging community. It had 700+ units with deferred maintenance, low occupancy and an elevated crime rate. I maintained a positive attitude no matter what came my way each day. That was my choice. It was a crazy pace and I have some amazing stories!

units: Was this career path something that was always on your radar?

Hurd: Recently graduated from college in the 1990s, I went into the leasing office at the apartment community where I lived to pay my rent and saw a "Now Hiring" sign. I spoke with the team about the position and my new career path began two weeks later. Although it may not have been on my radar, it has been a perfect fit and I can look back and see how all the pieces fell in place for this career.

units: Did you have any unrelated jobs growing up that unexpectedly prepared you for the apartment industry?

Hurd: In one way or another, all jobs are related to the apartment industry. In high school I babysat during the summers for extra money. Though I didn't realize it at the time, I was learning many important skills about meeting people's needs and dealing with difficult emotional situations, which is a direct parallel to our industry.

I also worked part-time in our city's local hospital, helping my mom in the radiology department. This taught me the importance of hard work, organization and attention to detail. In college, I waitressed at a local pizza restaurant, where I learned the value of customer service and the importance of a smile and a positive attitude. I pursued a degree in education and spent time working in area daycare centers. Serving as a Daycare Director allowed me to supervise a team,

collect tuition, meet required goals for enrollment and pass required state inspections. Each job helped me acquire skills for my career.

units: What's the most beneficial mistake you made early in your career?

Hurd: I worked 10- to 12-hour days, sometimes six days a week. I worked at a furious pace but often found myself tired or lacking the focus to complete tedious tasks. I didn't understand the power of the Law of Attraction. I attracted and was attracted to people who worked constantly.

Now, I try to lead with balance. I make time for faith and family because I see the value in having more balance in my life. I make better decisions and have more energy. I am a stronger employee and a better leader. Overall, I am a much greater asset to my company. Additionally, Milhaus' company culture supports a balanced lifestyle and I believe it makes us stronger as a team and as a company.

units: What's your advice for young professionals who are trying to carve their own path in the industry?

Hurd: Take risks; ask questions; don't be afraid to make mistakes; network, network, network; get active in your local apartment association; raise your hand to accept new challenges; speak up; and take every opportunity you can to learn something new.

Here's the most important piece of advice: Understand the true potential of your job. You are caring for a person's most vital need (housing) during what is, most likely, a highly stressful time in their life—job relocation, separation or divorce, graduation, birth of a child, etc. Take care of the person, connect with them, build a relationship and help them through this difficult transition. People remember how you make them feel.

To be considered for a future *Next Gen* column, please contact Lauren Boston at 703-797-0678 or lauren@naahq.org.