YOUNG & PROFESSIONAL IN SERVICE

In the inaugural year of The YPs, an initiative of Spartanburg Young Professionals, Jalitha Moore - strategic implementation coordinator for OneSpartanburg, Meghan Smith - College and Career Readiness project manager at SAM, and Cal Wicker - assistant vice president at BB&T, were identified as the top three young professionals serving Spartanburg. While Jalitha Moore ultimately scored the title, all three have valuable insights on why and how young professionals are serving Spartanburg.

Meghan
I strongly believe in an active and engaged citizenry. I give back through my work with the Hispanic Alliance and through my involvement at the City. I've been involved with immigration reform for several years and strive to help create a culture that welcomes all regardless of their background or immigration status.

Jalitha
Public service is my passion, so it feels like a natural fit for me to give back. I serve on several boards and committees that are instrumental to Spartanburg. I volunteer for as many community events as possible. I also try to encourage others to give back to the community. I think that we have to express to the next generation, through words and actions, that giving back is essential to their personal development and growth of their community.

Cal
I usually start by finding something I am passionate about. If you don't go in with some direction, it can be a little overwhelming since there are so many great causes to be a part of. Finding causes you are passionate about helps focus your efforts, which in turn helps you make a greater impact! Not to mention your passion for the work will shine through and great things will happen.
**Meghan**
A vision for a more just and equitable Spartanburg drives my service. Knowing that I am a part of something bigger than myself allows me the perspective needed to persevere, even when change feels slow and hard.

**Meghan**
Serving Spartanburg feeds my soul. It makes me feel invested in my community in a way that nothing else can. I have made new connections and relationships with people who have encouraged and challenged me. I'm inspired by others around me and hope to be able to inspire others myself.

**Meghan**
Working in the nonprofit field provides me with a natural avenue for service. Thankfully, my employer has provided me with the flexibility to pursue involvement in different areas.

**Jalitha**
This is my hometown! I like to prove people wrong about the negative perceptions they have about Spartanburg. We have a great community and I want everyone, residents and visitors, to feel the same love I have for our Hub City.

**Jalitha**
In some communities, you have leaders that don't believe young professionals have anything to contribute to their city. I am fortunate that was not the case in Spartanburg. By serving this community, I have learned so much about myself. I have definitely stepped outside of my comfort zone to embrace the relationships and friendships formed through my service. I have been given so many opportunities that allow me to continue doing things that I love.

**Jalitha**
My past and present employment all center around public service. When I worked at the Solicitor's Office, I served my community through advocacy and being a voice for those impacted by criminal domestic violence. During my years with Congressman Trey Gowdy's office, I served as a liaison between the constituents and several state and federal agencies. Now, I have the pleasure of serving my community through OneSpartanburg as we implement recommendations to move Spartanburg forward.

**Cal**
I am a firm believer that if you want a certain outcome from anything, you need to be willing to put in the hard work to achieve that outcome, otherwise you cannot be critical of the result. In other words, I am going to stay involved and keep promoting Spartanburg so that I can help play a small role in its revitalization. Secondly, I serve Spartanburg so that this community is a better place for EVERYONE that lives here. There are so many amazing non-profits in town that are making this community better for ALL and they are providing a voice for people that otherwise might not be heard.

**Cal**
Serving this community has been nothing short of amazing. It has given me a sense of purpose to where I am constantly looking for new ways to get involved and always daydreaming about how we get to a better Spartanburg. I have met the most amazing group of people while serving this community. Every time I run into folks I am working with or have worked with, it makes this community feel even more close-knit. It simply makes living here a more enjoyable time!

**Cal**
BB&T is always very supportive of me being involved in the Spartanburg community. Our company has what is referred to as the Lighthouse program, where several of the local employees will take on a few projects to create a positive impact on the community. This year we supported Backpack Buddies and Habitat for Humanity. BB&T has always been super supportive of the causes in which I am involved and for that I am ever grateful, as being involved in the community is very important to me.
**BusinessView**
What would you say to other young professionals thinking about getting involved?

**Meghan**
Do it! Think about what you’re passionate about and where your gifts and talents can be used. Realize that getting involved with something new will probably mean readjusting your time and priorities and possibly letting something else go.

**Jalitha**
Hesitation leads to procrastination, so just do it. I would get involved in community programs and/or events that serve your passion. Network! Sometimes you want to go home and relax, but you never know if that one networking event will change your life. Do not discount the power of networking, because it plays a huge factor in your net worth.

**Cal**
Find something you are passionate about and get involved by volunteering with that effort. And if you have an out-of-the-box idea for how to make Spartanburg a better place, you will absolutely be able to find like-minded people to join your mission, so don’t hesitate to bring good ideas to the light. Spartanburg is unique in that there is no barrier to getting involved and making things happen.