

We Plant it Forward
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PROFILE

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Kim Lahman's journey of pioneering change in her community

In the realm of social work and environmental science, few individuals embody the spirit of change and community engagement as vividly as Kim Lahman, a seasoned professional whose career spans two different but harmoniously intertwined paths.

Kim's journey began as a licensed social worker, committing seven years of her life to child protection services and dedicating herself to create positive change in whoever's lives needed it. Twenty years of clinical social work followed after this, in which Kim made a lasting impact on countless lives through providing counseling and support. However, a pivotal moment arrived when the landscape of social work evolved and this prompted Kim in a much-needed shift of directions.

Kim had a profound realization: a desire to channel her life-long passion, environmental preservation, into a new professional avenue. Armed with this idea, Kim pursued a second masters degree in environmental science, melding her social work expertise with a profound understanding of environmental issues.



DURHAM, N.C. – Kim Lahman serves as technical contractor for the Durham County Soil and Water Conservation District and on the board of We Plant it Forward.

“My first passion has always been the environment, and protecting the environment. I wanted to do whatever I could do to help preserve and preserve the world in which we live.”

This unique blend of social work and environmental science laid the foundation for a transformative phase. Kim found a niche working with nonprofits focused on environmental restoration, utilizing her social work background to encourage behavior change for the better of the environment.

“With NonProfits you get your hands dirty and I’m a very hands-on person. Nonprofits are fun, really. They allow you to be so much more creative in your roles and have way more flexibility. Of course there's a challenge with budgets and finances, but it’s always fun to work with people and learn new ways of approaching difficult tasks.”

During her time working with different non-profits, one particular organization stood out to her. This organization was named *We Plant it Forward*, an organization dedicated to enhancing the natural environment through hands-on initiatives. Intrigued by the prospect of

contributing to one of We Plant it Forward's largest events (The Arbor Day Festival), she seized the opportunity to leverage her skill set and passion for a meaningful cause.

Since then, Kim's commitment to We Plant it Forward has blossomed. She actively engages in various tree planting events and tree giveaways, relishing the chance to share her knowledge and witness the community's enthusiasm for nurturing the environment.

"Since the Arbor Day Festival last year, I have been involved in different tree planting events and tree giveaways, and I think one of the coolest experiences is when handing out a tree to somebody and you are explaining the type of tree, what it needs, how it needs to be planted, how much water/shade, and people just take that in. You can really see how much they care and how much they are learning."

Her dedication to environmental stewardship extends beyonds organized events. Grounded in the personal value of leaving places better than she found them, she exemplifies We Plant it forward comprehensive approach to environmental care. From collecting seeds, to nurturing seedlings and distributing trees to the community, she appreciates the full spectrum of We Plant it Forward's initiatives.

"One of my own personal values is making places better than I found them. Whether that's taking a hike and picking up litter, cleaning up trash on the side of the road, I believe that we all can take part in leaving the community better than we found it."

In advocating for We Plant it Forward, Kim emphasizes the organization's hands-on ethos, making it an ideal platform for those eager to engage actively in environmental causes. "If people are interested in hands-on activities and events, We Plant it Forward is a good organization for them. With the variety of activities and events you can get involved in, there is a

spot for everyone. If people want to be engaged with others and do good for the environment, this is the organization for you.”

Kim’s journey showcases the transformative power of change, community engagement, and the profound impact individuals can have on the world around them. As Kim continues to shape a better future through her work with We Plant it Forward, her story stands as a testament to the enduring connection between people and the planet.

