

As a young museum professional, almost nothing is as intimidating as being in a room full of people who have far more knowledge, experience, and years in the field than you do. But at the TAM conference, that was actually the most beautiful part.

As a scholarship recipient for the 2022 conference, I was coming from a place as a young professional who had finished graduate school and began my first position in the middle of the pandemic. Networking was difficult, conferences were all virtual, and the landscape of the public history field had changed faster than imaginable.

But when it was announced that TAM would be returning to be in person, but still with safety options that allowed for everyone to work within their comfort levels, we here at Historic Castalian Springs were so excited. Our site had undergone a merger just two months prior to the start of the pandemic, and we were so looking forward to reconnecting in person with colleagues in order to learn, grow, and show what we've been working on.

Knowing that I still had so much to learn, this scholarship then allowed me to have an even more amazing experience. I reconnected with friends from graduate school and was able to support them in their presentations. I met new people and learned new ways to approach my work and reach the community surrounding my sites.

For students and young professionals, I cannot recommend attending this conference, especially with funding when possible, enough. I left feeling so encouraged and ready to tackle what has already turned out to be a busy start to my site's tour season. I'm so grateful to everyone who made this possible!