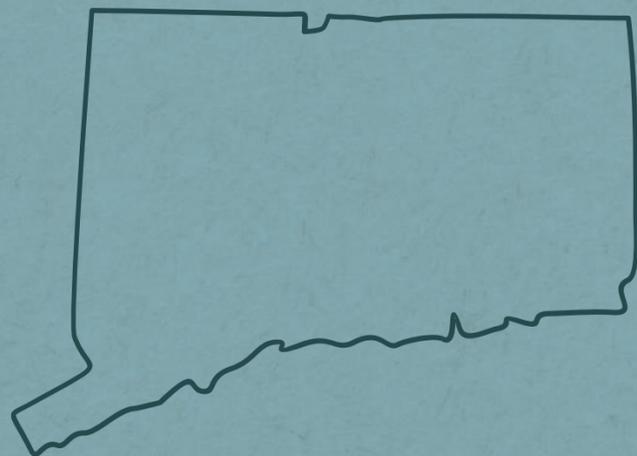


# 2026 IPP Intern Year- In-The-Life

BY SOPHIA AND LEXIE



CONNECTICUT RESTAURANT &  
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

# Lexie Beauchamp

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## Introduction

My name is Lexie Beauchamp, and I serve as the Event and Education Intern with the Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation (CHEF) while completing my Master of Public Administration at the University of Connecticut with a certificate in Nonprofit Management. I earned my B.S. in Organizational Leadership and Learning from the University of Louisville, and during my internship I've worked closely with both CHEF and the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association (CRHA). My work has included supporting ProStart programming, fundraising initiatives, and coordinating elements of major events like the CRAZIES Awards, including the silent auction and donor engagement. This experience has given me valuable insight into how nonprofit organizations and industry partners work together to support hospitality education and workforce development in Connecticut.

## Year

2025-2026 IPP Internship Cycle

# Sophia Andrade

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## Introduction

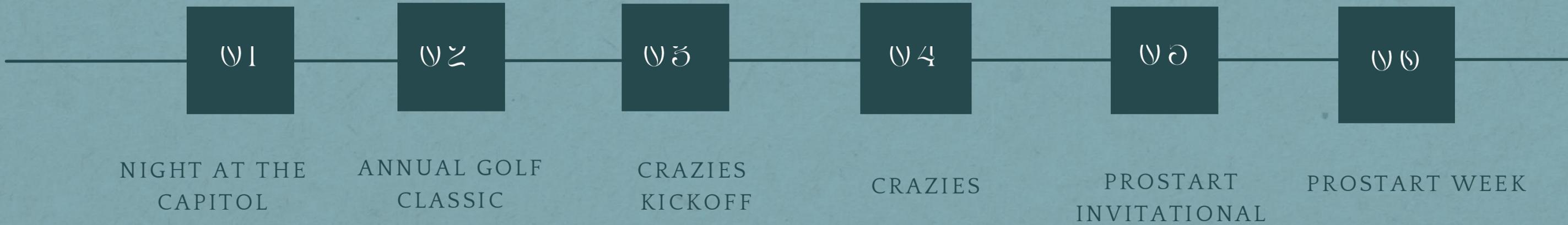
Hi, my name is Sophia! I graduated from the University of Connecticut with my bachelor's degree in Spring 2025 and am currently completing my Master's of Public Administration through UConn's School of Public Policy, with plans to graduate this May. I serve as the Legislative and Event Management Intern at the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association (CRHA), where I work on legislative engagement, industry outreach, and major hospitality events that support Connecticut's community. This opportunity has changed my perspective in working on the non-profit world, it is the drive and motivation of the team that carries these types of organization. I am excited to share my experiences and insights with the incoming intern for the 2026-2027 IPP cycle and offer a glimpse into working in the space where public policy and the hospitality industry come together.

## Year

2025-2026 IPP Internship Cycle



# SIGNATURE EVENTS



## NIGHT AT THE CAPITOL

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**UCONN SPOTLIGHT: SHANNON, UCONN SPP ALUMNA WHO WAS PREVIOUS CRHA INTERN IS NOW OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR**



**UCONN SPOTLIGHT: CHASE, UCONN SPP ALUMNI WHO WAS PREVIOUS CRHA INTERN STILL COMES BACK TO VOLUNTEER AT SIGNATURE EVENTS**

## ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

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AT THE ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC, I ASSISTED WITH SEVERAL ASPECTS OF EVENT COORDINATION TO HELP ENSURE THE DAY RAN SMOOTHLY. MY ROLE INCLUDED HELPING WITH EVENT SETUP AND CLEANUP, PREPARING GIFT BAGS FOR ALL ATTENDEES, AND DRIVING AROUND THE COURSE TO SUPPORT VENDORS AND ADDRESS ANY NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE EVENT. I ALSO HELPED COORDINATE WITH PROSTART STUDENTS WHO WERE VOLUNTEERING AND ASSISTED WITH FUNDRAISING EFFORTS FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOSPITALITY EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (CHEF) DURING THE EVENT'S AUCTION. THIS EXPERIENCE GAVE ME HANDS ON INSIGHT INTO LARGE SCALE HOSPITALITY EVENT MANAGEMENT AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT.

## CRAZIES KICKOFF

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AT THE CRAZIES KICKOFF EVENT, LEXIE AND I ASSISTED WITH REGISTRATION AND HELPED ENSURE THE EVENING RAN SMOOTHLY FOR GUESTS AND ATTENDEES. THE KICKOFF IS AN EXCITING MOMENT WHERE THE FINALISTS FOR THE CRAZIES AWARDS ARE OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES ACROSS CONNECTICUT'S RESTAURANT AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. DURING THE EVENT, I HELPED WELCOME ATTENDEES, SUPPORT THE CHECK IN PROCESS, AND ASSIST THE TEAM WITH ANY LOGISTICAL NEEDS, HELPING CREATE A SMOOTH AND CELEBRATORY ENVIRONMENT.



**CRHA TEAM IN FRONT OF THE STATE CAPITOL**



**CRHA INTERNS WITH OUR UCONN ALUMNA, SHANNON**

WORKING ON Night at the Capitol as the Legislative and Event Management Intern for the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association (CRHA) was a great experience. During the event, I had the opportunity to meet members of the CRHA team, board members, and many guests from across Connecticut's restaurant and hospitality industry. I assisted with event registration, helped vendors get set up and situated throughout the evening, and supported the team with cleanup once the event concluded. Being part of such an important industry event at the State Capitol allowed me to see firsthand how the hospitality community comes together to engage with policymakers and showcase the strength of the industry.

# THE CRAZIES

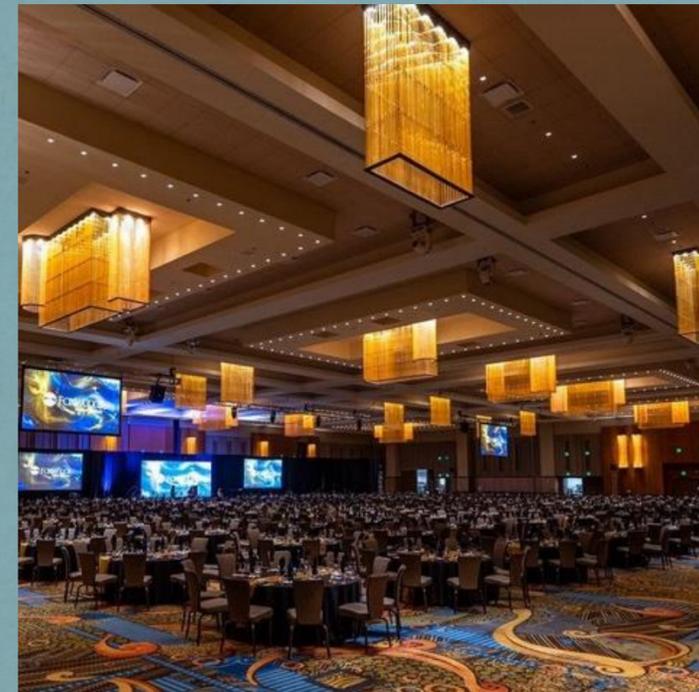
As an intern with the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association, I supported several aspects of the CRAZIES Awards, one of the organization's largest annual events celebrating excellence in Connecticut's restaurant and hospitality industry. In preparation for the event, I assisted with assembling swag bags for guests staying overnight and helped with logistics for the board meetings held the day before the ceremony. I also spent the full day on Monday assisting with event setup to ensure everything was prepared for the evening's program.



GOVERNOR NED LAMONT  
SPEAKING AT THE 2025



IVES BANK CRAZIES  
CONNECTICUT RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION AWARDS



WHERE THE MAGIC  
HAPPENS

During the awards ceremony, where over 1,500 guests attended my primary responsibility was coordinating with speakers and award presenters. I helped cue important speakers and guided them backstage at the appropriate time so the program could run smoothly and stay on schedule. After the ceremony concluded, I assisted with after-party logistics and helped with event breakdown and cleanup, supporting the team to ensure the event wrapped up successfully.

# THE CRAZIES

For the CRAZIES Awards, I supported CHEF's fundraising efforts by helping coordinate and manage the silent auction. This included reaching out to restaurants and industry partners to recruit donated items such as gift cards, dining experiences, and other contributions from hospitality stakeholders across the state.



On the day of the event, I worked the silent auction table, speaking with guests about the mission of CHEF and the importance of ProStart while encouraging bidding and additional donations. Our silent auction ultimately exceeded its fundraising goal, and being part of that success made this one of my favorite and most rewarding projects during my internship.



# What is ProStart?

ProStart is a nationwide, two-year high school program supported by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation that introduces students to careers in the restaurant and hospitality industry through culinary training, classroom learning, and hands-on experience. In Connecticut, the program is supported by the Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation (CHEF) in partnership with the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association (CRHA), helping students build industry skills, explore career pathways, and connect with hospitality professionals. During my internship, I've had the opportunity to help plan, coordinate, and support several major ProStart initiatives, including ProStart Bootcamp, ProStart Week, and the Connecticut ProStart Invitational (CPSI).



## CPSI (CONNECTICUT PROSTART INVITATIONAL)

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At the Connecticut ProStart Invitational (CPSI) at Mohegan Sun, I had the chance to help with many parts of the event, from staying overnight to assist with setup to working registration and promoting the ProStart program to potential new schools.

One of the most exciting parts of my experience was creating, designing, advertising, and running the brand-new Cake Decorating Competition that we introduced this year.

I also worked with Workforce Development Coordinator and UConn MPA alum Shannon Murphy to help prepare logistics for the Culinary and Management competitions. During the event, I helped present awards to the competing teams and got to assist in sending Connecticut's Culinary and Management winners to represent the state at the upcoming National ProStart Invitational in Baltimore, Maryland.



Simsbury High School student competing in the Cake Decorating Competition at CPSI



A student presenting during our practice session at ProStart Bootcamp



Enfield High School students getting a tour of the back of house at Mohegan Sun during CPSI



ProStart Week fundraising poster with previous ProStart students

## PROSTART

### .....BOOTCAMP.....

For ProStart Bootcamp in Fall 2025, I helped coordinate with participating schools by working directly with educators and students to register them for the program and ensure they had the information they needed leading up to the event. On the day of the bootcamp at Naugatuck Valley Community College, I also supported the behind-the-scenes logistics to help the program run smoothly, assisting with event coordination and making sure students, instructors, and industry partners were where they needed to be throughout the day.

## PROSTART

### .....WEEK.....

During ProStart Week, I helped support statewide outreach and coordination efforts to encourage restaurant participation and promote the ProStart program across Connecticut. A large part of my role involved communicating with restaurant owners and partners, helping recruit participating locations, and sharing information about how they could get involved in supporting hospitality education. I also assisted with promoting and explaining the "10 for 10" fundraiser campaign. Through this work, I gained experience in nonprofit outreach, industry engagement, and the behind-the-scenes coordination needed to run a statewide fundraising initiative.

# What's Next?

2026 - 2027 will bring some big transformations...

The Connecticut Restaurant Association is expanding to become the Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association (CRHA), reflecting a broader commitment to the full hospitality industry across the state. This transition expands the organization's work beyond restaurants to include hotels and additional hospitality partners, strengthening collaboration and support for the industry. For interns, this means a unique opportunity to see a nonprofit organization grow, evolve its brand, and expand its impact across Connecticut.

Beginning in 2026-2027, the internship roles will be combined into a new position titled Association & Events Assistant. This role will support both CRHA and the Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation (CHEF) through event planning, program coordination, and industry engagement. This intern will gain hands-on experience while seeing how a nonprofit organization navigates growth, transition, and expanded industry partnerships.

CONNECTICUT  
*Restaurant*  
ASSOCIATION

Evolving to become the  
**Connecticut Restaurant  
& Hospitality Association**

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