

## Video Transcript - Q?Crew Captain Talk – 'Taking on Responsibility and Having a Voice'

Niya: I've always been the baby of my family. On both my mom's side, and my dad's side of the family, I've always been the youngest. That being said, I never really got a chance to get a sense of how independent I could be. I never got to take charge.

Niya: But in my freshman year of high school, I was given the opportunity to work as a volunteer in Q?rius, at the National Museum of Natural History. And this summer, I became a Q?Crew Captain intern.

Niya: Q?rius is an interactive space within the museum, geared towards getting kids and teens interested in science through engagement and interaction. [00:00:30] As a Q?Crew volunteer, I've gotten to facilitate some of the interactive activities we have, and also some of the Smithsonian collections. And as a Q?Crew Captain, I've gotten to mentor some of these volunteers, but I've also gotten some other tasks.

Niya: One of which included creating an event called Teen Take Over. It was a recruitment event designed to get teens interested in joining our youth programs, because we didn't have much of a turnout for applicants in the past year. I was given this opportunity and I [00:01:00] thought "really? Me? I'm planning an event, an actual event, in Q?rius?" It was unbelievable that I was given this opportunity, but at the same time, it was somewhat nerve-racking.

Niya: I had to plan what the event would entail, and the logistics of where everyone would be, and what they would be doing. So, naturally, a bunch of thoughts were racing through my head. Like, what am I gonna have at this event? Are there gonna be classes at this event? Will they be drop in, or sit in? Do I need decorations? Do I need buttons? [00:01:30] Things like that.

Niya: So I worked diligently for a couple weeks. I planned out the location of everything, the buttons, the decorations, and even the catering. And when the day of the event finally arrived, it felt like everything came into place.

Niya: We had Teen Take Over postcards for people walking in. We had interns on the Basecamp and Field, microscopes in the theater, forensic anthropology, and scientific illustration upstairs. We had a feedback table giving out buttons as people exited, and we had a big [00:02:00] poster outside of Q?rius.

Niya: Everything was going smoothly and people kept coming in. So, the fear of something going wrong started to trail away. But then something happened. One of the interns came up to me, and said, "Hey, we're running out of buttons, I think we need more". So, this panic and the stress started to set in again. We're running out of buttons? How many more do we need? What kind of designs do we need more of? How quickly can I do this?

Niya: So I frantically walked over to my mentor and I passed on the news. [00:02:30] She looked at me, she paused, and she exclaimed, "Oh my God, we did it! We ran out of buttons!" And I was really confused at first, as to why she was so ecstatic. But then, I thought about it. We had so many people coming into Q?rius that we needed to make more buttons to give to visitors. The fact that we had that many people coming in, and enjoying the event, meant that the event was going so much better than I thought it would be.

Niya: So, the adrenaline from being nervous turned into adrenaline from being happy and excited. I knew, in that moment, that this event [00:03:00] wasn't just everything I hoped it would be. It was so much more.

Niya: So, I made the buttons, and then I checked on the rest of the volunteers, and the interns. I walked over to the center of Q?rius and looked around in awe. But then I remembered that school was just about to start in a couple weeks, which also made me remember that I'm only 17, and that this was my event. But I'm going to be an adult in less than a year.

Niya: I'm applying to colleges, I'm driving, and I've been in the city [00:03:30] alone. But 17 isn't actually a young age in order develop qualities like responsibility and independence. Yet, we're not given much of a chance at school. We're constantly looked after, we need passes to go other places, and we're given tasks and assignments with restrictive guidelines. It really isn't like the real world, and because of that, I never got to showcase just how independent and how reliable I could be. [00:04:00] Creating Teen Take Over has given me the opportunity to do just that, but to also be confident in my ability to do these things. So, while Teen Take Over served the purpose of giving teens a voice, it's as if it gave me a voice as well.