

# DAHLIA

Dahlia grew up in Pershing County, Nevada, and first experienced Burning Man as a participant before joining the DPW team. Her journey with the DPW began when Hamburgler introduced her to the community, and she quickly found her place with the BRC Storage Crew. Dahlia's role involves dealing with the on-site placement of storage containers for Theme camps. The supportive and uplifting environment of the DPW gives her a deep sense of belonging and purpose, motivating her to return each year to help build what she calls "the best city in the world."

This interview was conducted by "Flo", Flore Muguet, a French anthropologist, in 2016. Flo's questions have been omitted to improve reading flow.



“When you start working for DPW you ruin your life in the best possible way...”

I'm from Nevada and I'm from Arizona. I grew up in Pershing County. We are in Pershing County when we're in Black Rock City.

So, Hamburgler is one of my really close friends, and he brought me out as a participant last year. I started to hang out with everybody in DPW, and everybody was just like "Oh, what department are you in, where are you working?" And I was like, "No." And they said, "You should come out next year and work with us." And that's how I got started. I got approached to come out to work, and I did.

Today was my first day doing any kind of volunteering with fluffing. Usually, I'm with the BRC Storage Crew or PC storage crew. That was kind of a natural thing for me to do. I felt very comfortable doing it. Otherwise, my job is basically working with theme camps to place their private storage containers in their camps. Again, to their specifications. It's a really big customer service-oriented part of DPW.

It's a lot of fun. I really enjoy what I do during pre and during season. The very beginning of August is when I came out. So, I've been here quite a while. I actually don't have to do anything on the ranch. We arrange with Heat and Transpo to bring the containers out, and they use heisters, and we tell them where to drop the containers. It's a really close working relationship with the HEAT department, it's pretty cool.

We get maps sent in from Theme camps with their placement specifications, which can vary. They tell us exactly on the map where they want their 8 by 20 container.

We go into the city with flags, we measure their placement, and we drop flags where their container is gonna



Dahlia and Todd. Photo credit: Brian Kelly. Year unknown.

go. And then right before everybody arrived during pre-event week, we have their containers brought out to playa and then dropped onto those locations. We currently have 183, I believe, containers that we do.

Every theme camp has numbers assigned to each container that's spray painted on the side. We also have tags on the containers that we have on a list with each theme camp. We make sure that nothing gets lost. Once everything is said and done, we go through. We make sure that everyone has locked up and shut

their containers properly, and then we band them. Again, keeping track of that number with each camp. And then, yes, we have Heat and Transpo lift and take them back to the ranch. Honestly, my initial reason for coming here was because I don't have my life together anymore. I quit my job and sold all my stuff in March and went traveling. I needed money, I needed something to occupy my time. But now that I'm here, I want to come back next year because of my friends, because of that feeling of family that I don't get anywhere else. And because we are building the best

city in the world together. It's like... I don't know how to describe it, but I cannot not be here next year. This is it.

There's this motto that goes around: when you start working for DPW, you ruin your life in the best possible way. And it's so true because now all I'm thinking is, "What am I doing this time next year? I have to be here." I have to come back.

It's a very supportive group of people. I was talking to somebody today about how everybody is so inspiring

out here, because everybody is uplifting and encouraging, and they all wanna see you be the best person that you can be. Nobody puts anybody down, as far as I've seen.

Everybody is about helping to build you up. You all wanna build each other up. This day and age, it's such a rarity to find that in a small work team—much less the hundreds of people we have. So, this is like an energy hub.

You come here and you work with all these great people, and you take everything that you can, and all this uplifting energy, and you carry it with you. It gets you through until you come back. And that's the way I feel about it. I can't wait to come back, and I hope that I've taken enough from all these great people to get me through this next year. Because I still don't know what the hell I'm going to do with my life until I come back. It does feel like home.

I think the experience for me that really put it into perspective—and it was so simple—I think it was when we started moving all the containers onto the playa.

I remember getting up in the morning after, it'd been two days, and all of a sudden, I'm looking out at this big expanse and I'm seeing all of these containers. All of them, as far as the eye can see. And I was like, "My team and I are doing that, and we're doing that for these theme camps."

Watching those containers over the next week open up, and all of this stuff pour out of them, with all of this amazing stuff to be built, and realizing that I had a hand in facilitating that for these people... That for me was a great moment.

It really helps to know what your place is in building this city. It feels good. And that felt good.