

## Caretaker Spotlight



This month's Caretaker Spotlight introduces you to Erica Kudyba, Environmental Engineer within LBRE. Erica was born and raised in a small town, a suburb of Chicago, in northwest Indiana. She graduated from Ball State University with a degree in Environmental Management and a minor in Sustainability. She spent some time in Indianapolis before moving to San Francisco in the Fall of 2013 where she has been ever since!

Erica decided to work at Stanford following a position with the Climate Corps. At that time, she was focusing on water conservation for public schools in San Mateo County and she wanted to continue working in water conservation. She

always appreciated how progressive Stanford's sustainability initiatives were, so she was very excited to receive a call from Marty Laporte after giving her final Fellowship presentation. Her original role was to assist with environmental compliance and water conservation programs. Erica was happy to be able to work on both topics because she liked the diversity. You usually have to choose one path when working for larger utilities.

Erica has been at Stanford now for 6 years. She started as an Associate Environmental Engineer and now she is an Environmental Engineer. In her current role in LBRE, Erica doesn't interact with Building Managers very often. Usually when she is interacting with Building Managers, it's because she is trying to help them troubleshoot a leak in their building. This is important since there could be a toilet that is continuously running and this is certainly a waste of water.

A typical workday right now is very different; she is really missing seeing her coworkers and other friendly faces in LBRE. These days, she spend a lot of time checking emails and Slack. The Water Planning & Stewardship group recently launched a customer dashboard to allow users to see their water use. Everyday Erica spends some time troubleshooting and sending leak alerts so customers won't receive a surprisingly high water bill. Erica loves that, as an organization, Stanford works toward finding solutions to big challenges. Even though she plays a small roll in that positive impact, she enjoys working towards a goal that is meaningful and makes her proud. The friendly faces and collaboration within LBRE are also great bonuses!

One of Erica's favorite campus experiences was during the first Service Day during Celebrating Sustainability. Her group partnered with the Office of Sustainability and the Grounds Department to host a service day in the Arizona Garden. They campaigned and brought in volunteers to help remove weeds and do small pruning tasks in the garden for Earth Day.

Before that event, she did not know that the garden was there, but she remembers showing up and being so impressed by the number of cacti and succulents. The day was very cheerful (despite the rain) and she enjoyed spending time in nature with the volunteers. Erica highly recommends everyone to go make a visit!

Erica really enjoys what she works on now, but she always thought that it would be fun to be an architect or have a more hands on career like a carpenter. She is pretty sure that she watched too much HGTV growing up, but she really appreciates functional, beautiful, and well thought out design.

Outside of Stanford, she loves to cook and participate in almost any outdoor activity (ironically, she is not a fan of water sports). On almost any given weekend you can find her at the farmers' market, out for a bike ride, hiking, and in pre-covid times, indulging in all of San Francisco's diverse food scenes (with special attention given to ice cream).

Erica and her boyfriend Sam have been together now for 5 years and so far they have a lot of house plants together, but no pets.



Erica's work here will be valued for years to come. Thank you for your service to Stanford and helping build this institution's legacy.

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