

WORLD OF COCA-COLA

Jobs with pop

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"Hi. Welcome to the Far Coast. What adventure can we take you on today?"

With that, "ambassador" David Oliver Condo, an international business major at Georgia State University, ushers you into the new World of Coca-Cola's complex, a gastronomic galaxy of tastes and sounds carefully orchestrated by 150 employees.

These aren't just any workers. They're college students, real estate agents, singing telegram performers — even a former Chuck E. Cheese — plucked from 2,000 job applicants. To get here, you'd better have some acting chops, Barnum & Bailey showmanship, a bold yet unintrusive personality and stamina enough to endure an "American Idol"-like job tryout. An ability to speak other languages is a big plus.

"We're about having fun, creating smiles and sharing with our guests," said Linda Conrad, general manager of the World of Coca-Cola. "These are just great everyday ambassadors."

At the cabana-style Far Coast lounge, visitors get to sample trays of teas, coffees and cocoas as well as desserts made by chef-to-the-stars Wolfgang Puck. Ambassadors hover close by, urging you to sip and sample.

Inside the museum at Taste It, beverage connoisseurs guide you through the 70-plus global flavors of colas and other carbonated creations. You can get a hug and your picture taken with a 7-foot polar bear before picking a freshly dispensed souvenir Coke bottle from the bottling line that snakes through part of the museum.

Here's a look at some of the interesting and quirky jobs at Atlanta's newest destination:

HOW TO GO

- **What:** World of Coca-Cola
- **Opens:** May 24
- **Tickets:** \$15 adults, \$9 children; discounted prices online
- **Where:** Next to Georgia Aquarium on Centennial Olympic Boulevard



AMBASSADOR

"Hi! Would you like to take a picture with the polar bear?"

Instead of guiding people through houses, Sherita Denson now guides them through the World of Coca-Cola museum, with the help of furry hand puppets known as

Love Puppies. With an uncertain housing market, the former real estate agent wanted to do something different.

"It's a great opportunity to meet all the different people,"

Denson said, before turning to tell a couple:

"You all have a great day!"



Sherita Denson will guide visitors with the help of furry hand puppets known as Love Puppies.

POLAR BEAR

As costumed characters go, life as a Coke polar bear is a pretty good gig. Unlike most costumed workers who perform often in sweltering heat, the 7-foot animatronic bear gets to hug and dance and wave and wiggle in air-conditioned comfort. He gets to do just about anything, with the help of technology. Except talk.

"It's the mystique," Coca-Cola spokesman Petro Kacur said.

The bear was built by master puppeteer Jim Henson's son, Brian, and is fashioned after the bear in Coke's holiday commercials. He has his own dressing room and handler.



Sharon Judge of Delta Air Lines snuggles up to the Coke polar bear.

BEVERAGE CONNOISSEUR



Billy Carroll serves up an Odwalla juice beverage at the Taste It bar.

"You having a good time?"

Billy Carroll has performed singing telegrams and worked children's birthday parties.

Now he's working the room as a beverage connoisseur from behind the counter in the Taste It bar. He serves teas, water, juices, coffees and milk, items visitors can't get from the soda dispensing machines around the room.

"We're entertaining and educational, too," said Carroll, who wore a Umami taste bud button on the lapel

of his white chef's jacket and a red bottle opener on a chain around his neck.

A professional gardener, Carroll once worked at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Carroll's sidekick, Travis Morrison, who once worked as Chuck E. Cheese, wound up in the Taste It area because, at 5 feet 6, he was too short to be a polar bear.

Beverages are switched out every two weeks.

"Try the Inca Cola, it's my favorite..."