

## Who The Heck is Mackenzie Cates-Allen?



### Recent:

In January 2025, Mackenzie joined the Winston-Salem Police Department, and currently serves as the Senior Community Educator. Here she helps to build safety from within the institution, and serve as a bridge of knowledge and understanding between the Police Department and the community. She is stationed with the Community Resources Unit, where she helps educate and inform the community.

She assists in educating the community through programs like the Sweet Reads Literacy Program, Paw Patrol Education, and helps by coordinating Coffee with a Cop and supports officers in a variety of other WSPD community programs and events, including the Law Enforcement Torch Run, Citizens Police Academy, Youth Citizens Police Academy, National Night Out, and Neighborhood Watch. She also helps with department-wide events and steps in wherever needed to ensure successful community connection, be it inside the Police Department, or outside.

### Family:

Mackenzie Cates-Allen is a Mom of 3 amazing girls, ranging from 11-7. She has been in Winston-Salem since 2004 and has family in Greensboro.

### Older:

Mackenzie attended Salem College and obtained a degree in Nonprofit Management. She is very proud to have attended the oldest women's college in the country and always notes that Salem was one of the first in the US to offer that degree. She readily admits to being a "nonprofit nerd."

Working at Carmike Cinemas and climbing the ranks from slinging popcorn into management, after graduating in 2008, Mackenzie joined the YWCA of Winston-Salem as the Manager of Resource Development, located at Glade Street. When the economy melted down in 08/09 the YWCA decided to lay off most of the administration and close down the Glade Street branch.

At that point, Mackenzie, like many other recent college graduates, was over qualified and out of work, and few if any businesses, were hiring. So she went back to Carmike Cinemas into management, until she could find work in her beloved nonprofit field.

The next years Mackenzie, needing to pay her bills, worked in apartment leasing and new home construction, taking an odd administrative job here and there in the nonprofit world, before she found herself at the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership.

At the DWSP, Mackenzie found herself loving being involved in the center of the city, assisting in Downtown revitalization and community building. As she says, “up until that point, it was the closest I had ever come to doing just *exactly* what I wanted to be doing.” After 3.5 years, with opportunities for advancement and community-building lacking at her current employment, Mackenzie decided to take some time off.

“As an adult, I had never not worked before.” She wanted to examine what she was best at doing, where she wanted to go in her career, and what the city of Winston-Salem, the place she had called home since 2004, needed.

After asking around and consulting with all kinds of folks from different backgrounds, they came to the conclusion that what was missing was a central organization, one who served at the center of the city. An organization BY the people, for the people; one that wouldn’t leave the average person out of the loop. At the end of 2016, the Winston-Salem Ambassadors was created, with a mission to educate, by increasing awareness of Winston-Salem, both within the city AND without (regionally and nationally.)

From its inception until the end of 2024, Mackenzie served as President & Chief Ambassador, pouring her time, money and passion into making the city a better place and trying to bring people together. The organization aims to welcome each and every person to and in Winston-Salem.

At the end of 2018, Mackenzie was chosen to attend City of Winston-Salem University, a once-a-year course produced by the City of Winston-Salem. This deep dive into all things city government gave Mackenzie an even deeper glimpse into the working of the City of Winston-Salem, which she had already begun to dip her toes into.

In 2023, the Winston-Salem Ambassadors took over the Winston-Salem Holiday Parade, with Mackenzie playing the largest part in that, from the Jaycees, who closed their Winston-Salem chapter.

Also in 2023, Mackenzie joined the Chief of Police’s Community Engagement Committee, serving as a liaison between her community and the Chief of Police. This led to making it official, where she now happily serves as Senior Community educator at the Winston-Salem Police Department, and is thrilled to be a part of the City of Winston-Salem.

