



Health Promotion & Wellness Connects Grad to Meaningful Career

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Terri Roberts

GRADUATION YEAR
2017

MAJOR
Health Promotion and Wellness

HOMETOWN
Lafayette

When Terri Roberts began working with Foundation for Wellness, she wasn't looking for a new full-time role. The then-stay-at-home mom was just completing the internship required to earn her degree.

"I wanted to do something worthwhile, and I loved the programming, I loved the prevention aspect of it and the community engagement," she says.

That internship led to a permanent position for Roberts and a career she loves as community education coordinator with the organization, coordinating programs to prevent and manage chronic disease.

And it began with her decision to go back to school to complete her **bachelor's degree in health promotion and wellness**.

Finishing What She Started

Roberts enrolled at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2007 in athletic training, but as she faced the last semester of her degree program, she had doubts about her trajectory.

"I didn't want to be an athletic trainer anymore," she says. "I didn't want to be with sports or smell stinky football players for the rest of my life."

Meanwhile, big changes were happening in her personal life. Chief among them, Roberts bought her first house and got married. So, she changed her focus and put her degree on hold.

After her first daughter was born, Roberts decided it was time to finish her bachelor's degree.

"I don't want her to start something and not finish it," she says.

Roberts didn't want to re-enroll in athletic training, but she also didn't want to start a degree program from scratch.

The online B.S. in Kinesiology, Health Promotion and Wellness program allowed her to leverage her existing credits while providing the flexibility she needed to be present for her family.

"I could schedule everything and complete assignments ahead of time and manage my time as a full-time mom and a full-time wife," she says. "I'd make the time to do assignments when my little girl was sleeping or when I had some downtime."

Staying the Course

When Roberts neared the end of the degree program, she began looking for an internship. Online Health Promotion and Wellness students can choose to complete an internship or capstone project in their final semester.

Program coordinator and advisor Lisa LeBlanc pointed her toward the Woman's Foundation, which recently rebranded as Foundation for Wellness. The organization provides continuing medical education credits to healthcare professionals and coordinates several community-based health education programs, including Kids on the Geaux and Healthy Me Adult Diabetes Prevention Program.

Roberts had planned to continue her role as a stay-at-home mom following graduation, but the impact she saw through the organization's programming turned that internship into a career.

"I love to be proactive," she says. "If we can get that prevention out there and that education out there, I'm fulfilled in that."

Since graduating in 2017, Roberts has earned a master's in exercise science as well as the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) certification.

A cornerstone of the Health Promotion and Wellness program is to prepare students for the CHES exam.

"Mrs. Lisa was a good mentor and would encourage everyone that was in the program to get their certification," says Roberts. "The course the material from the classes that I took with her helped a lot. Being part of Health Promotion and Wellness prepared me for that exam."

Having discovered her own career path, Roberts encourages those interested in working in health promotion and disease prevention to consider the B.S. in Kinesiology, Health Promotion and Wellness.

"You can go into nonprofit, you can go into for-profit, you can focus on disease prevention, or you can focus on disease maintenance," says Roberts. "It's just so broad of a field."