

Anna's Story

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I started to develop my love for nutrition at an early age. My mother encouraged my interest in food science in elementary school through doing science fair projects that dealt with food (what gluten is and how it works, how to use fat substitutes in cooking, and what cutting board is the best). My interest in food and nutrition continued to grow in high school. My senior project was a nutrition class series that I taught at an after-school program at the local YMCA. I also enjoyed public speaking and developed my communication skills through 4-H Public Speaking Competitions and through Speech Team in high school. I knew that I wanted to pursue a career in dietetics and attend Purdue University.

I had no idea how my passion for nutrition and fitness would play out in my future job. I went through college very interested in sports nutrition and wanting to pursue a job working with athletes. After passing the RD exam, I ended up landing my first job in clinical dietetics in Lafayette, IN. It was at this first job that I developed a love for pediatric nutrition. I really enjoyed working in outpatient pediatrics and in the NICU. I found this patient population so interesting, because they change so quickly and I really enjoyed helping them to grow and develop appropriately. This then prompted me to change jobs and pursue pediatric nutrition full time in my current job as a NICU dietitian in Indianapolis, IN.

Even with this clinical job, I continued to use my communication skills and my passion for public speaking. I started doing media segments in Lafayette with the TV station there and the local newspaper. I enjoyed this so much that when I changed jobs I wanted to continue this working relationship with the media. I have a great working relationship with the public relations department at the hospital and I have done various segments for news outlets in the greater Indianapolis area. I continue to do community education through talks at various companies around Indianapolis. I also have partnered with various non-profit groups and serve as a speaker for them (the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association).

I really enjoy pairing together my love of clinical dietetics with my passion for public speaking. I want to share how I have used and cultivated my public speaking skills even with a position in clinical dietetics. I hope to encourage other dietitians to serve as resources for their communities. I feel that as dietitians, we are the nutrition experts and we need to be the face of nutrition for the public. This means serving as a resource for businesses, groups and news outlets so that we are sharing scientifically-based nutrition information with the public in a way that is interesting and easy to understand. I believe that fostering an environment where dietitians are built up and taught how to be effective communicators helps our profession overall.

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