

Amy's Story

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Involvement in the 4-H youth development program as a child inspired my interest in nutrition. *(My mom giving us foods from each food group at every meal might have shaped my interest in nutrition a little bit, too!)* In 4-H, I took food and nutrition projects, and participated in the Junior Family and Consumer Science Committee. Through the 4-H projects and committee involvement, I learned about careers related to food and nutrition. I wanted to become a Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educator so I could help people in my community engage in healthy behaviors.



After high school, I pursued a dual degree in Dietetics and Nutrition, Fitness, and Health at Purdue University. During a summer internship, one of my preceptors was talking with me about my post-graduation plans. I remember telling her that I wanted to complete a dietetic internship and then go to graduate school. I also talked about my interests in nutrition education, maternal and child health, management/coaching, and working in the community. She suggested that I look into the field of public health. I then decided that I would complete a Masters of Public Health after my dietetic internship at Cornell University. While at Cornell, I had a 4-month rotation at a local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic. I loved working with the mothers, caregivers, and babies, and talking about breastfeeding! This experience solidified my interests in public health. I went on to complete a Masters of Public Health Nutrition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I interned at a state WIC office to experience more of the curriculum development, program management, and staff training sides of public health/community nutrition. It was a wonderful experience!

My first “real job” out of college was as a Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educator for three counties. I enjoyed the opportunity to teach classes in the community with individuals of all ages and backgrounds. I did segments on several radio stations and wrote articles for a couple newspapers. These experiences provided opportunities to develop clear, concise, focused, and science-based messages for the public.

When an opportunity to work with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) came up, I decided to make a little career change and applied for the job. I was excited about the potential to devote more time to nutrition education and the opportunity to gain experience in coaching/supervision, curriculum development, and staff training. Fast forward to ~4.5 year later and I still love this job with EFNEP! Although I am not in the “front-lines” teaching the public, I supervise, coach, train, and support four people who do. Preparing and developing nutrition trainings for staff has been a fun experience because it helped me learn to develop messages in a way that will help staff clearly communicate nutrition information to individuals across the state. This position has allowed me to develop and revise adult and youth nutrition curriculum, as well as our pregnancy curriculum. Part of my job includes being a resource for staff when they receive complex nutrition questions from participants. This is one of my favorite parts of the job because it enables me to see how people can interpret and/or apply nutrition recommendations or information differently within their diverse life situations.

Each new experience or opportunity has helped shape, shift, or inspire my interests and career goals. I have blended skills and information from past experiences into the different projects and activities that I have engaged in over the years.

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