

Lisa Graves's Story



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I've always had an interest in health. For a long time I wanted to be a pediatrician. It wasn't until high school, when I started exploring other health-related fields, that I learned about a career specific to nutrition. A friend's mom was a dietitian with WIC and I had the opportunity to shadow her. This sparked my interest in pursuing a career in the field of nutrition. After earning a BS in Dietetics and Nutrition, Fitness, and Health from Purdue University and a MS in Family and Consumer Sciences from Eastern Illinois University, my career began as an Extension Educator at the county level, followed by working in school nutrition at the state level, and then a return to Extension, this time at the state level.

Nutrition communication is a thread embedded throughout my story... from educating consumers to ... colleagues and students. As a School and Community Nutrition Specialist at the Indiana Department of Education, I coordinated several USDA Team Nutrition Grants. I also provided technical assistance to school food service professionals on developing school food safety plans, wellness policies, and accommodating specialty dietary needs as part of the National School Lunch Program.

Prior to my current role with Purdue Extension, I served as a Foods and Nutrition Extension Specialist in the Department of Nutrition Science where I worked closely with faculty to translate their scientific findings to practical application for consumers. As a Limited-Term Lecturer in the department, I co-taught the undergraduate nutrition communications course with Barbara Mayfield and helped to develop the skillset of future nutrition professionals.

I currently serve as an Assistant Program Leader for Purdue Extension in the College of Health and Human Sciences (HHS) at Purdue University where I provide training to new HHS Extension Educators and build Extension's relationships with faculty. I also utilize my background in dietetics as I assist with the development and evaluation of community-based educational programs to improve the nutritional health of individuals and communities throughout Indiana.

One of my favorite things about being a Registered Dietitian is working in a field where there is tremendous opportunity to improve the lives of individuals and communities. I also value my network of fellow nutrition professionals. They are not only a source of inspiration and motivation, but also the group of individuals I communicate with when problem solving and celebrating success. I hope in some way to make at least a small contribution to supporting my fellow colleagues, improving community health, and advancing the field of nutrition.

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