

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Rob Marshall, ATC

PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF CCH'S ATHLETIC TRAINING

Growing up in rural Nebraska in the 1980s, Rob Marshall didn't have much exposure to athletic training as we know it today.

"Athletic training wasn't something in rural Nebraska that anybody knew about," he said. **"You kind of had a sense of it at the NFL and collegiate level, but there weren't many high schools who really had an athletic training program."**

After he entered college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Marshall was exposed to the field of athletic training in a new way and he took to it immediately. He'd always enjoyed athletics and he liked the idea of working in health care – with athletic training, he found a career option that included both.

"When I went to college, I found out really quickly that athletic training marries the athletics and health care side of it. It was just a perfect fit for me," he said. **"The minute I found that profession I knew that's where I was going to stay."**

Marshall went on to graduate from UNL with a Bachelor of Science degree in education with an emphasis in athletic training in 1995. He was offered a job as an athletic trainer for Columbus High School (CHS) while he was still in college and he accepted.

He's been working as an athletic trainer in Columbus ever since.

"I have always, since the day I graduated college, been the athletic trainer for Columbus High School, but I've been employed by different organizations to cover that," he said.

Now, in his current position as program director of Columbus Community Hospital's

athletic training, Marshall continues to serve as an athletic trainer at CHS, in addition to his other duties.

As program director, Marshall also supervises a staff of eight athletic trainers who provide athletic training services at several area schools. There are full-time athletic trainers at Columbus High School, Schuyler Central High School, Lakeview High School, Scotus Central Catholic High School and Central Community College.

The department's athletic trainers also provide athletic training services to six other area schools on an outreach basis, including Howells-Dodge Public School, Leigh High School, Clarkson High School, Boone Central High School, St. Edward Public School and Twin River High School. The staff also covers Columbus Middle School.

With this many schools to cover, the athletic trainers at CCH get to see plenty of variety in their work. That's one of the things Marshall enjoys the most about his job.

"The beauty of what we do is there really isn't a typical day," he said. **"It really varies from sport to sport, day to day and season to season, depending on how much you're on the road and how late you work in the evening."**

One thing that remains consistent is the support the athletic trainers receive from CCH.

During his professional career, Marshall has had the opportunity to serve on several local, state and national boards. He has served as the president of the Nebraska State Athletic Trainers' Association, been a district president overseeing a seven-state

district and he was recently elected to the National Athletic Trainers' Association board of directors.

Through these offices, Marshall has been able to learn about athletic training programs across the state and the country. Each of these experiences have made him grateful for the support CCH's athletic trainers receive from the hospital.

"Our hospital understands sports medicine and athletic training better than 99 percent of all organizations nationally," he said. **"They have always believed in proper health care for the kids. They remove barriers for us on a daily basis to enable us to practice at the highest level. I couldn't be happier to be here."**

This is a level of job satisfaction Marshall sees in his staff as well. As a whole, Marshall said athletic trainers tend to change jobs frequently to try to find an organization that supports them and gives them what they need to do their jobs well. But that movement isn't happening at CCH, because when athletic trainers join the CCH staff, they stay.

"I've been here since 1995 and we have slowly added to our staff. The one thing I am most proud of is that no one has ever left our staff. In all of those years, everyone who has been added, has stayed," Marshall said. **"We have built a sports medicine program at CCH that is certainly the envy of the state, if not the region. It has blossomed with great support from the hospital and great people."**

For more information on Marshall or CCH's athletic training program, visit www.columbushosp.org.