

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



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Roberta Miksch is the Platte County Lifestyle Coalition coordinator and a Complete Health Improvement Program facilitator at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH).

The Platte County Lifestyle Coalition (PCLC) is a local coalition made up of community members who are dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles. As PCLC coordinator, Miksch helps the coalition plan, develop, implement, promote and monitor its lifestyle initiatives. Additionally, she looks for grants to help the coalition continue its work.

“CCH and the PCLC have a unique relationship,” Miksch said. **“The PCLC leads the work of the coalition with CCH supporting its work.”**

As a Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) facilitator, Miksch leads classes as part of the hospital’s CHIP program. CHIP is a program designed to improve participants’ health and lives by encouraging them to eat better, exercise more, enhance their support systems and decrease stress. These and other lifestyle improvements can help prevent and reduce disease.

Miksch started at CCH as a CHIP facilitator in January 2018 and in April 2018, she accepted the PCLC coordinator position.

Though Miksch is fairly new to these positions, she is not new to public health. She spent years at the East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) where she worked to improve health

outcomes related to nutrition, cancer screening rates, substance abuse and more. Prior to joining CCH, Miksch was working as the chief public health officer at the ECDHD.

This enthusiasm for public health isn’t surprising, since Miksch has been working to improve the health of those around her most of her life.

“As a child, I would sneakily take a few cigarettes from my grandparents’ pack and throw them away. I didn’t want to throw the entire pack away at one time because that would be too obvious,” she said.

Miksch’s grandparents weren’t very happy with her when they caught her throwing away their cigarettes. But her grandparents’ smoking aside, Miksch’s family taught her many important lessons about health she would carry into adulthood.

Growing up in a single parent family, money was tight, so to save on transportation costs, Miksch and her siblings walked or biked almost everywhere they went.

“These are some of my favorite childhood memories and little did I know they would shape who I was to become,” she said. **“As a family, we would go on walks to the park or walk to church on the weekend.”**

Miksch’s family also always ate together, which is another one of her favorite memories of childhood – and another experience that led to her current career.

“Building family time around activity and food was important and still is,” she said. **“All of these things and more rolled into health promotion and disease prevention.”**

Based on her experiences with her family, Miksch knew she enjoyed health and food, so she went into the field of dietetics as a way to promote health and prevent disease.

Over the course of her career, Miksch has also been a Nebraska asbestos inspector and a registered environmental health specialist. Additionally, she has been certified in public health.

“Once in the workforce, opportunities presented themselves for me to grow in knowledge beyond dietetics and I seized each one,” she said.

She did the same when she had the opportunity to work with the PCLC.

“When given the opportunity to work with a community coalition, I said ‘yes’ as local people and businesses can impact the overall health of a community and it is exciting to see the work roll out and changes being made,” she said.

Miksch is happy to work with the coalition and CCH. She’s also excited to work in health, which is why she encourages other people to look into a career in the field themselves.

“The field of health care is large and encompasses many professions,” she said. **“Take opportunities as they are presented to you, say ‘yes’ and continue to grow as a person and as an employee.”**

For more information on Miksch, the PCLC or CHIP, visit columbushosp.org.