

THE Importance of Caring

2019

my journey into health care



Melinda Long

CCH CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTOR

Growing up, Melinda Long wasn't sure what her future career should be – until she took a closer look at what she enjoyed.

“When going to a college fair before high school was over, I was stumped as to what I wanted to do. ‘What could I do that I enjoyed? What were my interests?’” she said. “It was right there in front of me, I could teach. I loved kids and I was like a big kid myself.”

After graduating high school, Long attended Wayne State College. Her first plan was to be a K-3 teacher, but then she decided on early childhood education instead. She graduated from Wayne in 2006 with her Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood education and she went to work at a child care facility as a supervisor.

From there, Long started a family and decided to open a child care in her home – something she continued to do for 10 years until a position at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) opened up.

The hospital had just built the 14,000 square-foot, state-licensed Columbus Community Hospital Child Care Center, and it needed a director.

“I had always wanted to be a director of a center,” Long said. “I knew that I had worked in child care area for 13 years and it was time for me to branch out and teach others what I knew.”

She was hired as director of the center in

January 2017, and her basic duties are scheduling, billing, creating handbooks, crafting policies and helping where needed in the classrooms.

“I basically make sure the day in, day out items are done. I watch over all the children and staff at the center. I also work closely with parents,” she said. **“We play nurse, mediator, principal, friend and so much more.”**

On a typical day, Long greets parents and children as they come in, handles staff schedules, and takes care of any paperwork and billing needs. She also cares for children when they are sick, need medicine or need their temperature checked.

Long's job keeps her very busy, as the center has about 30 people on staff each day and serves as many as 100 kids on a daily basis. But despite the job's frantic pace, Long enjoys it.

“I would not change any of it for the world. I am truly blessed to have these children and parents in my life,” she said. **“A profession is not always measured in money; it can be measured in impacts. Each one of these children has an impact on my life, as I hope I do on theirs.”**

While Long enjoys working with the CCH Child Care Center's children, she also enjoys working with the CCH staff who support the clinic.

“All the parents and hospital staff show their support in any way possible if there is a medical situation or even a question being asked,” she said. **“Some of our medical professional parents have even visited the center to talk about their professions to our Pre-K classroom.”**

The CCH Child Care Center also works closely with the hospital's human resources, house-keeping, skilled nursing, swing bed and marketing departments, as well as many others – and Long is thankful for their support.

“I feel like CCH has been a huge blessing. I cannot thank them enough for all they have done for the center and continue to do,” she said. **“I feel we are so lucky to have all the aspects of the hospital to support us.”**

Before working at the CCH Child Care Center, Long had experience with CCH because her mother had worked in nutrition services at the hospital for 30 years and loved the company. However, Long never thought she'd end up at CCH herself, because she didn't want to work in the medical side of health care.

Thankfully, she found out that health care offers plenty of opportunities for people like her who may not be interested in the medical side of the field.

“A career in health care does not have to mean needles and blood,” she said. **“We need other people in health care to support those who do have the calling to work hands-on in the medical field. It is so rewarding knowing the doctors, nurses, medical staff, clerical staff and members of the public depend on us to make sure their children are well taken care of.”**

For more information on Long and the CCH Child Care Center, visit columbushosp.org.

The CCH Child Care Center is open from 5 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and provides infant, toddler, preschool and school-age care.