WKU grad finds her perfect fit in health education

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Selina Blick always knew she wanted to do something in the health field, but she had to find her niche first.

“I was good at talking with people,” she said.

After graduating from Western Kentucky University with a degree in public health, she worked for the American Cancer Society for a year and as head fitness coordinator at a Logan County health facility for six years.

Now she works as a health educator at the Logan County Health Department, where she has worked for four years. She is one of a team of three who do community health promotions at the health department. Blick handles a lot of physical activity promotion.

“We get to take a topic and find a way to make it understandable to the audience. We do prevention strategies in nutrition, physical activity, injury prevention and tobacco,” she said. “We handle Logan, Butler and Simpson counties. Here, I don’t have to wait for people to come to me. I can go to them.”

It took a short time for the job to become a perfect fit.

“When I started this job, public speaking was a fear,” she said. “Now I honestly enjoy it.”

Blick enjoys seeing the look on people’s faces that tell her that they understand what she’s telling them.

“You don’t know who’s listening or taking it to heart. You never really know,” she said. “But if I’m getting that one – making them change their habits – it’s worth it. Sometimes we see people or get e-mails (from clients following presentations) saying, ‘We’re stronger’ or ‘We’re better prepared to handle that.’”

“Some people wait for disease instead of doing something to prevent it”, Blick said.

“You don’t have to go down with osteoporosis or heart disease. You can actively do something,” she said.

“We’re putting control back in their hands.”

For example, the health department recently finished the Strong Women program, a 12-week weight training class designed for women ages 50 and up to help prevent osteoporosis. Participants met twice weekly.

“We offered it differently. We did not charge for it,” Blick said. “We wanted anyone to be able to come out.”

The women made huge gains in strength, she said.
“A participant who is 70 years old told me, ‘I can walk up the stairs now,’ ” Blick said. “She can go out and have her independence.”

Blick said one of her goals is to do more worksite wellness presentations.

“I believe a lot of worksites will start seeing prevention is the key,” she said.

Her favorite thing about her job is the creativity, Blick said, and she feels very grateful to use it in her career.

“I have the independence to be creative and make up programs,” she said. “I see this as a retirement place for me.”

Local GEAR UP student selected to attend National Conference

Program Seeks to Empower GEAR UP Youth

Benjamin Whitlock, a sophomore at Green County High School, has been selected to attend the 7th Annual National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) NCCEP Youth Leadership Summit held in San Francisco, CA July 18-22.

Benjamin is one of only 30 students selected nationally to be a first-time attendee at the Summit. All participants in the National Youth Leadership Summit are students from schools served by Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a federal program designed to increase the number of youth who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Students are selected in a competitive application process based on their academic achievement, leadership experience, essay, and letters of recommendation.

Over the course of the Summit, students work collectively to create a report focused on what educators should consider when designing strategies and programs aimed at improving student achievement; as well as help business and community leaders, policy makers, and educators understand the issues that students believe to be important for improving student success and strengthening the education system as a whole. The culmination of the Summit is the students’ presentation of the report to the over 2,000 attendees of the NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference.
Benjamin is an excellent student who maintains a 4.0 grade point average and is very active in extra-curricular activities. He is a member of several clubs including Beta Club, the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, Community Problem Solving Team, and the varsity golf team.

Whitlock is a participant of the Western Kentucky University (WKU) GEAR UP program. The WKU GEAR UP program is part of the statewide GEAR UP grant and is administered by the South Central AHEC at WKU. This program covers Green, Metcalfe, Monroe, Hart and Butler Counties.

For more information about NCCEP, GEAR UP and the Youth Leadership Summit, please visit www.edpartnerships.org or contact NCCEP at 202-530-1135. For more information about the WKU GEAR UP Program, please contact Lucy Juett at 745-3325

About NCCEP: NCCEP maintains offices in Washington, DC, and Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and leads education reform efforts in both countries. NCCEP works with education partnerships funded by the U.S. federal government, the government of Mexico, public and private foundations, and corporations from both the United States and Mexico. For more information about NCCEP, please visit www.edpartnerships.org.

CHHS Department Heads Complete 2009 Management Development Program at Harvard University

The Management Development Program (MDP) at Harvard provides innovative and practical ideas about critical management challenges facing mid-level administrators in the early years of their professional careers. The program encourages participants to think beyond the confines of their own disciplines and areas of administrative responsibility.

Dr. Gary English (Department of Public Health), Dr. Doris Sikora (Department of Consumer & Family Sciences), Dr. Lynn Austin (Department of Allied Health), and Dr. William Hey (Department of Kinesiology, Recreation & Sport) attended this year’s MDP.

This year’s MDP was from June 14-26. During the program, participants are expected to free themselves from work obligations and other professional commitments.

“A lot of material is covered in a short period of time. It's intense but relevant, so it maintains your interest throughout the program.” Said Dr. Gary English

“The energy and enthusiasm by everyone involved in the program is amazing. It’s a great opportunity to network with other Department Heads, Deans and administrators.”

The MDP prepares participants to become better leaders of their unit, department, or school, and more valuable contributors to their institutions.

“Attending the Harvard MDP was a professionally enriching experience. The diversity of attendees and variety of presentations were excellent and the professional networking opportunities that occurred during the two week program were unbelievably rewarding.” Said Dr. Willie Hey

By providing a more sophisticated understanding of how different institutional units function, MDP enables the participants to incorporate broader strategic considerations into management decisions.
"It was a wonderful opportunity to network with individuals from a wide variety of academic settings. The ability to look at situations from a multitude of perspectives was extremely rewarding." Said Dr. Lynn Austin

**WKU Dentists Offer Free Cleaning**

*Taken from The McCreary County Voice, Thursday, June 18, 2009*

The Western Kentucky University’s Mobile Dental Health Unit made a stop in McCreary County this week, offering free dental health care in conjunction with the McCreary County Christian Care Center.

Dr. Daniel Carter D.M.D., Coordinator Beth Whitfield, RN, BSN, MAE and Registered Hygienist Bonny Petty spent three days providing free cleanings, dental screenings and dental work to citizens who normally can’t afford dental care.

The Mobile Dental Health Unit, part of WKU’s Institute for Rural Health Development and Research Center, is typically on the road four days a week in the Barren River Area Health District, but the unit made a special trip to McCreary County this week, thanks in part to Dr. Carter’s family ties to the county. His father, Mike Carter, was born and raised in McCreary County.

For more information on the Mobile Health Unit you can visit [www.wku.edu/irhdr](http://www.wku.edu/irhdr).