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~ An Interview with Laurie Runk, Ph.D., CSCS, Our New Full-time Food & Nutrition, Health, and Physical Education Instructor ~



Laurie Runk

Where are you from originally, and what was it like growing up there?

I was born and raised with my two younger siblings on a horse farm in Lithopolis, Ohio, just outside of Columbus. Growing up in the same small town (population 650) as my father, grandfather, and great grandfather gave new meaning to “It takes a village to raise a child.” With plenty of land to explore and an Eagle Scout father, falling in love with the outdoors was a no-brainer. My brother, sister, and I were blessed to have grown up in such a loving family and wonderful community, which my parents still call home.

Tell me about your family

On New Year’s Eve 2014, my husband Andy and I were married on a beach in St. Thomas with 40 of our closest friends and family. We don’t have any children yet but still have quite a full house with our three 4-legged companions, Bear, Mike, and Brutus (two labs and a boxer).

What concepts/theories do you consider most valuable to your students, and how do you teach those concepts/theories?

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said *"Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."* This statement has stuck with me from the time I first began teaching. The process of education can often become muddled by the pressures to reach a certain finish line or move further up the ladder. However, I believe that this quote epitomizes the true purpose of education: to prepare an individual to become a contributing member in his or her chosen career field.

In all of my interactions with students, I make a concerted effort to encourage them to see beyond the grade. Grades are important, but do not miss the forest for the trees. The health field is about *people helping people*. If it were just about intelligence, then the thousands of self-help books would have put us out of business by now.

What are some examples of careers that your students pursue?

The beauty of working in the multi-disciplinary field of allied health is that students take the courses I teach for a multitude of different career goals. Students in the courses I teach are going on to nursing school, medical school, studying to be registered dietitians and physical therapists, just to name a few.

What advice do you have for online instructors, who spend so much time sitting, to improve their cardio health?

I would first recommend buying a standing desk! There are a number of studies that have looked at the negative effects of sitting-time as it relates to health. So even if you feel that some days you don’t have time to exercise, you can at least stand up and improve your health.

When it comes to exercise, the biggest barrier people report is time. Exercise doesn’t have to take a lot of time, but it

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