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T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Newsletter

Student Spotlight

Sidney Wood graduated Summa Cum Laude at the end of the Spring 2022 term with her Bachelor of Arts in Education degree with an Inclusive Endorsement in Early Childhood from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Sidney was first awarded a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship in the Spring 2019 term. She completed 88 credits while working full time as an assistant teacher at a public school pre-k program in Scotia, NE.



Sidney says, “Three years ago, I found myself waitressing at my local Pub & Grill. As I was taking a customer’s order, she asked me what my plan was after graduating from Central Community College. I explained to her that I would continue to be a paraprofessional at our public school as I had no interest in furthering my education in fear of student debt. She said, ‘You should apply for the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. You would be a great candidate.’ I hurried home after my shift, did some research, and started filling out the application immediately! I had never looked forward to checking the mail, but let’s just say I checked it every day for the next three weeks. On the third week, I had received my acceptance letter and that is the day that truly changed my life forever. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship has made it possible for me to pursue my passion in education. Without this scholarship, I would not have been able to walk across the stage at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The program assisted me with 80% tuition and books, provided study hours within my work schedule, and always had the door open for a helping hand. I cannot thank this program enough and because of them, I will be teaching at Central Valley for the next two years! ♡”

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Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children



PODCASTS

- *To learn about EC Systems' building, check out the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) podcast wherever you get your podcasts, "EC Policy Matters".*
- *Discover more about developmental screening on the podcast episode "Development Screenings for Young Children: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know" from the Illinois Early Learning Project, illiniosearlylearning.org/podcasts/devscreen-yc.*

MINDFUL MOMENTS AT WORK (FROM THE NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION FOR INFANT MENTAL HEALTH)

Mindfulness is purposefully paying attention to the present moment and doing so with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and without judgement. Taking micro-moments every day to practice mindfulness can help reduce your stress and enhance your workplace engagement. Here is one way to identify a way to practice mindfulness at work:

PRACTICE MOMENTS OF GRATITUDE— Taking the time to notice and be present with what you appreciate can boost your emotional well-being, health and can strengthen relationships. Each week: 1) Identify three moments that you feel grateful for and appreciate, 2) Identify 3 things at work that you are grateful for and appreciate, 3) Identify 3 things you like about yourself, & 4) Identify 3 things you like about a coworker and let them know.

RESPECT

Dear T.E.A.C.H. Recipients:

We need your help! The Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers (RESPECT) across Nebraska project is a collaboration among colleges, universities, and professional organizations supporting early childhood educators that aims to create accessible pathways for early childhood educators to earn degrees and certification.

We invite you to complete this survey to help us better understand your educational and workforce experiences. Your input will help us to understand the kinds of support needed to help **individuals** complete early childhood education degrees and certification in early childhood education in Nebraska.

You can use the link or URL below to access the survey. If you have questions about this project, please contact one of the investigators listed below.

The first page of the survey describes eligibility. The second page is an informed consent form. If you consent to participate, you will advance to the survey.

Thank you in advance for your contributions to this project, which will help us to advance the education and professional development of early childhood educators in Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julia Torquati jtorquati@unl.edu

Dr. Lisa Knoche lknoche2@unl.edu

<https://go.unl.edu/respect>



YOUR PERSONAL REMINDER



20 QUESTIONS

This month's section of "20 Questions" features Liz from Lancaster County. She is currently a family child care provider in Lincoln. She has been on a Bachelor Degree Gap Scholarship since the Spring 2023 term.

1. Where were you born? Lexington, NE
2. What is something you are proud of? I am extremely proud of my family... My husband of 25 years and our kids: Aiden (24), Zoe (23), Colleen (22), Korbin (19), & Vivian (16).
3. If you could meet someone famous, past or present, who would it be? Magda Gerber
4. If you could have one superpower, what would it be? The ability to clean up a mess with a simple glance. Think how much time that would free up in your life for living!
5. What is one of your biggest pet peeves? Disrespect
6. What's one place you really want to travel to? A place with glass-like water, maybe the Greek islands.
7. What is something you are afraid of? Snakes!
8. What are your favorite TV shows? I love tv and watch whatever my family is watching. Core favorites tend to be drama shows like ER, Criminal Minds, & NCIS.
9. Do you have any pets? Yes! 3 dogs: Leia, Indy, & their new baby, Ivy. Plus, a cat named Mister Princess Gracie.
10. Do you have any brothers or sisters? Yes, I am the second of four girls.
11. What is your favorite season? Summer is closely followed by spring.
12. Do you have a favorite holiday? Memorial Day or Labor Day... Just family time with no huge expectations of gifts or food, relaxing with friends and family.
13. What's your favorite food? Pizza
14. What do you like to do in your free time? I would love to find out!
15. What's one thing you can't live without? My water bottle!
16. If you had to describe yourself in three words, what would they be? Kind-hearted, flexible, fun
17. What is your favorite movie? Steel Magnolias
18. If I weren't a teacher, I'd be... A mom. Or, a pet sitter!
19. What's your favorite subject in school? Literature/English—I love books, reading, writing, and discussing books with people.
20. Do you prefer writing in pen or pencil? Pen, especially gel pens or those felt teacher pens.



Ways to Reduce Stress

- ⇒ **EAT REGULARLY:** Eat meals on a consistent schedule to reduce stress. When you skip meals, blood sugar decreases, which may cause your body to release cortisol.
- ⇒ **BE ACTIVE:** Regular physical activity helps lower blood pressure and stress hormones, and releases endorphins that can enhance positive feelings.
- ⇒ **TRY RELAXING ACTIVITIES:** Some hobbies, such as meditating or writing in a journal, can help focus your thoughts and create a more peaceful mood. Taking slow, deep breaths can also help reduce muscle tension and lower heart rate.
- ⇒ **TALK WITH OTHERS:** Connecting with friends and family is a good stress reliever, since it can be a distraction and help give you support. Regular mental health counseling may also help.
- ⇒ **PRACTICE GOOD SLEEP HABITS:** To help make restful sleep easier, establish a nighttime routine that helps you relax. Going to bed at the same time and turning off devices at least 30 minutes before bed may improve sleep.

PIE FOR PROVIDERS

Pie for Providers has created an easy online solution to help child care providers and center directors more efficiently bill and manage paperwork for the federal child care assistance program—maximizing income and freeing up your time for what really matters. Learn how it all works and how to sign up in Nebraska for FREE at:

bit.ly/p4pinNebraska

or email

team@pieforproviders.com.

DID YOU KNOW...

1. *We no longer have a rate of pay requirement to apply for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship?*
2. *We will be offering a CDA scholarship model?*
3. *We will be awarding a \$350 bonus to programs for each T.E.A.C.H. recipient they are sponsoring at the completion of each contract?*
4. *We will be awarding a \$1,000 bonus to T.E.A.C.H. recipients at the completion of each commitment period?*
5. *If you are a bachelor degree student, you can take all of your coursework before you pass the PRAXIS?*



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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY 4TH: EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE @ CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN GRAND ISLAND—JULIE WILL BE THERE!

FEBRUARY 16TH—20TH: JULIE OUT OF THE OFFICE

FEBRUARY 27TH: LAST DAY OF WINTER TERM @ MCC

MARCH 9TH: FIRST DAY OF SPRING TERM @ MCC

MARCH 4TH: COLUMBUS AREA EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE—JULIE WILL BE THERE!

MARCH 25TH: LINCOLN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

MARCH 25TH: NORFOLK CHILD CARE CONFERENCE—JULIE WILL BE THERE!

MARCH 28TH: ECE COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR IN FREMONT—JULIE WILL BE THERE!

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