

Kaitlynn Snodgrass
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“What interested you in the position and what you do here”

My name is Kaitlynn Snodgrass. I am a Gallia county resident who is a Meigs County alumni. I have two children aged four and one. I have been married for 5 years to my husband Austin Snodgrass. After being a stay at home mom for four years, I decided to apply for the Breastfeeding Peer position at the Meigs County Wic Office. I only work 12 hours a week, the rest of my time is dedicated to homeschooling my two children.

I became a mom at the young age of 19. Becoming a mother at such a young age was challenging. I became a mom before I even knew who I was or what I wanted to accomplish in life. I was going to school to become a social worker at Rio Grande Community College. I knew that I wanted to help families and work with children. After I had my daughter I continued to go to school part time while breastfeeding, but quickly realized that the career choice I was so passionate about was not for me. I stopped attending Rio Grande, and decided to stay home full time with my daughter. During that time I publicly advocated for breastfeeding without fear and encouraged other moms to try. I became very passionate about breastfeeding due to the joy it brought me and my daughter and the bond we shared. I began reading books about birth and lactation, educating myself so I could be of assistance to new moms in my community who were interested in breastfeeding. I was on a mission to change the stigma around breastfeeding.

I was eager to learn the science behind breastfeeding and thought about pursuing a career in the field. Fast forward a couple months, my lactation consultant messaged me with an opportunity. The Appalachian Breastfeeding Network wanted to sponsor me in taking a class to become certified as a Lactation Specialist. I immediately said yes, took the class and passed. I was not for sure where this certification would take me. I then became pregnant with my son, I breastfed him for 18 months. After he weaned, an opportunity for a breastfeeding peer opened up in my hometown. I wanted this job so I could create a safe community for breastfeeding moms and share the knowledge I had. I wanted to let mothers know that breastfeeding is not as scary or bizarre as the modern world has shown. Breastfeeding is the most natural, healthy, best start a mother can provide for her baby. We should celebrate that instead of shaming it.

Worries and embarrassment around breastfeeding can lead to women feeling unable to breastfeed in public. Breastfeeding has been around since the dawn of time, we as a collective should embrace women's bodies natural ability to create life and nourish that life. I have now been with the Meigs County Wic office as a breastfeeding peer for a month. I consult with pregnant and postpartum nursing moms to share information with them, words of

encouragement, or just as a friend to talk to about the struggles of motherhood. I am grateful for this opportunity to work in this network of professionals and provide support to this community.