

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



Joan Plummer, RD, LMNT, CDE

DIETITIAN, CERTIFIED DIABETES EDUCATOR AND COORDINATOR FOR DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Joan Plummer, RD, LMNT, CDE, was in high school when her father was asked to make some changes to his diet because he had high cholesterol. This, and Plummer's love of cooking and nutrition, would lead her to pursue a career in nutrition and dietetics.

She went on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition and dietetics from the University of Nebraska and completed a dietetic internship with the University of Oregon Health Science Center the following year.

Plummer started her career as a dietitian. She was in this position at a small hospital when she was given the opportunity to teach diabetes classes and found that she loved it.

After Plummer started working at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) in July 2001, she earned her certification to become a certified diabetes educator. She also received additional training to become a certified pump trainer for insulin pumps.

This education and training allow Plummer to fill many roles at CCH where she serves as a dietitian, certified diabetes educator and coordinator for the hospital's Diabetes Self-Management Program.

In these positions, Plummer provides education to clients on nutrition, diabetes and pre-diabetes. She also provides training on how to use blood glucose monitors and continuous glucose monitors, as well as provides cardiac rehab patients with nutrition education. In addition to this, Plummer

serves as a Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) facilitator, helps teach healthy cooking classes, leads free Food Thoughts classes, and provides nutrition information at other community events.

"People are so bombarded today with misinformation on nutrition and health," Plummer said. **"Pointing people in the right direction gives me a sense of accomplishment."**

Plummer is also happy that her position at CCH has evolved over the years to reach more people and provide even more comprehensive diabetes and nutrition information.

In 2001, the year Plummer started working at CCH, the hospital's diabetes program was recognized through the American Diabetes Association. The hospital has maintained that certification ever since and last year, the hospital's diabetes program became a recognized diabetes prevention program through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

When the Columbus Wellness Center opened in 2015, that allowed CCH to expand its nutrition education offerings and use the center's teaching kitchen for cooking classes.

"That is something I have always wanted to do, with my love for cooking, so now I can also live that dream," Plummer said. **"I am amazed how few people cook at home, so giving them the opportunity to prepare healthy foods at home is something that gives me great satisfaction."**

Plummer also enjoys working closely with people with diabetes to help them live their healthiest lives.

"In working closely with people with diabetes...I have developed a passion to educate and support them in any way I can," she said. **"I enjoy helping people manage their disease by lifestyle and treatment options. Most of all, I enjoy giving people evidenced-based information to help them have a healthy lifestyle and have a good quality of life."**

Plummer said that she has been supported by CCH in this goal, because the hospital's administration has always allowed her to get the continuing education and supplies she needs to keep CCH's nutrition and diabetes programs up-to-date.

"CCH has been awesome to work for," she said. **"I have always felt administration is there to provide tools to keep our hospital as one of the top hospitals in the state."**

Plummer is happy to work at CCH and happy to be in the health care field.

"Health care provides the opportunity to help people take care of themselves and live healthier lives," she said. **"It provides much personal satisfaction and joy knowing that you can make a difference in people's lives."**

For more information on Plummer and the nutrition programs available at CCH, visit www.columbushosp.org.