

Local Community Hero

Sara Robinson



Sara was the first Parent Educator that we hired when our program was forming. Not only has she visited families from the start, but she has helped form our program into what it is today. I specifically asked our team to describe Sara in one word, and these were some of the responses:

Dedicated, compassionate, empathetic, down-to-earth, helpful, motivated, inclusive, encouraging, funny, caring.

... and these are so accurate. Sara makes home visitation look easy... she knows the curriculum and the requirements. More importantly she builds relationships with

each of her families, listens intently and with purpose, is constantly brainstorming ideas for formal and informal supports, and is empathetic to the ever-changing needs of her families and of the community.

Sara is special to her families that she is serving, and also to our team. She isn't afraid to talk openly about the hard parts of work, of balancing work and home life, and of working full time supporting families with varying needs during a pandemic. She offers her listening ear openly to her peers and interjects humor at the most perfect time.

The families we are serving, our team, and our Community are lucky to have Sara - a dedicated Parent Educator, but also a strong female, mom, leader, community organizer, advocate, and teammate.

From Deanna Palmer, Executive Director of Lewis County Family Resource Network

Words from Sara ~

I feel like I was a home visitor before I even knew I was a home visitor. My entire life I have been helping others, listening and guiding the best I could, without judgement. Education, Social Services, and hearing other people's stories have always been what I liked to do. I never knew that home visiting really encompasses all of my interests, until I became a home visitor with Parents as Teachers. When I saw the job posting, I kept on circling back to it thinking that this would be the perfect job for me, and it turns out it truly is.

I have been a part of Lewis-Upshur Parents as Teachers since the program started in our area in 2016. As a brand-new program, it often felt like we didn't know what we were doing - but we were always open to change, supported each other and continued to adjust our sails as needed. I will never forget my first home visit, I was so nervous, but I am sure they were too. I really wanted to make a good impression. After that first visit I felt such a sense of accomplishment and thought to myself, "hey I can do this!" That family has since moved out of our service area, but I still keep in touch with her to this day.

As my caseload grew, I started visiting more families with more complex stressors. I found that working with them wasn't as hard as what I thought it would be. I knew I had the support of our PAT Team, I knew the resources in the area, I knew how to listen without judgement, I knew how to model appropriate behaviors, I knew how to talk to them about their child's growth and development, so developing that relationship came naturally.

I quickly learned that the relationship you build with the family is key to all of this. If they trust you, your visit happens naturally, and nothing is forced. I truly take something from each visit and each family, the good and the hard times. There is something to learn from each encounter. I will never forget being at a home visit and the mother was continuing to thank me for how far her daughter had come developmentally since I had been working with them. I told her that she is the one doing the work with her daughter, not me. As her mom, she is the one there, working all day, every day with her child and providing guidance and developing a relationship with her child, not me. I am there as a support 2-3 hours a month. She was the one putting in the time and seeing the progress, which the support of Parents as Teachers. The way those few words made that mother feel, is something that I will take with me forever. Just to think about the fact that no one may have ever told this mother she was doing a great job ever before.... Being a positive light in someone's life, when they may not get it otherwise, can be overwhelming at times.

I feel like being successful professionally gives me purpose in life. There is nothing I love more than being Manny and Daylen's mom, but being able to enjoy what I do and accomplish things professionally just puts the icing on the cake.

I could not do my job as well as what I do without the people that I work with; from my local office all the way up. Our team is filled with some of the most professional, empowering, thought provoking, and compassionate people on the planet. I am lucky to have them all by my side day in and day out. Some of us started out as strangers, but we all became more like family