



It Shows

Dreams can be motivators at any point in your life - just ask Becky Bubbs! Becky had wanted to be a Physical Therapy assistant for a long time and continued to request the admission information to apply for the program at Penn State DuBois. She would review the information and then put it aside and go on with her life.

One day, many years after graduating from high school, Becky decided to 'do the thing that was in my heart' and pursue the 2 PTA degree.

Read her remarkable story and be motivated to act on your own dreams!

Penn State in your career—it shows.



Rebecca (Becky) Bubbs has done a number of things since graduating from high school as an honor student. A Punxsutawney native and the youngest of 4 children, Becky worked in the grocery business out of high school and was also employed in the garment industry and in a business that supplied brass and copper pieces to a variety of industries.

Becky always had the desire to be a Physical Therapy assistant (2 PTA). She sent for admission packets from Penn State DuBois several times and reviewed the associate degree program in Physical Therapy Assistant. And, then she would push it aside and go on with her life. After her mother passed away and Becky reviewed the program again, she decided that she was “tired of not doing things that were in my heart”.

“The usual questions went through my mind like ‘Can I do this after so many years out of high school?’” says Becky. “I knew that I had done well in high school and decided that if I had problems in the work at Penn State DuBois, I’ll just ask for help.” She began the program fully expecting to complete it in the ‘2 years and a summer’.

Applying for grants to allow her to take college courses was a new thing for Becky. She enlisted the assistance of her sister who had just helped her own son complete the FAFSA forms. She did everything online and secured the funding she needed. To help herself financially, Becky took a part time job at County Market working in the dairy department. She worked every weekend and

the 'early hours' – 5 am to 11 am – during the week. On the way to the completion of the 2 PTA program, she reconnected with a prior boyfriend and was married.

“When we first started the PTA program, we had to write a letter to ourselves about what we hoped to get from the program. I wrote that I wanted to earn C’s and pass.” says Becky. At the end of the first semester of courses, which had seen Becky completing classes in math, history, music, and PT terminology, Becky attained exceptional grades, missing the Dean’s List by a fraction of a point. During her first year of studies, Becky became involved in the P. T. A. club, but decided not to spread herself “too thin” with other activities and take too much time away from her studies.

At the end of the first year, Becky realized that she could very effectively juggle a part time job, her studies and her involvement in campus life and decided to become more active on the campus. She became a peer mentor for Dr. Agnew and his anatomy course, joined Delta Mu Sigma, a scholastic honor society, and became president of the P. T. A. Club.

Classes in the PTA program were interesting. “I love anatomy and the class with Dr. Agnew was awesome. I don’t think you can ever know enough about the human body and how it functions. The kinesiology course was great too. The general education courses were interesting, but my real love was the courses in my major.” says Becky. Becky completed a number of internships; one at Indiana Hospital allowed Becky to participate in an inpatient acute setting.

After completing her coursework and while studying for her “boards”, Becky had the opportunity to work as an aide at Clearfield Hospital. After passing the boards on the first try, Becky worked at Clearfield Hospital as a PTA. While there, she received a call from the 2 PTA program head at Penn State DuBois, Barb Reinard, telling her about North Fork Rehabilitation Center and the availability of a full time PTA job there.

As Becky indicates, she is not a “job jumper”, but realized that her hours could be cut at Clearfield Hospital and that North Fork offered her the opportunity for a full time position as well as the chance to “use all the tools in the PT tool box”. She joined North Fork Rehabilitation Center in February 2009 and has begun to ‘experience it all’. A typical day could see Becky working with a stroke patient on activities of daily living, assisting a client in increasing mobility after a knee replacement, being involved in deep tissue rehabilitation, etc. As a PTA, Becky implements the plan developed by the physical therapist who evaluated the client during the first visit. She will assess the client on a day-to-day basis and report the client’s progress to the physical therapist, who will suggest modifications in treatment as needed.

When asked what the future might hold for her, Becky commented that she likes what she does at North Fork and that involvement in home health activities could eventually be part of her responsibilities. Home health is an area that Becky truly enjoys and had participated in during an internship at Mahoning Physical Therapy.

Working as a PTA is truly the accomplishment of a dream for Becky --- “If I had gone back to college sooner after graduating from high school, I would have continued my education beyond the associate degree and become a Physical Therapist.”

She further indicates, “Penn State DuBois is a great place to follow your dreams. You do not have to travel to a distant place, if they have the degree you want. They really care about their students; not once did I feel like I was ‘branded’ because I was older. The 17-19 students per one instructor in the program means that you can ask questions and get help as YOU need it. The instructors are actively involved in the profession and are current in their knowledge and in what they share with students during the college classes. I had the opportunity to work with 3 of the 4 PTA instructors as professionals on the job. Stephanie Russell worked at Clearfield when I was there; Barb Reinard and Lori Stafford have both been involved at North Fork Rehabilitation.”

Becky is the champion of dream fulfillment - “do it as early as you can, it’s well worth the time and the effort” - and waking up every morning and being in a job you really enjoy!