Helping Others To Broader Horizons: A Hallmark For Erin Lumpkins In Her Career

By Rick Pulliam
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Erin Lumpkins is a graduate of Ottawa Hills High School, where she played on the women’s basketball team. After graduating, she went on to attend the University of Michigan, graduating with a dual major in athletic medicine and physical education.

Ms Lumpkins is the daughter of Elias and Ruth Lumpkins, both retired educators. She says that her parents had a big influence on her success in high school and in college.

“My mother took me and my brother Eric to the library throughout the summer and made sure that we had books to read,” said Lumpkins. “She also involved us in a correspondence program where we did homework and sent it through the mail to be corrected. We had the math and reading packet.

“My parents also allowed us to play and be kids as well. We had good teachers, but my parents were always engaged with our education and followed up at home.

“When parent teacher conferences came around, they were there engaging with our teachers. In high school, because I knew that I had the most difficult time that I had ever had in school. I remember that after my first exam, I called home and cried because I knew that I had failed the exam. My mother encouraged me to get a tutor and helped me develop a plan for how to study for the next exam and then sent me a little care package, because I was a mess and that was really sweet of her.”

Upon graduating from college, Erin moved to Fairfax County, Virginia and taught elementary school physical education.

“I taught elementary school for six years and then I taught middle school for ten years,” said Erin. “I then took a year off from teaching and went abroad to England to study Health Care Economics and Epidemiology Of Obesity at Oxford University.”

She currently works for District of Columbia Public Schools, where she trains teachers and writes the curriculum for health education.

She also travels. “I traveled to Cuba in 2015 and recently returned from Nicaragua with eleven grade students who were a part of the study abroad program,” she said. “I was one of three teachers who were chaperones on the trip.”

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She has run the Walt Disney Marathon twice and the Marine Corps Marathon three times.

Erin is also very interested in giving back to her community as a member of her chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

“I am on the health committee and I am also on the youth development committee working with little girls,” she said. “What advice does she have for high school students?

“Take time to take care of yourself, especially if you are juniors or seniors, because it is easy to get caught up in everything that you have to do, like filling out college applications, studying, community service and extra curricular activities; so it is really easy to lose sight of your own health. In other words, make sure that you maintain balance in the midst of everything that is going on in your life.”

Her most important advice for high school students as they return to school in the fall is to set goals for themselves throughout the school year. “Prepare, set your goals, develop a plan and then develop a backup plan,” Erin said.

She went on to say, “Students should really think about the barriers that they might face and have a plan for how they are going to face and ultimately overcome those barriers; and have fun, because school is supposed to be about having fun.”