

Graduation Was a Family Affair for UNH Mother-Daughter Team

Thursday, May 23, 2013

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Trisha Lindstrum (l) and her mother, Nancy Sauter, received their degrees from the University of New Hampshire Saturday, May 18, 2013.

Nancy Sauter spent four years at the University of New Hampshire earning her master's degree in social work. For three of those years, her daughter was there, too. In the same program, as an undergraduate.

On May 18, 2013, both received their degrees. While Trisha Lindstrum was sitting on Memorial Field last weekend with the other 2013 graduates, Sauter was among the family and friends cheering her on.

“Saturday is all about Trisha. I’m so proud of her; I want all the attention on her,” Sauter said a few days before UNH’s commencement.

Right back at you, Mom.

“I’m really proud of her, too. I think it was much more difficult for her; it was harder,” Lindstrum said.

The two never had any classes together but they met for lunch on campus once a week, discussing professors and books they were assigned in common, and proofing each other’s papers. “In the beginning, I didn’t tell anyone I had a daughter in the program because I wasn’t sure if Trisha wanted people to know,” Sauter said.

“I told everyone, especially the professors I knew we both had. I thought it was so cool,” Lindstrum said. “I have a huge appreciation for what she did.”

What Sauter did was two internships during four years of study, while working at SeaCare Health Services in Exeter where she is now director of health services. It was that experience that led her to go back to school after a nearly 30-year hiatus. And to suggest her daughter consider the same field.

Lindstrum came to UNH with an associate’s degree in theater. She was on track to major in psychology and become a therapist.

“As I went along I realized that wasn’t what I wanted to do. And then my mother mentioned that I could do so much more with a degree in social work and I switched and loved it,” Lindstrum said.

Added Sauter, “I thought it was more likely she’d get a job with a BSW. There are always going to be people in need so there will always be a need for social workers. And there are so many job variations in the field.”

Lindstrum hasn’t found one yet but she is looking hard. She is moving to Vermont, hopeful she will find something there, maybe working with at-risk youths or children with developmental disabilities.

“I’m really willing to explore my options. I’m hoping my degree will lead me,” Lindstrum said. “It’s been a wonderful experience, doing this together,” Sauter said.

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