**Everyday Women of Sitka**

**Interview with Lisa Hodges, August 23, 2019**

Q: Can you please tell me a little about yourself? How long have you lived in Sitka? What types of things are you involved in here?

Lisa: I was born and raised here in Sitka. Right after high school I moved away for college to California. I attended Cal State University Hayward, now Cal State University East Bay. I finished [my studies in] human development with an emphasis in childhood. After that I worked for another year in California and then decided to move back to Sitka in 2003. I thought I was only going to stay for a while but then I ended up getting married. Now we have two kids and I am still living in Sitka. Aside from work, I am involved with the Sitka Imagination Library, Sitka Emblem Club #142, city league volleyball, and help out with my children’s activities whenever I can.

Q. How old are your kids?

Lisa: They are 12 and 6, seventh grade and first grade.

I work at the Center for Community and have worked there from 2003. I took a break to finish my Master’s in Elementary Education. After that I applied for a teaching job but didn’t get a position right away, so Gail [at Center for Community’s Early Learning Program] asked me if I wanted a job. It was perfect timing. Early childhood is related to my field. When I started I didn’t know how long I would stay there because teaching was still in the back of my mind. But then about 6 months into my work the state had an offer for infant learning program staff to go through a training for infant parent mental health. That was a 15-month-long program where I would fly to Napa/CA every month and work towards my accreditation in this post-graduate program through the University of Boston/MA.

After learning about infant parent mental health I was very passionate about the field because it is so important. You hear about so many things happening in the world and how these things could have been avoided if children had had proper nurturing and attachment relationships from the very beginning of life. You hear about all the trauma and how it affects kids and then teenagers and how that leads to future mental health problems. If we can start early in life and focus on those early years then I think we can make that shift of social change. I am very happy to be in this field because there is so much to learn. I just keep learning and doing professional development. We incorporate reflective practice in our work so we are constantly growing as a person.

Q: What is your biggest struggle right now?

Lisa: The kids just started school yesterday. Just getting back into that habit of our school routine, shifting the sleep schedule, shifting all the after-school routines, getting out of the door in the morning, it’s a little shift. I think it’s a constant struggle to balance that family-home-work life, trying to balance being a mom, a wife, having time to myself and all the activities, always trying to find that balance of fun and work, including self-care.

Q: What does a normal day in your life look like?

Lisa: I usually wake up at 5 to start the day, take the dog for a run, then go home and get myself ready, get the kids ready, and get them to school. Then I go to work, come home, pick them up, usually we’ll do homework or the kids will go to their extracurricular activity. Usually, my husband helps out with the dinner. We do a lot of sharing of the tasks, help each other out, and before you know it, [it’s] bedtime routine, and then [we] do it all over again. That’s our usual routine during the school year.

Q: What makes you proud to be a woman?

Lisa: For one, I think women are strong to be able to carry a baby for 9 months and to be able to deliver and give birth to a child. I think that is pretty amazing and powerful. I think women are capable of doing anything if they put their hearts and minds into it. There’s many good woman role models out there. Being a woman is part of my identity, so I am proud of who I am.

Q: Do you have something you’d like to say to other women in Sitka?

Lisa: We talked about self-care and I think to add to that self-love. To love and respect yourself and to give yourself that time [is important] because as a working mom we are go-go-go and think about other people’s needs and sometimes we get put on the back burner. Just remember to love yourself and respect yourself. I think with all the social media people are always comparing themselves to others but they can just be comfortable in their own skin and be happy with who they are and find their strengths.

I think if you can put your heart and soul into anything and set a goal for yourself and commit to it, then you can succeed. I think goals are good to have, something to work towards.