

A story of academic perseverance:

Lori Sobelson

SANDY LUPO
 News Editor

Back in 1994, a college education and degree were not things Lori Sobelson missed, or even thought about. Sobelson taught pre-school to children ages two to six.

"I had a wonderful marriage," she said, "and work, and no real problems."

Then Sobelson, at the urging of her husband David, took the

Myers-Briggs and other self-evaluation tests at Clackamas. The tests reveal psychological, or personality, "type", as well as strong interests and skills—known and unknown and transferable to the workforce.

Fascinated by the detailed test results, Sobelson continued her exploration for more information about herself and her life options.

In spring 1994, she enrolled in Clackamas' Life and Career Options (LCOP) class (see *Career* in the school catalog), now taught at the Family Resource Center. Then the class had a different name, and had not yet expanded from serving homemakers to also serving men and women of all ages transitioning from school to the workforce or from one job or career to another.

"This program was one that really opened a lot of doors," Sobelson remarked. "And because the teachers are trained and certified psychologists, they look beyond what most instructors do. They are capable and willing to listen to any kind of concerns students have."

Sobelson explained that as the LCOP class progressed, and as she completed the assignments, "all of a sudden the idea came about that maybe I should go to college." She had never been encouraged to go to college. The class not only sparked the idea, but also helped her formulate a roadmap.

Sobelson acknowledges the academic marathon that followed could not have succeeded without the enthusiastic support of

her husband, whom she calls her best friend, and to whom she has now been married 22 years.

"David was my editor sometimes, when I'd have to hand in huge reports," she remembered.

"He's very proud (of my accomplishment). It's not just my degree, it's *our* degree."

Sobelson earned her baccalaureate degree in three and one-half challenging years—including eight consecutive terms, carrying 16-20 credit hours each.

She received her bachelor's degree in Business Management and Operational Leadership from George Fox University in December 1997, graduating with a 4.0 grade point average and magna cum laude honors.

During and after college, Sobelson was able to acquire work experience with Hewlett Packard, for whom she worked as a market researcher, and with Benchmade Knife Co., for which she served as assistant to the president. Both jobs required and built upon her organizational ability and strength for detail, she says now, and were



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enhanced by her sensitivity to others.

Today, Sobelson works 19 hours per week as assistant to David Madsen, chair of the drafting department, while she searches for a full-time opportunity, preferably on campus.

She assists students with their classes and other needs and assists the department as it works closely with industry—any company or corporation with autocad (computer-aided drafting)—to upgrade the skills of present employees or to find students to do employee work.

Meanwhile, Sobelson supplements her work volunteering for LCOP, where she began at Clackamas and which has asked her to do its marketing. She was instrumental in the design and manufacture of the LCOP pin featured in the Nov. 10 issue of the *Print* and has been the featured speaker at the LCOP graduation ceremony more than once.

"I kept in touch because I wanted to give back," she said. "Now it's my turn to give them support—not that they seek it, but they so appreciate it. And I get so much more than I give."

Outside work and LCOP, Sobelson is an accomplished



seamstress, sewing suits and jackets, and linens and other décor for her home.

But her primary focus is her future. Her first goal is full-time employment at Clackamas. Then she'll determine in what area—psychology or education, perhaps—to earn her master's degree.

"My heart is here at Clackamas, so I know that as soon as something comes up..."

When asked what LCOP meant to her, in addition to the practical skills it gave her, Sobelson responded with great feeling.

"The thing that stands out most in my mind," she said, "is that the instructors provided a safe place for me and for other students, in which we could be ourselves without being judged



KARL KATZKE / Clackamas Print

or criticized. We could share things that were very personal, and know it was okay.

"They also provided a support system with *resources*, or sometimes just an ear. Their door was always open if I needed it. They introduced me to education and built my confidence. And promised they would be there if I came back later (after graduation) too. Support of other people was important.

"Getting an education is not just about academic studies," Sobelson added. "It's a lot of discovery of who I am and what I like, and I'm so glad I did it later in life rather than right out of high school. I appreciated it more because I was paying for it, and because I really wanted to be here."

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Lori Sobelson
 LCOP Graduate

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