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Portland Navy Recruiter Alexis Clark says she is living proof that you can succeed in a military career while also having a family, raising a child as a single mom, and going to school.

A Drive to Succeed

Naval officer is 'living proof' of challenges met

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Alexis Clark is changing the way Portlander's sign up for the Navy. Her willingness to share personal challenges and professional accomplishments with future sailors and officer applicants helps increase the knowledge of the contributions of women in the armed forces.

A recruiter for the Navy in Portland, she keeps an eye for potential and a lookout for others to follow in her path.

"I'm working on my masters, I've travelled halfway around the world, I've received a wide array of exposure to Navy medicine," Clark says. "There's nothing I haven't done that I didn't want to do."

Among a select number of women in command, Clark specializes in the recruitment of medical and dental professionals.

She deliberately aimed for the job, a difficult title to snatch since the fleet demand for medical personnel is huge. She managed to snag the full-time position all while raising a child as a single mom and going to school.

"I see women who are more driven in their careers but not sure how to incorporate it into their lives," says Clark. "You can have a family and still go to college and be successful in your career. You can do it all at once if you have the stamina and the motivation and drive to do so. I'm living proof."

Clark was born to a military family—having spent her first few years abroad as her family

was stationed in Germany. She managed to move through five different states before graduating from high school.

Inspired by her parents, she joined the Navy as soon as she was old enough. Oddly enough, her sign-up came just one day before the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

She soon obtained her dream job as a Hospital Corpsman and was stationed at Naval Hospital Great Lakes in Illinois. It was here that her passion for preventive medicine was fulfilled.

It is also where she would face a personal challenge that she was less prepared for: Single motherhood. Clark felt no shame nor does she hesitate to share her surprise—that her son's father abandoned her during her pregnancy.

"Now I have to work twice as hard to do what I want to do while doing what I need to do," says Clark. She gives credit to the sup-

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