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FEATURED

EDITOR'S PICK

NEK Native, Childcare Center Director, Earning Degree At CCV Commencement Today

Rebecca Tanner Began Taking CCV Classes Through Dual Enrollment In Senior Year At LI

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Rebecca Tanner will receive her associates degree in early childhood education today at the Community College commencement ceremony at Norwich University in Northfield. She is pictured here with her boyfriend, Ben Paris (Photo)

ST. JOHNSBURY — Northeast Kingdom native Rebecca Tanner will be presented with her college degree during the Community College of Vermont's (CCV) commencement today at Norwich University in a field in which she is already an accomplished professional.

Tanner, 26, a Lyndonville native who grew up in a farm family, credits her exposure to college at an early age to the early days of the dual enrollment program offered through CCV at Lyndon Institute, her high school alma mater.

While at LI, Tanner, who had a few open spots in her senior schedule to fill, took several early childhood education classes and did well in them. On graduation, she quickly found work at a local daycare center and stayed there until the business shuttered. She worked for six months as a nanny for a family whose children had attended that daycare center, since their lives - and hers - were upended for a time.



She was waiting for a new nonprofit daycare being started to open its doors in her hometown, in the heart of Lyndonville's village downtown, where she had been hired as the new center's lead teacher. After serving in that role for several years, she was promoted not quite two years ago to the center's director.

That center is the Northeast Kingdom Preschool and Childcare.

Katie Keszey, spokeswoman for CCV, said Tanner joined the workforce right after high school and has been able to advance her career while going to school, as many CCV students are able to balance.

Tanner, in an interview this week leading up to today's commencement, said of her chosen field, "It's such a challenging, yet rewarding career."

She said taking over as the director in the middle of the pandemic has been beyond challenging for her - and everyone in childcare.

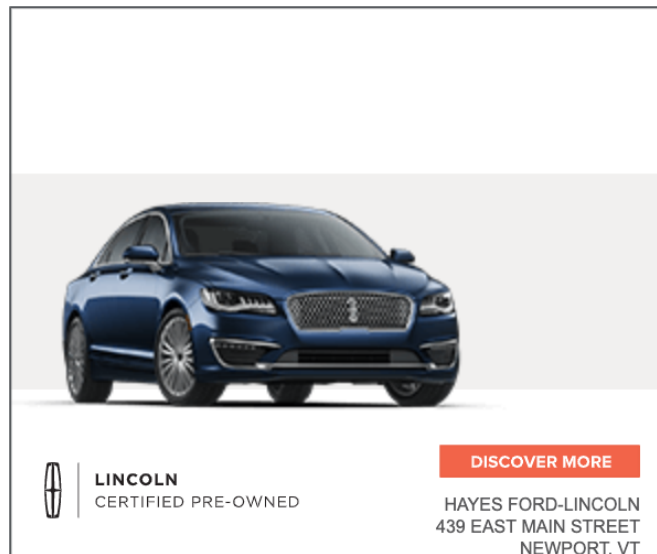
Rebecca's advisor at CCV Conner Gilbert, said of her, "Throughout her time at CCV, Rebecca has excelled in her coursework. Balancing her responsibilities as a student, director of the Northeast Kingdom Preschool and Childcare, a parent, and even showing cows at the Caledonia County fair, Rebecca shows both dedication and resilience in her pursuits. We're so proud of all the hard work that Rebecca has put into her studies and the active role she has in shaping the next generation of learners."

Tanner said growing up in a farm family gave her a work ethic that drove her to be independent, to not want to be in debt, and to work hard as she semester-by-semester checked classes off her associate's degree plans - "slow and steady," she said. It took her eight years, but she kept going with her eye on earning her degree.

And she did it - with the help of Vermont Student Assistance Corporation counselor Marti Kingsley every step of the way finding grants and scholarships, and what Tanner still owed in a balance every semester she paid off in full as she went, so she is graduating today not owing a cent.

"I was born and raised around here, I grew up on a dairy farm in Lyndonville, but we farmed kind of all over," she said.

Her first introduction to college during her senior year at LI began the journey to the career she has today, she said.



She graduated from LI in 2014, and began working full-time a week later at the first daycare center, which closed more than a year into her employment there.

In 2016 she was hired as the lead teacher at the new Northeast Kingdom Preschool and Childcare, then not quite two years ago she was promoted to the center's director.

She said growing up she had visions of becoming a veterinarian, "but that was kind of out of the cards, time and financially. I didn't expect or want my parents to pay for my education, and there really wasn't anything local, so for me, working and doing it on my own was pretty important. I did two classes a semester and I'm graduating owing zero dollars."

Attending CCV allowed her "to have the opportunity to work full-time and also be able to still further my education, I didn't have to choose, I could do them both at the same time," said Tanner.

Graduating, she said, "For me, it's just finally like the light at the end of the tunnel. There have been a lot of times when I'm like, 'What am I doing? Is this worth it? and the further I got, it was just like it's just this many more credits ... I would break it down by classes and

semesters.”

She’s undecided if she’ll keep going after earning her associate’s degree, but said she is just completing another class recently in childcare business administration after “I said I wasn’t going to take any more classes!”

Tanner recommends to high school students to take advantage of the dual enrollment opportunity, which led her on a path to higher education. “It’s something you should really take advantage of, the more credits you can take earlier on, the better off you are and the further you are in your college journey.”

Tanner’s family as well as her boyfriend and his daughter, and her nana will be attending the graduation ceremony, she said.

Of her work at the childcare center and preschool in Lyndonville, Tanner said, “It kind of feels like a second home to me ... It’s kind of like my home away from home.”

CCV Commencement Today

In a news release about today’s commencement, it was noted that today’s event at Norwich University’s Shapiro Field House at 2 p.m. will see more than 450 students awarded their associate degrees.

CCV President Joyce Judy will officiate the event. Governor Phil Scott will address the Class of 2022, and members of the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees will be in attendance.

CCV is Vermont’s second-largest college, serving nearly 10,000 students each year. With 12 locations and extensive online learning options, our students don’t have to travel far from their communities to access our degree and certificate programs, workforce, secondary and continuing education opportunities, and academic and veterans support services.



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