

# Sharyn Guthrie

knows the devastation of losing a job. But she also knows the joy she has found in dietetics and how using her skills can help other families that might be going through job loss or other issues.

“I was part of a downsizing, and took that as an opportunity to go back to school,” she said.

Guthrie went to school for a two-year dietetics degree, and did part of her internship in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program at Catawba County Public Health. She immediately felt at home.

**“The first time I went into public health for a clinical, I knew that’s where I wanted to work,” she said.**

When an office support position came open in Catawba County, she took the opportunity to return.

“At the time, dietetic technicians were not approved for nutrition positions, she said.”

Catawba County WIC rose to the occasion and WIC Director Julie Byrd began working with the state to change the rules that were preventing Guthrie from performing dietetic services.

“Julie, along with people in nutrition services at the state, pushed for dietetic technicians to be able to work as nutritionists for low risk clients. It took several years, but I was the first person in the state to have the credential,” said Guthrie.

She has been teaching low-risk families about food labels, nutritional values, and more for seven years now, and has worked for WIC for 13 all total.

“I knew I wanted to work in public health and I have no regrets,” she said.

Guthrie can’t count the number of families she has worked with and impacted over the years.

“There are a lot of opportunities for people to change a habit, start a new habit or get rid of a habit,” she said. “Another way for people to make a healthy change is in reading a food label. If you’re willing to spend the time with people and show them how to read a label, they may not act like they care. But you know human nature. When they go to the store, they’re going to try to read that label.”

Guthrie said the biggest thing she can do is empower families.

“Once people get more knowledge, they start feeling empowered. They have a new mentality of ‘I don’t have to comply’ or ‘I don’t have to do that,’ just because the commercial says it. ‘I can make my own decisions,’” she said. “That’s a lot of what we do here – empower people.”



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**Sharyn Guthrie is #makinglivingbetter every day in Catawba County.**