

## **A NEW CHAPTER**

**Pursuing a second career: Maura Fitzpatrick, Class of 2017,  
Master of Public Health**

**Michelle Marrone  
(From *Rivier Today*, Fall 2016)**



Photo by Jodie Andruskevich

### **How did you begin your career?**

As an undergraduate, I had a passion for service to others but opted for a degree in computer science. I graduated in 1985 and worked as a software engineer for 10 years, followed by 15 years as a stay-at-home mother raising four outstanding children and volunteering at St. Kathryn Parish in Hudson. Since then, I've worked in advertising sales and substance misuse rehabilitation.

### **What attracted you to the Master of Public Health (MPH) online program?**

While interviewing at Rivier for the nursing program I was asked if I ever considered a degree in public health. The director of the MPH program explained to me how my diverse background would be a great asset to the public health community. I was concerned that I did not have a clinical background, but she assured me that my software and sales skills would be just as valuable, which I have found to be true.

### **After being out of the classroom for 30 years, was it a difficult choice to pursue an online degree?**

I was initially intimidated by online learning, but it was a very smooth transition because of the organization and support offered by Rivier and the instructors. In many ways, online learning offers more, not less. Instructors, technical support, advisors, other students, and extensive learning materials and tools are all just a click away.

### **What kind of interactions do you have in a virtual classroom?**

Developing relationships with other students has been easy because we share a common interest and want to connect. The faculty has been superb regarding communication. Responses to any of my questions have always been received in less than 24 hours. I have easily kept in contact with my professors through online office hours, discussion boards, email, and, in some cases, by text.

**How has Rivier's mission of transforming hearts and minds to serve the world been part of your experience?**

I have been inspired to be myself by my instructors and have been shown over and over again that what I have to offer is unique to me and of great value. I have not only learned extensively about public health, but I have also learned more about myself than I ever expected I would.

**What does the future hold for you?**

I am just finishing my practicum at the Division of Public Health in Nashua. I am thrilled to finally be realizing my passion so many years later by taking part in the new and innovative online MPH program at Riv. The program has given me a whole new exciting chapter in my life to look forward to! ■

**From stay-at-home mom to public health champion, Maura Fitzpatrick strives to improve lives.**

***Favorite Quote:***

*"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." – Mother Teresa*

***Favorite Books:***

*"The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Henri Nouwen*

*"The Once and Future King" by T.H. White*

*"The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz*

***Favorite App:***

*Does my GPS count?*

***If you could do or be anything in life, what would it be?***

*Being a mother has been the most educational and rewarding experience of my life ... if I hadn't been blessed with so many other opportunities, I would be content with motherhood.*