



ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

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Stacey Renée Vitale

Sr. Administrative Assistant
Bridgewater, New Jersey

Being a workplace coordinator for the 2004 Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work® Day on April 22 was a privilege for Stacey Renée Vitale of Bridgewater, New Jersey. It was an opportunity to help girls and boys make their visions of the future a reality, just like she's been able to do for herself. Back when Stacey was 14 years old, she went to work with her mother, Lynn Vitale, as part of the former Take Our Daughters To Work® program. According to Stacey, the experience turned a curious and mischievous girl into a focused and accomplished young woman.

"I have direction in my life now because I participated in the Take Our Daughters To Work program," said Stacey. "Before that day, I was getting Cs and Ds, maybe a few Bs, in high school. The program was exactly what I needed to get my life back on track!" Stacey believes the new program can do the same for today's girls and boys. And it starts them thinking about how they'll live their whole lives – at work, at home, and in the community – when they grow up.

All grown up now herself and working in the marketing department of Ortho-McNeil, the same Johnson & Johnson company where her mother works, Stacey looks forward each year to coordinating the organization's Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day. Last year, 200 children participated.

"We use the official activities and come up with some of our own," said Vitale. "We talk with the kids about balancing work and family life. We give examples of putting family first, such as saying, 'this e-mail can wait till tomorrow because my child needs me,'" Vitale explained. "Work is important, but family comes first. This is the Johnson & Johnson credo."

Stacey believes the Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work program expands the children's capacity to dream. "I think it helps them to set their own personal goals and makes them realize that the real world isn't too far away!"

Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day is more than a career day; it is an opportunity for girls and boys to discuss the competing challenges of work and family, how they are affected by these forces, and how they believe family-friendly workplaces should function. It also strives to change public policies and workplace cultures to ensure that family-friendly environments are the norm, rather than the exception.

The Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work program promotes a society where men and women are encouraged to participate fully in all areas of life and are appreciated for doing so. Indeed, the family-friendly workplace is a future that girls and boys already envision for themselves. In a survey conducted by the Families and Work Institute, 81 percent of girls and almost 60 percent of boys said they will reduce their work hours when they have children.

MOLLY CONTI

I can think of many things that happened to me as a little girl that shaped the woman I am today--being the older of two children, a child of divorce with a virtually absent father, and having the cringe-worthy role of the new kid in school at least four times over amongst them. All things that, while helping to build character, definitely didn't make my young life very easy. That is why, to this day in my twenty sixth year, I credit the Take Our Daughters To Work Day Program for keeping my little girl self motivated and excited for the future.

When I was 12 years old, my mother was working at the Clinton-Gore '96 Re-Elect Campaign in Washington D.C. Because she had to work full time, I took on most of the household responsibility, which included taking care of my younger brother. My mother worked hard to make sure my brother and I had every opportunity growing up, but it was definitely tough to have so much responsibility at such a young age.

On Take Our Daughters To Work Day, I accompanied my mother to the Campaign headquarters, and had special access to behind the scenes action around a national presidential campaign. The atmosphere was buzzing with people who worked for a cause in which they fiercely believed, and not for financial gain (as I learned later in life that political campaigns don't pay so well!).

I sat in on meetings with my mother and other female colleagues discussing policy and issues important to women and families—although I didn't realize it at the time, and I remember being struck by how many women there were in the office, and not just men in pinstriped suits and tasseled loafers.

At the end of the day, my mother and I went to a special meeting with First Lady Hillary Clinton and other mothers and daughters for a special program put together by the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach (an Office that unfortunately no longer exists). The First Lady addressed the group, and while I don't quite remember her words, I do remember the feeling I left with that day.

I felt invincible, ready to work hard in school and make the grades to succeed and one day become just like my mother, her colleagues, and First Lady Clinton. Little did I know what an impact the day I spent with my mother at her job would have on my life—both then and now. And I got to meet Socks, the Clinton's cat, that was quite the little showman.