

## **Kristen Faus – population health**

### **Why did you choose your degree program? How has it helped you grow personally and professionally?**

I originally went to nursing school with the goal of becoming a NICU nurse. However, after marrying into the military and taking an 8-year break to support my husband's deployments and raise our three children, I found myself drawn to community and population health nursing. I wanted to positively affect the community my children are growing up in.

The degree program has helped me grow both personally and professionally by equipping me with the knowledge and skills needed to make a positive impact on community health outcomes and the well-being of military families. I've come to realize that by focusing on community health nursing, I can still indirectly affect the well-being of those NICU babies by improving the health of mothers and families, leading to better outcomes for infants.

### **What are you most proud of accomplishing during your time here?**

I am most proud of my personal growth, resilience, and the practical experience I have gained in population health nursing. Despite the challenges of juggling family responsibilities, full-time work, and a cross-country move from Alaska to New York during the program, I have maintained a strong academic record and have been able to apply my learning to real-world situations in my roles as an Army public health nurse and population health nurse. Graduating with my MSN is a tremendous accomplishment that I am incredibly proud of.

### **If you could go back in time, what advice would you give your younger self?**

I would tell my younger self that even though it's scary to start working again after an 8-year break, you're not only capable of graduating with your BSN but will also go on to earn your MSN. It's tough but doable. Embrace the journey, be open to new opportunities, and don't doubt your abilities. Seek out mentors and build a strong support network. These connections will be invaluable throughout your personal and professional life.

### **Who helped you the most on your journey?**

My family, particularly my husband and children, have been my greatest support system throughout my journey. Their willingness to support my studying through extra chores and allowing me to be focused on schoolwork has made it possible for me to pursue my education and career goals.

I am also grateful to Carol Fairlie, student services specialist, who maintains amazing contact with the nursing school graduates. She reached out about the population health scholarship opportunity knowing I worked in public health and encouraged me to apply.

**What's next after graduation?**

After graduating with my MSN, I plan to continue serving as a population health nurse at Fort Drum, where I hope to make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of active-duty soldiers, their families, and the broader community. I am excited to apply the advanced knowledge and skills I have gained through my graduate program to develop and implement effective community health initiatives.