Spring 2024





Name: Kennedy Wagner
Title: Foster Care Case Manager- BSW
Company: AGAPE
Professional Industry: Social Work

Tell us a little bit about how you obtained this job?
During my senior year at Lipscomb University I completed my practicum/ internship at AGAPE in the social services department. During my internship I put in many hours with my agency and got to experience the world of foster care and case management. I had a love for the population I was working with and dedication for the work I was doing. Through my internship I strived to be an asset to the company. February of my senior year, the Director of the social services department offered me a job as a case manager upon graduation.

What did you like about this job?
I love that AGAPE is a faith based organization and that I get to incorporate my beliefs and values into my everyday work. I am thankful that I have the freedom and opportunity to pour Christ and his love into the lives of the clients I serve. I appreciate that I have been blessed with the opportunity to advocate for the vulnerable and give my clients the tools and resources to be empowered. I love the relationships I have built with the children and families I work with.

What did you do in college to prepare for your career?
In college I majored in Social Work and minored in Family Science. The classes I took gave me a strong foundation and knowledge base to feel confident and competent entering my senior year practicum. In my practicum I was able to incorporate the teaching of my professors with the practical experience of real life cases.

What is the day in the life like at your job?
In case management no day is alike. Case managers in foster care attend to whatever needs their client presents on a day to day basis. This can include home visits, participating in school meetings, transporting kids to appointments, supervising visits, participating in court, and responding to crises. Foster Care case managers work everyday to help foster children find safety, stability, and permanency.

Spring 2024

What is challenging about your role?
In foster care you have to sit in the hard moments with children and families. Children in foster care often experience immense amounts of trauma, it can be challenging to help children process through these events. In case management you also do not have a set schedule due to the nature of working around other peoples schedules so it can be difficult to keep a work life balance.

What are the benefits of working in this field?
The biggest benefit of working in social work is you get to work everyday to help others. I have the opportunity to build relationships with the children I work with and to be a safe space for them.

What do you see happening in the future for these types of careers?
Unfortunately social work careers and jobs will always exist, as long as we live in a broken world the need for helping professions will continue to exist. In social work we say we would love to work ourselves out of a job, what that means is I would love for no child to have to enter foster care and for no child to experience trauma. I do not see in the near future the need for foster care ceasing to exist, though I wish it would. Foster Care case management needs more hardworking, kind-hearted, and motivated people to enter the field.

What should a student know about your field?
It is hard work but it is rewarding work to see the life of a child positively impacted due to the work you have put in.

What advice do you have for a student considering a career in your profession?
To continue to preserve and work through the hard situations and cases you encounter. To realize you may never see the growth from the seeds you have sown, but that does not mean you have not made an impact. Take care of yourself! Even the most resilient and determined worker can experience burnout. Remember you can't pour into others from an empty cup. Most importantly, hold onto your faith in God- trust in his plan and seek his guidance as you enter this difficult field of work.