

# Samantha Mulder is earning her **degree** from afar

Alumna returns to MCC to pursue Early Childhood Education

By Shelly Springborn

**W**ith the help of technology and family support, Samantha Mulder is finishing her degree at Montcalm Community College.

Mulder is taking advantage of MCC's online and live online course offerings to complete an associate degree in Early Childhood Education without leaving the comforts of her home in Cadillac.

The stay-at-home mom, who also opened an in-home daycare in 2019, said she probably would not be able to attend college at this time if it wasn't for MCC's online offerings.

"Living in Cadillac, I have not stepped foot on campus – even though that would be fun to do some time," Mulder said. "I have been able to submit all coursework and documentation online and communication through email is quick and easy.

"I struggle with ADHD. I have found this style of individual learning gives me the opportunity to work the way I need to learn and at a pace that works for me," she added.

"I have three boys. Having the option for both 100 percent online and hybrid courses gives me the best of both worlds," she said. "I can be here for my family and still work on earning my degree. There have already been many times where things have happened where if I was on campus, I would have been late or absent. Because of my online learning, I am never late for class!"

After graduating from Montabella High School in 2004, Mulder "took some time off to figure out life," enrolling for the first time at MCC in 2008 while working as a nanny.

"MCC's evening classes allowed me to start my college career while staying employed," she said. "I was an on-campus learner and enjoyed the in-person experience."



*Samantha Mulder reads a book to children at her daycare.*

After a short time, she relocated to Cadillac for her job, continuing to work with children as a nanny and in a nursery at a high-end fitness club. She also took classes at nearby Baker College. There, she earned an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certificate.

Then life took over. Mulder married, had her first child and worked in a medical office. In 2015, she found herself facing single life again.

"Having no family in the Cadillac area, it was just my son and I, and our wonderful daycare provider," she said. "Without her I never would have made it through the next two years. I knew after meeting her, she was important, and I really wanted to be with my children and be there for others who may have a situation like mine."

Mulder is now remarried and credits her husband for encouraging her to pursue her dreams.

"My spouse gave me the motivation and support to move forward with my real dream of working with children while staying at home with my own children," she said.

"There are many college options out there; however, I found that MCC works best for me and my family," she said. "The instructors are thorough and respond timely to emails if guidance is needed.

"Without MCC, I would not be where I am today," she said. ■