

Public health doctoral recipient is fit to serve

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Lori Andersen, center, who received a doctoral degree from Tulane University on May 16, embodies health and fitness herself. Here, she leads a fitness boot camp in New Orleans City Park. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Leading exercise classes in New Orleans City Park, running marathons and coaching a girls' running club are just a few of the healthy habits Lori Andersen used to relieve stress during her studies at the Tulane University [School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#).

"I can concentrate and focus when I am physically active, I sleep better, and it's a giant stress relief," says [Andersen](#), who received her PhD at Tulane Commencement on May 16.

"I recognized the benefits of a healthy lifestyle when I was young and felt really passionate about helping others achieve the same."

Not only does Andersen embody a healthy lifestyle, but she spent her doctoral program at Tulane immersed in the science of exploring what helps children and adults eat healthily and be physically active.

Andersen's dissertation examined the use of salad bars in school cafeterias, and she managed the follow-up research project that worked with 23 New Orleans schools, a project that was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Tulane [Prevention Research Center](#).

One major take-away from the study, Andersen said, is that schools should not only offer students healthy food, like salads, but also promote that food and encourage healthy food preferences.

Starting this summer, Andersen will be teaching others about public health and continuing her research as an assistant professor at Utah State University in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department.

"Once I got started in my educational journey, I realized there was so much more to healthy lifestyle than just telling others they should be healthy," Andersen says. "Studying health has helped me realize all the barriers associated with a healthy lifestyle, and I'm interested in finding solutions to reduce these barriers through research."

Naomi King Englar is the communications and training coordinator for the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University and the Maternal and Child Health Leadership Training Program.

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Lori Andersen, PhD, class of 2015