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## **Mom fulfills promise, enrolls in college with her two kids**

By Howard McEwen Enquirer contributor

### **HIGHLAND HEIGHTS**

Erin Kern and her two children will attend Gateway Community and Technical College this fall.

"I told them if they finish all through school that I'd go back and get my GED, and we'd go to college together," Kern, 43, of Fort Thomas, said.

Her son, Kenneth Kern, 20, started looking into school after his high school graduation and is halfway through a massage therapy degree. This year, her daughter, Marion, 24, entered the registered nurse program. Erin starts the same program in October.

Along with the promise to her children to return to school, Erin was inspired by their performance as well.

"They were doing what I asked them to do," she said. "Then I looked around and thought 'What am I going to do?'"

Erin doesn't foresee any conflicts in attending the same school.

"They love it," she said. "We're very close. We have a tight relationship with each other. I told them I can bring the cupcakes and go on field trips together."

All three work full-time. Erin is a patient care assistant at Christ Hospital.

Erin's academic adviser, Sheila Gray, said three family members attending school at the same time is unique, but Erin's circumstances are not.

"She is very typical of our Gateway audience - adult responsibilities, works full-time and then some," Gray said. "Our average student is 28 years old. As our new slogan says, we really can be where education begins for a lot of different students."

Several years ago, Stephen Popple urged Erin to get her GED when he worked as an adviser at the Kenton County Adult Education Program. Now as a Gateway instructor, he will be teaching her first class.

"He was helping me back then get into nursing. This has been something I'm interested in for a long time," Kern said.

Popple is happy to meet up with Kern again.

"One of the most satisfying aspects of being involved in education are the opportunities to plant seeds in the minds of individuals about what they can do," Popple said. "Whether individuals go forward with what they can do is up to them. But to see someone like Erin, who has made the decision to go forward with her dream, is something I am overjoyed to see."

Although proud of the fact that she finally has her GED and will be entering college, she feels her biggest accomplishment is seeing her children in college also.

"I think it's important that if you don't stay on your kids in school and participate in their lives, you don't know where they'll end up," Kern said.

Her children ended up in college - with mom.

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