

Influential Women Profiles: Shelby Thrush, Inspiring Educator and Community Leader in Early Childhood Education

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Preschool Program Director and Event Professional in Boyne City, Michigan, Blends Creativity, Leadership, and Lifelong Learning to Shape the Next Generation

Boyne City, Michigan – Shelby Lynn-Sunderman Thrush is an accomplished educator and event professional whose career reflects a deep commitment to service, creativity, and lifelong learning. She currently serves as the Preschool Program Director and Lead Teacher at Concord Academy Boyne, where she oversees early childhood programming with a focus on developmentally appropriate instruction, leadership, and building strong community connections.



Shelby's academic achievements include a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services Administration with a concentration in Commercial Recreation and minors in Event Management and Hospitality Administration from Central Michigan University, as well as a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Lower Elementary Education from Concordia University Ann Arbor, earned in December 2025.

Her professional journey is marked by a unique blend of education and event management. Shelby began her career in event planning, interning at Art Reach of Mid Michigan and later coordinating large-scale events, including weddings. In 2015, she transitioned into Special Education, dedicating six years to supporting diverse learners while prioritizing meaningful impact and family balance. After a brief return to event planning in 2021 as a Wedding

Coordinator with Up North Events, Shelby realized her true passion remained in education—leading her back to early childhood leadership.

Today, Shelby successfully balances her responsibilities as Preschool Program Director with part-time work as a Wedding Coordinator, bringing strong organizational skills, creativity, and relationship-building to both roles. Known for her leadership, adaptability, and dedication to creating positive experiences—whether for young learners or couples celebrating milestone moments—Shelby has made a lasting impact through education, service, and community engagement.

Shelby attributes her success to her diverse career path and her steadfast commitment to continuous learning and growth. She is particularly proud of guiding her program to earn the highest Great Start to Quality rating in its first year, a testament to her dedication to high-quality learning environments that benefit children and families alike.

Shelby's decision to pursue a career in education was deeply influenced by her fifth-grade teacher, Miss Terry Decker, whose example sparked her passion for making a meaningful impact on young lives.

Shelby encourages young women entering the education field to pursue their passions with confidence. She advises them to push through barriers, trust themselves, and stay committed to their goals, assuring them that persistence and passion will create meaningful opportunities.

Looking ahead, Shelby sees meaningful opportunities to shape the future of education by sharing her insights, bringing joy and fun into learning, and inspiring others to elevate the learning experience.

At the core of Shelby's personal and professional life are the values of family, connection, and purpose. Whether spending time outdoors with her family, capturing life's moments through photography, or cultivating a nurturing classroom environment, she prioritizes experiences that bring fulfillment and foster meaningful relationships. Her work exemplifies a commitment to inspiring the next generation while maintaining balance, joy, and purpose in her own life.

Learn More about Shelby Thrush:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Shelby-Thrush>

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