

Alumni Spotlight featuring Leah Malavite



Leah (Firestone) Malavite, 39, of Greensburg, attended Westmoreland County Community College from 2006-2008 and is our featured alumnus.

So what made Malavite want to attend Westmoreland after high school?

“The college had and continues to have a wonderful hospitality program. It was close to home, affordable, and had the best instructors around. I had the best experience at this college,” says Malavite, who studied to be a dietetic technician.

After graduating, she enrolled at the University of Alabama and obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Food and Nutrition. Malavite then obtained her Master's of Science in Food and Nutrition

at IUP, and is currently working on her Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition at Kansas University Medical School. She is also board certified in renal nutrition.

When looking back at her college days, the memories that stick out the most would be going on the NYC food tour in 2007.

Malavite exclaims, “My favorite memory was going on the NYC food tour in 2007. There was a fairly large group of us. We toured the Food Network, multiple restaurants, Times Square, and even went to the top of the Empire State Building. This trip is something that I still reminisce over.”

Did Malavite have a favorite instructor?

“Cheryl Shipley. Cheryl had the brightest personality and smile. I enjoyed every moment of her classes. She presented information in a way that made you want to learn more. You could see how passionate she was about her career,” says Malavite.

Malavite was not formally involved in any clubs but would have liked to have been.

Now that she has graduated from Westmoreland, what is she up to now?

“I currently have a few different jobs. I work part-time for DaVita dialysis. Working in renal nutrition is very rewarding. I love my patients and the company I work for. I am also an Adjunct Instructor here at Westmoreland, CCAC, Penn State Fayette, and Seton Hill, where I teach classes like Nutrition, Nutritional Cooking and Baking, Foods 1, and Intro Principles to Nutrition. I also consult RD at a skilled nursing facility,” says Malavite.

Once she was finished at Westmoreland, she was able to move into Food and Nutrition Service related roles such as Nutrition Services Director at a few different long-term care facilities. Westmoreland prepared her to pursue an entry-level position into management and equipped her with the tools to advance her career. It also gave her the confidence she needed to pursue higher education and move up the ladder within the workforce.

Behind the scenes, Malavite has many supporters that she would like to thank.

“I am surrounded by the most amazing guys anyone could ask for... my husband, Zachary (the most perfect man in this world; I could not be where I am today without his love and support); my sons Jason, Alex, Zebby and Teddy; and my fur cats Eli and Penny.”

Malavite is also active in her community. She is currently involved with the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is also the secretary on the board for the Council on Renal Nutrition through the National Kidney Foundation. In her spare time, she loves baking. Her sons love to help, and taste, all the goodies that they prepare in their kitchen. She also enjoys music, concerts and reading.

Her advice to current college students?

“Never give up. Your dreams are closer than you realize,” says Malavite.

