

So You Want to Be a Social Worker – Part 3

LCCC Career Exploration Podcast

- Music: [00:05](#) [inaudible]
- David Gerrrone: [00:05](#) The passion has to be there. You can't look at this field as just a job. You know, it's got to come from the heart. All you have to do to be good as this is just have a lot of heart and have a lot of empathy.
- Music: [00:19](#) [inaudible]
- David Gerrrone: [00:19](#) I've seen many people go into the field just because they're looking for a job. And that usually doesn't work because it's true, you're never going to be rich, but the fulfillment comes from that feeling that you are actually making a difference.
- Music: [00:37](#) [inaudible]
- Janet Maltbie: [00:37](#) From the campus of Lorain County Community College. This is the Career Exploration Podcast on LCCC radio.com the Boom. I'm Janet Maltbie. We explore careers, college majors, and more so you can be a success here on the LCCC campus and beyond. I'm a career counselor and I believe completing a degree pursuing passionate work and debt-free living is key to your future. I'm here to help you on that journey and so are my guests
- Music: [01:06](#) [inaudible]
- Janet Maltbie: [01:06](#) Today my special guest is David Gerrrone and our topic of conversation is, so you want to be a social worker or a human services professional. This is the third part of a three part series on the helping professions. David got his start here on the Lorain County Community College campus by completing a two year degree in human services, then completed a four year bachelor's degree in social work through our Youngstown State partnership program. He currently works at Big brother, Big sisters of Lorain County and is also an academic advisor for the health and wellness programs here at LCCC. Welcome to the program, David.
- David Gerrrone: [01:43](#) Thank you. Happy to be here.

Janet Maltbie: [01:44](#) Nice to have you. What got you interested in this profession?

Speaker 2: [01:50](#) You know, ever since I was little, there was always something about helping people. I kind of knew about the social work field. You know, I think a lot of people have the perception of social workers are the people that, you know, they go into the homes and they take the children out of the homes and take them away from their families. And I said, you know, there's gotta be more to that field than just that. I knew I wanted to be a helper. The one thing that probably deterred me was everyone else saying, "you don't want to be a social worker." You know, you're not gonna make any money. The burnout rate is high. And unfortunately being young and 18 and easily influenced by other's words, I decided to go the business route and quickly found out after two semesters at that wasn't for me, you know, personally. So then I veered back to social work cause I'm doing it for me, not anyone else. So that's how I ended up in it.

Janet Maltbie: [02:42](#) So you got your human services degree here first, right? And then your bachelor's degree?

David Gerrrone: [02:47](#) Yes.

Janet Maltbie: [02:48](#) Do you recommend that path for other students now that you've worked in the field?

David Gerrrone: [02:53](#) For me it couldn't have worked out better because along with the two year human services degree comes along, that internship that you have to do in your last semester of the human services degree. And I had chose Big Brothers, Big Sisters to do my internship starting in January of 2008 I liked kids. I like helping people, you know, I was blessed to grow up in a two parent headed household. Many of the children in that program don't have that in mom is working two, three jobs, just keep food on the table and a roof over the family's head. So I was kind of intrigued by that, that there was such this need for mentors and role model just right next door from the community that I grew up in. So on my last day, it was a great internship. It was about five months long on my last day working out the door, the director at the time said, "can I see you in my office?" And I thought it was just, thank you, we're gonna miss you. And she offered me a full time job on the spot and I of course, you know, being 22, 23 at the time, I said, I don't know, do I want to give... It was May. I said, do I want to give up my summer and work? So I said, "Can I think about it?" And I went outside and I called my parents and they said, "you take that." And it was a full time job with benefits. I walked back in and I said, "I'll take it, but I don't want to start for two

weeks." So I accepted the job offer and I've been there full time ever since. And then I was able that August to start the partnership program. And I guess for me personally, I liked the fact that I could work full time in the field and the Youngstown State partnership program was flexible enough that I could do both.

Janet Maltbie: [04:30](#)

Tell us about your work at Big brothers. Big sisters.

David Gerrrone: [04:34](#)

So my work at Big brothers, Big sisters I love and I'm passionate about because once again, when people think social work, they think they think of all kind of like the bad and the burnout in the, you make no money part, which isn't true. Some of it is the thing that intrigues me and that I love about my job is it's a happy side of social work is truly helping people, helping children, helping families, helping the community. So my job consists of interviewing the kids who sign up for the program, interviewing their parent or guardian, interviewing the potential volunteers. So background checks, you know, sex offender registry check, driving record checks has they are going to be transporting the child in three personal references. So then we have a pool of waiting children and then we have a pool of waiting mentors, volunteers and we get to pair them, which is cool. It's almost like matchmaking for friends. So we, we match them based on geographical location. We, we match them based on personal interests.

Janet Maltbie: [05:32](#)

So you feel like you're really making a difference in these kids' lives? I do feel that in our outcomes show that we are and we're very outcome driven.

Janet Maltbie: [05:41](#)

If you were to advise a student who is thinking about becoming a social worker, what would you say to them?

David Gerrrone: [05:48](#)

You know, you definitely, you can always tell when you meet with a student too. The passion has to be there. You can't look at this field as just a job. You know, it's got to come from the heart. All you have to do to be good as this is just have a lot of heart and have a lot of empathy and you do have to see, really see their situation. And feel their situation as if it was almost your own. I've seen many people go into the field just because they're looking for a job and that usually doesn't work because it's true, you're never going to be rich. But the fulfillment comes from that feeling that you are actually making a difference. And it's interesting because I have, you know, a lot of friends who make triple what I make in they're, they're great business people and they, I've had quite a few say I'm so jealous of you. And I go, why are you jealous of me? I said, cause I'm kinda

jealous of you. And they said, because you're actually doing something fulfilling in making a difference. And you know, I feel like I just, they will say, "I feel like I'm just going to work in pushing papers all day."

- Janet Maltbie: [06:47](#) Is there a class that you would recommend if a person is thinking about social work as a profession or the human services degree?
- David Gerrrone: [06:55](#) You know, the one that sticks out to me would probably just be the intro to social work class. That's where I met Jennifer Kukis for the first time. And that's one of those kind of feeler classes, like, I'm gonna feel this out. I want to take it first to see if this is for me, see if it is what I thought it was going to be. And that instructor, Jennifer Kukis, just, I'm grateful for the opportunity that confirmed everything. I knew the first week that this was for me. There were some surprises of course, but that's always to be expected. And they were good surprises. There was nothing that scared me from the field, but it was the one class that made me want more.
- Janet Maltbie: [07:31](#) Are you thinking about completing a master's degree?
- David Gerrrone: [07:35](#) I have dabbled, you know, with that thought. In the field bachelor's is bare minimum and there are so many more opportunities that like if I ever wanted to work in a medical or hospital setting, that's required, you know?
- Janet Maltbie: [07:49](#) Right. And I believe you earn more money.
- David Gerrrone: [07:51](#) Oh yeah. At the hospital setting.
- David Gerrrone: [07:53](#) Absolutely. That's where the money is.
- Janet Maltbie: [07:55](#) Right, right. And you can still help people.
- David Gerrrone: [07:57](#) And you can still help people.
- Janet Maltbie: [07:59](#) And you can still like buy bread.
- David Gerrrone: [08:02](#) Exactly.
- Janet Maltbie: [08:02](#) And clothe yourself.
- David Gerrrone: [08:04](#) Absolutely. The best of both. Right? Best of both. Yep.

Janet Maltbie: [08:09](#) Anything else that you would like to share that you think is important for people that are considering this program before they make that step? What would you, how would you advise them or anything that you think that they should know?

David Gerrrone: [08:22](#) My biggest advice, and I wish that I would've had this advice when I was starting out and it would have maybe, I could've gotten to it a little bit sooner and not had everyone in my ear telling me, you don't want to do that. You don't want to do that for whatever various reasons were in their mind. Do go with your heart. Take, take the money thing out of it, and even take the burnout out of it. As I tell all of my students, you have to absolutely love what you're doing. The saddest thing to me is when I ask someone, do you like what you, and they go, "I hate my job, I dreaded, I gotta drag myself out of bed and forced myself to drive there." That is so sad to me. So if you love what you do, which I truly do, you never work a day in your life, right?

Janet Maltbie: [09:09](#) David, thank you so much.

David Gerrrone: [09:11](#) Thank you.

Janet Maltbie: [09:11](#) For joining me today. If you would like to speak with David or another academic advisor at Lorain County Community College about a career in human services or social work, please call (440) 366-4033 that number again is (440) 366-4033

Music: [09:35](#) [inaudible]

Janet Maltbie: [09:35](#) This program has been brought to you by the generous support of Enrollment, Financial, and career services, who reminds you that it's not too late or too early to begin your career journey at Lorain County Community College.

Music: [09:50](#) [inaudible]

Janet Maltbie: [09:50](#) You've been listening to the Career Exploration Podcast on college radio, her ground, the world LCCCradio.com the Boom. I'm Janet Maltbie. Thanks for listening.

Music: [10:06](#) [inaudible].