

When it was time for **Darla Houser** to make a career change, she knew she wanted something where she could grow and learn.

That's one of the reasons why she accepted a job at Catawba County Public Health in the lab.

"I had been on three interviews at other places. I didn't think it would be anything I liked. I came to the interview at Public Health, and I instantly liked this place. Everyone was nice and it seemed like people worked in a team. It felt like the right fit," she said.

Her previous experience had been in labs at area hospitals, and in private practice. She liked the change that public health offered and the teamwork she encountered. Houser seized the opportunity to provide a variety of different services and learn new skills that she wouldn't have been able to do anywhere else.

"I love doing lab testing. Through my job at Public Health, I have learned so much more about public health in general and what we do for the community."

The work performed in the lab affects many other areas of Public Health.

"We really work on two sides. We do testing for the adult health clinic, looking for diseases that people may have contracted" she said. "The role there is testing specimens to spot problems so people can get the treatment they need and not infect others."

The other side is environmental health testing, with water samples that are collected by Environmental Health Specialists in the field.

"By running the tests in the lab, we help keep our water safe - drinking water, restaurant water and pool water are all tested," she said. "Keeping drinking water safe is critical to the health of the community."

Although testing for disease and testing water are important functions, many people don't know that they're performed at Public Health, she said.

"People just expect results and may not really know all the work that goes into testing," Houser said. "The community assumes that things are taken care of, but doesn't necessarily know who does it."

Her experience at Public Health has kept her interest in the lab and the organization.

"This is a good place to work, with good people who work as a team. We all work together to give the best to our patients and the community," said Houser. "That teamwork directly benefits the community."



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#IamPublicHealth

Darla Houser is #makinglivingbetter every day in Catawba County.