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Putnam County's newest kindergarten teacher comes from Mohawk County south of Moravia, Iowa. While growing up, she took babysitting

Nebraska. She has taken her sheep to national shows in Kansas City and Louisville, Kentucky.

Asked about the role models in her life and she answers, "My parents. Both of them set the proper example of behavior. They taught us kids the right values we need to succeed."

Robin Prater, "From Mohawk to Midget Country"

Robin was an academic

achiever. She was the Valedictorian in the Class of 1999. Following graduation, she attended Ellsworth Community College in Iowa Falls and graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in 2001. She also played softball for the school. For the next two years, she attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City and rooted for the Hawkeyes. In May 2003, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education.

When asked why she selected elementary education as a career choice, she responds, "I've always enjoyed that age level. Teaching them is a good way to have a positive impact on their lives, especially when they are so young."

From 2003-2005, Robin taught 1st and 2nd grades in a combined classroom in Eldora, Iowa. "We had five teachers," she says of the unusual arrangement. "Each teacher had specific teaching responsibilities. Such a grouping requires teamwork and cooperation."

When a better opportunity became available, she applied for and was hired to teach at a Davenport, Iowa, pre-school during the 2005-2006 school year. "I really liked teaching there," she states, "but I wanted a job closer to my family. I'd also started a quilt and bead shop with my sister. I moved back to Moravia too late that year to find a teaching job. To keep busy and earn income that year, I substituted and worked at a bank."

After being asked how she learned of the Putnam County job, a warm smile appears with her reply, "The position was advertised on the Internet.

jobs that earned her money and naturally prepared her for teaching young children. Born on October 27, 1980, Robin Prater's parents are Phil and Sharon (Dickinson) Prater. Her father is a self-employed painter, and her mother is a computer programmer. An older sister, Jill, is a physical therapist in the Monroe County Hospital in Albia. Her younger brother, Jeff, is a recent graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in horticulture.

Like most girls in small Iowa towns, Robin was born and raised with a softball and basketball in her hands. In both sports, she learned that teamwork and hard work are important values needed for success in life.

As a Lady Mohawk in the Moravia High School, she played 3rd base on the softball team and guard on the basketball squad. During her junior year, she earned all-conference honors in both sports and was an all-state selection in softball. Because she tore her ACL during her senior year, she missed half of the basketball season and all of softball.

With her father and FFA teacher providing guidance, Robin raised and showed sheep. A pleasant smile appears when she explains, "Dad was a huge help. He taught me how to care for the sheep and how to show them in competition. I also showed when I was in college. I probably spoiled them. One I called Bo Bo and another Jordan."

Honors she has won with her sheep include Appanoose County Fair Champion, division winner at the Iowa State Fair and at a show in Omaha,