DEQ BFFs

THE SERIES

Candace Brooks

Erin Vorderlandwehr

DEQ is proud to have been the starting line for many female friendships because we are champions of Women Supporting Women.

DEQ: How did you first meet and become friends here at DEQ?
E: Our husbands know each other.
C: Yes, they play basketball together, and they're video game nerds together sometimes. And then our kids are the same age.
E: That's what sealed the deal with our friendship.
C: They're all six months apart. So our daughters are the same age and our sons are the same age. And they don't go to the same school, but –
E: They hang out.
C: We coached our daughters' soccer team together for two seasons.
E: Oh gosh.
C: … which was great and horrible. And then you know, birthdays, and hanging out and stuff. We do a lot of stuff outside of work, definitely.
E: Yeah, all the time.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share today?
E: I can't imagine going to work and not having a friend that you get along with, and that can work with you and help you but not hold you back.
C: Exactly, a friend that will keep you accountable. Erin definitely makes me better – Erin works really hard, and she's really smart, so I really strive to keep up with her. I think that's important, in the workplace especially, 'cause you're here to do your job. It's always a bonus to have a friend who -
E: Yeah, you don't want that friend who's going to put you at risk, or who you have to cover for. You want the friend you can work well with, and bounce stuff off of each other, and –
C: Make each other better in the workplace. And it grows your friendship, too.

Managers in the State Environmental Laboratory Services Division. Candace and Erin became close friends through DEQ, and they support each other at work and in life.

Q: What was your initial reaction to each other?
C: She trained me on some stuff in the laboratory, and that's how we initially met.
E: We were the younger crew at the time.
C: We sealed the deal.
E: We worked in the same lab.
C: Candace, Erin, and other DEQ volunteers at the Lake Hefner shoreline cleanup in 2018

Q: Do you socialize a lot outside of work?
C: Oh yeah, let me tell you.
E: Our families get along.
C: We sealed the deal.

Q: Are there any funny stories about your time here at DEQ you'd like to share?
C: I mean Erin just is funny? So that's every day.
E: I know.
C: You just kind of talk with her? [both laughing]
E: Yeah whenever I was her manager, that I couldn't allow our working relationship evolution in the job. I think we've stayed pretty consistent. They would actually talk to us about –
E: Not playing favorites and all that other stuff.
C: Yeah, whenever I was her manager, that I couldn't allow our friendship to get in the way – and we didn't, 'cause we were good employees.
E: We are good employees. [laughing]
C: But I don't remember –
E: There's nothing really specific, we try to stay out of trouble. [both laughing]
C: But every day we definitely do something funny or totally goofy.
E: Did we actually answer that question?

Q: What was your initial reaction to each other?
C: I don't really remember! [laughing]
E: I know, it's been so long! [laughing] I mean, we got along, I mean, she had to train me on stuff –
C: We did get along;
E: I knew she was a good trainer, she was intelligent, she's friendly.
C: I remember thinking that I was very excited that someone my age was working with me. [laughing]
E: Yeah, we were the younger crew at the time.

Q: Why do you think it's important to have friends at work?
C: It's important, in the workplace especially, 'cause you're here to do your job. It's always a bonus to have a friend who -
E: Yeah, you don't want that friend who's going to put you at risk, or who you have to cover for. You want the friend you can work well with, and bounce stuff off of each other, and –
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As part of our continued celebration of #InternationalWomensDay, we are chatting with two awesome ladies, Candace Brooks and Erin Vorderlandwehr, both Environmental Programs Managers in the State Environmental Laboratory Services Division. Candace and Erin became close friends through DEQ, and they support each other at work and in life.

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DEQ: How did you first meet and become friends here at DEQ?
C: We met while we were both still temps –
E: Candace: We worked in the same lab.
C: Candace Brooks

This concludes our interview series highlighting the Women of DEQ.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

Follow us on Facebook (@DEQOklahoma), Twitter (@Okahomadeq), and Instagram (@oklahomadeq).

Candace, Erin, and other DEQ volunteers at the Lake Hefner shoreline cleanup in 2018

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