

A PARENT YOU KNOW

Name: Amy DuPont
Age: 29 (I hit the big 3-0 this June!!)
Married: Erich Zwicker, Oct. 2004
Child: Bryce, born Nov. 20, 2007
Job title: TV 19 morning anchor/reporter

Go to cpclax.com for more photos of Amy DuPont!



Photo courtesy of Theresa Smerud, artist & photographer

Amy grew up playing just about every sport possible in Inver Grove Heights, Minn., but fell in love with gymnastics in particular. (Her father was an NCAA Division III pole vault national champion while competing at UW-Stout.)

As a student at UW-La Crosse, Amy continued to compete in gymnastics and diving, and was the news director for the college news station. "Believe it or not," she says, "I kind of fell into TV news."

Amy intended to become a physical therapist, but after struggling with the decision (and some of the classes), she took a career interest survey. "It said I would be a good personal trainer, TV journalist, stunt double, or Broadway performer," she says, "so I signed up for a couple of TV classes."

After graduation, Amy interned with TV 19, followed by a brief time as weekend anchor at KSAX-TV in Alexandria, Minn. In 2002, she joined TV 19 as a weekend weather anchor and was promoted to Daybreak anchor by 2004.

While on assignment with the sheriff's department, Amy met her husband, Erich. After dating for a year, Erich pro-

posed during a live broadcast from the Oktoberfest grounds. "We have a lot of important couple moments on tape," Amy says.

TV 19 even sent a crew to the hospital the day after their son, Bryce, was born.

Throughout it all, gymnastics has been a huge part of Amy's life. She took a three-year break from coaching when her work schedule wouldn't allow it, but since she returned nearly five years ago as the West Salem-Aquinas head coach, they've won three conference championships, two sectional championships, and qualified for the state tournament three times. Amy credits her coaching partnership with friend and colleague, Carrie O'Hearn, for the team's success.

Tell us about your family.

Life revolves around Bryce. I look forward to coming home every afternoon because he usually greets me at the door with a smile. There is nothing in the world better than that!

Erich and I work opposite work schedules so Bryce is not in day care. It's great for Bryce, who is with parents that

love him all day, but it can be difficult on both Erich and me. The two hours each day during the week is just enough time to do a "Bryce update," maybe eat lunch together, and then do the baby hand-off. I'm sure a lot of other couples do the same thing during the week and then catch up on the weekends. Unfortunately, Erich only gets one weekend off a month, and for four months of the year, I'm busy on the weekend with gymnastics. Still, we make it work, and enjoy the time we do have together.

How do you strike a balance between a successful work life and family?

I manage work and family with the help of my husband, our parents, and some great friends. Erich changed shifts after Bryce was born so we were able to work opposite schedules.

Erich's parents live just over an hour from Onalaska. They are always willing to come down and watch Bryce when we need them. My parents live further away, but help when they can. Our friends are great too. I've often called upon them for on the spot babysitting jobs. And I have great babysitters, many of whom are current and former gymnasts!

What do you remember most about becoming a mom?

What I remember most is being afraid I would never become a mom. Erich and I tried for quite some time to get pregnant. Every month it didn't happen, I wondered if something was wrong or if it would ever happen. We actually made an appointment to speak with a doctor. The day before the appointment, I found out I was pregnant.

What was the biggest surprise about parenthood, something you wished you'd known or something people told you but you realized you have to experience for yourself?

I was worried I would be bored. I never really liked babysitting; I remember often being bored. I thought I would be bored during maternity leave. Wow, I was so wrong. The days flew past and Erich, Bryce, and I always found something to do. Babies do so many new things every day. It's exciting. You never know what's going to happen.

Bryce also loved to eat, so I spent a lot of time "hooked up," as I liked to call it. He was also hungry whenever I was hungry. I remember asking Erich if I would ever eat a hot meal again!

Before I had Bryce, many people gave me the same advice: Sleep when the baby sleeps. Sadly, I didn't take that advice until about a week before my leave was up. I wish I would have taken advantage of that down time. Now I know better.

How has parenthood changed you?

I'm such a softy now! I was never a crier. I kept cool and distanced from the stories I covered. As a coach, I didn't allow crying in the gym. My rule was if you were not bleeding or broken, I didn't want to see it.

Now, I get teary-eyed over so much! If any of my athletes are hurt, or upset and crying, I have to work hard not to choke up.

News stories about sick kids, kids who have passed away, kids who have helped someone or who have overcome an

obstacle, parents who've lost kids or who have died, they really hit home. Now, when I read a story about education, school violence, or health care, I really understand how the stories affect people and families.

What advice do you offer other parents, particularly first-time parents?

I don't think I'm the best person to give advice. I'm still learning how to be a good parent. And believe me, I have and will stumble along the way. I often wonder if I'm putting in too many hours at work, or if I should give up coaching. I still can't positively answer either question. But every day I get up (at 2:30 a.m.) and try to be the best mom, wife, and employee I can be. I do what I think is best for Bryce. I hug him, kiss him, and tell him I love him. Some days I'm super mom; some days I'm not.

Anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

A lot of people ask me about my schedule. I'm up weekday mornings between 2:30 and 2:45 a.m. I need to be at work by 4 a.m. I'm on the air from 5:30 to 7 a.m. After the show, I do some reporting, and help set up the news day. I'm home around 12:30 p.m. Erich and I see each other for a few hours before he's off to work and then I head to practice.

Bryce comes to practice at least two days a week. It's been challenging, but my assistant coach and the girls on the team are great with him. He plays in the gym (he is now doing somersaults at home!), eats his snack, and sometimes hangs on mom! After practice, around 5:30 p.m., Bryce and I head home for dinner, a bath, and reading time. Bryce usually goes to bed between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m.

I try to get at least six hours of sleep each night. And it's usually broken sleep; Bryce still doesn't sleep through the night! So, if I stumble during the morning news, please bear with me. I may have had a rough night! CPC



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