

## ALUMNI OF THE MONTH

**Name:**

Dr. Andrea (Wilson) Heller

**Year of Graduation:**

2002

**What have you done since graduating from Port Allegany High School?**

After graduation I attended Hiram College in Ohio, graduating in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in both biomedical humanities and music history/theory.

I took two years off from formal education to be educated informally in the world of compassion as a bartender and police/EMS/ fire dispatcher. I later graduated from A.T. Still University in 2012 after earning my medical degree. I completed a family medicine residency in 2015 and hospice/palliative medicine fellowship in 2016.

I've been employed at UPMC Cole since 2016 as a family medicine physician, and more recently, as medical director of the home health, hospice, and palliative care program. My husband, Joe (from the Cleveland, OH area) has been supporting me on this journey since 2006. In 2015, our family grew with the birth of our son, Alex.

**Where do you currently live?**

Coudersport, PA

**Who was your favorite teacher in high school? Why were they your favorite?**

The school staff that cultivated my passions most were Mr. Potter, Mrs. Murphy, and Mr. Berrettini.

Mr. Potter saw my love of science and critical thinking and fostered it allowing me to work on independent projects and learn through hands-on experiments.

Mrs. Murphy was the compassionate ear that let me vent and gently guided me in the direction of my dreams.

Mr. Berrettini allowed me to spend one period each day with him as a "Nurse assistant" and spent that time exploring options in medicine, at one point telling me "if you don't get into a US medical school, go to Poland!" He had the utmost faith that I would become a doctor, and I truly believe his faith in me gave me the faith to believe in myself.

**What is your fondest memory of Port Allegany High School?**

I loved my time as a cheerleader for the football/basketball/wrestling teams. I often joke with palliative care patients/families that my role on their medical team is to be their “cheerleader,” treating their symptoms so they can continue with chemo or other treatments and battle their disease while rooting for them from the sidelines.