
Interview with Christina Hussami, Mother and Student

Contributed by Dina Tekka-Efstathiou

Christina Hussami is a mother of two young children, a full time student pursuing a degree in Psychology, a volunteer, and a wife with very busy social life. She has excellent time management skills, despite her hectic lifestyle.

Christina has achieved high honors in her first year of college, always finds time to help her children with homework, prepares fresh homemade meals for all the family, takes Sidney and Ryan to out of school activities almost daily, and Christina and her husband often entertain in their home. Sorry… I forgot to mention that Christina and I walk almost 15 miles weekly, weather permitted. I am sure you are wondering, as much as I am, what her secret is.

In your perspective, do families of the 21st century make a lot of sacrifices or compromises, either personal or professional, to provide the best family environment for their children?

I feel that many families in the 21st century make many different compromises to provide the best family environment for their children. It all depends on what the concept of "family environment" means to each individual family. For us, mealtimes are one of the most important times of the day to spend time laughing and discussing our daily activities with one another. We all get up early and have a sit-down breakfast together each day. Granted, it may not be a hot meal, but the togetherness is the same. So, no matter what we have going on, we try to have a nice breakfast and dinner together each day, which means quality family time at the beginning and at the end of each hectic day.

What is the most important aspect in your life?

The physical and emotional well-being of our entire family is the most important aspect of my life at the present time. We try hard as a family to incorporate healthy eating and exercise into our daily routines as much as we can. Some of our weekend activities include biking or walking in the park, and we try to go swimming at a local health club at least once a week in the wintertime, and at least 3 times a week in the summer. Also, the kids are involved in team activities throughout the year to keep them active and teach them sportsmanship.

How do you balance the fine line between business and family?

Balancing the day-to-day activities with my workload at school and family duties is not unlike balancing on a tightrope—sometimes something has to give. Since I have enough deadlines with classes, I try not to put myself on a tight schedule at home. I work hard to get all of my classwork done while they are in school, so I am available in the afternoons to help with any homework that they may have at that time.

Do you have your own household to-do list?

As I mentioned above, I do not set a tight schedule at home as far as grocery-shopping or laundry; I prefer to do my

housework on an as-needed basis. I try to do laundry when the children are not at home, so I can get it done with no interruptions. I do make a list for my grocery shopping, so I will only get the items needed without extras!!

What is your typical weekday/weekend like?

On a weekday, I get up and shower before anyone else, get coffee ready, wake up my husband, wake up each kid and get them dressed; then, we all go down for our breakfast. After breakfast, I drive and walk my daughter to school before I drive my son to his preschool. Then, I go home and finish any work that I may do, and review my personal school calendar to make sure that I'm not missing anything. Then, it's off to school for me!! On the weekend, it's much more laid back. The kids are allowed to stay up a bit later than usual and sleep in an hour later. I try to actually cook a hot breakfast on the weekend and make it more enjoyable, not as hurried as during the week. After that, we make plans with friends, or do soccer or swimming, depending on the season.

Do you have some examples of your most critical survivor practices at home?

Something that really helps me a lot is having a cleaning service come once a week. By having them do the base cleaning, it frees up my time, and allows me to pay more attention to the laundry or cooking. I, also, like to go to food-preparation places (Dream Dinners, Super Suppers, etc.) to prepare my food ahead of time, so we are never without anything to eat. It is nice to have a fresh, made-from-scratch meal in the freezer whenever you may need it.

Christina, thank you for sharing with Goneis readers your personal perspective on how you manage your family, school, and social lives.

Thank you, Dina. It was my pleasure.

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