

How this online student turned a passion for teaching into an achievable reality

By Meenah Rincon, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

Teachers, whether they specialize in elementary education or college, hold the foundation of education for students in every aspect of their lives, continuing to impact them forever.

In a classroom, surrounded by young professionals, is where Christy Trapp manifests to be one day, reaching for that same impactful feeling.

From Southern California to her new home in central Texas, Trapp's life has never been short of demands. Having two children and being a wife to her high school sweetheart of nearly 10 years, she has persisted nonetheless.

She joined Starbucks as a team member in 2019, shortly after her daughter was born, when a manager introduced her to the [Starbucks College Achievement Plan](#). The first-of-its-kind partnership with Arizona State University allows all eligible U.S. partners to earn their first bachelor's degree through ASU's top-ranked online degree programs.

The Starbucks College Achievement Plan allowed her to experience financial freedom while continuing her role at Starbucks, creating a career path and supporting her family.

She started on the path to earning her degree, but balancing early-morning shifts, a growing family and coursework, she found herself struggling to keep up.

Then, in the spring of 2024, something shifted. Trapp made the decision to redirect her full energy toward finishing her degree and began taking six classes a semester all while shuttling her kids to extracurricular activities.

"The beginning of schooling was difficult to balance my growing career within the company and my children," she said. "I would not have had the resources or foundations set to attend ASU without Starbucks."

While earning her degree through ASU Online, she participated in the Global Career Accelerator and completed hands-on observation hours working with pre-K and younger children, turning classroom theory into lived experience.

This spring, Trapp graduates from ASU with her bachelor's degree in [early childhood education](#) and is ready to step into a classroom of her own, a dream she has carried most of her life.

We spoke to Trapp about her time at ASU Online and her plans for the future.

Note: The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Question: What was your “aha” moment, when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: There was truly no "aha" moment for my field of study. I knew I wanted to be in education since I was young. I always had supportive and kind teachers. I wanted to be just like them. The flip side of my major stems from the love, curiosity and wonder children have, no matter the age. They make education fun and exciting. Every new lesson is amazing to them and can be an adventure to explore. Children are complex, and learning how to live for the first time, just like we are.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?

A: Some advice that I have received: Mistakes are proof that you are trying. I have been taking six classes a semester in order to finish school, and finding a subject I am passionate about makes the mistakes I have made along the way more impactful. I have taught myself time management through four calendars to stay on top of my work, and dedicating different days of the week to a specific class.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: My plans after graduation are to finish my minor during the summer and begin finding a teacher certification program within the state of Texas! I cannot wait to begin working with children every day in an educational setting.

With that said, I am really sad to be leaving the company I worked for in my young adult life. Starbucks has been there for me through loss, heartbreak, my engagement, my wedding, both my children being born, my educational journey, moving across the country and so many more milestones. I would not be the person I am today without everything Starbucks has given and done for me.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: I am unsure if \$40 million can solve this problem, but I really want to make food more affordable for everyone. I want to ensure every family does not have to fear that they cannot serve dinner for a week. I believe schools should provide free lunches to all kids, and somehow lower the cost of food.

This article was written by Sabrina Baker for ASU Online.

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Text image(s)



Christy Trapp, courtesy photo