

Continued

At this point, life is good and she is living a dream.

The couple own 16 acres of property and the family has a great time four-wheeling with ATVs.

She has always liked working with children and that led the 32-year-old to take the social services program at Loyalist College. She graduated in 1994 and after a series of jobs, she found one this past June that she considers tailor-made for her.

Hodge holds the unwieldy title of director of community investments and partnerships.

She said it involves helping panels formed from 40 commu-

nity volunteers to choose how much each of the United Way's 51 agencies will receive in funding each year. She also does the linking up with businesses that do "in-kind" donations — not cash, but items like furniture, food and office supplies.

"I love it," Hodge said of her job during an interview at the United Way headquarters on William Street. "It's a very unique environment to work in. It's probably one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had."

Along the way, she was with the local Community Living's summer program for developmentally disabled children and

in Bancroft with Community Care for North Hastings and was on the board of North Hastings Children's Services. At one point, before landing the Bancroft job, she toiled as a real estate agent, being unable to find work in the social service field.

She got back into it, working at the provincial intake screening office in Trenton, where residents of Eastern Ontario who wanted social services money applied.

When that closed and she landed the United Way position here.

It is not that far from where

she grew up in Point Anne. Her grandfather worked for the cement plant there and her grandmother ran the general store. Her parents also lived there and her mother, Penny Hart, still does. Hodge is one of three sisters — Shelly Reed and Julie Hart both live in Belleville.

Hodge attended long-shut D.R. Atkins elementary school on Elmwood Drive, then Harry J. Clarke and Moira Secondary School.

When she isn't at the United Way office, dealing with Diesel's antics or ATVing, this winter you can find Hodge at the Stirling arena.

"I'm a hockey mom, manager of the Novice A hockey team," she said. "A lot of the managers are women now."

She added that a number of women are moving into coaching, too, but she doesn't plan to move in that direction.

"No, I can't skate very well," she said, laughing. "(I'll) just cheer from the stands."

She said her family — Jason is from Belleville and is an industrial electrician at Unilever — tends to do activities where all four can be involved, such as camping in summer.

But Hodge also likes to immerse herself in a good book.

"I read a lot — anything I can get my hands on," she said. Her latest read was *Lovely Bones*, about a little girl who is raped and killed and looks down from heaven and follows the goings-on of her family.

She enjoyed a favourite program on television, but she finds little time for that now, what with the growing activities of her family life.

"I used to watch *West Wing* faithfully," she said.

At the end of the interview, Hodge was asked to pull out the crystal ball and tell where she would be in five years.

"I see myself working here," she replied. "This is my ideal job."

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