

Written by Ivy Tech Indianapolis Marketing

Isabella Unger, a 25-year-old mother, server, and student at Ivy Tech Indianapolis, is carving out her future in the field of **visual communications**. A talented photographer passionate about capturing life's moments, Unger's journey to higher education has been anything but straightforward. Her story is one of resilience, a deep love for creativity, and the determination to provide a better future for herself and her family.

Originally from Brazil, Unger's path to visual communications began with a spark of interest in photography as a teenager. At just 15 years old, she was gifted her first camera, and from that moment, her love for photography grew.

"I would take pictures of everybody at birthdays and events," she reminisced, "and I felt like that's where I fit."

Despite her early passion, life's obstacles pushed her dream of pursuing photography to the side. After completing her senior year at Greenwood High School, Unger chose not to attend college, overwhelmed by personal struggles, including feeling like college had no meaning for her.

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Instead, Unger entered the workforce, working as a server at restaurants. Over time, she found herself deeply involved in her mother's restaurant business, managing the social media, website, and photography for [J & J Pancake House](#) in Zionsville. It was her mother's encouragement that ultimately inspired Unger to reconsider higher education.

"She told me, if I were to pursue school or something that would help me continue to better my skills for her restaurant, she'd pay for it," Unger said.

With that support, Unger felt it was time to make a change.

Unger enrolled at Ivy Tech, pursuing a degree in visual communications, which perfectly aligned with her love for photography and her desire to build a business. She was drawn to the College's accessible programs, which allowed her to start with small courses and work towards an associate degree while managing her responsibilities as a mother and server.

"Ivy Tech felt accessible, and I have many people, including my husband, that have attended," she explained. "It was something I felt I could achieve."



Photo Provided by Isabella Unger

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Balancing motherhood, work, and school is no easy feat, but Unger has found a way to make it work with the support of her family and Ivy Tech.

"I thought it was going to be overwhelming, but it ended up not being overwhelming at all," she admitted, smiling.

Careful planning and open communication with her support system have allowed Unger to maintain a balance between her studies, work, and family life. She currently takes two classes each semester, works a few days a week, and still has time to be present with her young child.

Her time at Ivy Tech has not only helped her refine her photography skills but also given her the motivation and confidence to keep pushing toward her goals. One of her favorite classes is Photography 104, taught by Professor Darryl Moody.

"He's been excellent, always in a good mood and looking forward to you learning," Unger said. "Going to class with him makes me feel like what I'm learning matters."

As she moves forward in her studies, Unger is clear about her future ambitions. After graduation, which she projects for 2026, she plans to build her own business, offering photography and visual marketing services to other small business owners.

"I want my business to help other businesses," she said, emphasizing her desire to work with those in the same boat as her—people trying to make their dreams work. "I want to be a light, to help them get more clients and help their businesses grow."

Unger's journey is an inspiration to others who may be balancing work, family, and school. Her advice for those considering a return to education? Patience.

"Sometimes it's just not the right moment to do something," she reflected. "You have to think about what's important to you, what brings you joy, and what your goals are. Even if it sounds impossible, it's achievable if you put work into it."

For Unger, the future is bright, and Ivy Tech is helping her pave the way to a successful career and a fulfilling life, both for her and her family.

"Right now, Ivy Tech is just what I need," she said. "It's taking me places."

You can follow Unger's work on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) , as she is open to

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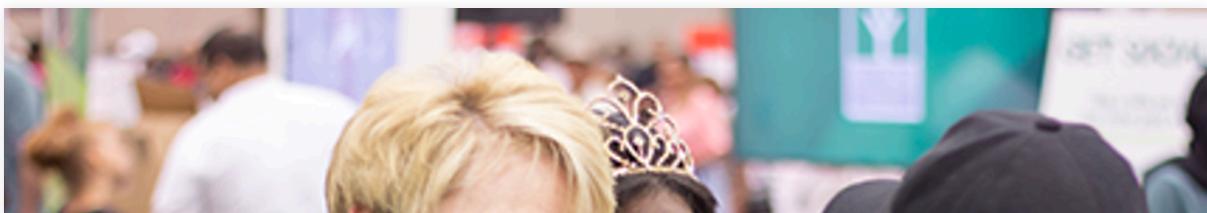
Ivy Tech Community College is Indiana's largest public postsecondary institution and the nation's largest singly accredited statewide community college system, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Ivy Tech has campuses throughout Indiana and also serves thousands of students annually online. It serves as the state's engine of workforce development, offering associate degrees, long- and short-term certificate programs, industry certifications, and training that aligns with the needs of the community. The College provides a seamless transfer to other colleges and universities in Indiana, as well as out of state, for a more affordable route to a bachelor's degree.

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