Rocklin doctors balance schoolbooks, baby and business

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The Applebaum family of Rocklin often accomplishes more in one morning than most people do all day.

Sam Applebaum is an adult primary care physician with Kaiser Permanente. His wife, Laura Applebaum, is a family physician with Sutter.

They cherish time together with their daughter, 21-month-old Hannah, who loves playing at the gym, riding her trike and visiting grandma in Carmichael.

Busy family, busy careers and dad recently earned his MBA with the first class of graduates from Sacramento’s Drexel University.

“We are very proud of Sam,” said Carl (Toby) Oxholm III, senior vice president and dean of Drexel’s Sacramento Center for Graduate Studies. “Not only did he overcome lots of hurdles that could have stopped him, but he is perfectly positioned to become a healthcare leader in this region – an industry critical to the region’s economic success, a field where visionary and well-prepared leaders are especially needed in today’s economic crisis, and will be in even greater demand when the Boomers retire.”

The Applebaums attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, so they were familiar with Drexel University of Philadelphia. After coming across an advertisement for the Drexel MBA program in Sacramento, Sam Applebaum knew the two-year commitment would give him the background he wanted in administrative leadership.

“Throughout medical school and residency I’ve always sought out leadership positions and enjoyed being involved in an administrative aspect and when I graduated from residency I took on a position working 70 percent because I knew I wanted to go back and get my MBA,” said Sam Applebaum, who praises his family for helping him pace the workload. “The key is trying to obtain some work life balance. I think that’s been tough over this past year and with support of my wife and my family and with having my daughter to really kind of ground me, it’s really been wonderful to spend a lot of time with family and be able to do the things that I love.”

Laura Applebaum feels fortunate her mother-in-law can watch Hannah on the days she works.

“Definitely lucky to have Sam’s mom to take care of Hannah,” shared Laura Applebaum who rises early on work mornings to examine newborns at the hospital. “It also makes it doable because I work part time.”

The Applebaums are part of a growing trend of young American professionals pursuing graduate degrees, often for job security, higher income and marketability. According to the U.S Department of Education, MBA students are a more diverse group compared to students in other graduate programs. At Drexel’s Sacramento Center for Graduate Studies, the average age of students is 36.

“Many have kids at home, and spouses who work outside the home,” Oxholm said. “Most of our programs have the students work in groups; and that means that the students themselves are great supports for their colleagues, covering for them when they are gone and helping them keep up. Our technology allows those who cannot be physically in the seats to participate electronically and/or watch the classes via podcast afterwards.”

Sam Applebaum enjoyed networking with a variety of professionals at Drexel and also the flexibility of the program.

“I think that for those people who are interested in any sort of administrative leadership, it’s good to actually have some coursework and to have a stronger foundation,” he shared. “So for those people interested in taking that extra step, I definitely recommend it.”