

Dive Training™

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Why We Dive: What Does Scuba Diving Mean to You?

Diving has taught Kristin and Alyssa Hunter, right, how to focus on their goals, and it increased their self-confidence.



Confidence and Maturity

By Linda Lee Walden
Photos by Lynn Laymon

Sisters Alyssa and Kristen Hunter, ages 19 and 23, have never been closer, "We used to fight a lot," Alyssa says, "But since we took several scuba classes together, we're much better friends." And that was not the only change to the girls' personalities, according to their mother, Karoline. "Dealing with more mature people made them take things seriously," she says. "They learned to respect themselves.

Alyssa was actually the first sister to dive; she started in the PADI Bubblemaker program when she was 11 and just kept going. "My first time underwater I couldn't stop smiling, so I kept getting water in my mouth. As soon as I figured out not to smile so much underwater I got addicted to scuba."

Until then she was an unfocused student, and her mom said she could only continue in scuba if her grades improved. That was all the motivation she needed. "During my Open Water class I'd quiz myself for the test with questions on cards. It made me think about the answers rather than guessing. I started to use the method in school too." Almost immediately her grades rose to A's.

Taking college courses while completing high school this past spring, Alyssa now says she feels like she can do anything she wants. "I am no longer scattered; I'm more goal oriented and failure is no longer an option for me."

With her sister and brother certified to dive, Kristin finally succumbed to Alyssa's nagging and got certified at age 16. Her transformation was almost instant. "I was always the one who sat in the back of the class and didn't participate in discussions." Within five weeks her teachers were noticing a difference. "When I hit the water all my stress went away. Having to depend on a buddy and her depend on me gave me the confidence to be a leader."

Kristin's new-found confidence also helped her grades. "I knew the answers, but used to get so stressed I couldn't think. After achieving so much in my scuba courses I knew I could relax and not stress out on tests." She also finds that the practical applications of the Divemaster program she is currently taking are helping her stay organized while going to college and working full time.