

## Hospital Bear

The yellow stuffed bear with a silk ribbon bow around its neck that sat perfectly in the middle of my pillows resembled much more to me than a cute toy in my seven-year old mind. It was the physical warmth of a smile of a nurse that faithfully stayed by my side while I laid on the operating table too scared to know how to reach out for support.

Growing up, my image of a nurse was someone who checked patients in until a doctor was ready to see them. I had never considered going into the medical field despite the number of people who told me that it would be a good fit. However, as time progressed and I began getting more exposed to the health field, the reasons of why I decided to switch my major to pursue nursing became apparent.

It was not until I was in my third year of college in an exercise program that I realized that promoting exercise and healthy eating were not enough to heal a mind and body. It takes someone's whole life, their history from even before birth and their experiences up until the present moment to even begin to understand what interventions are needed to begin a healing process. A family friend of mine, who was a nurse, once told me that nursing was a calling, that those who choose to become a nurse do so because they see it as a life-long work. I did not understand what that meant until I realized how many of my experiences put me in a position to work with people needed someone to share their story with. I wanted to help people to thrive by understanding the whole picture and every detail that contributes to their health. I wanted to help people change from the inside out and empower them to take control of their life through the appropriate resources and programs. Thus I decided to switch my major and expand my skills in order to be able to provide that type of care.

Nurses understand that healing can come in many different ways. During high school I was able to work as a server in the dining hall in a retirement home. During that time, I just fell in love with the residents who shared their stories with me and the smile of gratitude for giving a listening ear. I learned the healing power that listening could have on a tired and lonely heart and the absolute warmth that being of help to someone brought to me. I was able to feel that same warmth when working with special needs children and adults in helping them exercise every week as just my presence could be a source of healing. A nurse advocates for their patients in many ways and in all aspects of their lives.

It has been a dream of mine to help minority groups access better health care and meet daily needs. It was in my public health class that I learned more about the roles of a nurse and how they could be involved in communities in all levels. This was an area that I felt strongly in and that nurses could play a large role in providing that care. Through my experience as a minority in my community, I felt that I could use what I learn as a nurse to help those in other parts of the world to receive the care that they need and to provide the resources that can make those changes.

Nursing is a versatile field that offers many opportunities to heal individuals and communities in powerful ways. The yellow stuffed bear in my room that still sits in the middle of my bed to this day reminds me of that each day. Changing to a nursing major was hard for me at

first, as I knew it was not an easy program, but the further I got along, the more I knew I needed to be there. Nursing provides healing, comfort and knowledge in ways that cannot be found anywhere else. That is why I decided to choose nursing and still choose it today.