



W.H.E.E.L.

Scholarship Contest Winner

Sarah Rigney

Topic:

New Career Choice, Your Inspiration, and Why Now?

Throughout my childhood and into early adulthood, I felt called to do one thing; be a mother. I have fulfilled that calling four times, and although I adore being a mother, I still felt an urge to do more. In 2015, my grandparents were moved to an assisted living facility for the elderly. During my visits with them, I was impressed by the personalized care that the nursing team provided. They cared for my grandparents as if they were their own. Eventually, my grandparent's health had declined and I was called in to visit with my grandmother one last time. The nurse was so patient and compassionate. She asked if I would like to provide some simple care tasks for my grandmother. She guided me through the process and encouraged me along the way. I didn't realize at the time, but she was giving me a chance to say goodbye. This was a gift that I never expected to receive and one that I will be forever grateful for. This patient, caring and compassionate nurse had solidified what I was feeling in my heart all along. That deep urge that I was feeling was to care for others. I have been called to be a nurse.

I have been a stay-at-home mother for nine years, and my children are now at an age of independence. Although they will always need encouragement, they require less guidance with each passing year. I feel confident that now is the right time to pursue further education. I have always enjoyed expanding my knowledge by reading, researching and listening to others, but had not been in a classroom since 2007, when I received my bachelor's degree in psychology from CMU. In the spring of 2019, I chose to act on my impulses, and enrolled in prerequisite classes at LCC. I was so nervous before my first class that I was shaking, but the thought that I would one day be a nurse gave me courage. In the summer of 2019, I was accepted into the second-degree nursing program at LCC. One half of my first semester into nursing school is when Covid-19 began impacting the health of people around the world. I was not able to return to in-person clinical study, due to the health risks for the patients. I have been aching for the opportunity to care for these patients and support the nursing staff. I will be diving in soon though, as I am scheduled to graduate in May of 2021 and plan to apply for nursing positions immediately.

I was inspired to act on my calling with a deep desire to make a positive impact on my community. I aspire to care for all; however, I feel a connection to the care of new mothers. Nurses can make an impact on the lives of their patients by caring for them, but to care for a new mother can be like caring for the root of a fragile flower. I was that fragile flower four times over. The care and support that my nurses provided made a substantial impact on my confidence and care approach as a new mother.

I look at my children, and I look at the world that they are growing up in. It is a wonderful world, but I see too many people hurting. Too many caring only about the present moment without consideration for the future. I want to be an example for my children and others. We do not have to remain in a stagnant situation. We are able to change outcomes for those around us, for our communities and for our world. It is never too late to make a change, rise up and make a difference. Yes, nursing is about treatment plans and diagnoses, but it also involves a deep level of wholistic care. If my training and education enables me to make a positive impact on one person's life by providing care for them, then all of the work will have been worth it.