

## Nursing Essay

My life experiences have helped me to realize that nursing is my calling. I feel the best about myself when I am given the opportunity to help and care for others, and it would be my dream to complete the Nursing Program at your incredible institution.

It was the day after my wedding in 2003 that ultimately confirmed my desire to pursue a career in nursing. I had just arrived in Las Vegas with my new husband when I called home to let them know we had arrived. I instantly could tell by the tone in my sister's voice that something was wrong. After I persistently begged her to tell me what the problem was, she broke the news to me. My 20-year-old sister had been diagnosed with AML (Acute Myeloid Leukemia). Those were the scariest words that I had ever heard. I stood there paralyzed in fear with a terrible feeling of helplessness. Immediately we flew home to be surrounded by our loved ones. Little did I know it at the time, this was just the beginning of our travels for her treatment. She immediately began her first round of chemotherapy treatment before being transferred to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in NH for a stem cell transplant. This had been my first experience with any type of cancer or illness. I spent many hours researching leukemia, blood cells, stem cells, and bone marrow trying to learn as much as I could so I could understand what was happening. The effects of the chemotherapy in preparation for the stem cell and bone marrow transplant were extremely painful and devastating. She lived in isolation at the hospital for several months at a time. We had to wear masks, gowns, and gloves to be with her. We all took turns sleeping at the hospital with her. She was never alone. We all pulled together and helped care for her. We were disappointed to learn that the stem cell transplant was a failure and we were now in need of a bone marrow donor. The next step was traveling to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for a bone marrow transplant. My sister asked me to have a bone marrow drive and to help try to find a donor for her.

It was Valentine's Day 2004 in XXXXX where one of my biggest accomplishments occurred and a life-changing moment in my life. We had two weeks to try to put together a bone marrow drive for XXXX and raise money to fund it. Our family worked day and night gathering donations, and getting the word out to media and news agencies about our drive. We all worked very hard and were able to pull it together. We had no idea how many people were going to show up. We had hoped for fifty or sixty. Each bone marrow kit involved a blood draw that cost \$60.00. If people couldn't afford it we asked them to come anyway because our family wouldn't turn anyone away. We had a bone marrow drive that brought in over 500 people! We ended up running out of kits and having to turn people away. It was a miracle. This day changed my life and the way I view the world. People that were unable to donate for medical reasons donated money for other people that showed up and couldn't afford it. We had a couple come in on the morning of their wedding to donate to see if they were a match for my sister. It was amazing people all day donating their time, blood, and money to help a complete stranger. It still brings me to tears thinking about how wonderful and caring people are. My sister didn't find a match at our drive but two other people did! There is no better feeling in the world than knowing because we had this bone marrow drive for my sister that two other people in the world got a second chance at living and keeping their loved ones around longer. My sister passed away exactly one year after her initial diagnosis. I feel that her illness and

death had formed who I am today. I know for certain who I am and what I want to do with my life. I was born to help people and I feel good when I am doing it.

I have continued to work closely with Bethematch.org (formerly new England marrow donor program) trying to get people to join the registry. I run bone marrow drives and recruit people whenever possible. I know that every person does make a difference and I proved it. My long-term goals are to work with oncology patients preferably in a transplant center. I feel that I need to pay it forward. I have learned that it is the little and big things that make such a big difference to a patient dealing with an illness. I have great compassion and empathy for the patients and their loved ones.

As a caregiver for the XXXXXXXX I work in an apartment building with ten residents that are paraplegic or quadriplegic. The residents rely on me and my fellow coworkers for activities of daily living such as toileting, showering, eating, dressing, cleaning, food preparation, and any personalized goals they have. This job has times where it is physically and emotionally draining. There are times when you are dealing with body fluids that can make most people nauseous, I am able to work through these challenges and focus on the task at hand which is helping the patient.

I have begun taking courses at the XXXXX in XXXXX. I have thus far taken Anatomy and Physiology I and II , Nutrition, Psychology, Math Concepts, and Human Growth and Development and excelled in all of them despite the challenges of being a stay at home mom of three children ages 4,6 and 17. It was very challenging at times to balance parenthood and the intensive academics. It proves that I am determined when I set my mind on something.

I am hoping for the opportunity to fulfill my calling through completion of the Nursing Program at XXXXXX. I realize that this program is highly competitive I think through my life experiences and good grades that is a good indicator that I will successfully complete the nursing program and become an exceptional nurse. It is my first choice to study at the XXX campus, if there are openings in other locations.

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