

'Nicest Nurse Ever' Story Defines Humankindness

People connect through stories -- they are how we take stock of both monumental life events and small everyday moments. Stories help us learn from each other; get to know our colleagues and patients better; and are an optimal way of sharing and spreading humankindness. Case in point is a powerful and memorable story of TG.

Career choices are often inspired by family, teachers or personal interests. For TG, at 12-years-old, she knew she wanted to be a nurse, after spending a day at work with her aunt, a charge nurse at a hospital in Mexico. TG explained, "As clichéd as it sounds, I wanted to become a nurse to make a difference. I wanted to see things in a positive light and to help people."

TG is doing just that as an ICU registered nurse at the Truxton Campus, Mercy Hospitals of Bakersfield. She is definitely impacting people's lives.

After taking care of a patient for three days, TG had gotten to know her three children, ages 8, 18, and 20, and learned that she had been a hardworking mother. Unfortunately, the patient was deemed brain dead, and the family was in dire straits. Who was going to pay for the funeral services? Who was going to look after the children? Several questions arose. The family was in need of financial help.

"Their mother was going to be taken off life support and on top of that they had financial worries to deal with. I couldn't imagine all the emotions and stresses they were going through," said TG, a mother of a 2-year-old son. "I wanted to take some of the financial burden off their shoulders."

Never reluctant to speak up or advocate for her patients, TG began to ask for contributions. "What I didn't expect to happen was how everyone came together for this family – the physicians, nurses, lab staff, respiratory therapists, etc... It was just so amazing," TG explained. In a single 12-hour shift, \$1,500 was raised for the family.

In addition to raising funds for the family, TG also had the difficult task of explaining to the youngest child that her mom was no longer going to be with them. "I bought an angel along with a card that spoke of strength and heaven," said TG. "And, when I gave her the card, I told her that whenever she was sad, she should look up at the stars and know that angels were looking after her mother."

When the family was given the donation from the staff, they were moved to tears and grateful for what TG has done. The family showered TG with cards filled with personal notes. One touching sentiment read, "Thank you for taking care of my mom; you are the nicest nurse ever. Thank you for the gift."

While TG was the catalyst, she humbly attributes the fundraising efforts to colleague Stephanie Strickland, respiratory therapist, who was instrumental in the endeavor along with other staff. "This shows how powerful we can be if we all work as a team," said TG. "Everyone opened their hearts and had empathy for the family. It was a group effort."

All stories welcome. Please share your stories of humankindness, how a patient or colleague moved you or made a difference. Or, if you have an inspiring story idea or lead, email us and we'll follow up:

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