



Sabbatical Experience

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March 18, 2026



From CCC studies to Pediatric Surgery Nurse



Sabbatical focus:

- serving food insecure families and sharing my experience to inspire nursing students to volunteer and serve the CCC communities

Sabbatical bonus:

- an unexpected twist providing new meaning



Food and a sense of belonging are basic human needs. If unaddressed, health disparities and inequities can result. (Demircioglu, 2024)

**When we volunteer to serve,
it is meaningful to staff,
improves community, and
ultimately improves the
health and safety of the
population. (Sanchez, 2021)**



NRS 110 Health Promotion Noticing Activity

Supports 5 student course learning outcomes in the following areas:



Outside looking in...



Inside looking out...

From the outside looking in:



- *“A shiny, expensive-looking care drove up and parked right in front of the building. Who might be arriving in such a fancy vehicle? The driver got out and had 2 grocery bags in hand, joining the long line outside the building.”*

***Empathy, kindness, and avoiding judgment
all help foster diversity. (Sanchez, 2021)***

A closer look at the food pantry experience:

- *“The student had never considered the energy it takes to arrive early, stand in line outside in the cold weather with thin clothing, choose items in the food pantry and carry groceries back to the car without rolling shopping carts or anyone to help them carry or unload the groceries.”*

A key component of removing implicit bias is the nurse’s ability to reflect on their awareness of bias they hold; awareness is key to providing inclusive patient care. (Murray, 2024).





A few months later, the food pantry story continues:

- *“Many food pantry customers seemed almost ashamed, never establishing eye contact. The student sensed the shoppers’ discomfort when asking how many granola bars or cans of corn were allowed.”*

***Food insecurity can be accompanied by social isolation and community bias.
(Mosher, 2024)***



From the inside looking out:

- *“The student noticed that some items were in surplus supply, such as cases of cupcakes, which only last a few days. There were a few specialty foods, such as gluten free or lactose free food items, but those went quickly and there were not enough to go around.”*

Food insecurity can negatively affect early childhood eating behaviors, which are often screened at early childhood education settings such as preschools or day care centers. (Varela et al., 2024)





Finding more than just food items:

- *“There are more than just food items offered at a food pantry, such as free children’s books, and houseware items such as COVID tests. The student realized these extra items provide a more holistic approach to meeting multiple family needs.”*

**Family resilience influences the ability to adapt and navigate unanticipated difficulties, including financial hardship, sudden illness, or food insecurities.
(Demircioglu, 2024)**

From the inside looking out:

- *“One volunteer mentioned they used to be standing in line as a food pantry customer just 1 year ago, and now she and her daughter joined so they could volunteer and give back in this way.”*

Fact: Seventy-seven percent of Oregon Food Bank staff have a lived experience of hunger. (Oregon Food Bank, 2025).





From the inside looking out:

- *“The food pantry volunteers served 320 people in just 14 minutes. That was half of the people served the first time. Many are now afraid to leave their homes due to ICE presence in our communities. (No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act, 2025)*

We may not have helped create our current social climate, but we can help affect a positive change within it. (Sanchez, 2021).

The Unexpected Twist – Looking from the patient’s perspective

Nursing attributes that encourage inclusiveness and belonging:

- *Strong communication skills*
- *Appropriate sense of humor*
- *Taking time; not being rushed*
- *Asking permission; allowing for privacy*
- *Not passing judgment*
- *Providing consistent, respectful care*
- *Critical thinking*
- *Empowering the patient’s voice to be heard*
- *Bringing their personality; allowing their own gifts to be shared*



A full-circle moment:



- *“One of my former students, a CCC nursing graduate was assigned to care for my mother for 3 consecutive days of her hospital stay. This was a positive and meaningful experience for the patient, family and the student.”*

Get to know your patient... you cannot treat them as a whole person if you do not know them. This includes social determinants of health (access to quality health care, education, financial stability, their neighborhood social and community connections, and living environment) that influence the patient’s health and well-being. (Mosley and Bowen, 2025).



Thank You!

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