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Let's talk about Nursing



Relocation Is Changing Nursing

2020 is suspending jobs, taking away our padlocks, creating havoc with our social lives, separating us from family and friends. Many Americans are now on an employment rollercoaster and clamoring to get off. Many are looking toward relocation and location-proof careers for their new normal.

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Perseverance In Nursing

Perseverance is a complex virtue. For some, it is a divinely inspired gift, while for others, it seems to be an inner strength. It feeds the tenacity and willpower felt in the face of challenges. When add to knowing what you want, where you want to go, and why, you become a powerful force for maintaining one's course despite obstacles. Beth Oelkers, a nursing student in Scottsdale, Arizona, has the gift, inner drive, and focus to persevere in becoming a Registered Nurse (RN) no matter what life throws at her.

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Certified Nursing Assistant

If you consider yourself to be a people person, a career as a CNA or certified nursing assistant could definitely be the right move for you. This health care career gets you up close to your patients, and your daily tasks will mostly be focused on providing hands-on care. CNA certification also serves as an excellent stepping stone for other health care-based careers in the future, giving you a way to make money while you are taking advanced classes.

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Licensed Vocational / Practical Nurse

Starting off your health care profession as a licensed practical nurse or licensed vocational nurse gives you a great way to get your feet wet without having to commit to the lengthy amount of schooling that registered nurses must complete. You have several options for how you can start your career based on the amount of time you wish to take and on your professional goals for the future.

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Registered Nurse

Registered nurses are in great demand these days as the rapidly aging U.S. population and the increase in new medical technology create a strong need for knowledgeable health care workers. All RNs must be licensed by the state in which they practice and undergo rigorous training before working with patients.

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Bachelor of Science in Nursing

If you are currently licensed as a registered nurse in your state but only have a diploma or an associate's degree, you may be interested in completing an RN to BSN program. This program will allow you to move on to more advanced work in a variety of health care areas and may also allow you to make more money than you would with your current, entry-level degree.

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Master of Science in Nursing

If you already have your BSN degree but wish to take on more advanced roles in your health care institution or wish to focus your nursing knowledge on one particular area, an MSN degree may be the way to go. A master's degree in nursing will allow you to take on more responsibilities and can even open up unique job opportunities for you in which you can provide health care more independently than ever before.

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Doctor of Nursing Practice

A doctor of nursing practice or DNP is the highest nursing-related degree that you can achieve. This is generally seen as a leadership degree that you would use to work in the upper echelons of nursing care. It also requires a huge focus on research and scholarly writing.

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Content/Stories

A Story of True Perseverance

<https://aspiringnurse.com/a-story-of-true-perseverance/>

A Story of True Perseverance

By Debby Wadsworth, Freelance Writer

Perseverance is a complex virtue. For some, it is a divinely inspired gift, while for others, it seems to be an inner strength. It feeds the tenacity and willpower that in the face of challenges. When add to knowing what you want, where you want to go, and why, you become a powerful force for maintaining one's course despite obstacles. Beth Deikers, a nursing student in Scottsdale, Arizona, has the gift, inner drive, and focus to persevere in becoming a Registered Nurse (RN) no matter what life throws at her.

She'll be an RN - despite age

Beth Deikers has been interested in helping people all her life. She talks about it with a sparkle in her eye and a smile on her face. "There were two things I always wanted to do, teaching and nursing," Deikers said. Entering college at Purdue University, she thought long and hard about her two passions. Deikers was torn between teaching and nursing. She looked to God's guidance when making her final decision, and teaching won. Deikers earned her undergraduate degree in education & special education, followed by earning a master's degree. Her teaching career was off and running.

For over ten years, Deikers genuinely enjoyed her career, teaching in Texas, Indiana, and Arizona. "I taught Kindergarten, and 4th, 5th grades and worked as a reading specialist," Deikers said. "I loved being in the classroom for many years, teaching them, seeing their light bubble turn on." Plus, she enjoyed one incredibly special year when one of her Kindergarten students was her daughter.

But into her second decade of teaching, her passion for it began to fade. Torn on what to do, she started having discussions about it with her husband. She decided to leave teaching. "I left when the paperwork got more daunting than the fun," Deikers explained. "I decided to come home to be with my kids in high school."

During the years Deikers was home, she spent a lot of time taking care of her parents. Her mother had a brain aneurysm, followed by a brain injury, and had to endure multiple surgeries. Little did she know the inner strength and faith her mother showed would become an inspiration for her in the coming years.



Beth Deikers

Original Story

A Story of True Perseverance

> She'll be an RN despite age, a tumor, & Covid-19.

By Debby Wadsworth

Everyone goes through challenges in their lives, it's a part of living.

Problems arise that are avoidable, while other are unavoidable often caused by variables we cannot control. Some issues are

harder to overcome than others, but most are not life-altering or threatening. They are simple problems we either resolve, put off, or ignore without major consequences.



But what do you do when encountering a really big challenge? How do you overcome a series of problems that are way above and beyond? Answers and inspiration can be found in the true story of Beth Oelkers, of Scottsdale, Arizona. She gives new meaning to the word 'perseverance'.

She Always Wanted to Help People

Oelkers has been interested in helping people all her life.

"There were two things I always wanted to do, teaching and nursing," Oelkers said.

Entering college at Purdue University, Oelkers was torn



between her two passions. She thought long and hard about both, looked to God for guidance, and decided to pursue teaching. Oelkers earned an undergraduate degree in education & special education, followed by a master's degree.

For over ten years, Oelkers genuinely enjoyed her career, teaching in Texas, Indiana, and Arizona. "I taught Kindergarten, 2nd, 4th, 5th grades, and worked as a reading specialist," Oelkers said. "I loved being in the classroom for many years, teaching them, seeing their light bulbs turn on." Plus, she enjoyed one incredibly special year, when one of her Kindergarten students was her daughter.

But into Oelkers second decade of teaching, her passion began to fade. "The paperwork got to be more daunting than the fun," Oelkers said. She was torn on what to do and started talking about it with her husband about possibilities. After many discussions, moments of reflection, and time pondering alternatives, Oelkers decided to leave teaching.

"I decided to come home to be with my kids in high school." During those years, Oelkers spent a lot of time taking care of her parents. Her mother had a brain aneurysm, followed by a brain injury, that required enduring multiple surgeries. As Oelkers took care of her mother, she was

amazed by her mother's inner strength and faith. Little did she know at the time, it was providing Oelkers the inspiration she would need in years to come.

Oelkers Decided Nursing was her Future

The experience with her mother's illness reignited Oelkers passion for nursing. "It made me realize I always wanted to be a nurse," Oelkers said. She volunteered to work with high school students interested in the healthcare field. Working with the students further fueled



her passion for nursing. It pushed it to the point of being even stronger than when starting college. "I remember sitting at home and talking it over with my husband," Oelkers said. "He (Oelkers husband) said, why don't you do it. You have always wanted to, now what is stopping you?"

After some contemplation, "I felt I knew what I wanted to do, pursue my passion for nursing," Oelkers said. She had essential support from her family and could finally dedicate the time. As for where she would work, Oelkers already knew the answer. It was working in hospitals. The decision let loose a flood of hope, excitement, and anticipation having found a new purpose for her life.

Oelkers began researching the educational requirements and learned despite already have a bachelor's and master's degree, more schooling was needed. She would have to complete nursing program prerequisites like a college class in Anatomy. Oelkers found and enrolled in the Edson College's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program. Through CEP Oelkers would be able to complete all required undergraduate classes and earn an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN).

Back to school at 40 something!

For Oelkers, it was time to go back to school at 40 something. "Going back to school is hard," Oelkers said. "I am used to being the teacher, not the student." She remembers thinking "Oh my goodness, what am I doing, these kids are going to be my kids' age?" said After Oelkers got the guts to walk into the first Anatomy and Physiology class her anxiety levels diminished as she met other students and started new friendships.



While working on the prerequisites, Oelkers started looking at nursing schools. She chose the Bachelor's in Nursing - Accelerated BSN Program at Arizona State University (ASU), applied and was accepted. Why ASU? Oelkers said it was because they had a great program, it was right there in the valley where she lived, and their people worked with her. Having been accepted, she was excited about being well on her way to achieving the goal of becoming a Registered Nurse (RN).

She'll be an RN: Despite a Brain Tumor

While all of this was going on, the migraine headaches Oelkers had suffered from for years became worse. They grew in intensity to the point of her enduring severe untreatable pain 24/7. She knew something wasn't right and made an appointment to see a doctor. The doctor ran all kinds of tests including an MRI. Oelkers left the appointment and waited on pins and needles for the results, hoping and praying the news would be good.



The notification that her results were in came through a brief voicemail message from her doctor. The message was only that she should schedule an appointment. It was an unsettling and brief message that gave no indicators of the results. It added to her anxiety, along with her husband saying he would accompany her to the doctor's office. "This was normally something he didn't do," according to Oelkers. However, in the end, she would be glad he did.

They went to the appointment both hoping for good news, yet very nervous from no indicator on what to expect. The doctor began by going over the results. He said the words 'brain tumor' and Oelkers heart immediately sank. The rest of their appointment became a blur for her. The doctor went over all the related details. Oelkers remembers hoping her husband was listening because her head was spinning. She had just been hit by a devastating blow, that took Oelkers a while to grasp and accept.

She went for a second opinion and her diagnosis was confirmed at Barrow's Neurological Institute. Basically, Oelkers had the best of the worst in brain tumors. The plan of care was to monitor the tumor growth, make changes in her medications and diet. Oelkers went home and had what she called a "pity party", then pulled herself together with the support of her faith, family, and friends. Oelkers also reflected on her mother's inner strength when enduring brain surgery. She too found that strength and pressed forward.

It Took Faith, Inner Strength & Tenacity

Despite the brain tumor diagnosis, Oelkers life was going great! Oelkers loved the school, her professors, advisor, and classes. She was well on her way to becoming an RN.

Everything at home was going well too.

Oelkers had a daughter in medical school and a son working at Apple. But her bubble would soon burst when the severe headaches returned. This time they were even worse than before.



Nothing the doctors could give her would deaden the pain. She was understandably upset, scared, and worried. The tumor was threatened everything including her life. She continued to rely on the support of her family and friends along with remembering her mother's inner strength. Oelkers also prayed with her pastor and clung to her faith in God. Unsure of her future, she once again scheduled an appointment with her doctor. But this time her test results were different, and the doctors said it was time to take the brain tumor out. Oelkers said she started to panic, as her world started once again spinning out of control.

The doctors described and explained three procedures and wanted her to select one. This time she could also more clearly understand what the doctors were saying having finished an anatomy class. Her daughter also was there and shared what she had learned from medical school. Together they decided to proceed with a Translabyrinthine Craniectomy.

The procedure would enter her skull behind her left ear to extract the tumor. As with any surgery, there were many risks, even more with the delicacies of brain surgery. The worst outcome would be loss of life. Others on a long list of potential complications included stroke, seizures, swelling of the brain, nerve damage, impaired mental function, facial paralysis, and infection. Plus, other potential complications from anesthesia.

Doctors were certain Oelkers would have to sacrifice the hearing in her left ear in order for the neurosurgeon to get out all of the tumor. Her mind raced as she tried to make sense of it all. What about her dream of becoming a nurse? She had to address that too in the midst of it all.

Oelkers hoped there was a way to continue her classes at ASU and Edson College. She was elated when her ASU advisor went to bat for her and successfully negotiated a continuance with her ASU coursework when she was ready. Oelkers was also able to convince Edson College to make her a special exception. Despite facing so many unknowns, Oelkers was hopeful. She put everything in God's hands and knew her family, friends, nursing school, and RN career would be there waiting for her.

The First Surgery Brought Severe Complications

She endured the first surgery and woke up with severe complications. "The first 48 hours were filled with nausea, and nothing worked to treat it," Oelkers said. "The only way I can describe it was like looking at a whiteboard that keeps spinning to the left and then right." Within a few days of her week in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), the spinning went away. But there were many other complications to overcome.



“It was beyond frustrating. Everyone was scared I had brain damage,” Oelkers said. She went home, started outpatient therapy, and drew strength from her faith, family, friends, and memory of her mother’s perseverance. “I remember watching the Today Show and thinking wow they have so many misspelled words,” Oelkers said. “Then I remembered it was me. But I am so much smarter than this. I have a master’s degree!”

She would try to have conversations, and simple words would not come. “I had to work to retrieve the words,” Oelkers explained. “I was terribly sad that I would not be returning to nursing school in January because I did not have the physical strength.”

A Second Surgery Saved Her Life

During recovery, family and friends came to help, provide support, food, and more. “Some days were terrible and others better,” Oelkers said. “None were really good.” Her daughter came to visit one day and noticed her incision was open. Not knowing for sure what she was seeing, yet knowing from medical school something was not right, she rushed her mother



to Barrow Neurological Institute. It became the worst day yet, with the diagnosis of needing another brain surgery.

Brain surgery was the one thing she never wanted to go through again. Oelkers said she sunk to her lowest point, wondering "Will this ever be over? Will I ever become a nurse?" It took a lot of prayers and support, but she pulled out of it, underwent surgery, and spent another week in the ICU. Oelkers was discharged, when home, and had to start recovery all over again.

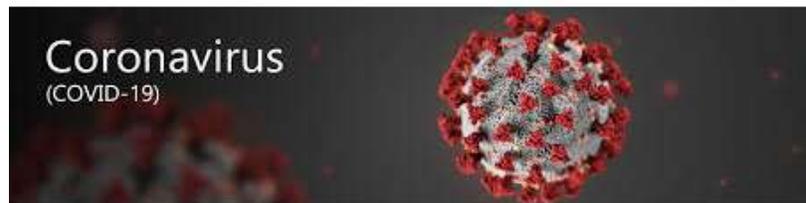
During her second recovery, additional news came from the doctor on her condition. It totally changed her feeling toward the second surgery and enduring another recovery. She learned the second surgery was actually a blessing. It had stopped the infection from setting in and saved her life. The good news and made it easier to look in the mirror and cope with her facial palsy and uncertainty if it would ever go away.

“Eating was very messy,” Oelkers said. “I could not open my jaw very wide because they fixed part of my incision with my temporalis muscle.” As she recovered, Oelkers returned to her nursing studies online a little at a time. She started spending 15 minutes each day and worked her way up to several hours of online study. When she felt ready, she resumed her in-person classes and clinical.

Ironically, her daughter, now a 4th-year medical student at University Arizona Phoenix Medical School, was doing clinical rounds at the same time Oelkers was completing hospital clinicals. “We have not run into each other yet, but it is entirely possible,” Oelkers said about her and her daughter. “We have great conversations that could clear a room.”

She’ll be an RN: Despite Covid-19

Life was back to as close to normal as possible, then Covid-19 hit, bringing yet another challenge. She finished her clinicals, went on Spring break,



not to return. Colleges transitioned all classes to online learning, and clinicals were put on hold. But Oelkers has stayed focused, continued persevering through it all as in the past.

Each time she says to herself, “I think this is going to be the hardest thing ever, and I have to remember what I have already accomplished.” The hardest part of Covid-19 for Oelkers has been understanding the public response to the pandemic. “What is most frustrating is when people think it is a hoax when doctors and nurses are working so hard to keep people alive,” Oelkers said. “If I can wear a mask to save a person’s life, I will wear a mask.”

When asked what her light bulb moments have been in her journey, Oelkers said, “How much harder it is than I ever thought it would be. I knew nurses worked hard, but I never realized how much they worked and cared.” She also expressed her admiration for nurses. “I am not a nurse yet. I will be very proud to be a nurse and have those letters,” Oelkers said.

Despite everything she has endured, Oelkers remains enthusiastic about becoming an RN and helping people. "It's a very amazing profession to be able to help people," Oelkers said. "I have always loved the nurses that helped me through my journey, and I hope to be like them."

Never be Afraid of the Scars

Oelkers created a sign to encourage herself and placed it by her front door. It says, "Never be afraid of scars." To her, it simply means that she was stronger than anything that tried to hurt her. She looks at it for strength every time she leaves her house. Oelkers continues to stay on course relying on her faith, mother's inspiration, inner strength, family, and friends. She will graduate in December of this year with her BSN and RN.

She says, "I chose to see the silver lining, the friendships I have made, and the relationships that have grown stronger because of it."



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