CommonSpirit

Sacred Stories

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Compassion Inclusion Integrity Excellence Collaboration

Sacred Stories convey ways our mission is being lived out by the gifted people in our ministry. We invite you to use these stories for inspiration, as a meeting reflection, or to encourage discussion with your team.

My Poignant Story

TEXT

"And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick." — Matthew 14:14

SACRED STORY

On my second day as activities director in our behavioral health department, I decided to visit each room. I wanted to meet all the patients and try to see through their eyes how to make their days special.

One of our patients was a man in his eighties, whom we'll call Jerry. He came to us from rehab after suffering a stroke. The rehab team had noted some aggressive behavior from Jerry. When I met him, he hadn't eaten or slept in three days. He seemed lost and disoriented.

I asked Jerry about his family: he mentioned the name Lolli, and said she had just been with him, but now he couldn't find her. I wasn't sure if Lolli was a nurse who had helped him, a pet, a friend or a family member.

The next day, Jerry still had not eaten or slept, his condition was deteriorating, and he was still looking for Lolli. I did a little research and found out his wife, "Lucy," was in the ICU at our hospital. She was in critical condition after suffering a stroke. Could she be the Lolli that Jerry was looking for? I asked the nurses if we could take him to the ICU to see his wife, who was in a coma. The nurses were willing to help reunite the couple, though they cautioned that Lucy might not even know that he was there.

I called the couple's daughter, "Kathy," to ask her permission to take Jerry to visit her mother. She was extremely grateful. She also said that she was on her way to the hospital. While I waited for Kathy to arrive, I helped Jerry and combed his hair so he would be ready to see his wife.

Continued on next page...

CommonSpirit

Sacred Stories

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Compassion Inclusion Integrity Excellence Collaboration

Continued from previous page...

My Poignant Story

SACRED STORY CONTINUED

Once we were all on the way to the ICU, Jerry smiled, and a tear rolled down his cheek. Kathy was teary-eyed and excited, too.

Lucy's ICU nurse greeted us and guided us into the room. Lucy was unresponsive as we wheeled Jerry to the side of her bed. When he saw Lucy, he immediately held her hand. "Lolli!" he said. We helped him stand up so he could lean over and give her a kiss.

Then, Lucy's eyes opened. "Jerry, is that you?" she said. Lucy started to remove her blankets and pull herself towards him. We helped Jerry sit on the hospital bed with his wife, and she hugged him. Lucy saw her daughter and smiled, gently repeating Kathy's name, over and over.

The ICU nurse was in tears, and we were literally on our knees with amazement. Lucy asked for water and ate a popsicle as if her stroke had never happened.

After this, both Jerry and Lucy improved. They eventually were discharged to live with their daughter.

God bless this ministry for allowing me to experience this poignant story. It is a reminder that God guides us through every encounter if we take the time to hear His voice when we listen to patients like Jerry, who really need to be heard. It was a beautiful reminder of our mission.

Shared from the Sacred Stories Archive

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Why is being present and listening so important in this story?

Can you think of a time when you truly listened to someone? What happened?

How much more healing could take place if we took the time to be truly present, listen and find compassionate ways to meet people's needs?