

CARING FOR THE FUTURE

Jennifer Torres attended her first college class when she was in second grade. Her babysitter was taking nursing classes, and she tagged along. It was then, at the age where she and her peers were learning how to tell time, that she fell in love with anatomy. "I understood nothing, but was amazed by everything," she recalls. It had made such a big impact on her that she told her second grade teacher about the experience the next day.

"Children are the future and someone has to take care of them," Jennifer remembers her teacher saying. This idea stuck with her, leading to her aspiration to do pediatrics.

Her love of health science carried throughout her life. In high school, Jennifer was a member of the health careers club. Her favorite television shows were *ER* and *Scrubs*. When Dr. Callie Torres was introduced on the hospital drama *Grey's Anatomy*, then high school senior Jennifer Torres' eyes lit up. "I want to be her," she thought. After all, she already had the same name. Jennifer enrolled at Gwynedd-Mercy College as a premedical student, in hopes of earning the credentials to achieve her dream.



But, as a first-year student, Jennifer's ideas on a career in medicine began to change. The main component of a doctor's job is diagnosing the patient. "I realized that I wanted to do more patient care," she says. She decided to major in nursing.

Nancy Chiarantona, Jennifer's advisor and nursing professor, agrees that her amiable personality fits well into the nursing role. "She is not afraid to be herself with her patients," Chiarantona said after observing Jennifer interact with patients during clinicals. "Not only does she deliver excellent patient care, Jennifer communicates well with her patients."

Two years into her nursing classes, Jennifer found a summer camp job through a career fair at the College. She worked as a nurse in Camp Nock-A-Mixon's infirmary for hundreds of campers ages 7-15 who board there for seven weeks. "Being at camp is a completely different experience from working in the hospitals," she says. "The kids look to nurses for comfort, attention and care in the absence of their parents." Because of the extra amount of time necessary to spend with her young patients, Jennifer learns all about their interests, like sports and school. Her role as their nurse overlaps with her role as their friend.

Jennifer creates a connection with her patients, especially with kids. It's what fuels her drive to be a helping hand when people need it most. When Jennifer is told that pediatrics can be a tough specialization, she remembers the words her second grade teacher spoke.

"I'm taking care of our future."

Jennifer's Scholarships:

Gwynedd-Mercy Grant – The Gwynedd-Mercy Grant is a partial tuition award for students with SAT scores of at least 800 and who prove financial need.

Activities Grant – The Activities Grant is available for first-time freshmen only who demonstrate leadership in school activities and/or community service. Jennifer is involved in the Student Activities Committee, the dance team and the Student Government Association.

William Randolph Hearst Scholarship – This scholarship is available for students enrolled in Gwynedd-Mercy College's Nursing program. Preference is given to persons of Hispanic/Latino heritage.

Tuition Incentive Program (TIP) – The TIP Grant is an award offered to incoming, first-time freshmen who are graduates of a Catholic high school.