

## Steve Mandieka



After graduating from high school, I asked myself what I would do to make a difference in people's lives. The answer was twofold: I would volunteer, and I would attend college. I joined the community health outreach program at a local church, and enrolled in college classes. Working in the church became tremendously gratifying because I had the chance to visit with the elderly in local nursing homes and delivered food to the needy in the community.

Attending college is the best decision that I ever made. I decided to pursue a career that would cultivate the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. What better choice than practice within the field of long-term care? I believe that nursing is an art and a science that integrates theoretical knowledge and clinical practice in the provision of compassionate, holistic and culturally competent care. Health outcomes such as disease prevention, health maintenance and health promotion are deeply interconnected in nursing practice.

I chose older adult services because I plan to focus on changing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices amongst population-at-risk groups. The outcomes that I plan to achieve include health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, education, coordination and continuity of care in the management of individuals and families in the community.

Community involvement is an integral part of my life because it enriches my nursing practice. My future practice and contributions in long-term care are prompted by the enormous challenges in the United States health care system. I plan to provide accessible and cost effective health care to the elderly and their families through media campaigns, organizing community meetings, and health fairs to identify concern and issues regarding possible health threats. As a result, locate and link population-at-risk groups with resources available in the community.

Working with the elderly has been very rewarding. It was not until the moment when a patient said to me, "I had already given up on walking again, but thanks to you now I can walk," that I realized how fortunate I was to be a registered nurse. It has been enriching and heartwarming to see patients meet their goals and return to their routine lifestyles feeling more empowered to stay healthy and maintain better quality of life.

My personal experience as a registered nurse has led me to work with the underserved population from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. I volunteer at the Kenyan Community Church, whereby I have met many uninsured underserved people that opt to disregard regular check-ups and medical treatment to wait for symptoms to resolve. Unfortunately, when symptoms do not resolve these individuals shyly seek medical advice. More often than not, a delay in seeking treatment increases the risk of severity of an illness or disease. Within this population, I provide educational seminars about the importance of regular check-ups, immunizations, hearing and vision screening, adult risk assessments and home safety screenings.

To conclude, I am a highly motivated student and love school. I have found that my passion and career dreams are deeply rooted in long term care. Many lives have touched mine. Certainly, if awarded this scholarship, your distinguished organization will be one that I will truly cherish for the rest of my life to illuminate the lives of each and every person that I come across.