



What nursing means to me...

ONE SATURDAY NIGHT, WHILE I WAS WORKING IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, Michael* was brought in by EMS. He had been struck by a car while riding his bicycle, and was in pretty bad shape. He had fractures to his face, which made it difficult to insert a tube to assist him with his breathing. After working on him for an extended period of time, we were able to stabilize him and begin the process of admitting him to the intensive care unit (ICU). A lack of beds in the ICU meant he spent several hours under my care in the emergency department (his parents by his side), until space became available later that night.

While caring for Michael, I spoke to his parents and tried to learn as much as I could about him. They told me he was a hockey fan, and was on his way home from work to watch the Maple Leafs when he had his accident. Having read research that suggests patients can still hear while they are in a coma, I decided to visit the ICU before or after each of my shifts for several months to update Michael on how the Leafs were doing. I visited his bedside to give him their latest scores, and then I'd leave.

When he was discharged several months after the accident, Michael and his family stopped by the emergency department to thank the staff. I was on duty speaking to another patient, but when I wrapped up, I said hello. Michael looked at me and said: "Those Leafs really

sucked while I was out." He then walked away. Everyone looked confused. I walked away, overwhelmed by what I had just experienced.

Michael's parents told my colleagues that their son had mentioned a man had given him updates on the Leafs, and that he looked forward to this man coming back each day. They thought he may have been hallucinating.

I haven't seen Michael since that day, but the experience has stayed with me, and has greatly shaped the way I practise.

Michael helped me remember the amazing thing about being a nurse: that I get to be genuine and act the way we were intended to act as humans towards each other on a daily basis. I get to use my nursing knowledge to help heal the body, and my human side to help address the other needs of those I am caring for. The greatest part of being a nurse is that, on any given day, we get to be health professionals, chaplains, councillors, technicians, and social workers. Most importantly, we get to be a patient's friend and advocate in their time of need.

It's an amazing feeling when someone places their trust in you when they are most vulnerable, without knowing anything about you. What other profession offers this sort of an experience? **RN**

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Tell us what nursing means to you. Email editor@RNAO.ca

Nursing Education Grants

The Nursing Education Initiative (NEI) is a program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to provide nurses (RNs and RPNs) practising in Ontario with funding for professional development.

Visit your professional association's website today for more details on:

- The program
- Who is eligible
- The selection criteria
- How and when to apply
- Upcoming changes for 2013

As of August 1, 2013, **RNs must complete their applications online.** See <http://www.RNAO.ca/NEI> for details.

À compter du 1er Août 2013, **les IA compléter le formulaire en ligne.** Consulter le <http://www.RNAO.ca/NEI> pour de plus amples renseignements.

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- Le programme
- Qui est admissible
- Les critères de sélection
- Le processus de demande
- Les modifications au programme pour 2013



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