

## MaryEllen Plummer

It was my last week of clinical in my first semester of the nursing program at Lansing Community College. Our instructor gave us all our patient assignments. Before I went to introduce myself to my patient with the recently broken hip, my instructor pulled me aside and said “MaryEllen, I’ve seen you have a calming demeanor with your patients before and your patient really needs that from you right now.”

As I entered the patient’s room I could tell that she was in extreme distress. She was lying on her side while the nurse aide washed her back. Her teeth were chattering, her whole body was shaking and she had tears in her eyes. I immediately went to her bedside and knelt down so we could be face to face. I introduced myself and asked her if she was cold because she was shaking so terribly. She replied with a weak and mumbled “No, it just hurts so bad, and I still haven’t finished the grandkid’s Christmas shopping.” I took the woman’s hand and embraced it within my own and in my calmest voice asked her to tell me about her grandchildren. Within seconds of having a hand to hold and something to take her mind off the pain her teeth stopped chattering, and her body stopped convulsing.

When the aide was finished I began my assessment, but I continued to converse with her about our families to keep her from thinking of the pain. Her spouse was with her for the majority of the stay and at first glance I could tell he was dealing with as much frustration as she was pain. He was somewhat cross to me at first, which I understood. But he and I found a common ground and I know that by helping him relax, it aided in her comfort. I had this patient for two days and whenever I asked her what her pain level was on a scale of zero to ten her response was never below a nine. I knew I couldn’t take her pain away but I could do everything in my power ease her mind, emotions and spirit.

As a nurse I look forward to caring for people as a whole and seeing them for who they are, instead of a bed number or ailment. It was a very rewarding end to a very rewarding semester. I know I

made an impact on her and her spouse during a very difficult time, and I know this is only the beginning of the differences I will continue to make.