

Nurse Excellence

RN Ashley R. James

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Meet Ashley.

Can you tell us three fast facts about yourself?

I am 26 years old and a nurse. For the most of my life I lived in Florida, then moved to New York eight months ago when I got married.

What brought you to nursing and how did you find the road to becoming one?

My younger sister and I have been dreaming about being in the medical field since we were young. My aunt whom we greatly admired is a nurse, and she encouraged us to become nurses too. She explained that nursing is the ideal steppingstone for a medical career, where we can always branch out to a specific specialty or further it in whichever direction your heart pulls. Though my parents are not nurses, they

were definitely the ones who have given me the tools to push for the goals I want without fraying away from aiming higher. My dad is a man who took the initiative to do his own thing, starting his construction business from the ground up until it reached success. They are everything I want to embody.

In January of 2019, my mind was made up towards nursing and I enrolled in an accelerated nursing program at Kyser University in Florida. The program did not pause for summer, spring, or winter break, making it a very long year. Studies that other's would have covered in months were jammed into several weeks. It was pressuring, considering that the knowledge will potentially need to be applied. It was not enough to memorize, but I had to be confident that I really know it. School was conveniently located right around the corner from home, which meant no morning rush. But that lasted only for the first semester. Once COVID hit, all classes were held on Zoom.

How did you find the virtual classes?

On the one hand, it gave me the lea of keeping a lazy morning. Yet it is difficult to keep motivation propelling me, with the bed at my right and snacks calling my name from the kitchen. There were no peers to be met either. During times of testing, I would literally lock my room and hang a sign out to my family "do not be too loud." Even so it was hard to concentrate while my family was spending time together. At a certain point I was aching to go back to routine.

If you can give one piece of advice to patients, what would it be?

Saying thank you makes a great difference. My first job was working at a COVID - 19 testing site, administering vaccines, and handing out tests. One morning, an older lady came in to take the vaccine, but I advised her to first take the test. She took the COVID test and turned completely blue when the results were positive. She suffered a severe anxiety attack, being afraid she will die. I helped her calm down, guiding her with some advice how to make it through. Two weeks thereafter she came back to test negative and then gave me an effusive thank you. It made me feel so fulfilled, giving me strength to go on.

Can you share something interesting about your current assignment?

Melissa Mapes RN, the assigned clinical case manager for my patient, has been working 1;1 with my patient prior to assuming her role as a CCM. She knows the patient's care inside out and it is amazing how she is always there for me to answer any questions, eager to advise me. When I was invited to the office to be presented with my Certificate of Excellence, I was delighted to meet Melissa in person! She is just great!

Do you find yourself convincing others to nursing?

All the time! Though I do feel it is a profession you need the drive for, and you definitely need the right stomach for it. Sometimes you see things that make you feel so queasy, and you need to know you can handle it. Even for me, I don't think I'll ever be able to do wound care. When I see a patient with a wound, although I know the patient is in pain, it is hard to overcome the nausea I feel. On the other hand, I would love to become a Labor & Delivery Nurse someday. When people hear it, they are like, "Ashley, wound care - not; labor & delivery - yes?" finding it very comical. But that is just the way I feel.

You mentioned to move to New York, how did you find adjustment in general and which differences can you identify in the nursing market?

I do have a lot of family in New York, so the place did not feel foreign. Also, I am the kind of person who

loves traveling and exploring new things. Since I came here, I spend plenty of my spare time to go sight-seeing with my husband. We love visiting parks and going for walks all around NYC. In terms of nursing, the market here is a lot more competitive and it is more difficult to find a job. I felt lucky when my current position is a tremendous improvement from my previous one. My job here with White Glove gives me a lot more flexibility, where I can still live my life and feel fulfilled as a nurse both at once. Still, it was hard to say goodbye to my parents and family who were blue to learn that I am leaving them behind. We are a very close-knit family, enjoying dinners together and spending much time as a family. They are coming for a visit to New York in just a few weeks and I am seriously looking forward!

Any message you would like to impart to Nurses all over?

Never be afraid to ask questions and no question is too small to be asked. Being a person who loves to work independently, it was a hard adjustment for me to ask questions at every step in the way. Yet the longer I am a nurse, the more I see the importance to utilize the resources we have.



RN Ashley R. James and Melissa Mapes, the assigned Clinical Case Manager

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