

Who I am? Caring is as Caring Does... a community nurse story

Now, just 38 years young as a community nurse I have come to realise what it means to be, well ...*a community nurse. Personal and professional values unchanged; role fulfilment realised!*

This may seem at odds with my general frustration of trying to deliver health care in an environment of decreasing funding and greater institutional expectations. So why am I fulfilled?

Simply, I am privileged to practice community nursing in the area I live.

It is my community; a driving force to deliver the best care I possibly can. I am rewarded by sharing my skill and knowledge to the people whom I am around 24 hours of the day; not just exclusive to the hours of 9 to 5 in a *somewhere office* on a general working day.

Around Christmas a year or two back, a fellow swimmer was diagnosed with inoperable cancer. I did not know this fellow personally. He was told that I was a community nurse by another swimmer who had himself been a recipient of my nursing care.

The referral from a former client is it self very rewarding but a much greater reward was to come. Over the next little while and sometime before I became professionally involved, I was able to help guide this fellow and his family through the trials and tribulations as his illness progressed.

We developed a trusting relationship which benefited both the client/family and myself. My realisation - it is a privilege to be able to care for someone in a professional sense but a

much greater honour to care for a friend. My community are my friends and caring for them is a great honour.

Perhaps, this in a sense, is the true spirit of a *district nurse*. Someone who is part of the community.