

# Pressure Marks on Face Are True Imprints Fighting COVID-19

**By Yang Chia-Chia, RN, Ward 11B, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital**

When 2003 SARS broke out; I was in my senior year at nursing school. I vaguely remembered that many nursing students were recalled back to school. The news reported that Ho-Ping Hospital had been locked down, and medical personnel fell ill one after another and some even died. We all felt our health were threatened, and never thought we would confront a pandemic outbreak. Then at the end of February this year, the nurse head of the unit informed everyone through LINE app that the hospital would set up a special nursing unit for COVID-19 patients, an isolation ward 12B, and inquired if we had the desire to support this unit.

When I heard the news, I immediately pondered, “Should I go? Will it be too dangerous?” or “Should I pretend that there is no such thing?” I struggled internally. After I calmed down and thought if no one was willing to go because of fear, those patients would be helpless. When I thought of this, my innate nursing instinct surfaced. Contributing my energy to help patients has always been my goal. I do have the ability to take care of them just like those firefighters, knowing the danger to put out fires but to save lives. I wanted to seize the opportunity to help those patients. Thus, I registered with the nursing head to



support 12B ward. To ease family worries, I went home and discussed with my parents about my beliefs and emphasized that the hospital would provide the necessary equipment to protect us. I would also take care of myself well. I hope my parents would ease their concerns and worries, so I could devote myself entirely to take care of the patients.

### **Inspired and Energized**

In mid-March 2020, led by Nurse Head Ya-Fung Wu, we used the precision method and tools to build an isolation ward. On the next day, we were joined by two lovely nurses Chien-Yu, Wen-Ron. We examined almost everything, from medical equipment, consumable supplies, stationary, frame, even water buckets and trash cans. We wanted to make it more convenient for all medical staff. We wrapped all our medical equipment, TV remote controls, monitors, and all switches with clear plastic as protection. We also tested all our medical equipment, UD car control system, telephones, intercoms, tablets, and cell phones to make sure all were working fine. Also, we brainstormed situations



**Picture: Nurses took care of the COVID-19 patients with caring and consolation to ease patient's anxiety.**



**Dalin Tzu Chi hospital's nurses who care for the COVID-19 patients are loving and courageous.**

that we might encounter during this pandemic. For example, we customized patients' packages of daily living necessities according to their age and gender.

For me, I learned how the ward was built from scratch. Learning from an experienced supervisor in setting up a ward is a rare experience. Using the 5S techniques in nursing, for example, entering a "1" or "2" on medical equipment seems trivial, but it greatly enhances and simplifies some tasks.

With constant discussions, researches and experiments, we had a clear picture of how the isolation ward should look like. The feeling of being recognized was so great. When the hospital's head came to tour our facility and gave us some positive feedback, we felt all the hard work was worthwhile. I think God must know that we were ready.

When the ward opened on March 30, the night shift received a first confirmed COVID-19 patient. I was on duty the next morning and a bit nervous. My continuous training helped me stay calm. I wore personal protective equipment, told myself to stay calm, and followed a doctor into the ward. Other than doing my routine, I also used professional judgement to care for patients both physically and mentally. When I took off my personal protective equipment, my clothes and hair were soaked. Luckily, there was a shower room provided by the hospital for personal hygiene. We could change to clean work clothes. This was a real special experience.

In order to reduce infection, we tried to tend patients within the same area. But then we also considered patients would be alone in isolation. Therefore, we also use cell phones and application software to communicate with patients, to show we care. Although we couldn't see patients in person, but from their feedback we knew they felt at ease with our care.

### Love and Caring Strengthen the Confidence



With the conditions of patients going up and down, I was nervous in between disappointment and hope. When the test came back positive, I could feel the patient's despair. Thus, we started to come up with ideas to bring hope to the patients. We came up with well wishes cards. A really big message card filled with encouraging words and warm wishes. We also utilized the window inside to post messages to cheer the patients. All these were new experiments to me. We were serious to cheer up patients and make them more comfortable. Like our colleague Yi-Jen, while delivering the meals, she felt the food was only lukewarm, so she warmed it up with microwave oven prior to delivery; patients were extremely happy and touched. This is one incident of patients' centered care.



**To care for patients in isolation, nurses hand-made cards with caring and loving messages.**

Some patients felt our loving caring and many expressed their gratitude with messages written on the windows.

During this period, Dr. Chu Yi-Chun often shared with us the development of the epidemic and related treatments as well as related research papers about COVID-19. Also, colleague Chang Yu-Feng accompanied us side-by-side in every aspect like an elder sister. Infection control nurse Ya-Lan provided answers to all our concerns and questions regarding caring and protection. We really appreciate our good partners from the emergency room, including the managers and doctors working together with us. Ward 12B from the beginning is an accomplishment. We could see everyone's face and hand filled with marks and scars. With this precious experience, we look forward to taking care of patients with diligence, keep ourselves safe and continue the missions of our hospital.