

A Male Nurse with Social Worker Background

By: Chi Lee-Mei, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Nursing, Tzu Chi University of Science and Technology



Chiu Chien-Yuan is a fourth-year student of the second graduating class in the Nursing Department of Tzu Chi University of Science and Technology, nicknamed “Crocodile”; the reason for this name is because his family is engaged in the breeding industry in Madou District, Tainan City. He already had a degree in social work from Hsuan Chuang University. After working for 12 years at the Taipei Shepherd Social Welfare Foundation, he wanted to have his dream come true - nursing. Thus, he resigned, changed his career path, and came to the Tzu Chi family through a series of tests and examinations. He came far from Tainan to study at our school, located in Hualien, eastern Taiwan; he is economically independent, relying



on his savings and working as a social worker on a part-time basis. Due to the need to work rotations, he did not choose accommodation on campus. Chiu rented near Tzu Chi University and used a bicycle to commute. It was energy consuming to ride to school on a daily basis as the school is located on a hill. However, Chiu didn't think it was difficult; he considered it an exercise. Sometimes due to the work schedule as a social worker, the accompanying of young people to other counties or cities for medical treatment or working the night shift, he missed classes.

Starting school at age 36, living off campus and independently, Chiu initially worried that he would not fit in or that he would be considered as "an elderly." Even though he was shy and sometimes cheerful, his presence was found in basketball, volleyball, baseball and track competitions on campus, leading his classmates, men or women, indulging to the fullest. He was filled with vitality and physique, assimilating into all classroom activities. During a community health care assessment exercise, his group chose to collect information in JingPu tribe, a remote beach community. Everyone took their scooters together and completed it in one day. When asked why they chose such a far community instead of a nearby community,

Chiu responded, “We considered it a mini getaway to connect ourselves. It was good.” He was able to think differently and seek new knowledge. For the curriculum of Human Development class, students must take turns “caring” for infant dolls on a 24-hour basis. It was necessary to carry it at all times, and to breastfeed in the middle of the night. The responses from students were very tiresome! As for Chiu, he was riding a bicycle halfway with his baby on his back. When it cried, Chiu immediately stopped and changed the diaper on the roadside. He made the learning adventures fun in light of this trying experience.

Before the internship, students must complete professional prerequisites: such as basic nursing, medical and surgical nursing, obstetric nursing, pediatric nursing, psychiatric nursing, and community health nursing. The class work would get heavier and harder. There are written tests, technical tests, group discussions, group reports, etc. Theories, technologies, methodologies, and applications must be overcome one by one and the pressure is heavy. It was not easy for Jianyuan, an older student and working part-time. However, Chiu prioritized his studying time and took advantage of the little time to prepare his homework. During weekends, he would also gather his classmates to study in the library together, discuss each other’s homework, and improve each other’s learning abilities. His academic performance was excellent, and his grade point average was among the top five. However, the internship was another challenge. Even though he was already studious, striving upward, in reality he had had to struggle with many changes and be on his toes at all times. Meanwhile, at the request of his teachers, Chiu had to assist other students who were trailing behind in their studies, which added burden to his stress. Fortunately, the internship instructors provided timely advice and counselling. Chiu was able to accept with their guidance with humility, discuss with the teacher, and make timely revisions. He also helped his classmates and was repeatedly praised by the teachers. He was awarded the second place for internship performance award as well as an award for speakership at the graduation ceremony.

From being a social worker to becoming a nurse, it was a divergence of career for Chiu Chien-Yuan. However, if the two professions can be merged to provide succinct care to patients, provide services to the disadvantaged and help overcome difficulties, it will be beneficial to service the nursing units, patients, and family members. It is hoped that Jianyuan will step out of the school boundary to become a professional, and develop his talents for the future.