

2010 WC Rotary College Scholarship  
Essay from winning student – Anmol Khuruna

A faint, rapid beeping sound rose quickly to a deafening alarm. A scratchy voice read out the dispatch at the station. A blur of lights later, and my partner and I stood in an apartment elevator. Pungent odors of moldy carpet caused our eyes to water in the dingy hallway. The discord of blaring communication radios and hysterical yelling threw me off balance as I stepped through the splintered doorway.

Nothing seemed wrong at first glance, but then I looked down. An eighty-year old man lay face down, unconscious. There was no time to lose. My partner and I worked together to stabilize our new patient. The man groaned and came to, easing our nerves a little. We checked his vital signs, and his blood sugar was far out of the normal range. Even in the chaotic world of emergency medicine, those numbers didn't bode well. We quickly loaded him onto the stretcher, and whisked him away towards the hospital. Only a *single* dose of glucose was enough to revive him completely. The change in his temperament was truly startling. I later learned he had been lying on the floor for two days without access to food or water. On that call, I learned that I actually *could* make a difference and help a patient's condition improve. While flipping through an emergency medicine textbook later that night, I could not help smiling at the old fellow's renewed vivacity.

I never will forget the dizzying flashing lights, wailing sirens, and my patient's soft gratitude as I wheeled his stretcher into the Chester County ER. My EMT experiences and afterthoughts of discussions with patients have helped me realize how truly grateful I am to have my family, education and opportunities, while other patients have helped me recognize and accept the things I don't have. My goal is to maximize comfort for them, both physically and emotionally. I have to admit, I have used my contagious smile in combination with my interminable cheer to comfort them; hoping to make a difference. The connections with my patients are anonymous and momentary, but memorable.

Initial expectations that interactions with patients would remain in a healthcare setting exploded several months after beginning as an EMT. Amidst a book and bake sale to fundraise donations for Community Volunteers in Medicine, a local volunteer health clinic, I observed an old man slowly amble across our driveway. Leaning heavily on his cane and through distinct audible wheezes, he asked if there were any interesting adventure novels. Immediately, I began to sift through the ocean of literature, poking into corners to find a decent read. Meanwhile, I explained the purpose of the fundraiser and advertised the magnanimous hearts of those who worked at the clinic. A queer expression of recognition formed on his face, and he proudly informed me that the clinic had treated him numerous times! Soon the two of us struck up a lively conversation. Forty minutes later, I helped carry a heavy load of boxes to the minibus he called home. Interacting with a patient in a real-life setting shattered the wall between my preconceived healthcare environment and reserved life. Inspiration surged through my chest as I listened to anecdotes the clinic's numerous benefits and support to the uninsured and underprivileged. Raising awareness and collecting funds and supplies for the clinic have become ways to tackle issues inherent in the local community, such as lack of health insurance.

Whether whisking someone to the hospital in a rocky ambulance or amiably chatting with a patient from a clinic I actively support, experiences with patients occur pleasingly often. Interacting with the people who benefit from my actions motivates me to strive farther. The wide variety of people with whom I interact expands my horizons of the universe. Knowing that what I do can directly impact people is fulfilling. Patient interactions develop and evolve differently, but all have a similar goal: trust and treatment. I relish the opportunity to guide ordinary people through the transition back to the connected world in which we reside. As I progress through life, I will expand my horizons even further to connect to and guide as many people as possible.