

MULTIPLE CAREER PATHS THROUGH NURSING

Keita-Alix Harris

NGĀTI KAHU

I'm a registered nurse at Palmerston North Hospital and I studied a Bachelor of Nursing at Massey University. I wasn't one of those students whose grades came easily but Massey was very supportive, my whanau helped enormously and a lot of determination on my part saw me pass.

I grew up in Levin, which is in the Horowhenua midway between Wellington and Palmerston North. You could say that health is a family business. My older sister is a doctor at Palmerston North Hospital and I've got a couple of aunts and uncles who are nurses. It's very cool that I get to talk to my sister and family about health and work.

Kia Ora Hauora

If you want to study health the Kia Ora Hauora website is a big help. It had the information and access to the scholarship I needed and highlights health events that were helpful. In my second year at University I was involved with the Kia Ora Hauora Health

Roadshow and Open Days for Māori students studying health. It was a cool way to share what I'd learnt and it cemented the fact that I love health and teaching people.

Student nursing

I'd say that at high school study at least one or two sciences like physics, chemistry or biology. It makes it easier once you're at University. First year studies are pretty much about human development and basic pathophysiology and then you do a couple of weeks in different rest homes. In the second year you move into the hospitals, start following a nurse and caring for patients. In the third year you learn about mental health and general medicine.

On the job

I work in the Cardiology Department at Palmerston North Hospital; it's a very intense sort of adrenalin place. There

are so many different types of diseases and complications that affect the heart. Every day, my job is different and I get to meet so many different people. Some as patients and others are whānau visiting their loved ones.

When I deal with Māori whānau I understand where they're coming from - being a Māori myself. A hospital isn't the most comfortable and inviting place for people so it's important to support them and create an environment where they feel valued. That's one of the perks of the job.

Aspirations

Health as a career can take you anywhere. There are hospitals around the country and all over the world, so travel is always an option. I have an ambition to one day be a flight nurse. For the moment, I've started postgraduate studies in nursing science and working towards my Masters. It can open up doors into nursing specialties such as diabetes, stroke, cardiac, respiratory, theatre and wounds.

To be a nurse or work in health at all I believe you've got to have an element of compassion and empathy for people. If you do and you want to make a difference then I recommend health as a career. You won't regret it, I know I haven't.



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