

nursing career

INSPIRED BY KORO

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NGĀI TAHU | TE ATI AWA

School

When my sister and I turned nine and ten we moved to Christchurch. My parents thought there'd be more options study wise and sent me to Lincoln High School and St Margaret's College.

From Year 9 to 13 I focused more on my sports rather than academics and this let me down when it came to university studies. I should have paid more attention in school.

Kia Ora Hauora

At high school I didn't know what I wanted to do. We were encouraged to go to the Careers Expo in Christchurch and I only went because it was a free day off school and they had free goodies. I ended up at the Kia Ora Hauora stall where they were offering free pens.

Vicki Ratana the Kia Ora Hauora Co-ordinator for Te Waipounamu was there and I just loved hearing her talk. She was so passionate about young Māori getting jobs in the health pathway in the future. Vicki said there'd always be a need for health workers and I would never be out of a job plus the pay was pretty good, so I grabbed my free pen and signed up straight away.

“ I always put my hand up to look after Māori. ”

Family motivation

Towards the end of high school my koro ended up in hospital. We went into hospital and I had no idea what the doctors and nurses were saying. I could see my koro struggling and I wanted to help him understand what was going on. He wasn't one to ask for help, pain relief or more care.

I thought if a nurse like me was in there who took more time and care to understand him, they'd be able to get him pathways into better health care. That's when I decided to be a nurse and enrol at CPIT - now known as Ara.



Knuckling down with studies

My first year at CPIT was a big shock. Nothing prepared me for university. You have to be accountable for your own learning. My toughest time was when I had a knee injury in my first week of nursing and couldn't play sports.

I felt depressed, failed my science paper and was held back six months. But my friends and family and the guys at Kia Ora Hauora supported me. I never thought I'd get through those three and a half years but I did.

On the job

Today I work at Christchurch Hospital on a general medical ward which specialises in respiratory conditions. We've got a lot of Māori in our ward both young and older. I always put my hand up to look after Māori.

It's easy to make such a good relationship with them because they're in a foreign environment and it's sometimes scary. Lots of people don't have good memories about hospitals. I always think about when my koro was in hospital and feel I'm making a difference.