

The tale of the sale

By LeAnn Thieman, LPN

AS NURSES, WE DON'T STOP caring for people at the end of our shift. We minister to others in our everyday lives too. We can't help it. The same qualities that call us to be compassionate nurses at the bedside are the same qualities that call us to help people in our homes, communities, and even yard sales! This nurse's story illustrates how an informal but astute nursing assessment can change someone's life.

Nurses are trained to assess not only each patient's condition, but also his circumstances so we can implement nursing interventions with great outcomes. I put that training to good use in my own backyard.

It all started when I promised my family I'd have another yard sale so we could trade our trash for cash. During the heat of the sale, I heard a woman exclaim to her husband, "Oh, what lovely draperies!" I immediately was drawn to her.

"We're missionaries just back from Thailand," she told me. "We don't have any drapes on our windows. These lined drapes would really keep out the cold." Charmed by her sweet spirit, I told her she could have them for half price. She gathered them up with a lovely smile of gratitude and left with her husband.

The next day, as I was putting left-over items into boxes to donate, I saw the woman's husband coming up the driveway with a handsome teenage boy. He greeted me with a smile and warm hello, revealing a cleft palate.

The older man explained that he'd seen a golf bag here the day before that he thought Rosen, his adopted son from Bulgaria, would love. The young man said he worked as a caddy at a local golf course. His eyes lit up as he examined the bag. "How much is it?" he asked.

"It's three dollars, Rosen," his dad answered as he read the sticker. The



youngster started to hand me the three dollars. I clasped his hand. "Just keep it."

As he started down the driveway with the bag, he was almost dancing with joy. "Thank you lady, thank you so much!"

That night as I lay in bed, I recalled how grateful Rosen had been. I drifted to sleep thinking about how great it would be if Rosen's cleft palate could be repaired.

A short time later, I visited my dentist for a checkup. I told him the yard sale story and asked him if he'd ever partnered in helping out people with limited resources. He paused for just a moment, then said with a smile, "If you can find him, I'll treat him."

I contacted the caddy master at the golf course and asked about Rosen. The man was very protective at first, but when I explained my reason for calling,

he shared that Rosen had received a "Caddy of the Year" award for going the extra mile in service to others.

When I called Rosen's home, his mother answered. I told her I was the "yard sale drape lady," and explained our plan to help repair Rosen's cleft palate. Tearfully, she said the timing was perfect. Two days earlier, Rosen had had an unpleasant experience with a dentist. He was so upset that he'd decided to trust God, not dentists, with his mouth! As we talked, I learned that Rosen had been orphaned as a child and ostracized because of his facial deformity.

It took a little encouragement, but Rosen agreed to see my dentist, who not only examined, cleaned, and X-rayed his teeth, but also enlisted the help of an oral surgeon. Before Christmas, Rosen had his cleft palate repaired by an experienced surgical team who donated all their time and expenses. Rosen also received a full set of braces, along with ongoing care from true professionals.

Today, Rosen works with Youth with a Mission, a ministry to help street children. With the help of others, my initial nursing assessment resulted in a great outcome!

—Kathy Brown, RN, CSP ♦

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