



Nurse Excellence Lorna Gordon, RN

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Meet Lorna.

Can you tell us about yourself?

My family is originally from St. Vincent, a beautiful island in the Caribbeans. I remember when my teacher asked the question “*what do you want to be when you grow up?*” one of my friends said a fireman, the other a policeman. I said I want to be a nurse. It has been what I dreamed about ever since. I love to help other people. In the Caribbean there were no long-term care facilities or homecare nursing. When someone was sick or got older the family would take care. One of my neighbors had a parent who was paralyzed, giving me the first glimpse into the life of those who are bedbound. They worked hard to keep the respect and care for their parent, yet it was hard when the family carried the full burden. I remember myself at a pretty young age offering to help with shifts or take out the patient.

My father was a successful fisherman, floating several boats on the fish rich sea to support us. My mother was a hardworking woman who suffered from kidney failure. She would wake up every day at 7am to go to the hospital to get her insulin which is how it would be done in the Caribbean. Then she would go and work at her own store as a vendor selling products. My mother would always encourage us as girls that when we grow up, we should do the same,

making our own money productively and being independent. When I got married, I was challenged as my husband would only hear of me being a homemaker. I was sitting home, first having one baby then another. Though I was a proud mom of two, I was not fulfilled. There was nothing I wanted more than nursing, but he would not agree that I go after a career.

How did you end up becoming a nurse?

In 1989, I finally came to America with my daughters with a goal to go after the things that truly matter. At first, I picked up a job as a nanny to initially support my family, while working out the logistic documents to become a medical assistant at a doctor's office. At the practice, one of the patients I was working with told me that I work so well, and she sees no reason why I am not becoming a nurse technician. At that time, it was pretty stressful with young kids in the home, and I could not think of going to classes. My patient would not leave me alone even after hearing my explanation. She said she knows the director of a particular program and she followed through to get me in there! I did well on the first exam and by 1999 I was a nurse technician working on the floor; something I did for more than fourteen years. While working at the facility, I started working directly towards my RN. That was a challenging time! There was a 2-year span where I literally lived off no more than 4 hours of sleep every night.

Did you start out with Homecare immediately after you got your degree?

At first, I was a bedside nurse in Methodist before moving onto the ER at Bellevue, a job I do not miss for a day! You could witness in a day what others do not see in a lifetime. I remember a man being rushed in with a heart attack the day after thanksgiving. Just earlier that day his wife drove out to Pennsylvania leaving a healthy man behind. A neighbor saw him shoveling the snow, falling once, getting back up and falling again. Dead. You cannot imagine the pain of a young woman who did not dream she will get a call that her healthy husband is no longer alive. Another time, A woman came in complaining of a very strong headache. While she was waiting for a doctor to see her, I felt she was truly in distress. It was weird. When I stood next to her, I could literally feel her throbbing pain. I approached the doctors and pleaded to them that someone come take a look at this lady *now*. Something was clearly not okay. She was taken for a CT scan and suddenly I saw like a thousand doctors rushing to her room. She had a leak in her brain and that caused the pressure blurring up! Those stories would not happen once in a while. It was daily occurrences that was taking a toll on me.

Do you have any goals you still want to develop in nursing?

I can say I truly love doing what I am doing and the only place I would go after White Glove is retirement. Working with White Glove Homecare is an all-encompassing job. I work here for more than six years and was always matched to the nicest patients I truly care for and we formed a special bond. The health insurance is great, and you are paid on the dot on time. And truthfully, it is more a family than just an agency! Melissa, Gittel, and Lori are friends to me. More than once in the past I was offered to be promoted to the role of Clinical Case Manager, but I would not leave homecare bedside nursing. It is where my heart is.

Any message you would want to impart to more nurses?

Nursing is the most rewarding and fulfilling job where we are always making a true difference! While we are doing the day-to-day tasks it is good to remember that fostering a good relationship with our patients helps us deliver the best care on the physical level too.

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