

Persephanie Carmichael

Twin Rivers Student 2014-15



To: Carmen Jackson and Twin Rivers Health Sciences

In August 2015, I moved in and started college at Indiana State University. The first year quickly flew by as I was busy working and attending to my pre-requisites for the nursing program. Normally, a pre-nursing student would attend Indiana State University for 3 semesters before applying to the nursing program in order to have the time to complete the necessary pre-requisite classes. I had the opportunity to apply early to the program because I had started college with almost a whole year's worth of credits, some of which happened to be a few of the required pre-requisites for the program. So right before my second semester of college came to a close, I put my application in to the nursing program praying to be accepted and start my journey into my nursing career. A month later, I was being notified that I had indeed been accepted and would start in fall of 2016. I was ecstatic and terrified at the same time. I had no idea what to expect from nursing school and was overwhelmed at the idea of starting so quickly.

To my surprise, as I made it through my first week in nursing school, I realized it wasn't going to be as hard as I thought it would be. And now, after successfully completing my first semester and starting my second semester in the program, I realize that I have Twin Rivers Health

Careers to thank for that. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Twin Rivers in high school, but I don't think I quite fully understood just how vital and helpful the education I received there would be. The first area that I noticed my Twin Rivers experience assisting me was with medical terminology. At Indiana State University Nursing, taking a class on medical terminology is not required. You actually get a medical terminology book in the first semester of nursing school, one that is different and not as in depth as the one used in Twin Rivers, and each class that you take for the duration of the program is only responsible for teaching 1 to 4 chapters. This method makes it really drawn out and if I didn't already have experience and memorization in medical terminology, I feel that this Indiana State University method would be ineffective in truly learning, memorizing and retaining the information. I feel that it is essential and vital to know medical terminology prior to starting the nursing program and gaining clinical experience. Since Carmen Jackson did such a fantastic job teaching us medical terminology, I have not had to study for it once. The information I was presented in Twin Rivers has stuck with me and I truly do know the material. Not only did Carmen Jackson make sure her students knew and memorized the medical terminology that was going to be covered on a given test, but she also was effective in showing us just how much of a priority it needs to be. She effectively taught us the material in a way that made us *retain* it. She did this by ensuring the student's made vocabulary flash cards, giving pop quizzes, making review games and providing us with comprehensive tests.

Another aspect in which Twin Rivers, and specifically Carmen Jackson, has facilitated me in nursing was supplying me with the knowledge of proper vital signs norms and techniques. Mrs. Jackson's favorite saying was always, "To know what is abnormal, you have to know what's normal". I have lived by this moto while in nursing school. To my surprise, my clinical

instructors did not do a great job of teaching vital sign norms. They do teach us how to take vitals, but I honestly do not remember a time when we were given information or instruction on what is and isn't normal. So when my first clinical rotation came around, which was at a nursing home, it amazed me how many students walked into the clinical setting taking vitals while not having any idea of what they should be. My jaw hit the floor when I was discussing a patient's vital signs with a fellow classmate and she informed me that she had just taken the patient's blood pressure and calmly told me it was 210/140. She had no idea that a blood pressure that high was even a bad thing, she was just writing down what she got. If it had not been for my training with vital signs at Twin Rivers, I feel that I could not have been fully competent in the clinical setting with my Indiana State University education.

Like my vital signs experience, my experience in the lab component in Twin Rivers has been invaluable to me. The fundamentals class that I took last semester was set up very similar to Twin Rivers. We had lecture time, to read the material and learn about the skill or skills we would be checking off on that week. Then, we would go down to lab and view a demonstration of the skill. Finally, we would practice it and then check off on it. As the first official "check off" approached, the entire class's anxiety and nerves were through the roof. Everyone was stressing out and practicing 500 times. Some of the students had never even made a bed before, let alone knew what a "mitered corner" was. But me? I was stress free and looking forward to the check off. Why? Because Twin Rivers prepared me for that too. I do have to admit, I was slightly nervous when I realized that we wouldn't be checking off on 1 to 2 skills in a lab time like I did in Twin Rivers, but instead was going to be checking off on 5-7 at a time. But once I reminded myself that I already knew how to do most of these skills and have actually already done a check off on them before, my nervousness went away and I was able to help my other classmates

prepare for their check offs. I am also extremely thankful for the thoroughness and attention taken at Twin Rivers in aspects to our skill check offs and competencies. Mrs. Jackson took the time to ensure each student really did know the skill being executed. Nursing school skills were presented at such a faster pace compared to Twin Rivers and if I had not had that previous experience, especially in a skill like taking a blood pressure, I would have had to work extremely hard to be skilled in time.

Lastly, I am thankful for the clinical experience gained while in Twin Rivers. I got to pursue so many different avenues and facilities that I had a nice, well-rounded clinical experience. Carmen Jackson did a fantastic job preparing me for that clinical experience and patient interaction. The practice I received during Twin Rivers check offs prepared me for when I did my Twin Rivers clinical rotations. With every skill check off, we had to introduce ourselves, identify and verify the patient, wash our hands and provide patient privacy. During that fundamentals class, that was honestly one of the most missed aspects during a check off. But for me? I could do that in my sleep. I also gained invaluable nurse-patient communication and introductory skills. It was really comforting going into my first nursing school clinical already having that patient experience. Some of my classmates had never had any patient interactions before and really struggled with the simple task of introducing themselves and explaining what they were going to be doing. At Indiana State University, each student must go through a clinical evaluation after completing every rotation. When I received my first one, I got commended on my ease and comfort with patient interaction. My clinical instructor then told me she assumed that I worked as a CNA, but I was able to proudly tell her that I didn't work as a CNA, but rather, that I got my experience from the Twin Rivers Health Careers program. It was such an

asset to have that clinical experience gained at Twin Rivers under my belt before attending college and I don't think I would have done nearly as well as I did if I had not had that experience.

Twin Rivers is something that I am so incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in and complete. It shaped my career choice, sharpened my health career's skills, and ultimately changed my life. Carmen Jackson is such a special instructor. She has the skill, drive and passion that every teacher or instructor should strive to have. I believe she truly cares for each and every one of her students, and that meant the world to me when I was one of them.

Twin Rivers Health Careers, thank you again for all that you have done for me and thank for all that you will do for the future health care workers that this program gets a chance to mold. As a second semester nursing student, I am now spending time in the hospital clinical setting and also am going to get the awesome experience of going on a LifeLine run, shadowing at IU Trauma, and starting to do more advanced procedures such as catheters, IV's and wound care. We are now expected to start thinking about what kind of specialty nurse we want to be and what we ultimately want to do with the rest of our nursing careers. Honestly, I have no idea what I want to do right now. But am I scared? Not at all, because I know that with a Twin Rivers education as my foundation, I can accomplish anything that I set my mind to in health care.

Sincerely,

Persephanie Carmichael

Twin Rivers Health Careers Graduate 2015