

UC San Diego

Summer 2024 - UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing: Forging a Path in Nursing

Title

UC San Diego Bound, RN Dreams Found

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/31b2h5z4>

Journal

UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing, 17(1)

Author

Londerholm, Megan, MSN, RN, PHN

Publication Date

2024-04-01

Peer reviewed

UC San Diego Bound, RN Dreams Found

Author: Megan Londerholm (Yap), MSN, RN, PHN

My journey at UC San Diego Health (UCSDH) began with wide eyes and a heart full of ambition, and it still hasn't stopped since!

As a nursing student, I walked through the halls of Hillcrest (HC), wearing a baby blue uniform and white leather shoes, stepping into the world of healthcare for the first time. The sights, sounds, and smells were overwhelming as a symphony of beeps, gurgles, and conversations played in the backdrop. Yet, amidst the initial chaos, a sense of purpose bloomed within me. UCSDH was the place where I knew I belonged and wanted to start and end my career as a Registered Nurse.

Those early clinicals years were a whirlwind of information and practical lessons on HC's 8th floor. I learned to take vitals with trembling hands, administer medications with thought and care, and navigate EPIC charts that documented each patient's story. The experiences I had on this floor will always remain the foundation of my journey.

Graduation marked a bittersweet transition. I was now a fledgling nurse eager to get hired at UCSDH! Shortly after graduation, I interviewed with JMC 4FGH Surgical Oncology, managed by Laura Vento, and it felt like home. I was the first newly licensed registered nurse (NLRN) that JMC 4FGH hired and was guided by a kind, bubbly, and resourceful nurse, Megan Bandfield. She taught me the unspoken language of nursing, the subtle cues that revealed a patient's and

family's needs beyond the words they spoke. I remember one of my first shifts working with her; we had a family who had just made the difficult decision to transition their loved one to comfort care. During 12-hour shifts, nurses establish meaningful connections with patients and their families, allowing them to learn about their values, cultures, and beliefs. After learning how much the patient loved ice cream, Megan organized a special ice cream party for the family to honor their loved one. Megan was not only a wonderful and color-coordinating scrubs preceptor (so we could be twins aka Megs x2) but exemplified the immense value and impact of establishing meaningful connections with her patients, patient's families, coworkers, and other healthcare professionals. I learned a valuable trait from Megan on that day, and I've carried it with me throughout my nursing journey.

After my first year as an NLRN, I joined my unit-based practice council (UBPC) and jumped into leadership positions. Having served as the co-chair of my unit's UBPC for two years, I discovered my passion for precepting and subsequently became the chair of the hospital-wide Preceptor Development + Support Council (PD+SC). For three years, I oversaw all



Megan Londerholm is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and moved to Orange County, California, with her family. She has a Master's of Nursing from the University of San Diego and a BS in Nutrition Sciences from California Polytechnic State University: San Luis Obispo. When she is not at work, you can find her running with her golden retriever, Birdie, or traveling with her husband, Kevin. Megan loves being a UC San Diego Health RN.


RN preceptors within the system, spearheaded communication efforts, organized educational events, and facilitated biannual recognition with a wonderful team of bedside nurses, nurse educators, and nurse managers.

I started to reflect on my own career aspirations during this time as well. I was precepting others to do what they set out to do and realized that I wanted to be the kind of nurse who thrives in fast-paced and adrenaline-pumping


situations, handling the controlled chaos with a calm and collected demeanor... an ICU nurse. I applied to 3GH ICU, a floor below, managed by Chris Clapp and Heidi Burnell, and took the opportunity I've always wanted. Throughout my time in 3GH ICU, I was lucky to be given opportunities to have many different nursing roles: charge nurse, resource, preceptor to all types of new hires, lead unit orientation days, ECMO specialist, and trained to take care of the sickest patients within San Diego County. Being an ICU nurse was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life! And the support system at 3GH was simply amazing. The camaraderie and teamwork among the staff made the environment truly special. Again, like 4FGH, I felt like I was part of a family, all working together towards a common goal - providing the best possible care to our patients. It was truly an incredible experience!

But have you ever felt like you're going around in circles, only to end up exactly where you started? Well, that's exactly what happened to me! I landed my dream role within the UCSDH Education, Development, and Research Department (EDR) as a Nursing Professional Development Specialist, onboarding student nurses and new-hire RNs within our organization. And the cherry on top? The position was previously held by Kathy Swasey, a former NLRN who worked her way up also to become a Nurse Educator and recently retired in June 2023! I can't wait to continue her amazing work and help shape the future of nursing education at UCSDH!

My journey through the UCSD healthcare system has been one of constant evolution, a tapestry woven with the threads of clinical practice, mentorship, and education. From the nervous student to the seasoned ICU nurse and finally to the passionate new educator, each step has shaped me, deepened my understanding of the human experience, and strengthened my commitment to this noble profession. As I stand before nursing students and new nurse hires in my new role, I see not just blank slates but the potential for heroes, healers, and nurses who will write their own chapters at UCSDH.



*As you move through your life
You come across your purpose
And really try to focus
And put the vision into the hands of faith
You finally get there but do you succeed or do you fail
And if you fail do you continue to follow the trail
When do you think you'll get to the end
So many questions and thoughts ruminating
All that negativity is the enemy to your immunity
Trying not to blow all that snot out in open space
Infecting others with your germs
Touching your face
You finally begin to improve
But then you hear a cough and run past others and you ask
Should I be wearing a mask
Trying not to breathe all those microbes
Am I really going to be that germaphobe
So you shield yourself and isolate
All alone with those toxic thoughts
No breakaway and don't be that person
Looking for an epiphany
You were once a shiny penny
Now eroded
Acknowledged and duly noted
Flip that mindset
Be yourself, with every life there's a purpose
When the wave crashes against the cliff
Disperse the soul tossing, turning, and flip
Dive into that ocean take a deep breath and continue
Stop all those inner feelings of hate
Remind yourself you are doing great
Even when others don't recognize it
You know deep down you're doing your best
Forgive yourself and give it a rest
Continue to follow your trail
Without a struggle you will not avail*



**Poem by Janessa Esteban,
MSN-Ed., RN**

