



**Hsiu-Wen Yu,**

Home-care Nurse of  
Community Health Center,  
Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital

**Ms.**

Written by Wen-Yu Wang

**Cheerleader**

Home-care nurse Hsiu-Wen Yu usually keeps her cell phone on around-the-clock so she can readily address medical emergency issues from patients and their families. Always brimming with a smile on her face, Hsiu-Wen never shows a trace of tiredness after a long day of home care visits and then returning to the hospital for unfinished tasks. Among her colleagues in the community health center, Hsiu-Wen is nicknamed “Ms. Cheerleader” because of her aerobic dance in a performance during the opening of the Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital.

### **An Energetic Granddaughter**

“Follow me, move your arms - one, two, three, and four...”

Hsiu-Wen set the tone with at the start of the healthcare seminar in front of a group of elderly. People followed by flexing their rigid joints, leaving their maladies and fatigue behind. Ever since the hospital opened three years ago with two continuing weeks of inaugural free

Ms. Hsiu-Wen Yu is petite but full of energy and is a true cheerleader.





Home-care nurse, Hsiu-Wen Yu provides support and care instructions to a discharged patient and his family.



clinics, Hsiu-Wen has been leading the aerobic warm-ups at the hospital lobby. Despite her petite figure, Hsiu-Wen's resounding energy seemed infectious and the crowd responded wholeheartedly.

She carries the same vigor when she visits her patients at home. When she arrives at the patient home, Hsiu-Wen always cheerfully calls out, "Grandma, I am here!" To the at-home patients, it is comforting to have a "Granddaughter" to visit.

### **Nursing from a Personal Perspective**

Hsiu-Wen's unwavering enthusiasm during her 12 years of service is guided by her previous experience as a patient. She has experienced suffering and knows how best to deal with the pain.

While attending nursing school, Hsiu-Wen was involved in a serious motorcycle accident. While traveling on a motorcycle with a classmate, they collided with a pedestrian. Trying to avoid the pedestrian, Hsiu-Wen was thrown off her vehicle incurring major head injuries. She was in coma for many days in the hospital with life sustaining tubes all over her body. Half of her face was paralyzed as a result of damages to the nerves. Her mother was tearful during her ordeal and Hsiu-Wen was worried. For over eight months, she commuted to Pindong by bike

everyday after school for physical rehabilitation. She lost hearing in her right ear. Having been through a near-death experience and again another auto accident that fractured her right clavicle, Hsiu-Wen learned to treasure every moment of life. Because of these painful experiences, Hsiu-Wen learned to nurture and comfort those in pain and cherish each encounter with patients and their families.

Soon after her recovery, Hsiu-Wen's uncle suffered a life-threatening illness which caused her to respect the nursing profession. Hsiu-Wen's family was turned upside down by her uncle's illness and major medical decisions were dependent upon Hsiu-Wen due to her nursing background. Honored to care for her uncle and relieve him from pain, Hsiu-Wen dedicated herself to the nursing profession so she can continue treating every patient as if they were her own family member.

### **The Road to Long Term Care**

From the Emergency Room to Intensive Care Unit to Regular Wards, helping patients to recover brought Hsiu-Wen a sense of accomplishment. Sometimes she questioned why patients repeatedly return to the hospital. "Was it because they were not getting the proper care after discharge?" She soon grew interested in long-term care, an area of specialty that focuses on the continuity of care after hospital discharge, patients' preparedness and post-hospital home care.

For ten years, Hsiu-Wen worked part-time to put herself through college, which helped shape her independent and assiduous character. She joined the Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital when it opened in January of 2007. With her expertise and a good heart to helping others, she began working as a home-care nurse at the Community Health Center, a path to advance her career in a different field of nursing. As a home-care specialist, Hsiu-Wen's job is to help patients transition from the hospital to a home-care environment. She has done exactly that. Her notebook, filled to the brim with detailed writing about patients' treatments and special needs, speaks volume about her devotion and due diligence.

Furthermore, once a patient is identified for long-term care, she directly contacts long-term care organizations to arrange care plans so that family members can be relieved from their daily care responsibilities.



In the three years since transitioning from a hospital staff nurse to a home-care nurse, Hsiu-Wen has worked hard to learn various skills across different nursing categories. She obtained extensive experiences from all of her cases and the patients' families. These valuable lessons could not have been obtained from the textbooks. As she stated, "Life has been enriched by them." She continues to stand by her decision to become part of the long-term care team.

### **A Source of Strength**

In addition, feedback from patients and their families always lifts her spirit. One of her most memorable cases was an elderly lady who suffered a stroke and was bedridden for a year. At the beginning, the paralyzed mother was speech-impaired and responsive only to pain and required around-the-clock care. Luckily, she had a son who patiently cared for her by her side. One day, Hsiu-Wen received an unexpected call from him, excitedly telling her that his mother could speak his name again. Taken by such a surprise, he could think of no other person but Hsiu-Wen to share the news with.

Upon hearing the news, Hsiu-Wen joyfully said to him, "your mom's recovery is attributed to your love and unflagging efforts." She advised him to schedule a follow-up appointment with the doctor for his mother.

From her experience over the years, Hsiu-Wen learned how critical post-hospital care is for the patients. When hospitalized, patients are in the care of a complete medical team, and family members have little to worry about. However, once discharged, patients and their family members are usually ill-prepared to handle the care at home, especially for those who require assisted or special care.

In addition to the demand of constant traveling as a home-care specialist, Hsiu-Wen often has to face the harsh reality of patients' deteriorating quality of life due to the fatigue of their care givers. Despite feeling helpless at times, Hsiu-Wen is always encouraged when she sees families who are resilient and resourceful in getting the help they need for the patients. The most rewarding part as a home-care nurse is that she has built such strong relationship with patients' families that they regard her as a part of their family, not just a nurse.

## **Tenderness, Attentiveness, and Continuous Loving Care**

Under the unruffled façade of a nurse, Hsiu-Wen has a tender and delicate heart. While visiting a 22-year-old girl with Muscular Dystrophy (MD) in Miaoli with the TIMA (Tzu Chi Interanational Medical Association) memebers, Hsiu-Wen surprised the girl with a box of chocolate after learning that she loved chocolate. Hsiu-Wen not only deeply cares about her patients but also loves animals. In fact, after work, she is surrounded by rabbits, fishes, dogs, and other pets at home. When she is not taking care of patients, she is taking care of her family of animals!

She deeply believes that passion is required to do a good job and provide the best comprehensive care. To fulfill her goal, she never stops enhancing her professional knowledge and skills. Whenever possible, she pursues opportunities in professional development to continue her education in long-term care.

“Grasp every moment in life, just do it.” These empowering words have helped her continue to advance her profession. In addition, the Community Health Center offers a family-like environment that supports her nursing career and further enriches her life.

