

My name is Cora Salmonsens. I am a licensed massage therapist, mature mother of three adult children and nursing student at Mira Costa Community College, enrolled in the 2-year ADN program, and currently actively engaged in my 1st year, second semester nursing studies as part of the 2024 cohort. Prior to being accepted into the ADN program I have enjoyed careers as a florist and wedding coordinator in my early 20's to mid 30's, then started to take an interest in overall wellness, which inspired my journey to become a licensed massage therapist. In the year 2004, shortly before my third child, my son Max, was born, I graduated from West Valley College massage therapy program in the San Jose Bay Area, CA, and after taking my 3 months maternity leave went into practice. I enjoyed my over 17 years of work as a LMT, and recently over the last few years started looking to expand my knowledge base and understanding of the human body and it's complex inner dynamics. My current educational aspiration to become a practicing RN is deeply influenced by several profound events in my personal life, which occurred in late 2018. Both my father and my sister died within two months of each other in the late fall of that year, each after having battled a long term illness which slowly progressed and ultimately lead to their demise. Without going into too much detail, my father died from complications associated with dementia, and my sister succumbed to osteosarcoma after a long two year battle with the disease. Part of my grieving process has been to celebrate the gift and joy of life by gaining scientific insight in, and understanding of, the detailed processes stabilizing the human body; becoming familiar with the complex, interconnected systems human beings are composed of. I know that both of my family members received the best of medical and nursing care as they endured the difficult challenge of dealing with arising disease states within their bodies, and now want to do nothing more urgently than be that nurse that can provide this same

level of care for an equally affected patient when the need arises. I am also aware that, to have had a mature, engaged and knowledgeable bedside nurse, has made all the difference for my father and sister especially in their final days, but also along the way. My goal is to become a nurse of this caliber; to provide compassionate, quality nursing care to a patient in need. In the interest of community service in a healthcare environment, I most recently have volunteered at Scripps Encinitas and Scripps La Jolla hospitals, primarily on the med-Surg floor and Labor and delivery unit. It is this involvement in healthcare, that has given me confirmation that I am on the right path in my ongoing career development, as I feel myself continuously deeper drawn into this line of work. I currently work part-time, ten to fifteen hours a week, with my primary life goal and focus being on my nursing studies. Unfortunately, my husband has been unemployed for several months, which has been a financial strain and hardship. Qualifying for this scholarship award could provide much-needed resources, which would allow me to continue to focus on my studies and not have to compromise my academic progress by taking on additional work hours at this time. In reading about Tina I have realized that the spirit in which she lived her life deeply resonates with me, as in losing both my father and sister within just months of each other I became at that time innately, deeply aware of the precious and delicate nature of life, and specifically the human expression of health in all its complexity. It came to mind that, for me personally, nothing at this stage of my life would be more important than to live in service of improving health outcomes and reduce suffering for patients in need of care. In reading about Tina's life journey it became apparent that she deeply felt the connection we all share in living the human experience, and that living a life of compassion, kindness and selfless service is a human life well lived.