

# Bucking the stereotype

## Male nurses used to be a rarity but are gaining more acceptance

Mike Milord, Surgical Unit  
Hotel Dieu-Grace Hospital

When Mike Milord attended nursing classes at St. Clair College, he was definitely in the minority.

“There were maybe three or four guys in the class. Nursing is so much more acceptable now as a career option for men” he says.

A nurse for almost two decades, Milord says that the health environment and public acceptance of male nurses has changed since his early days in the profession.

“I’ve had patients respond to me positively because I’m a male – especially the ladies – but there’s been both positive and negative.”

A knack for health care and the right personality convinced Milord that he was a right fit for the job.

“I guess I was always interested in doing something in the medical field. I tried nursing and excelled.”

And even though there were those who couldn’t understand that choice, “I was okay with it –it was something I wanted to do and set my mind to it.”

Today Milord is a Registered Practical Nurse working in the Surgical Unit of Hotel Dieu-Grace Hospital. He also worked in neurosurgery for 16 years.

His choice of career has presented its share of challenges – keeping current with best practice is a major part of the job. “You’re always taking extra

courses, especially with expanding roles of nurses today – you’re always in school or conferences always upgrading your education.”

While the volume of work increased for a period of years, the Ontario government’s commitment to hiring 8,000 more full-time nurses has meant an easing of that burden for Milord. “It was pretty difficult for a while there, but with increasing staff, it’s gotten easier. It used to be pretty heavy.”

Milord’s day typically involves being assigned the care of three to five surgical patients. He is responsible for such things as delivering medications, monitoring IVs, dressings and IV pumps, executing physicians’ orders, transcribing orders and getting patients off to tests.

“I’m also responsible for getting



Michael Milford, RPN (registered practical nurse) uses a blood pressure machine on a patient at Hotel Dieu.

Ed Goodfellow - Special to The Star

them ready to go to surgery if they come in ahead of time, and getting them back from surgery afterwards.

“A lot come in from intensive care and I may be assigned to them depending on how complex the cases are.”

For Milord, the most rewarding aspect of nursing is the satisfaction he gets from helping patients. “I enjoy seeing smiles on

their faces and the success stories when you’ve been with them since the beginning and then discharging them when they’re better.”

Milord believes laughter can be the best medicine – applied in the proper dose – but always maintains his professionalism.

“A nurse’s attitude is a big part of how successful they will be with a patient – you have to be

able to assess your patient’s personality and determine your approach with them. What works with some might not work with others. You learn over time.”

What advice would he give to a man considering a career in nursing today?

“If you want to be a hands-on person who can really make a difference, then this is the job for you!”

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*I’ve seen HIV and common colds.*

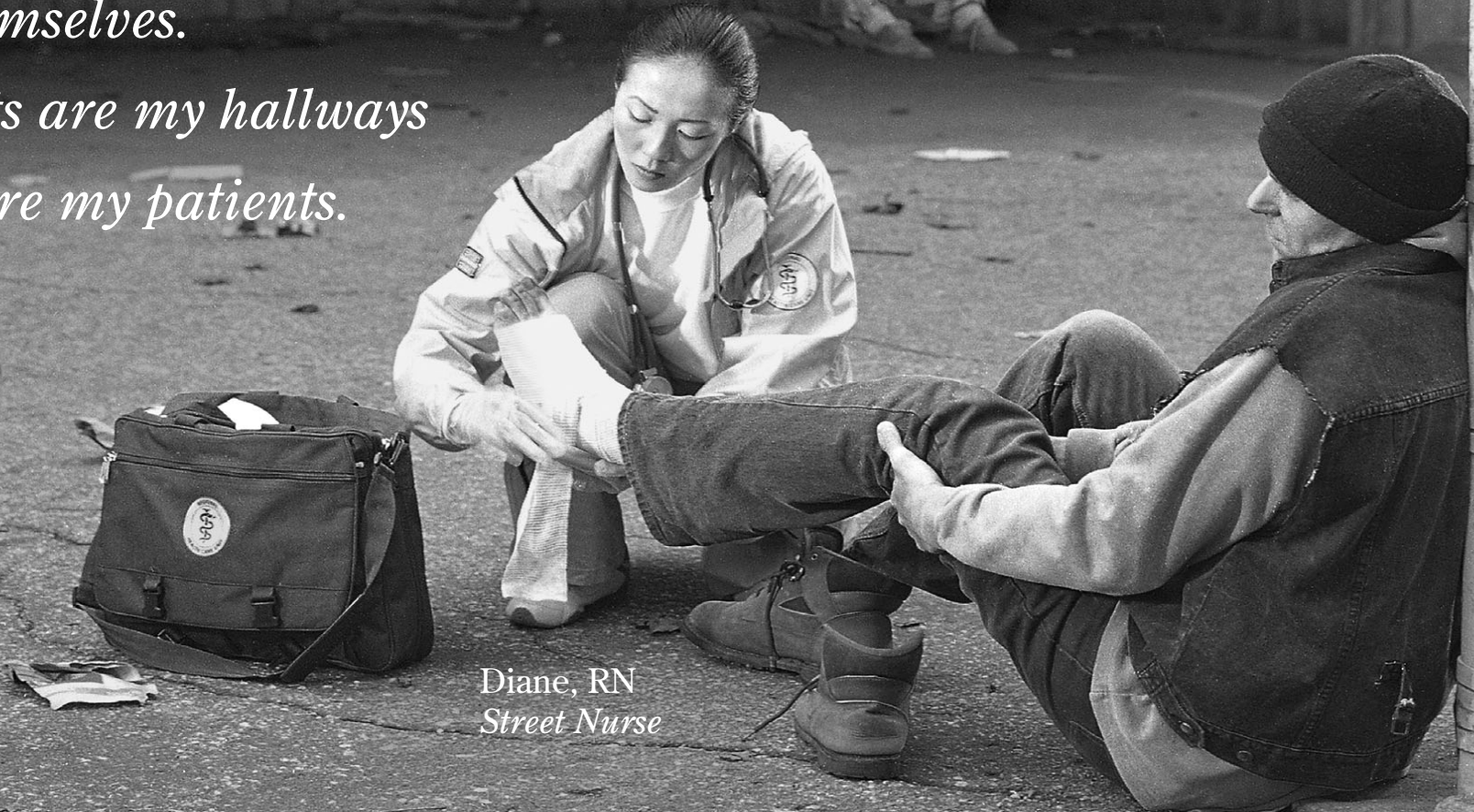
*I’ve immunized, counselled*

*and cared for those who can’t*

*care for themselves.*

*These streets are my hallways*

*and these are my patients.*



Diane, RN  
Street Nurse

Street nurse Diane, RN, is but one example of the varied and vital roles that nurses are playing in Ontario’s health care system. Through years of education and experience, nurses are specializing in everything from oncology, cardiovascular care and neuroscience to research, rehabilitation and critical care.

Today’s nurses are highly qualified, doing far more than you might think. Nurses – a key part of the team strengthening health care in Ontario.

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