

March 16th, 2009 Yuka Saito

**TF CNS scholarship Program
Speech for the reception**

It's really more honor than I deserve to be accepted as scholar of CNS program. I am very appreciative for this wonderful reception and sparing your time.

My name is Yuka Saito and I attend Tokyo Metropolitan University, 2nd year of Graduate School of Human Health Science, Department of Nurse Science, majoring in "child rearing" nursing.

I graduated from the Department of Nursing of Tokyo Municipal University of Health Science, which is now called the Metropolitan University of Tokyo. Then I worked as a pediatric nurse for 5 years in Tokyo Medical and Dental University Hospital, faculty of Medicine.

The other scholar, Yokoi-kun, was my university mate for 4 years, and also Dr. Mitsuiki, who worked at NCCHD supported by the Tyler Foundation was my colleague for 3 years in the hospital. I feel it is a curious coincidence.

I thought over what I should talk about in this speech, and decided I would like to talk about my humble history with pediatric cancer and foresight for future.

I decided to be a nurse through my own personal experience of hospitalization. I first interacted with a pediatric cancer patient during job training in my 4th year of university.

He was a 5 year-old boy, and he had younger brother, so his mother could not come every day to hospital and his time with her was limited.

I remember clearly that I wanted to use my time for those children when the boy cried "I need my mom!" to me, as I tried to do something to make him feel better.

As graduate student, I work on "changes in parents based on the nursing approach during the terminal phase" and I've become interested in pediatric cancer, especially nursing in the terminal period.

"Even if the disease is not cured, I'd like to do nursing for parents and children to be healed, and feel happiness." It was my aim at first when I entered the ward.

But the reality was more than I expected.

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Over half of the children had blood diseases and there were many who were diagnosed with infant leukemia and had bone marrow transplants like Tyler. It was not small number of children who passed away after treatment.

I saw off many children who passed away in Intensive Care Unit, who said thank you at the end even though they were still small, who said " I don't want to die" when they passed away, or who passed away when I thought they were still okay.

I cannot forget M-chan who passed away when she was a kindergartener. I met her when I was in my 2nd year as a nurse.

Her leukemia had relapsed and she had Osseous metastasis, so the situation could suddenly change anytime.

Her entire body was in pain, she was writhing on the bed crying...and all I could do was hold her tight with her mother.

My mind went blank when her mother said "She already did her best. Please remove everything... the monitor and IV."

I felt powerless, and I am ashamed to say it took me one year to get back on my feet after that. I could not forget the mother after her daughter passed away holding her saying "There is no more pain. Let's go home together and eat a meal at home."

I fully realized how tragic it is to lose a child.

Considering this, I felt parents of Tyler have very strong and wonderful heart.

I spent 5 years working as a nurse, wondering and worrying what the best care was for children.

And I could also see it was not only me who was worrying and wondering about it.

How can we create a support system for parents to stay happy during their limited time with their child?

How can we create a place where the medical staff's heart is healed...and talk about a better place for children to come.

These things became my main motivation to study further in graduate school.

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I also struggle with the dilemma that even though I have knowledge from research and books regarding terminal care for children and their families, I have not been able to practice this on the ward. So I would like to figure out how to bring to life the quality which links research and practice.

Now it has been 1 year since I started Graduate school, but gradually I can find the clues to those challenges.

For example, by analyzing the rights and ethics issues surrounding children, I could see the roots of the problem and look for how to do the very best for kids.

Also, I've learned nursing theory and models and my ability in assessment has increased. I understand that we can also support children and families through people who live (in the community. KS added)

In addition to that, through the cooperation of people in various fields, we can realize total care for children who have diseases and their families in the community.

Now I will start to practice what I've learned through on the job training.

I am so nervous, but I think I can absorb what I could not see when I was working as nurse and think about it.

I feel very strong and thankful for the support from Tyler Foundation at this time.

I feel the Tyler Foundation's Shine On! House and Shine On! Sitting are an important system for children who need to be hospitalized for a long time because of pediatric cancer treatment.

In the future, I would like to support all the children in a terminal phase, including pediatric cancer patients, and help these children to spend quality time with their family.

In the current medical system, if we are hospitalized, the hospital is the only place to go and families are separated.

But the Shine On! House which is near hospital, can make it possible for the families and children to spend time together as family. In the future, doctors and nurses can visit so children can spend time in more secure environment.

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It would be great to provide this environment when children feel that they want to go home, so that they can spend more time with their families outside the hospital.

Lastly, I will not forget the weight of my gratitude to the Tyler Foundation.

There are many parents who can not stand the sadness of losing a child, but you have risen up for people who have problems... and these wonderful and dramatic activities were created since there is a strong eternal bond between Tyler and his family.

I will do my best not to forget what Tyler and the other children I sent off were trying to tell me.

Thank you very much.