

MARY SHALVEY, RN

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NYC Health + Hospitals | North Central Bronx Hospital



An observer might say Mary Shalvey has public service in her blood: after all, her grandfather was a captain in the New York Fire Department, and her father was a lieutenant in the New York Police Department. "I feel it is an honor to be able to follow in their footsteps and provide nursing care for the people of our great city," she shares. "Since I was a little girl, I have always loved helping others and dreamed of becoming a registered nurse; I truly consider becoming a nurse fulfilling my calling. I find it extremely rewarding knowing I can take care of patients when they need it most."

Shalvey takes pride in being a public health nurse. "Working as a nurse in the City health care system is unlike anything else. It is a system where you come across many different people from many different

walks of life. No matter your sex, religion, race, or insurance or ability to pay, the City will always take care of every single patient. Seeing the great need that is in the communities we serve motivates me - these patients not only depend on us for care, but they also depend on us to educate and empower them regarding their health. The patients are so grateful and appreciative of the care they receive, which is something I saw less frequently in a private hospital."

One particular example stands out in her mind. "While I was working in the Emergency Department, a blind elderly male patient mistakenly was dropped off at our hospital rather than the one close by," she recalls. "I overheard people giving him directions to the other hospital; there was no way I could let this man walk there alone. He was alone, in an unfamiliar neighborhood." Since her shift was over, Shalvey escorted the man to his destination. "During our walk, he shared his life story with me, and I was in awe at how this man had overcome many trials and tribulations during his life while maintaining a positive and optimistic outlook. When we arrived, he grabbed my hand and said, 'God bless you, Mary. You have shown more kindness to me in the last 15 minutes than I can remember. You are in the right field; your patients are lucky to have you. I will never forget you; you are an angel.'

"It has been almost four years since that day, and I have never forgotten him either," she continued. "This experience was what nursing is all about: the moments where you do something so small for someone else and make such a big difference."

Shalvey is passionate about nursing and constantly endeavors to improve. "As nurses, it is engrained in us that we should always strive to do better and to bring about

improvement so we can have the best possible outcomes for our patients," she explains. "Being a nurse does not end when you punch out at the end of the day. It is not just a job you do; it is a lifestyle. I will never stop learning so I can continue to improve the lives of those around me. Nurse-driven interventions bring about many changes in the medical field to improve patient outcomes. Modern medical and technological advances allow for better care for our patients, and there is always room to improve the care we deliver.

"I am fortunate to be able to say that I wholeheartedly love my profession," she adds. "Nurses can have a positive impact on patient's lives; nurses have a responsibility to their patients and often serve as their advocate when the patients are unable to advocate for themselves. I am motivated by the satisfaction I feel knowing I made a difference in my patients' lives. To know that I helped lessen my patients' pain and provided them competent compassionate care means that I have done my job to the best of my ability.

"Nursing is the most trusted profession," Shalvey points out. "We form strong rapport with our patients in a short amount of time. We need to be compassionate because our patients are sick and at their lowest points. We need to be kind and listen. We need to hold their hands and ease their fears. Nurses are healers, and compassion aids the healing process. As Maya Angelou stated, 'People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'"