



Providing care for patients at UCLA and for those in need in Kenya

Manyore, recipient of UCLA Health System's Community/World Service Award, immigrated to the United States 12 years ago, became a nurse and last year began Medical Missions Kenya to help underserved communities in her homeland.

What do you do at UCLA?

I work as a float nurse, filling in for nurses when they need coverage at UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica and Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

What attracted you to the nursing profession?

I came to the United States from Kenya in 1999 and applied for a job as a salesgirl at Blockbuster Video. I was getting a routine pre-employment health exam when I found out I had hypertension. I was really surprised and frustrated because no one had ever checked my blood pressure before in Kenya despite multiple encounters with doctors.

What do you like about working as a nurse at UCLA?

I love working at UCLA. I believe the essence of nursing is caring. As nurses, we are in a unique position to take care of patients and their families and to advocate for them during their healing or dying process. I meet so many interesting people and I learn so much from my patients. They inspire me every day. I don't think there's a better calling.

Why did you start Medical Missions Kenya?

I launched Medical Missions Kenya, a nonprofit organization, with a group of volunteer doctors and nurses who organize medical missions to underserved communities in Kenya where healthcare services are inadequate or non-existent. We provide free health screenings, diagnose and treat chronic conditions and

provide health education in areas that are largely ignored by the Kenyan government, such as the nomadic Maasai communities in the north. During our first two-week mission in December, 2011, we screened more than 2,000 people. We are trying to organize a second mission for October of this year.

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What was UCLA's role in the mission?

UCLA was very supportive of our efforts. Allison Diamant, M.D., a UCLA internist and an amazing woman who loves to volunteer, was one of the doctors who helped lead the mission. Three of the 12 nurses who joined the mission came from UCLA. The UCLA Medical Alumni Association and the UCLA Global Health staff were instrumental in getting this organization off the ground. UCLA donated medical supplies like pulse oximeters, glucometers and blood pressure monitors.

What kind of patients does the organization serve?

We serve the under-privileged communities in remote areas of Kenya. We screened everyone we saw for chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and HIV, and then tried to connect patients with local healthcare providers for follow-up care. The typical patient in Kenya doesn't see a doctor on a regular basis, so when they come in, they have multiple needs. There are barriers that prevent these communities from accessing healthcare including cultural beliefs, a lack of money, fear and an inability to get to distant hospitals. That is why so many people still die from easily treatable diseases like malaria, typhoid, pneumonia, dysentery and measles. When word got out that we were giving free health screenings and medications, people walked for miles to see us. Every morning we had long lines of patients and we stayed until we saw every last one, even if it meant working with flashlights.

What is the Community/World Service Award?

I received the Community/World Service Award during Nurse Appreciation Week. The Community/World Service Award is a UCLA award given to employees who are recognized by their peers for their volunteer work. I'm very humbled and was honored to receive an award, but I don't think I deserve the award for doing something I love and enjoy and am passionate about. I am uncomfortable being the center of attention, but am truly grateful to UCLA and my work colleagues for the support they have given me as a nurse and as a volunteer.