

BY LEE LEWIS-HUSK

The Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses Gives Scholarship to Lane County Nurse



The transport of American troops during WWI in French boxcars may not have much in common with contemporary nursing, but the two intersect in Lane County through Tamara Stambaugh.

A student working toward becoming a family nurse practitioner, Stambaugh caught the eye of the Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses (La Societe Des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux). An explanation may help.

The “Forty & Eight,” as the group is popularly known, was founded in 1920 as an independent honor society of the American Legion. The group took its name from the practice of transporting American troops in French boxcars, each stenciled with its capacity: either 40 men or eight horses. The story goes that if you could laugh after a train ride to the battlefield in a crowded boxcar recently vacated

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by horses, you could surely adapt to the changes in life upon returning home.

Although the group's primary purpose is to have fun and offer support to veterans and their families, its local chapters have numerous philanthropic programs, including a scholarship program for nursing students. Established in 1955, the program was designed to meet the nation's "ever-increasing need for trained nurses." Since then, the society has helped nearly 30,000 nurses with more than \$26 million in scholarships.

This year, the Lane County voiture (local chapter) selected Stambaugh, a single mother of two, to receive its first scholarship. "Our voiture has money bequeathed by a member for the explicit use in nurses training," says Cabot Clark, a semi-retired pharmacist and the "chef du gare" (chief of the station) and head of the nurses training scholarship committee. He says that Stambaugh's need as well as her nursing background impressed the committee.

Stambaugh, 36, who is in the second year of a three-year program, said that she'd been balancing the benefits of pursuing a higher degree against the burden of student loan debt. Concerned about repaying loans and supporting her two children when she finished school, Stambaugh said that she had teetered on the edge of quitting the master's program. "I wasn't as worried about making it academically," says the former high school valedictorian and honors student from Linfield Good Samaritan School of Nursing. "The letter offering the scholarship totally tipped the scales for me," says Stambaugh. Due to the demands of school and parenting, Stambaugh is able to work only part time for a Eugene pediatrician. "Getting the scholarship took a load off my mind."

Stambaugh's motivation for becoming a nurse stemmed from an international exchange program to Costa Rica while she was a student at Linfield. "My host mother was elderly. She had a weeping wound on her calf.

I'll never forget my frustrating inability to cure her," says Stambaugh. When she returned to the U.S. a year later, Stambaugh knew she wanted to be a nurse. She gave up an athletic scholarship as a runner to transfer to Linfield's nursing program in Portland.

For several years after earning a bachelor's degree, she worked as a nurse in large metropolitan hospitals, schools, urgent care triage, nursing homes and, most recently, pediatrics. While married to a man in the military, she even taught at a Japanese nursing school, translating Japanese medical terminology into English.

A native of Wenatchee, Washington, her family eventually returned to the Northwest and settled in Eugene, Ore. When she learned that OHSU was offering family nurse practitioner training in Lane County, she jumped at the chance to extend her education. "The distance learning intrigued me," she says. "Last year I conversed online and through videoconferencing with faculty and students all over the state." She says the videoconferencing allows the faculty and students to see and hear one another. "It's as if we're in the same room." In addition to distance technologies, the program provides laboratory work and clinical experience in the community. Two OHSU faculty preceptors provide the students with guidance, help arrange the clinicals and "are always there if we need anything," according to an appreciative Stambaugh.

When Stambaugh finishes the program next year, she hopes to find a way to use her Spanish fluency to care for the growing Hispanic population. She even dreams of having her own migrant clinic someday. Thanks to a nursing school that brings education to where its students live, a generous scholarship from a strange-sounding group known as the Forty & Eight, a pediatrician who allows her to work part time, her wonderful children and a lot of hard work, Stambaugh's dream may become a reality. NP