



"Up Close" is a regular feature in Imprint. This column profiles outstanding nursing students. Readers are invited to submit names for consideration to abrownnu@students.mcgc.edu.

BY AMBER BROWN

Cassandra Linza

Cassandra (Cassie) Linza of Utah is truly a remarkable nursing student. She says she owed much of her strength of character to her mother, who raised her on her own after her father died of heart failure when Linda was only 12.

"My mother is the strongest and most wonderful person I know," says Linza. Currently married to her high school sweetheart, the two reside in West Jordan, Utah, with their two sons.

Linza, a nursing student at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, first became interested in nursing after the incredible nursing care she received during the birth of her first child. She liked the variety and depth of experience that nursing offered.

"There are so many different roles for nurses, that I knew I could find something that would fit me. I love to be challenged, and to work collaboratively as part of a team," she explains.

After leaving a career in travel and tourism, Linza gained health care experience working at the Valley Emergency Communication Center as a 911 and police dispatcher. She was

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thrilled to work for the Critical Incident Stress Management Team, a volunteer group consisting of EMS workers throughout Utah. After several years, Linza decided to pursue a career in nursing. She has been on the Dean's List for the past three years, and is a member of the Utah Student Nurses' Association (USNA). She was elected secretary for 2003-2004, and vice president for 2004-2005. Linza, along with classmate Jill Michaelson, formed their own local NSNA chapter last spring.

Linza's efforts have not gone unnoticed. She was awarded the Student Nurse Leadership award for Westminster and received awards at the USNA convention in 2004. Linza believes that being involved in NSNA has given her the confidence to achieve her goals and dreams. "I would have never thought that I could make a difference, but when



I attended the NSNA convention in Phoenix, it made me realize the many opportunities out there. I also loved to see all the other student nurses from around the country. There was so much enthusiasm and excitement!" she states.

Linza's accomplishments are even more outstanding when one considers the many obstacles she has overcome since entering nursing school. Her mother-in-law died from cancer in March 2003, and her husband was diagnosed with renal failure six months later. Linza grew both personally and professionally during this difficult time.

"I had the opportunity to witness hospice nursing first-hand with my mother-in-law, and the experience of my husband's illness has strengthened my knowledge regarding all aspects of nursing, the role of the family during patient treatment," she says.

Friends who know her best describe her as smart, strong, motivated and humble. Linza has

maintained her GPA at an astonishing 3.8, while working two jobs, raising two children, and going to school full-time. Her husband is also a big fan, stating: “I am constantly in awe of Cassie. I believe she makes the world a better place. I have never met a more honest, dedicated person.”

In her spare time, Linza enjoys gardening, camping, shopping, and spending time with her husband.

“I value my husband, my two sons, and my future career as a nurse, which will enable me to touch other peoples’ lives and make a difference.”

Linza’s future plans including earning a PhD and becoming a nurse practitioner, as well as teaching. Her strong will and spirit continue to inspire others, and she is truly destined for a stellar nursing career. ☺

Amber Brown is the 2004-2005 Up Close reporter, and a nursing student at the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, GA.