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[Kandyce Hardie]: I'm a helper, like if someone is hurt, or if someone is hungry, or if someone is, whatever the need is, I want to help. That's just me by nature. So I think that is why I became a nurse. But the more time that I spent in nursing school, it was a challenge for me. And nursing still is because you don't know what's gonna walk through your door, I think, which is why I worked in the ER for awhile. You don't know what's gonna walk in the door. And I want to be ready to help that person the best I can regardless of where I am. And it's similar at the high school, you just never know what the next person is gonna need. So I like the challenge.

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[SFX ONE]

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From WHJE, this is First Responders 411, getting you the inside scoop on first responders in and around Carmel.

[SFX TWO]

I'm Tatum Prati.

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[Tatum]: What would we do without school nurses? Who would take care of us when we're feeling sick in the middle of class? Most students don't see them very often if at all. But they are always there and always ready to take care of us. I talked to Kandyce Hardie, one of the nurses in the main health center, about her experiences as a nurse. Before working here at CHS, she worked in the emergency department at Riley Hospital.

[Kandyce]: I miss the adrenaline rush. But I like what I do here. And there's purpose in all of it. I like working with high schoolers because they're adults. I mean, I consider it adult medicine.

Whereas when I worked at Riley, it was more pediatric. I feel like the kids in the high school kind of cross that line as they move through. So, yeah, I enjoy working with them as young adults. They can make their own decisions, and they have an opinion. And I like that.

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[Kandyce]: My favorite thing, I really think, is just the relationship building. So we have students that we see on a daily basis, maybe for daily meds, maybe they're diabetic, maybe they just have some need, they have a procedure that we perform every day while they're here. And I like to get to know those kids, their families. A lot of times I get to know their friends 'cause their friends will come with them. And then I like to be able to see them outside of work, you know. For instance, I was at a concert on Friday night, and I saw one of our kids from here. And I knew his name. And I think it's really cool, out of a student population of 51 hundred, that I would know one kid at a concert. And so that's, I think, what means the most to me a lot of times, just the relationships.

[Tatum]: While she doesn't work in the ER anymore, she still gets to experience an adrenaline rush at the high school because, of course, emergencies happen here, too.

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[Kandyce:] We have what we call emergency runs. So there's a phone number that every teacher has, and they'll call that number if they need a nurse emergently. And it rings on all of our phones, so we always hear it. And whoever takes the call usually responds. I've had multiple things. Sometimes they're employees. Maybe the employee isn't feeling well or thinks that maybe they're having a heart attack. It might be a student that fainted. I've had a student who had a first time seizure in class. And that's always scary when someone's having a seizure. We had a student several years ago who would just pass out randomly and would turn cyanotic or

blue as if she wasn't getting enough oxygen. And that was always an emergency response, we always had to respond emergently to that. Over the years I think I've had several emergencies. Randomness really. 'Cause for the most part everyone here is well, but occasionally you just have those glitches where something goes wrong.

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[Tatum:] One of these "glitches" was last school year. Sophie Dillman, now a senior, stepped on a screw in tech theatre.

[Sophie Dillman]: I was pulling plywood off of the shelf. And then I stepped back, and there was a three inch screw sticking out of a two by four. And I just stepped straight onto it, and it went into my foot. And it damaged the nerves as it went in, so I couldn't really tell if it was in there or not. But I knew it was at least in my shoe. So then I was with Garrett Brooker, and we tried to, like, pull my foot up, but it wouldn't come out, out of the screw. So then Garrett lifted my leg up, and then I still couldn't tell if the screw was in my foot or not. So we untied my shoe, and once we lifted my foot up, we realized that it was in there because my white shoe had turned red.

[Tatum]: That's when Garrett took her to the nurse, literally carried her from the auditorium to the nurse's office where they took great care of her.

[Sophie]: They were super sweet. They gave me some DECA socks 'cause my socks were damaged. And they wrapped it nice and neat. I feel like a normal nurse at a school would kind of panic if a kid came in like with an impaled wound. But they stayed calm. They were nice.

[Tatum]: While these "glitches" are bad, they can be exciting for a nurse.

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[Kanyce]: I'll almost always volunteer to go because I like the adrenaline rush. But sometimes we'll argue over who wants to go here. We're like, "I'll go." "No, I'll go." But we usually send

one person. The other person stays back 'cause we have two nurses in the main health center. But I think nurses in general like that adrenaline rush a little bit. And I think that I feel most confident that it's not gonna be something horrible, although there's always the risk that there could be something bad waiting. But we get a pretty quick synopsis of what's going on over the phone from the teacher, so we kind of know what we're responding to. Occasionally we'll get a call where someone'll say, "We have a student who's down in the hallway." And we don't know why. And so that will get my blood pumping to try to figure out why.

[Tatum]: Kandyce learned a lot throughout her nursing career, and she still continues to learn and grow. She has taken away several key points from her experiences.

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[Kandyce]: Strive to find those opportunities that challenge you. Don't become complacent. And just soak up as much information as you can. I always say, take the job assignments that nobody else wants because chances are they're gonna be the most challenging. And you're gonna be one step ahead because you learned more than the person who turned it down. A lot of nurses out of nursing school or in nursing school don't want to work on a medical surgical unit or don't want to work in an ER. But you're exposed to so many different things that you learn. I just feel like you're one step ahead of the next nurse because you learned things that someone else turned down. So I guess that would be my advice. In college too, you know. When I was in college, a teacher would say, "Well, who wants to do this procedure?" I wanted to do it because I'm a hands on person. So let me try it once while you're here with me, and then the next time that I go to do it, I'll know how. So I say seek those opportunities. Seek them out, and take advantage.

[Tatum]: For WHJE, this has been Tatum Prati. More stories like this can be found at whje.com.

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