

THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into volunteering



Leslie Calderon

VOLUNTEEN

When Leslie Calderon had an opportunity to become a VolunTEEN at Columbus Community Hospital, she knew she couldn't pass it up.

Calderon first learned about the program from her school counselor when she was a freshman at Columbus High School. After hearing more, she decided to take a leap of faith and submit her application.

"I was considering getting my certified nursing assistant (CNA) license, but at the time, I wasn't old enough to take the course," she said. **"Ultimately, I decided to volunteer at the hospital because it allowed me to explore all types of careers in the medical field and find out which one I would be most interested in pursuing."**

She officially became a VolunTEEN in December 2019 and served as a beverage cart volunteer. In this position, she visited patients, families, visitors and staff members throughout the hospital and offered them a refreshing afternoon beverage. Calderon said it was an excellent way for her to learn the hospital's layout. She enjoyed visiting with patients and seeing the joy in their

eyes as they held their newborn babies for the first time.

After a few months, Calderon's desire to become more involved with the program grew, and she transitioned to the hospital's diagnostic imaging department. As a diagnostic imaging volunteer, she removes linens and restocks the various items the department may need throughout the week. Once her assigned tasks are complete, she shadows the department's staff members while they review X-rays and computerized tomography (CT) scans.

Calderon said she's gained a lot of valuable experiences as a VolunTEEN and is looking forward to using her knowledge as she pursues a career.

"The hospital has been wonderful in supporting me and helping me make connections with professionals in the medical field," she said. **"It has also helped enhance my leadership skills."**

Calderon encourages all area teens to take part in this amazing volunteer opportunity.

"Through volunteering at the hospital, you not only help the community, but you also get the chance to learn more about career options in health care and find out what you are truly passionate about," she said.

Calderon plans to continue working as a VolunTEEN until she finishes high school. Following graduation, she will attend the University of Nebraska-Kearney to pursue a career in dentistry. When she is not busy with schoolwork or volunteering at the hospital, she enjoys working out, swimming and spending time with her family and friends.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities available at the hospital, visit columbushosp.org.