What is your role at Johns Hopkins?
As a case manager of the Patient Access Line, my primary responsibility is to follow up with newly discharged patients in order to reassess their condition, make sure they have the right medications, help them with self-care management and encourage them to make follow-up appointments with their physicians. We also collaborate with health care providers to address the needs of patients in the home.

How long have you been with Johns Hopkins?
I have been at Johns Hopkins Medicine for eight months, but I have worked as a nurse for 33 years.

Who were your role models growing up?
My dad was a huge influence on me. I admire his intelligence, skills, leadership, and especially his strong will and courage in reaching his goals. People saw and respected him as a great leader. Couples and families would seek out his counseling for their problems and follow his words of advice. My dad’s qualities made me grow up with the desire to serve people and my community. My second role model is Aunt Amie, a retired nurse who worked hard and climbed the ladder in the nursing profession, retiring as a rehab director and then going on to serve others as a Chicago police officer.

How did you decide to focus on health care?
I was very sickly as a child and would constantly get taken to the hospital. But what was most memorable were the nurses who took care of me. I saw them as angels in their white uniforms. So, I told my mom and dad that I wanted to become a nurse when I grew up. I wanted to take care of and heal the sick like those angels.

What challenges did you face along the way?
I was born in the small town of Baganga, Davao Oriental, Philippines. Right after I was born my mom asked my dad to move to Davao City so that they could send us to good schools. I went to San Pedro College for my B.S.N. degree. During that time, my dad got really sick and, when the economy turned bad, he was laid off. Our family faced hardship, and my parents resorted to selling furniture to help make ends meet. We got our food from the fruits and vegetables they grew, as well as the ducks and chickens we raised. I studied harder to pass all the exams, and I would always tell myself to do my best in everything because there was no second chance for me. My allowance was only 5 pesos for the entire week — 10 cents in American money — so I had to be thrifty and stretch my money as best as I could. I had to make and sew my own school and nursing uniforms. I had to keep up with my studies while working in the hospital, usually hungry because I barely had enough money for food. My dad had a stroke three years after I passed the nurse’s board exam. I took care of him for 21 days in the ICU, as an ICU nurse. I feel so blessed to have been given the chance to take care of my dad in his last days here on earth.

What Asian/Pacific-American historical figures do you find interesting or inspiring?
I find Mother Teresa’s work inspiring and admirable. She spent her life in the service of those in great poverty. As a nurse, I want to follow her footsteps of being so compassionate toward the poor and unwanted.

What are some fun things about you that you want the readers to know?
I love singing even though I am terribly out of tune, and cracking a joke every once in a while to help lighten the mood of those around me.

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