

New Scrubs:

We started an incredible journey together. You were brand new and I was a brand new face to staff and residents. We showed up together, ready to make a difference and bring some smiles and relief to those in need. We were new, wrinkle free and ready to go.....fresh, clean! That first night, we met so many new faces and saw so many different scrubs; all in different phases of use and wear. We stood out....too new, unwrinkled, unsure of ourselves, too clean, we stood out. We saw so many things in everyone's eyes....fear, exhaustion, desperation, concern, defeat, compassion. That first night we learned so much together, brought many smiles to new faces, watched as people milled about and doing their thing. We quickly became dirty ourselves yet still had that nice crisp look to us. We did our best to learn, to fit in. We came back to our room after that first night; exhausted and ready for a break. We washed the night away with soap and water, we thought about what was to come. As the nights went on we, ourselves became wrinkled, dirty, worn. No matter how well we took care of ourselves...we couldn't remove the wrinkles like we did so many times to remove the wrinkles on the beds the residents laid upon. We watched as residents went from being able to move around on their own and take care of their own basic needs to being bed ridden and helpless. We tried in vain, to remove the wrinkles from these beds to make it more comfortable for them, just as I tried to remove the wrinkles from you. Then I realized that wrinkles weren't so bad. Your wrinkles showed you care, you are there for these people and we are all in this together....we are bonded, we are wrinkled. We watched in horror as more and more continued to spiral downward. We sat on the beds of so many, holding their hands, washing them with soap and water and telling them they are loved. We were the last voices some heard, the last touch they felt, the last loving words they would hear, the last person to say "I love you". We, us.....me and my wrinkled scrubs. We quickly became part of this family, all of us wrinkled, dirty, tired and compassionate....together. As the exhausting nights went on we became more and more weary of returning to work as we were never confronted with good news. We held coworkers as they mourned the loss of another resident. We secretly cried when we got home because we had become so attached to these new faces, these wonderful people. We secretly sat every morning and reflected on the night before and wished these wrinkles would just go away. We get to work one day, feeling defeated and are met with the best news, residents are starting to get better! We sat with these very sick and undefeated residents and held their hands....you are loved, you can fight this, you are too strong to give up.....don't ever give up! As I was carefully folding you, trying to get the wrinkles out and putting you away I realized; we too have become warn, scared, exhausted, defeated but our compassion and determination has never wavered. We miss our family and our home greatly but we must continue to carry on with what I signed us up for. You took care of me, protected me as I protected you, washed you and cared for you as we both did for our residents. Our last night was different; we saw the beginning of something horrible and went through the worst times with all the other pairs of scrubs and finally through days/nights getting easier. Together we all made it through this storm, wrinkled, worn and tattered but still standing tall. We quickly realized how amazing the women and men wearing these other scrubs truly are. With minimal resources at our disposal we were able to bring people back from near death....what an amazing feeling. How proud we feel for the others wearing these scrubs. We forged new friendships, new memories with the others wearing the scrubs and residents alike. We went from being so concerned and constantly on our feet caring for these people to being able to just watch them sleep and rest. We sang with the women in the other scrubs and danced in the hallways as our wonderful residents slept and regained their strength. We danced with joy because these residents made it! We danced to honor those that didn't survive yet still brought joy to our lives just days and hours before they passed, because they were now free of their pain. We danced because we all weathered this storm together. Our scrubs now equally worn, tattered, wrinkled and dirty have seen the worst and best with us and now dance with us. We sang and danced because we finally had a chance to look at the positives and not continue on with negatives. As I fold you for the last time, so neatly, I realize I am putting away another chapter in our lives. We are thankful for our team and family and these, oh so beautiful, wrinkles. We are thankful for those that fought so hard and said, not today God, not today.....

Jaimie Adams 28 May 2020...Firefighter/EMT...

