

April More Voices: Unsung Heroes

Category: Unsung Heroes

written by Paul Gross | April 1, 2023

Dear *Pulse* readers,

During my first year of medical school, I came down with type 1 diabetes—the kind that requires insulin, the kind they used to call “juvenile onset,” even though I was thirty years old.

The symptoms were classic—raging thirst and a constant need to pee—but as a first-year student I hadn’t learned that yet, and as a previously healthy adult I couldn’t believe that my body would be so underhanded as to betray me.

A physician friend connected me with Dr. Hahn, a city hospital internist with a particular expertise in diabetes. He agreed to see me, on short notice, late on a Monday afternoon. Without giving any indication of the imposition it must have been, he evaluated me, walked me over to the university hospital, got me admitted and directed my care.

Thanks to the treatment he initiated, here I am, decades later, still alive and in good health. I’ll always be grateful to him, one of my unsung heroes.

As appreciative as I am, truth be told, once Dr. Hahn had gotten me settled in the hospital, I didn’t see all that much of him there. Up on the floor, the nurses were my real caregivers. I still remember Nora, who showed me how to check my blood sugar, taught me how to inject myself with insulin, checked in on me regularly and made me feel cared for. She and her colleagues were my unsung heroes as well.

Now, when I look around the family health center where I work as a physician, I see unsung heroes all around—those who keep our health center running: our unfailingly pleasant and helpful clerical staff. our overburdened nurses and our unflappable security guards.

I’m perhaps most impressed with the most easily overlooked heroes—our evening housekeepers. They arrive when everyone else is leaving, and for many, this is a second job, taken on so they can feed their families and pay New York City rents. They’re all immigrants, with olive skin and broken English. If I were in their shoes, I’d feel irritable and spent, but they greet me with tired smiles and good cheer. How do they do it? Why must politicians demonize them? Whenever I’m feeling overburdened and resentful, I think of the fortitude of these unsung superheroes. I’d like to think that one of their children may some day lead us all.

April’s *More Voices* theme is [Unsung Heroes](#). Share your story with us using this [More Voices Submission Form](#).

For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#). And have a look at last month’s theme, [Finding Balance](#).

Remember, your health-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With warm regards,

Paul Gross
Editor