



Joy Njenga a student at MHCC

MHCC Student Embarks on Journey to Become a Nurse

Inspired by family and instructors to care for others

As she observed the nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) care for her little brother for two months following his early birth, Joy Njenga had no way of knowing how much this experience would inspire her future goals.

Joy Njenga was born in Kenya and moved to the US at just 6 months old. She lived in Florida for seven years before relocating to Missouri, where she spent nine years. Finally, in 2020, Njenga and her family settled in Gresh-

am, Oregon. Her journey at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) began in her senior year of high school when she enrolled in the middle college program, which allowed her to take college courses while completing high school at Reynolds High School.

"I was just so tired of school," Njenga said, "Then someone told me about middle college and I asked my counselor about it. I didn't have any friends in Reynolds because I didn't know anyone so then I just started dreaming of college."

Njenga first wanted to go into engineering, but that career path wasn't working out. Her plans changed when her mother suggested exploring nursing instead. Njenga wanted to help people while also earn-

ing a good income, Njenga dug deeper into the field and decided to study nursing.

As a student taking her prerequisites for nursing school at MHCC, Njenga is inspired by her instructors and the program itself. One of her favorite classes is anatomy, taught by Dr. Melissa Gonzalez-McNeal, a friendly and caring teacher. At first, adjusting to college classes and harder homework was tough and led Njenga to seek help from her teachers. She found solace in talking to her teachers, using online resources, and drawing support from her father. Beyond her studies, Njenga is engaged in campus life at MHCC. She worked at the Student Services Hub as part of the work-study program.

Njenga is also in the soccer club and the Associated Students of Mt. Hood

Community College (ASMHC) where she formerly served as the recreation events coordinator and helped plan campus events, such as Barney Bash and blood drives. She now serves as ASMHC's student organization and club coordinator.

With graduation coming up in winter 2023 or spring 2024, Njenga has set her sights on transferring to a university to complete her Bachelor of Science in nursing. Njenga is thinking about becoming a travel nurse or a NICU nurse so that she can care for premature infants the way her little brother was cared for all those years ago. Njenga has kept going and emerged as a devoted student, involved in campus life, and driven to make an impact in the field of nursing.