

Deborah Creed, RN, PHN oral history 2010

Interview with Deborah Creed (0:00-6:38)

AS: My name is Amber Shelton. I'm a nursing student at UNCW and we are at the Public Health Association Conference to do oral interviews. Today is Thursday October 28th, 2010 and today I am interviewing...

DC: Deborah Creed.

AS: Okay Deborah, where were you born?

DC: I was born in Surry County.

AS: And when were you born?

DC: I was born April 25th, 1956.

AS: And why did you decide to become a nurse? What most attracted you to nursing?

DC: I had been raised on a farm and had worked in the mill. I had done that for a couple years, went to school and got a degree in marketing and decided that I wanted to do something different. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I was always doing things for people. Several of my friends said "you should go to nursing school" so I decided to do that. I worked during the day, I worked at the hospital during the day as clerical, and I decided I'd go to nursing school. I started in the beginning going at night and then ended up quitting my job and went full-time during the day.

AS: Where and when did you go to nursing school?

DC: Surry Community College in Dobson, NC.

AS: Please tell me a little about your nursing education, especially as it relates to community and public health.

DC: I got my nursing degree when I was in my 30s and I had had both children. I had my ADN. I worked for about ten years and went back to school and got my bachelor's degree. And I'm presently working on my Master's degree in public health leadership.

AS: Why did you decide to become a community health nurse?

DC: Because there's so many needs in the community. Not just in our county, all over North Carolina. We have obesity, it's on the rise at the present time. We have diabetes, young children who are diabetics. We have all kinds of health needs and disparities in the community that someone needs to address and that's what public health is all about.

AS: Please tell me about your first job in community health.

DC: My first job was, I started working in community health in, I think it was 1996 and I worked in the local public health department, Surry County health and nutrition center. I am still

employed there. So I've been there for 14 years, but that was the first time I had been in community health. I had worked previously in hospitals.

AS: Please tell me your most memorable story about community health nursing. This can be a time you made a significant contribution to your community or people within your community, or a time when something went horribly wrong, or something surprising that happened to you as a community health nurse, or a memory of a nurse who inspired you, or anything else you would like to share.

DC: I think probably the number one thing that I can think of in my career is when I went to work at the health department dentistry was not a big thing in public health at all. We had children coming in, I worked in the pediatric clinic, I was a supervisor there, and we saw children come in everyday with dental care needs. Their teeth were not being taken care of. They had a payer source Medicaid but no dentist in our area would take Medicaid, it was very hard. They had to go outside of the county to seek services. So my goal was to build a dental clinic that would take medicaid clients, children. And that's what I did. I began writing grants and we obtained enough grant funding and built a dental clinic. We had difficulty getting dentists because of the pay that's associated with public health compared to the private sector. So I made a roadtrip to Chapel Hill to the dental school and obtained a dentist there when they were having open house. A lot of private sectors were there telling them about the things that they could offer students. I wrote a letter to the state to get our County approved for grant repayments. That's probably one of the main things that stands out, how you have to go way beyond to get the things you need. But we now have a dental clinic and we are serving children in our county and it's very busy.

AS: Are there any other stories you would like to share?

DC: There's all kinds of funny stories, things that go on in public health, you know. It's a great career, everything about it. Like I said I've been there for 14 years. I had worked in the hospital for three years prior to that and worked for hospice part-time so I've done a lot of different duties with nursing. But I absolutely love public health because it's challenging every day. It's never the same on daily in and out things like it is at the hospital, you know. You go in and you you're going to pass medications, you're going to do assessments, things like that. Public health is not that way. With public health it's something usually exciting everyday so I really do like it. I could think of lots of funny things that we have done. Changing lives of young girls who come in with STDs, things like that. Education, seeing people lose weight when we do one on one education with them and helping them get better control of their high blood pressure and their diabetes. These are all things that we see every day.

AS: Great. If you had do to it all again, would you be a community health nurse? Why or why not?

DC: Yes definitely. Like I said it's been a great career for me. I absolutely love it. I'm not the director of nursing at our health department. In that position I'm even more equipped to make changes in our health department that do effect the county, its population and their health. So it's definitely something that I would recommend to anyone.

AS: Is there anything else you would like to share with nurses in the future who are interested in community health nursing in 2010?

DC: Just that if you want an exciting career, if you want something that is challenging, something that makes you be a visionary, that you have to think outside the box, and how to get things done lots of times with a very fixed budget. It's very challenging and that's what makes it exciting to me, that it is a challenging career. So I would recommend it to anyone.

AS: Okay thank you very much.

DC: You're welcome.