

A Diabetes Educator Helping Me Find My Path

By Crystal Ganoë

Choosing a career path can be very challenging. Most often, you know what your interests are, but are not completely sure if it is the right path for you. This is especially important when choosing a major at college and pursuing your dream career. I think the best way to help determine if you are on the right path is to spend a day “in your future shoes.” In other words, to find someone in that career field and shadow them to see what the career is like in the real world. Many times students graduate with a degree only to have no idea what their future job really entails until it is too late.

Take me, for example, I am a Nutrition student attending Metropolitan State College of Denver. I knew I had a passion for nutrition but really had no idea what the major required. At the time, Metro did not even have nutrition major so I decided I would go ahead and create my own through the individualized degree program. What a mistake that would have been! To my relief, Metro State declared a major in nutrition. It was in my ‘Introduction to Professions in Nutrition’ class where I started second-guessing my career path. I had no idea that the major required an internship in order to become a Registered Dietitian! Not to mention I would maybe even have to leave the state and the cost would be out-of-pocket! This was a very stressful time for me. All of a sudden, I was unsure of my career path and the excitement of becoming a Registered Dietitian began to diminish. Then I thought to myself, how can I give up on something so important to me so easily? I came to the conclusion that I never expected it to be easy and it would be worth the hard work and dedication! During my nutrition class, I learned about many opportunities available to nutrition students.

One of the Dietitian’s that was introduced during my class and really stood out to me was **Jenny Madrid, MPH, RD, CDE, BC-ADM**. Jenny Madrid is a Registered Dietitian that works as a Certified Diabetes Educator for a hospital in Colorado. I wanted to learn more about what a typical day is like being not only a Registered Dietitian but as a Certified Diabetes Educator as well. I contacted Jenny Madrid and was invited to come and shadow for a day. I was excited and nervous to come in. I was nervous that this could turn out to be a day where I realized that this may not be my career path, but excited knowing that this could help to learn more about the road in nutrition that I want to take. The day arrived and it was a very eventful and exciting day. Jenny had a nice comfortable office where she would prepare for her patients coming in that day by reading previous notes from previous visits with the patients. When a patient would arrive, Jenny would greet the patient and bring them to a room where the educating would take place. Jenny’s patients were very sweet and determined to get their lives back on track. I couldn’t help but feel sad and happy all at the same time during the patient meetings. I felt sad knowing that these patients never wanted diabetes and knowing that they have to completely change their lifestyles to accommodate their diabetes. I felt happy knowing that these patients are strong and dedicated to changing

their lives, yet can remain so optimistic at the same time. During each patient visit, Jenny would make sure to answer all of the patient's questions, record valuable information such as their A1C levels and be their friend all at the same time. **One of the patients turned to me and said "You know I really like Jenny, She really is good at what she does and a good person."**

In fact, all of Jenny's patients had nothing but positive comments about Jenny and really enjoyed their visit with her even if it was regarding their diabetes. Jenny's patients are right. She is very dedicated, caring, and friendly. In between patients, she wasted no time. She was kind enough to teach me all about the body and the way diabetes can affect the patient. She also answered any questions that I had regarding Dietetics and what the well-respected profession has to offer. I was much honored to have spent the day with such a highly-respected and experienced individual as Jenny Madrid. I left that day not only with knowledge that I didn't have before meeting Jenny, but with the security of knowing that I had chosen the right path and couldn't wait to one day be able to help others and make a difference in lives just as Jenny does on a day-to-day basis! I am now ready and looking forward to my dietetic internship no matter what challenges or obstacles have to be faced along the way. **I know that each step is a learning experience and will give me the skills I need to succeed in the field of Dietetics.**