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St. Vincent's Youth Award Essay

The mission of St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester, rooted in the principles of Charity, Excellence, and a commitment to the dignity of every human life, resonates deeply with my own aspirations. Over the past few years, I have dedicated myself to serving my community through healthcare, accumulating upwards of 100 hours as an EMT crew assistant with Post 77 in Port Chester and as a transport volunteer at White Plains Hospital. These experiences have been a profound lesson in what it means to care for others in their most vulnerable moments.

My time with Post 77 and at White Plains Hospital has taught me that healthcare is anchored in human connection. Whether I am assisting in the fast-paced environment of an ambulance or helping transport patients safely through the hospital, I strive to embody the mission of "shared ministry," the idea that by showing up, listening, and offering a steady hand, we contribute to a healing environment.

One moment in particular solidified this calling for me. I remember a woman who had been struck by a car; she was brought into the ER, her forehead bleeding and her eyes filled with terror. As the medical team swirled around us in a blur of controlled chaos, she looked past the rush of scrubs and monitors. She turned to me, a sixteen-year-old crew assistant on my first shift, and pleaded in Spanish, "Would you mind staying with me for a minute?"

Technically, I wasn't supposed to. I was there to assist with logistics, not to offer bedside comfort. I had no clinical training for this interaction. Yet, there was no room for hesitation. I nodded, held her hand, and stayed. That experience taught me that being a caregiver is not always about what you do, but about being present when someone else is afraid.

This encounter mirrors the spirit of the Sisters of Charity who founded St. Vincent's. By offering simple human compassion, I learned that dignity is an active, ongoing commitment. My service has taught me that when we treat every individual with respect and empathy, we fulfill the true purpose of healthcare. I am committed to carrying this lesson of compassion into my future, ensuring that every patient I encounter feels seen, heard, and supported, just as that woman did.