Immigrant nurses find a new life with CCC program

Eugene Sadiki joined his wife in Oregon after emigrating

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Eugene Famba Sadiki’s journey as a nurse began before he finished high school in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He survived being shot in wartime and separation from his wife, who believed he was dead.

Half a world away from the Congo, Sadiki is continuing his path in nursing in the United States through the Workforce Improvement with Immigrant Nurses program at Clackamas Community College.

The WIIN program at CCC prepares experienced foreign-educated nurses living in the U.S. to enter the nursing workforce here and eases their transition into practice. Since the program began in 2003, 74 nurses from 30 countries have completed the program and are now working in hospitals, longterm care, the American Red Cross, corrections, health clinics and dialysis centers.

Each nurse in the program has a unique story of training, immigration, struggle to find meaningful work and return to their career of choice through the WIIN program.

A long road home

Eugene Sadiki arrived in the United States in 2009 after working as a nurse in his home country for more than 25 years, in settings that varied from rural hospitals to natural medicine to education.

In the war-torn Congo, he was living away from his wife while finishing his bachelor’s degree in nursing and health administration. His education was interrupted when he was shot by warring factions.

Sadiki’s wife, Bahati Collette, believed he had died, and she subsequently moved to the United States. Through a cousin, Sadiki learned Collette was living in America and obtained her email address. In February 2002, Sadiki spoke to his wife on the phone, hearing her voice for the first time in four years.

For the next seven years, Sadiki struggled to emigrate to join his wife. His efforts took him to Kenya where he continued to work as a nurse while going through the long emigration process. After his fourth attempt, he was successful, and Sadiki joined Collette in Oregon in 2009.

Sadiki was hopeful that he could work as a nurse in Oregon and met with the Oregon Board of Nursing, which introduced him to the WIIN program at CCC. He began taking courses to improve his English skills before he was accepted into WIIN.

“It’s been a long road, but the WIIN program has helped me very much — I have gained so much professionalism as a nurse,” he said.

Sadiki graduated from the WIIN program in December and is now completing his clinical program and preparing to take the nursing exam. He would like to eventually work in health administration, working with the elderly.

Judy Andersen, director of the WIIN program, says Sadiki has been an inspiration to both students and staff in the program.

“Eugene’s compassion and generosity is evident to all with whom he comes in contact,” she said. “He has volunteered as a mentor to classmates who needed help with understanding math problems and encouraged others who were undergoing personal challenges. Eugene’s warm smile and caring heart are
his trademarks.”

For more information about the WIIN program, please contact Cathy Boucher, 503-594-6012; by email, cathyb@clackamas.edu.