

Working toward his wings

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Gothenburg grad hasn't lost sight of ultimate goal.

With more than 400 volunteer hours of service to the American Red Cross on top of a bachelor's degree in nursing and a full-time job in a trauma center, Luke Ballmer knows what he was put on this earth to do.

"Helping people is my passion," said Ballmer, a 2005 Gothenburg High School graduate working toward his life-long dream of becoming a helicopter flight nurse. "I have always known that a career that focuses on helping people is for me."

Ballmer grew up in Gothenburg, the son of Mark and Holly Ballmer.

He attended BryanLGH College of Health Sciences in Lincoln, graduating as a registered nurse in December 2009 with a bachelor's degree.

During college, he worked as an emergency medical technician for a private ambulance company in Lincoln and joined the Raymond Volunteer Fire Department where he lives north of Lincoln.

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“I enjoy responding to emergencies with the fire department and helping people whenever I can,” he said. “I love pre-hospital emergency medical services.”



Also during college, Ballmer became involved in the American Red Cross.

“It was something I wanted to do to give back to the community in which I lived,” he said.

The Red Cross has offered Ballmer a variety of learning opportunities as a volunteer.

He recently was appointed assistant coordinator for the emergency first aid team serving during University of Nebraska football games in Memorial Stadium.

“My job includes overseeing nearly 50 other volunteers from the Red Cross each home football game and assigning duties for everyone to accomplish,” Ballmer said.

In addition he is responsible for making sure response bags have enough oxygen and trauma supplies for each event.

That’s all on top of responding to medical emergencies in the stadium which holds more than 86,000 fans.

“Over the last four years, I have responded to various medical calls ranging from minor complaints such as scrapes and stings to medical emergencies such as cardiac arrest or stroke,” Ballmer said. “You get to meet a lot of neat people and that is very interesting to me. Everyone has a story.”

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The most difficult aspect of the Red Cross assignment, he said, is trying to please everyone.

“I have found that trying to do the most good for the most people is one way I can deal with that,” he said.

When Ballmer received his nursing pin in December, he was also presented with a special award from the Red Cross.

The Red Cross honors nursing students who have given at least 20 hours of service to the organization.

Ballmer logged more than 400 hours.

When presenting Ballmer’s award, Red Cross representative Marian L. Price told the audience her organization strives to connect nursing students with their communities through opportunities to develop leadership skills, provide meaningful services and help prepare for, prevent and respond to emergencies.

“He truly is an outstanding young man,” she said.

Ballmer received a Red Cross RN pin, signifying a change in position within the organization.

“It made me feel good to be recognized for the hours I have spent volunteering,” he said.

With all of his schooling and volunteer hours, Ballmer has never lost sight of his goal to become a flight nurse.

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Right now he works in the emergency room at Lincoln's BryanLGH West Trauma Center.

Day-to-day duties include caring for people who come into the emergency room and initiating life-saving measures to the sickest patients. Ballmer works alongside EMS crews bringing patients to the ER and trauma physicians working in the hospital.

"I absolutely love my job and appreciate all of the experience and knowledge I have gained since graduating from college," he said. "The experience I gain in the ER will help prepare me for the future."

BryanLGH operates a life flight helicopter service called Star Care. Working as a flight nurse requires four or more years of prior critical care experience as a RN.

That job is what Ballmer is working toward.

"That's always been my ultimate goal," he said.

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