



Singapore celebrates its 130th year of nursing today. **JUDITH TAN** (juditht@sph.com.sg) speaks to three young nurses on their inspiration and love for the profession

Moved by nurses' care for him

You won't want to mess with nurse Jonathan Lim.

He is trained in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a form of martial arts that promotes the concept that a smaller, weaker person can successfully defend against a bigger, stronger assailant.

But ultimately it is nursing that has the bigger pull for the 24-year-old. His interest in it started when he almost lost his life at 13.

He contracted acute disseminated encephalomyelitis after a bout of high fever.

"My mother discovered me lying on my bed, unable to move. She took me to KK Women's and Children's Hospital where the neurologist diagnosed that I had acute disseminated encephalomyelitis," he said.

This is a brief but widespread inflammation in the brain and spinal cord that damages the myelin, the

protective covering of nerve fibres. "I was warded in the hospital and paralysed from the chest down for five days. My parents were told there was a high chance I would suffer from brain damage," he said.

Unable to move, Mr Lim said he was, however, aware of his surroundings, and he watched how the medical staff took care of him, "particularly the nurses".

RUSHING

"They were rushing around, making sure I was okay and taking care of my needs. That was when I told myself that if I were to get better, I would dedicate my life to taking care of others," he told The New Paper.

Fortunately, he recovered and 13 days later, he was discharged from the hospital.

With that second lease of life,

Mr Lim started to map his future in healthcare and nursing.

"Nursing is both an art and a science. The art is in the way you communicate and understand what the patient needs. The science is the theory, knowledge," said Mr Lim, who will be joining Khoo Teck Puat Hospital as a staff nurse on Monday.

"While doctors treat patients, they are still removed from the patients. Nurses, on the other hand, are closer. They take care of the patients' every need. They are there for the pain and suffering. I want to do that, to be hands on," he added.

He admitted that there had been times when he felt it was not for him.

"The satisfaction I felt after helping someone changed that," he said.

And his martial arts training has helped him deal with patients.

Mr Lim said it stands him in good



STAY CALM: Staff nurse Jonathan Lim, who is trained in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, says it helps him keep his cool in situations that can turn volatile.

TNP PHOTOS: GAVIN FOO

stead in controlling his temper and staying calm.

"I'd be able to detach myself emotionally should the situation with the patient or the patient's loved ones turn volatile," he said.

Having been a medic during his National Service and at the Youth Olympic Games in 2010, Mr Lim hopes to be a nurse in emergency medicine.

"It is a field I have had an interest in since the first day of nursing. I hope to work at least three years there and hone what I have learnt throughout my education," he said.



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— Nurse Jonathan Lim (left)