

Helping What Can't be Cured

"Dear Santa. Please give me a dog. I promise to take good care of it."

When I was in kindergarten, I wrote a letter to Santa at Christmas. However, in place of a puppy, I received a machine for making crepes. Why do you think this was? The reason is, I had an animal allergy. Just touching an animal or being in the same space with one, results in a rash all over my body, itchy eyes, endless sneezing and a nose that won't stop running! Therefore, it isn't possible for me to keep a dog.

I have suffered a great deal with this animal allergy. I've loved animals since I was little, and I've always enjoyed reading books and watching TV shows about animals. I used to go to my grandparents' house with my family, but they kept cats and dogs, so I always took anti-allergy medicine when I went. I couldn't go to places with animals, such as zoos and farms, without this medicine. Sometimes I forgot to bring my medicine and so had to give up going to such places. I didn't know much about allergies and I remember feeling very frustrated that I was unreasonably kept away from my beloved animals. I was also deeply envious of people who could touch the animals without any problem. Have you ever been separated from things you love, like me? Have you ever had the experience of: "I really want to do it, but I can't"?

When I was in elementary school, I heard a lecture about sick children. There, I learned about children with serious illnesses such as cancer and heart disease. I discovered that they live with restrictions on exercise and daily life. They want to run as fast and hard as they can, but they can't run; they want to play as much as they can, but they can't keep up with other kids. Basically, they can't do ordinary things that others take for granted. Seeing them, I remembered my own allergies that prevented me from playing with animals.

I think that wanting to do something you can't is a very painful thing for a child. In my case, there was no cure for my allergies, and leaving animals alone was the best way to control the symptoms, so it was unavoidable that I didn't keep pets or go to zoos. However, is it really okay to just dismiss what sick children can't do with the single phrase, "it can't be helped"?

The pain I experienced may be different from their pain because I could still run around and play with other kids. However, my frustration had a deep impact on me and since attending that lecture about sick kids, I have wanted to be a pediatric nurse. If you have yourself experienced a physical or mental problem which limits you, you may be able to bring some emotional understanding to the job - and that could be an asset.

Pediatric nurses work in pediatrics, which is the treatment of children and young people. Not only do they treat children physically, but they also have to give support and encouragement. As a pediatric nurse, I would like children not only to cope with their illnesses, but also to maximize what they can do and to find their individual strengths. For example, children who are being treated for an illness or who have severe symptoms of the illness may use wheelchairs. Therefore, they cannot walk or run with their legs and feet, but they can use their hands, sight, and hearing. Activities such as origami, drawing pictures and playing music could develop their talents and interests. Also, letting them explore the things they are interested in could bring a smile to their face.

I don't think everyone has to work directly with sick children to help them. Being indirectly involved could mean volunteering to raise money or to raise awareness of the issues that face kids with severe illness. Knowing about and understanding their illnesses is the first step in helping them. Currently, it cannot be said that a system to help them is fully in place. Therefore, I want to support and encourage these kids through my job as a pediatric nurse. I hope that this world will develop a wider range of support mechanisms for children who 'want to but can't.' Above all, I hope they have more opportunities to express themselves and experience happiness.