The idea for this came to me when my Grandmother was admitted to the hospital for a bowel obstruction. Nurses are faced with hearing it all, from physicians to patients to families, nurses must be able to juggle information coming from them from all different angles. When I think about nurses hearing it all, I immediately think of a stethoscope, a tool nurses all over the world use to assess patients’ bowel sounds, breath sounds, and heart tones. Yet nurses do much more than listen to a beating heart or breathing lungs through a stethoscope. Nurses also listen to our hurts, our fears, our anxieties…Nurses Hear It All!

I utilized photography to depict nurses listening to patients from the healthcare facility to the comfort of the patient’s home. The nurse in these images is my Mom, who has been an LPN for more than 40 years. She is listening to my 88-year-old Grandmother’s heartbeat. Another image is of seals in Crescent City, California. There are several interesting components of these pictures. First, my Grandmother’s last name (and my mother’s maiden name) is Seals. There are two generations of nurses depicted in these photos: me (the photographer) and my Mom. My Mom is using my stethoscope which is the pink breast cancer edition by Littman, and my Grandmother is a breast cancer survivor. On my Grandmother’s lap in one picture is that day’s edition of The Kansas City Star, our local newspaper. In the other image my Grandmother is playing cards with two of my aunts and a cousin. These images represent nurses hearing it all, but they also represent the two women in my life who not only helped shape me into the person I am today, but also helped me find a passion for nursing. When I was a small child, my Mom was a home health nurse. We lived in rural Oklahoma, so it was difficult at times to find someone to watch children while at work. Therefore, my Mom took me with her to many of her home health visits. I remember playing cards with an old man while his wife was care for in the other room by my Mom. The images on this poster help remind me that nurses impact lives no matter where they work, and no matter what patient population they serve. As nurses we have the gift of caring for patients all over the world, resulting in a global impact.

I include my Recipe for a Nurse: Start with heaps of compassion, sprinkle in lots of love, stir in a handful of honor, and then whisk in a ton of empathy. Finally, fold in unending courage and a hefty dose of lifelong learning.

This content of this poster may impact many people in different ways – art speaks to people differently. I believe this poster has helped me to realize that although I love teaching and leading, the desire to care for patients at the bedside still burns strong in my soul.