

Story

German nursing major chases his dream in Hangzhou

By Chen Miaolin

"I don't think I'm a typical man because I do nursing," Patrick Alexander Witzak said with a chuckle, his eyes twinkling with self-awareness. This statement, delivered with a warm smile, immediately piqued my interest. The soft hum of the coffee grinder in the background provided a rhythmic backdrop to our conversation as he sank into his memories.

"I think a typical man in Germany, who likes cars, football, and has a long beard-- someone who likes to be seen as a man-- wouldn't choose to nurse," he paused for a moment. "But nowadays, many good men are comfortable being hairdressers or nurses."

Patrick's journey began in Germany, where he was born and raised. His early years were filled with typical pursuits for a young boy: playing football and exploring the world around him.

Patrick never intended to pursue a career in healthcare. "When I graduated from high school, I never thought I would become a nurse," he said with a surprised expression. It was during his studies in Germany, when he needed to work to support himself, that

he discovered the nursing field. "I knew people who were nurses, and they said, 'Hey, you can start working with older people in their daily lives,'" he explained. This choice would eventually define his career path. "I think, from everything I did, it's what I'm the best at," he said confidently. "I'm a very energetic person, and it's a physical job. I'm good at talking to people for the first time."

He fondly recalled a heartwarming story about fixing an old guitar for a woman whose husband had passed away and left it behind. With a smile, he said, "The moment I told her the guitar was fixed, she was overjoyed and couldn't stop asking me about it." Her happiness, according to Patrick, was palpable when she saw it restored. He felt a deep sense of fulfillment in bringing such joy to someone and realized the power of small acts of kindness to make a big difference in people's lives. "Nursing is difficult, but it taught me a lot about patience and compassion. When you stay kind, treat them well, and try your best, after some time, you win their trust, become friends, and build good relationships."

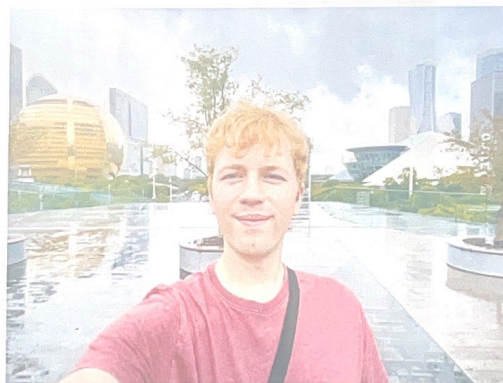


Photo provided to Hangzhoufeel

Gender bias is an inescapable issue in nursing, and Patrick has encountered it firsthand. At times, he faced skepticism from patients who preferred female nurses, often due to past experiences or deeply ingrained cultural beliefs. "Many women reject male nurses because they've had bad experiences with men," he noted. Even his mother wasn't supportive at first, he admitted. "She thought I should choose a profession with a higher social status, like becoming a doctor."

Patrick remained steadfast in

his decision. "I believe nursing is incredibly meaningful," he said with conviction. "It's about supporting people through their hardest times, and I find that very fulfilling." His passion for nursing is evident, and he has hoped that his dedication would eventually win over those who doubted his decision.

Patrick's decision to come to Hangzhou was driven by both personal and professional aspirations. "I've always been fascinated by Chinese culture and language," he explained. "When I started learn-

ing Chinese, I realized how much I enjoyed it and wanted to immerse myself in the culture." This interest was further fueled by his relationship with his Chinese girlfriend. "She was a big part of my decision to come to Hangzhou," he admitted. "We wanted to be together, and Hangzhou Normal University offered me the opportunity to study nursing at a high level."

"Patrick is an exceptional student," said Ella, one of his professors. "He is not only committed to his studies but also actively engages in cultural exchange activities. His positive attitude and willingness to help others make him a valuable member of our community."

In terms of career, Patrick is aware of the growing acceptance and need for male nurses in China. "The number of male nurses is increasing, and I think it's a positive trend," he observed. "Nursing is a demanding job, and having more men in the field can bring a different perspective and physical strength to the profession." At least, Patrick is not alone. Among the 22 international students in his grade who also major in nursing, 7 are boys, coming from different corners of the Earth.

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