

By Faith...

Hear.

Believe.

Move.



**JoyValerie Nellas was called for a time
such as this!**

JoyValerie is a Clinical Laboratory Scientist at Cornell Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, the epicenter of COVID-19. She never imagined God would have placed her at the center of the pandemic. Her team of scientists work with the only machine in the country that does antibody testing.

She is also the niece of Susie Jennings, the founder of Operation Care International (OCI). JoyValerie humbly washed feet at our annual Christmas event for the homeless and impoverished. Focus, hard work and selflessness run in this family!

I caught up with her to talk about her faith and her heart for Operation Care International.

Question: What have you learned from serving at the Operation Care International Christmas party for the homeless and impoverished that has stayed with you during this pandemic?

JoyValerie: The word that comes to mind is humility. Everything I learned from OCI and Susie was to be selfless. I love the humble beginning of OCI. I remember when Susie was the blanket lady in Dallas. She always had the right heart. She wanted to serve people and help those in need. I also loved that OCI has an international focus. Many people think it's just the big Dallas event at the Convention Center. It is so much more than that, they are making a difference globally. I love supporting OCI.

Question: In your early years you thought about being a missionary doctor overseas. Did you ever think you would be at the center of this epidemic?

JoyValerie: I believe God called me for a season such as this! I did want to be a missionary doctor; now my mission field is NYC. People ask me if I'm scared being around the virus. I don't have fear even when we do the tests. God has given me strength and focus. I stay laser-focused on the goal. We need to test our employees in the hospital to protect them and others in case they are infected. The machine we use to do the antibody tests is the only one in the country.

Question: How have you stayed so consistently focused on the job even when many of your peers have been fearful?

JoyValerie: Once again, I stay focused on the goal. Our family, from my grandmother to my aunt, Susie Jennings, all have a strong work ethic. We are all goal-focused, and I guess I have that gene as well. I don't look at this as a job, it's a calling!

Question: Thanks for serving and financially supporting OCI monthly since 2013. How can the OCI family pray for you and your team in NYC?

JoyValerie: Pray for all the unsung heroes, the people behind the scenes. My role is done behind the scenes but there are so many more unsung heroes--not just the healthcare workers, but the janitors and people cleaning the beds, rooms, windows. Many of them have been infected. Pray for their healing, protection and strength. My faith has actually been strengthened during this difficult season.

Question: What verse has helped you through this?

JoyValerie: Philippians 2:4-5 says don't just look out for your own interests but look out for the interests of others. This battle of COVID-19 can only be won if we put other people's needs first. These verses also reminds me of Susie and OCI. When we love on the homeless and impoverished and wash their feet at the Dallas Convention Center, we have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. In many ways, OCI prepared me to serve in my current job. It's about serving and putting other people's needs first. At times it can be difficult, but as Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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