

Sara Sheppard, HTL

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She quietly whispered ‘thank you – you are saving a life’

One high school career field trip to the University of Texas MD Anderson School of Health Professions and Sara was hooked. At the time of her visit, she already had several years of experience in the healthcare environment. Sara’s future career choice was profoundly influenced by the time spent in hospitals as she supported her father’s courageous fight against heart disease.

Why histotechnology? It’s a hands-on field, which is something that appealed to Sara. Currently she works as a senior research histology technician in the MD Anderson Department of Veterinary Medicine & Surgery. In her research laboratory role, she prepares animal tissue slides for researchers. Sara may not interact directly with patients in her day-to-day work, yet the results of her work are instrumental in cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

In May 2018 Sara’s father received a life-saving heart transplant. At the time she was working with human tissue for a previous employer preparing slides of deceased donor tissue for pathologists to determine compatibility for a match with prospective transplant recipients. With every donor tissue slide she prepared, quietly in her head she thought of the name of the person from which the tissue was harvested and whispered a heartfelt *thank you, you are saving a life*.

Regardless of whether Sara’s career leads toward work with animal or human tissue, the outcome is the same. Someone’s life, now or in the future, is being saved because of people like Sara, who have dedicated their time and talents toward cancer research, treatment and prevention.

<i>MD Anderson School(s) from which I graduated</i>	The University of Texas MD Anderson Graduate School of Health Professions
<i>Graduation Year</i>	2017
<i>Current Employer</i>	MD Anderson Cancer Center Department of Veterinary Medicine & Surgery
<i>Current City</i>	Houston, Texas
<i>Current Position</i>	Senior Research Histology Technician

This is my story

<i>What is your career motivation?</i>	Sara's father struggled with heart disease since she was a teenager. During her many visits to see her father during his hospital stays, she found inspiration through the movement and innovation of the healthcare environment. Sara's father received a life-saving heart transplant in May 2018 and is doing well. And Sara is in a field she loves with aspirations of achieving a future leadership role in the Histotechnology arena.
<i>Who are your mentors?</i>	Dr. Toysha Mayer & Professor Mark Bailey Sara connected with Dr. Mayer and Professor Bailey because of their quest for quality and thorough education for their students. Both instructors wanted her to succeed and provided the educational structure that led to successful completion of the program. Professor Bailey is the Associate Professor and Program Director for the MD Anderson School of Health Professions Histotechnology program. Dr. Mayer is the Assistant professor of Histotechnology at the School of Health Professions.
<i>Family Life</i>	Sara is engaged to be married
<i>Undergraduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s).</i>	The University of Texas MD Anderson School of Health Professionals; Bachelor of Science in Histotechnology; 2017
<i>Graduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s).</i>	Sara is currently in pursuit of a master's in health care administration.
<i>High school from which I received a degree.</i>	Katy High School – Katy, Texas

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