You Can Be Me!

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Recommended Citation
Gravano, T., You can be me!, For Your Health, 2008, p. 11
TAMARA GRAVANO, PT, DPT, GCS, had her first internship while working on her graduate degree in the field of geriatrics (the specialty of working with older patients). “I was thinking sports at first. So I wasn’t sure how I’d feel about working with a group of patients who had an average age of 79. But I was immediately at home with my many ‘grandmas and grandpas.’ I loved it.”

Gravano has specialized in the field of geriatrics ever since. “I enjoy talking with someone who has a greater sense of history than I do. My patients remember seeing the first car come down the street. They have a great depth of human experience and they make great conversation,” she says.

“At the end of the day, I love that I helped someone who has had a stroke get up and be independent again when they never thought that would be possible,” explains Gravano. “That is a great day for me. The gratitude in their faces makes me melt.”

For students who want to consider a field in physical therapy, Gravano advises “pay attention in science class. Biology is very important. And be inquisitive. That makes for a good physical therapist.” Gravano also encourages young people to consider a field in geriatrics. “With the aging of the population, there are more and more people over the age of 65. There is so much opportunity to help keep them healthy and independent. They are amazing patients.”