



Loss Of Arm Creates Meaningful New Purpose For New Jersey Nurse

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SUMMIT, N.J. (CBSNewYork) – A dedicated nurse in New Jersey isn't letting a catastrophic accident stop her from doing what she loves.

A devastating accident costing a woman her arm is now helping her develop special bonds with the people she cares for, reports CBS2's Dick Brennan.

Pain is all too familiar for Kristina DeJesus-Barquin, but the 32-year-old registered nurse knows all about resilience.

"I was able to adapt, it took a couple of months to get back in the swing of things," she said.

In 2017, the woman from Cranford, N.J., was in a boating accident while on vacation in Austin. The boat's propeller chopped off her right arm from the shoulder down, but her nursing skills kept her alive.

"I knew I couldn't panic," said DeJesus-Barquin. "I was able to instruct my rescuers and friends what to do and they did it, and I am still here."



Kristina DeJesus-Barquin (credit: CBS2)

PHOTOS: [Kristina DeJesus-Barquin Before And After Losing Arm](#)

After months of therapy, she is back on her feet. Now, with help from a trainer, she still manages to work out all the time.

Since she was born right handed, she had to relearn basic things such as writing. When it comes to tasks at work that require two hands, she has become creative.

For example, she uses a kitchen sponge holder to put on her medical glove.

“It may take a little bit longer or need a little bit more support, but I am still able to be in the same role,” said DeJesus-Barquin.

“I get to see her still be herself,” said her husband, Blas Barquin. “She goes to the gym, she cooks, she cleans, she does all the normal things she used to.”

Before the accident, DeJesus-Barquin worked as a private nurse in patients’ homes and at the Atlantic Health System’s Overlook Medical Center in Summit – two roles she still fulfills.

“She has provided a new found resilience for our staff and source of strength,” said Matthew Mascari, an assistant nurse manager who works with DeJesus-Barquin in the center’s Coronary Card Unit. “She really showed us what being strong means and really defines it.”

DeJesus-Barquin is not just a role model for her co-workers, but also her patients. She says she now empathizes more and her story shows them they too can do push through.

“Being in their position, feeling scared, feeling hopeless at times – I am able to understand them on a whole different level,” she said.

Her unfortunate accident is resulting in meaningful purpose.