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9-19-11
Personal Interview

Writer In Disguise

The future nurse who sits in scrubs ready for a day in the hospital takes a look at his cell phone every few seconds to keep track of the time. Derek Whaley is a very busy undergraduate student at East Tennessee State University who is currently studying to be a nurse. He is involved on campus, in his studies, and with his internship.

Whaley grew up in Sevier County, TN. He graduated in the top 10 percent at Pigeon Forge High School. After graduation, Whaley attended Maryville College for one year and then transferred to Walter State Community College where he obtained an associate's degree in psychology. After leaving Walters State, Whaley decided to attend ETSU to try and get in to nursing school.

After being admitted into ETSU in fall 2009, Whaley applied to be a resident advisor for the Department of Housing and Residence Life. He received the position and has worked as an RA in the residence halls on campus for a total of four semesters. This year he is an RA in Davis Apartments. His duties in this role include a weekly duty night, weekend duty shifts, and program planning.

In his fall 2010, Whaley was admitted into the ETSU School of nursing. He was also able to obtain a paid internship with the Mountain States Health Alliance where he is able to get real experience in different health care facilities in the Johnson City area. He works eight hours every week at a hospital when he is not in class or on duty for his RA position. "After graduating, I want to go to CRNA School," says Whaley. CRNA stands for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists.

With all of those responsibilities, it might come as a surprise to learn the Whaley has actually personally written and published a book at the young age of 22. Whaley began the book back in high school and finished it this past year. His book, *The Light In The Water*, was published and released this past July. “My high school English teacher inspired me,” he says when asked what made him want to write a book. After he finished with the writing, he took it upon himself to do research on how to publish a book. He looked up and found the perfect self-publishing company that fit his needs and his printed story became a book. He creatively designed what he wanted the front cover to look like and he contacted an artist to help bring his cover to life.

Whaley is trying to find time to write a second book to add to the first one, a werewolf and vampire novel, which he hope to turn into a trilogy. Whaley’s book is available on Amazon.com for purchase.