Olivia Tran wants to do more than study nursing. She is driven to become a nurse practitioner and help communities get the medical care that they desperately need.

Her family has made regular trips to Vietnam to see friends and relatives and bring needed supplies to a Catholic orphanage. One of those trips occurred when she was a third grader, when they packed extra medical supplies and a bunch of her toys.

“I remember donating my old toys to the orphanage, and I watched as several kids shared one toy between them. Being able to bring some bit of joy to those kids was an eye-opening experience for me,” she said.

Over the years, her family helped build a playground at the orphanage, and they continue to donate medical supplies. Tran knew she would become a nurse one day. Her choice was celebrated years later at a White Coat Ceremony at Sacramento State’s School of Nursing.

“I was able to have all of my family there to witness me take the oath, to uphold the ideals of the nursing profession and devote myself as I began my clinical education,” she said. “I felt the reality set in that I had made it, all of my hard work over the past few years had gotten me into a great nursing program. I was on track to becoming the nurse that I had dreamed.”

As a nursing student, Tran most recently worked as a COVID-19 health screener for the Dignity Health hospital system and volunteered as a nurse intern at a Northern California veterans hospital.

A transfer student to Sacramento State, Tran earned numerous scholarships along her journey, including an Alumni Association Scholarship in 2019.

“Scholarships have really made my education possible. As a first-generation college student, my family and I are so grateful for the opportunities that donors have granted me."

—Olivia Tran ‘20