Mission
To help people and communities achieve better health

Vision
A leading innovator enabling healthy communities

Values
Respect, Integrity, Imagination, Courage, Excellence

Mission
The mission of the Florida Blue Foundation is to improve the health and well-being of Floridians and their communities.

Focus Areas
The Foundation has an expanding commitment to corporate social responsibility through five focus areas:

Access to Health Care – Improving Access to Health Care (IMPACT) Grants to address health care disparities and increase access to quality, health-related services for the uninsured

Consumer Health – Embrace a Healthy Florida initiative to address the causes and prevention of childhood obesity

Quality and Safety of Patient Care – Developing a diverse, well-trained, frontline-care workforce to meet the health care needs of Florida

Quality of Life – To improve: human and social services; diversity and community development; education and literacy; arts and culture; and disaster relief and preparedness.

Health Care System – Recognize excellence and innovation in community health through the annual Sapphire Awards
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Nurses are an integral component of the health care system. These highly skilled, compassionate professionals play key roles in hospital patients’ health outcomes, access to care and the quality and safety of patient care. They touch our lives in so many ways.

Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are committed to supporting efforts that build and sustain an adequate and well-trained nurse workforce. This in turn will improve the health care system in Florida and the health of the people and communities throughout the state.

This publication features stories from some of the students who received scholarships from the Generation RN™ Florida Blue Nurse Scholars program. While we recognize these students for their commitment to making their dreams of becoming nurses reality, we also use this opportunity to pay tribute to all nurses who every day provide care in hospitals, schools, medical practices, clinics and workplaces, and to those who are teaching others to become nurses.

We recognize and honor the contributions of a profession that echoes our commitment to helping people and communities achieve better health.

Patrick J. Geraghty
Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Florida Blue

Florida Blue
in the pursuit of health
On behalf of the Florida Blue Foundation Board of Directors, I send greetings and commendations to the Generation RN®SM Florida Blue Nurse Scholars whose stories we share within the pages of this publication.

Since 2004, when Generation RN®SM was created, the Foundation’s Board has continued to address nursing workforce issues in the state of Florida through its focus area called “Improving the Quality and Safety of Patient Care.” Threats to patient safety, access to care and quality of care resulting from the nursing shortage were at the heart of the Board’s decision to choose nursing workforce issues as an area of focus. We also believed that there was a need for demonstrated, action oriented leadership to build and sustain an adequate and well-trained nurse workforce in Florida.

Through grantmaking and partnerships, we provided endowments for scholarships, endowed faculty positions, studied the use of simulation in nurse education, established the Florida Healthcare Simulation Alliance, and formed the Florida Action Coalition to address the future of nursing.

While we have been a partner in addressing nurse workforce issues and identifying solutions in Florida, we acknowledge that the demand for well-trained and prepared nurses will continue to increase as the baby boomer population ages. Moreover, the need for advanced degree nurses who can provide leadership and teach the nurses of the future will continue to grow. Our hope is that these long-term, lasting investments will lead to long-term, lasting solutions that ensure access to high quality patient care.

To the Florida Blue Nurse Scholars who have shared their stories, and to all nurses across Florida, we honor you for your commitment to nursing and for helping the people of Florida achieve better health.

Charles S. Joseph
Chairman of the Board, Florida Blue Foundation; and Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Florida Blue

Florida Blue Foundation
Within these pages are thank you notes and testimonials from some of the recipients of the Generation RN℠ Florida Blue Nurse Scholars program. You’ll read what motivated the students to pursue a career in nursing. For some, being a nurse is a life-long dream. For others, it’s a second or third career. And a few are pursuing advanced degrees so that they can be the next cadre of professors to teach and train the next generations of nurses. What motivates them may vary, but they all share that desire to deliver care in a compassionate, professional manner that replaces tears with smiles, transforms helplessness to hope, mends the body and brings comfort to the suffering.

These professionals, who make up the largest number of workers in the health care system, make a difference in the lives of many every day. We are proud of their accomplishments. Their accomplishments honor the scholarships they have received.

Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are positioned to continue to develop Florida’s nursing workforce through strong partnerships and investments across Florida. Like the nurses whose stories you will read, we are committed to helping Florida’s people and communities achieve better health.

Susan B. Towler
Vice President Florida Blue Foundation; and Executive Director, Corporate Social Responsibility, Florida Blue

Florida Blue Foundation
Florida Blue and Florida Blue Foundation

Improving the Quality and Safety of Patient Care

Nursing Initiative History

Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation recognize the need to continually improve the quality and safety of patient care. Receiving high quality health care, including education, prevention and primary care, helps everyone to stay healthy and return to health after an illness or injury. We also recognize that a well-trained and prepared nursing workforce is the key to this improved patient care, since nurses make up the largest portion of the health care workforce in Florida, and provide most of the health care. To this end we have contributed over the years over $20 million to nursing in four areas:

- Generation RN℠
- Florida Center for Nursing
- Simulation Technology in Nursing Education
- Florida Action Coalition

Generation RN℠

In 2004 Florida Blue (formerly Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida) and the Florida Blue Foundation (formerly Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation) established a longstanding commitment to nursing in Florida. Beginning with the corporate Signature Program, Generation RN℠, which contributed and attracted over $45 million in public-private partnerships to Florida's nursing education, career development, and best practices research, Florida Blue supported every accredited Florida nursing school, through student scholarships, classroom and lab-room space, and three endowed professorships. It supported programs to advance nursing best practices that improve career development and job satisfaction of experienced nurses to retain them in the workforce. It established at the University of Florida the Florida Blue Center for Health Care Access, Patient Safety and Quality Outcomes to generate evidence-based research in nursing practice that will improve the health of Floridians. A special thanks is extended to Cyrus M. Jollivette and Catherine A. Kelly for their commitment and foresight back in 2004 to have Florida Blue create the Generation RN℠ Initiative to advance the education and supply of nurses in the State of Florida.

Generation RN℠ garnered many statewide and national awards for corporate philanthropy, communications, and impact on health care delivery, such as the 2006 Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program from American Business Awards. Generation RN℠ supported unique partnerships between institutions, such as the unique collaboration of the University of Miami (UM), St. Thomas University (STU), a federally designated Hispanic college, and Florida Memorial University (FMU), a historically black college. More than 2,735 nursing students have graduated through the scholarship program. At the Florida State College Foundation, 200 nursing students each year, in perpetuity, receive nursing scholarships through this program.

Generation RN℠ endowments for scholarships and endowed faculty positions are continuing to reap rewards for our nurses and nursing students.
Florida Center for Nursing

The Florida Center for Nursing is the definitive source for information, research and strategies addressing the dynamic nurse workforce needs in Florida. The FCN continues to lead the way in addressing Florida’s nursing shortage. The Florida Blue Foundation continues to partner with FCN to address nurse workforce issues.

Simulation Technology

The Foundation, in partnership with the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN), determined that patient simulation technology should be explored as a possible way to increase student capacity in clinical training. In 2009, the Foundation was awarded a $250,000 grant from the national initiative Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future (PIN), a joint program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation. The grant was matched by Florida Blue. The $500,000 research project called Promoting the Use of Simulation Technology in Florida Nurse Education, found that nurse educational institutions and clinical sites have opportunities to collaborate on several fronts to integrate simulation into nurse training throughout the state. The study revealed that while simulation is “permitted to be used for up to 25 percent of direct clinical practice, the percent[age] of simulation substituted for clinical hours averaged 5.1 percent across pre-licensure programs.”

Florida Action Coalition

In October 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published a landmark report – The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health – that outlined ways nursing can contribute to an improved American health care delivery system. The report prompted a national collaboration of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and AARP, named the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, to implement the recommendations made in the report. As a result, 36 regional action coalitions have been formed, among them the Florida Action Coalition (FL-AC). The Foundation was selected to co-lead the coalition with the FCN.

The FL-AC has invited nursing and non-nurse state leaders to participate in the coalition, including elected officials, health industry executives, physicians and other health professionals, educators, philanthropists, AARP Florida and leaders in the business community. The FL-AC has prioritized the IOM recommendations and adapted them to meet Florida’s needs.

The Future

With more than 3 million members, the nursing profession is the largest segment of the nation’s health care workforce. Working on the front lines of patient care, nurses can play a vital role in helping realize the objectives set forth in the 2010 Affordable Care Act, legislation that represents the broadest health care overhaul since the 1965 creation of the Medicare and Medicaid programs. A number of barriers prevent nurses from being able to respond effectively to rapidly changing health care settings and an evolving health care system. These barriers need to be overcome to ensure that nurses are well positioned to lead change and advance health. Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are positioned to continue to develop Florida’s nursing workforce through strong partnerships and investments across Florida.

1Quantitative Research Findings for the FCN Simulation Project, Florida Center for Nursing
PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to highlight a few nursing students who were recipients of Generation RNSM Florida Blue Nurse Scholarships from around the state. There are many more students whose stories could be included, but we could highlight only a few.

The stories and thank you notes within this book were written by the students. We did not edit any submission, so you will read exactly what they wrote about how their lives were affected by receiving a scholarship.

Our hope is that some of the students are in attendance at the 2013 Statewide Nursing Summit so that we can acknowledge their commitment to nursing and caring for the people of Florida.

We hope you enjoy reading the thank you messages and stories. We know you will be inspired by their commitment.
Nursing students from Broward College receive $19,539 in scholarships from the Florida Blue Nurse Scholarship Fund at the Florida College System Foundation in September 2013.
These funds mean so much to our students, especially with the cost of labs and equipment, and the required testing in many of these programs,” said President Eaton.

Florida College System (FCS) Chancellor Randy Hanna (left) presents scholarship funds from the FCS Foundation to Daytona State President Carol W. Eaton in August 2013. Since 2008, over 100 Daytona State College students have benefitted from the Florida Blue Scholarships.
Eastern Florida State College Institute of Nursing
Scholarship Testimonial

With this scholarship reward, I will be able to achieve my personal goals by receiving my RN certification and to continue on to getting my BA in nursing. Having the education, I will be able to give the best care to my patients because of the available educational resources that I was able to purchase with this scholarship in nursing school. My personal goal in nursing school is to maintain a high GPA. To reach my goal I will need to make sure that I’m prepared for all of my tests and assignments. One way I could be prepared is to have the required materials for my classes. Also stress can play a big factor in affecting grades so being picked to receive a scholarship will help relieve my stress when it comes to financial needs.

With this scholarship reward I will be able to achieve my educational goals by being able to buy the necessary resources to further my education. Not being able to afford the necessary material is a stressful headache, so every little bit helps. As we all know it, college school books can be very expensive, so with this money I will be able to purchase a textbook for a course I will be taking this summer. Being a student in nursing program at Brevard Community College is an honor, but at times it can be tough because it is an accelerated program and the grade scales are much higher than other programs, with that being said the necessary material will make it possible to excel in my program. I would like to go on to earn my BA in nursing but to get there I will have to go through the steps. And receiving this scholarship will help me get through the step a little easier.

What this Scholarship means to me is that if you work hard all your hard work will pay off. It’s nice to know that all my hard work has paid off and has been acknowledged. To receive this scholarship gives me a boost of energy that will help me continue to work hard in my classes. It’s an honor to have been chosen for this scholarship. I want to thank you for your generosity and for choosing me out of all of the candidates. It’s nice to know that there are people in this world that try to do good and give to others. I know that this act of kindness will work its way back to the person or persons who donated this money to such a great organization.

I’m writing this letter to personally Thank You for the generous award that I have been offered through the Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship program. I was just thrilled to receive this award unexpectedly and to receive the money in a timely manner, so that I could use it for my classes that I’m currently taking this summer. With this award I will have the extra resources to purchase a textbook that is required and be able to fulfill my expectations as a Nursing student at Brevard Community College*. Again, Thank You for choosing me, this means a lot to me.

Thank you,

Veronica Aguillon

* Eastern Florida State College, formerly Brevard Community College, adopted its current name on July 1, 2013, with the addition of four-year bachelor’s degrees.

“...if you work hard all your hard work will pay off” – Veronica Aguillon
This afternoon, I was informed that I received a $500 Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship for Nursing from The Foundation for Florida’s Community Colleges for the Spring 2012 semester. I am very thankful for this generous gift. I want to say thank you for your consideration for this award and inform you that this award could not have come at a better time.

When tuition for the Spring 2012 semester was due, I was unable to pay for my classes due to being unemployed. My unemployment benefit payments were only a fraction of what my college tuition was and there was no way possible I could pay for it. I had to ask my mother, who was also struggling financially, to pay for my classes. She said she would pay my tuition, which was over $1,000, and buy the books that I needed. Towards the end of the Spring 2012 semester, right before final exams, I was informed that I needed all new tires on my car because there were threads and wires exposed and two of the tires were completely bald. My mother paid for the tires, brakes, and a new battery. She wasn’t happy with me because I was costing her a lot of money. She understood that my car repairs were necessary to get me to and from school and clinicals, which was the only reason she was going to help me. I had a very hard time relying on my mother for the things I needed most and the things I always did for myself in the past. I lost some of my independence and that bothered me since I wasn’t used to having to rely on other people for things I needed.

I passed my classes for the Spring 2012 semester almost two weeks ago. My whole family was excited and happy for me and my accomplishments. It was a rough semester, but I did it, and am very happy that I will be starting my last semester of Nursing school next week. This award came at a time when I truly needed it. Summer 2012 tuition was due yesterday and my mother had to pay it again.

I am so excited to see what my future holds for me. I am looking forward to graduating in August 2012, with my A.D.N. degree and becoming an RN. My dream job is to work as a nurse at a children’s hospital working with children with cancer. Once I decided I wanted to be a nurse, I knew I wanted to work in the field of pediatric oncology. This scholarship couldn’t have come at a better time. I have been struggling financially and feel truly blessed to have received this special gift! I want to say thank you to Blue Cross Blue Shield for their generosity.

I thank you very much for your time and consideration. This scholarship was a true blessing and came at a time I truly needed help. This gift helps me move on in my nursing studies and takes some pressure off of my mom. This award will also allow me to gain some of my independence back. I am looking forward to my future as a nurse and this scholarship will help me accomplish my goals and graduate in August 2012. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Faith Compton
With this letter, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to The Foundation for Florida’s Community Colleges who made the opportunity to receive the Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship Award for BCC nursing program possible. Thank you for the recognition of my efforts in pursuing my goals of becoming an RN and starting my new, exciting career and life as a nurse. I will always be thankful for your generous scholarship award opportunity as it was a surprising gesture. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michael V. Desjardins

Scholarship Testimonial

This scholarship will help me achieve my personal goal by completing the BCC nursing program which will be an important step into my new exciting career pathway of nursing. I would like to thank the BCC Foundation for the opportunity to receive the Blue Cross Blue Shield scholarship award. This generous award will definitely go a long way due to my current non-employment, full-time student status where I am relying on school/government loans that I will have to pay back once I graduate. This great opportunity could not have come at a more perfect time. My goals are to graduate and receive my Associates Degree in Nursing from BCC, then pass the State Board Exam which will allow me to become a registered nurse in the state of Florida. So any funding is a welcomed and a generous act that I will accept whole-heartedly, especially when it is directly helping me achieve my personal goal of becoming an RN and ultimately starting a new and rewarding career. Aside from me being a full-time student, I am also a care-giver of my uncle who lives with me so it is hard for me to work and have an income at this point in time, so again this award helps me financially plus it makes me feel like I am making good decisions when it comes to my future career outlook.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship award will dramatically help me achieve another very important goal, that is education. Education is the foundation that will enable me to be a successful nurse in the future. The importance of obtaining an education cannot be stressed enough. In the medical profession we are dealing with patients’ livelihoods so competence and having a solid education is paramount. However, the time and money involved in the education process can be very rigorous and stressful, but the rewards later in life make it well worth it. So for now I am a stressed out, struggling student, but the nursing program at BCC with the sound education and training they provide is a valuable commodity that Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship award has helped me achieve by their acceptance and generosity. When receiving such an award it makes the whole nursing program experience and me second-guessing myself more justifiable. The recognition that I am doing a good job puts me at ease and just makes me more focused and determined to achieve my personal goal of becoming an RN and starting my new career.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship award means a great deal to me and my loved ones. It puts the whole education and nursing process in perspective. To be acknowledged that I am doing a good job and to be rewarded with my first potential scholarship makes the entire process all that more gratifying and worth it. The nursing program at BCC is not an easy program by any means, so to be rewarded financially and academically is an achievement that I am very proud and honored to be a part of. It’s nice to be recognized for all my efforts and the hard work that I have put in and that is required to complete the nursing program. I was extremely excited and pleasantly surprised to be given this opportunity and scholarship award by the BCC Foundation, it just reinforces that I made the right decision with my new career pathway. I am a returning student who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering 20 years ago and worked in the field for 12 years, but due to poor economic times and lack of urban land development, the civil engineering market has become obsolete. So to choose a new career was not an easy one, and going back to college at the age of 40 was something I knew I had to do. I think I chose the right profession in the medical field as it can have many rewards by providing care to patients. Couple that with the care I have provided for many loved-ones over the years, I knew I made the right choice for my future.
Scholarship Testimonial

Receiving this scholarship has really helped me to achieve my goal of becoming a registered nurse. Being a full-time student in the nursing program requires the devotion of most of my time and effort, which makes it difficult to generate income. I am currently working as home health aide on the weekends; however, because my schedule is so demanding, it has become difficult to balance work and school. Before the nursing program started, I earned around $10 per hour and took home just about $400 every paycheck. Unfortunately, now that I am not able to work as much as I would like to, my paychecks are only a fraction of that amount. Considering that I would literally have to work over fifty hours in order to make the amount of money offered through this scholarship, receiving it greatly lessened the financial burden that I have been experiencing. Not having that added stress has helped me out tremendously, allowing me to focus more of my energy on my clinical and classroom activities. This scholarship has given me a head start toward achieving my long time goal of becoming a registered nurse, and I am truly grateful that I received this wonderful award from Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

This scholarship truly means the world to me, because without the help of organizations such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield, paying for my school expenses would be extremely difficult. Not only has this scholarship provided me with an added financial boost, it has really helped to ease the amount of stress that I am under as a student. Having to worry about paying for books, tuition and other classroom supplies can be very taxing, and often it can lead to a loss of focus due to the amount of pressure. I can remember staying up at night thinking about how little money I had, and how hard it was going to be to pay for upcoming semesters. It caused me to become very frustrated, and in my opinion limited my ability to perform successfully in my core classes. After receiving this scholarship, however, I was able to relax a little bit more, allowing me to devote myself to my schoolwork. It wasn’t long before I started to notice the positive effects on my grades, which came as a direct result of not having to worry so much about money. With this being said, I am truly appreciative to have been awarded this scholarship, and consider these funds to be a great blessing.

Receiving a quality education is very important to me, as it allows me to become the best nurse that I can be. I strive to absorb as much valuable information as humanly possible, in order to better prepare myself for the situations that I will encounter in the field. The funds awarded to me through this scholarship have assisted me to achieve this goal. This scholarship has provided me with additional boost in confidence, which I have used to propel myself through the rigors of the nursing program. I am able to really focus on the task at hand, without feeling strained as result of tuition and other out of pocket expenses I would normally have to pay for. This makes a huge difference in my ability to perform successfully as a student, because I know without a doubt that I will be able to pay for my tuition. Not only has it improved my confidence, but it has really become a motivating factor knowing that there are organizations such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield that help students to attain their dreams. This scholarship allows me to excel as a student, while I take the necessary steps in order to become a registered nurse.

― Angela Dively

Thank you very much for your generous scholarship. I am extremely pleased and grateful. I am a second year nursing student at Brevard Community College and plan on graduating May 2013 with an Associate Degree in Nursing. After graduation, I plan on continuing my education at the University of Central Florida for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

My school work load is challenging and this gift has come at a great time of need. Thanks to you, I have less of a financial burden on my shoulders. I can now concentrate fully on my education. Ultimately, I will be able to give back to the community and make a difference. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Angela Dively
More than two years ago, expecting her second child, her husband lost his job. This forced them to make significant changes, including postponing her advanced education. After receiving her BSN, she decided her goal was to become a good patient care provider and advocate despite the sacrifices involved in advanced studies, financial and otherwise. Ms. Chatzipoulous is a student in the MSN Administration and Financial Leadership track, and looks forward to making a difference in the health care system.

Jaime Chatzipoulous

She began as a Family Nurse Practitioner student and is now a Nursing Education Student. Upon completion, she plans to work with the adolescent and older population within a community setting. Her daughter is a pre-med student also at FAU. Additionally, a year ago her husband had lost his job and is currently working for a company where he barely makes enough income to assist with monthly expenses. Ms. Harry-Hussman used the scholarship to pay tuition and purchase text books.

Maureen Harry-Hussman
Ms. Kamciyan is currently contracted to conduct home health assessments for Medicare beneficiaries. She enjoys working with this population and intends to complete her DNP capstone project with older adults – particularly as it relates to managing their chronic diseases at home. Two of her three adult children live with her and try to assist with expenses. The BCBS scholarship money helped to offset the cost of tuition and books as she still must repay the student loans incurred from her master’s education.

Ms. Jeffery has been a nurse for 12 years and currently works in an ICU unit. She enjoys working with the older population and education on all levels of nursing. Currently she is a charge nurse and clinical coach for the new nurses and graduating nurses. When she decided to return to school pursuing a master’s degree in nursing education, she had no idea how she would pay for her tuition and associated expenses. As a mother of four little children she wants to be an inspiration. Hard work and determination have been her driving force.

Ms. Mercado works in Women’s Health Care. She loves working with babies and children and finds that helping mothers with this exciting time in their lives is truly rewarding. She is the sole provider for her family working full time. At the same time she is going to school pursuing a Master’s degree. Ms. Mercado currently attends the Administrative and Financial Leadership program and will pursue a position that would impact a great number of people both nurses and patients.

If it were not for the assistance of FAU and BCBS nursing scholarships, Ms. Preston would not have been able to continue with school. She has almost completed her ARNP. She is the mother and sole provider of three small boys ages 9, 5, 2. Due to the clinical hours and amount of course content, she cut down to part time at work this last semester.
Thank you, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida for your generosity in the scholarship you offer. I have been interested in the human body ever since I had baby teeth. My mom tells stories of me on my bathroom sink looking at my mouth in the mirror at each tooth and playing dentist with my sister. These stories are just the first of the few stories I can remember. I went to a small private high school where my Anatomy and Physiology teacher, Mr. Brads, made science come alive for me. He taught us about all the amazing functions of the body, and how together, they make the body work. He required us to memorize all the major bones, muscles, and nerves. He had us explain in essay format the parts of the heart and the complete circulation throughout the body. Many students dreaded this class and I never understood why and I never will.

Beyond my interest in the human physiology, I have always had a caring heart. I never wanted to hurt my brother or sister’s feelings and I always wanted to make my friends happy when they were upset. At the time all I could do was talk to them and reassure them everything was going to be OK. Now that I have this opportunity to study nursing at Florida Gulf Coast University I want to use the new skills I learn to help people on a deeper level. I want to learn how to heal someone from physical strains and emotional stress. I want to be a listener to a patient needing to talk to relieve their stress. I believe that I was born to be in nursing field.

I have always desired to do the best that I can in everything I do. I have been involved in sports since I was in kindergarten, playing soccer, tee ball, and basketball. I always had a drive inside me to succeed and win. I never enjoyed the game if I was not playing as well as I knew I could. This desire only became stronger in high school, especially when it came to sports and my grades. I have always been pushed myself to strive for an A on the hardest test of the year. I have always believed in myself because of my parent’s encouragement. I still have that desire for excellence. I am always striving to understand each and every component of every class. I realize now that this is going to be a lifelong career, and I would like to understand enough to also be able to teach my peers.

I am thankful for the support you are offering me. I am ready to excel in this program and I promise that I will put my whole heart into succeeding. I want to be the best Nurse I can be for my patients. Thank you for your generosity and your support in my nursing career. Sincerely,

Will Allnutt
My name is Amanda Ciulla, I am a student attending Florida Gulf Coast University in the School of Nursing. Before explaining a little about myself, I would first like to thank you and express just how grateful I am to be named a recipient of the generous scholarship award provided by your foundation. Receiving the news of this financial award came with shock and excitement. As soon as I had a minute I called my parents to let them know, they too were very excited for me. A scholarship such as this allows me the chance to go about school with a bit more ease. With the soaring price of books we encounter as nursing students each semester, lab fee’s, buying scrubs, medical equipment, etc. The costs in addition to standard tuition billing can be pretty overwhelming. I work part time at a restaurant while attending school. The generosity of this financial award lifts a great weight of the financial burden, allowing me to focus more on my studies.

This spring, I began my first semester as a student admitted into the School of Nursing here at Florida Gulf Coast University. Although it seemed like a long quest to get to this point, I know that the real challenge still lies ahead. Attending the Nursing Student Orientation where the small group of new admitee’s was welcomed by the kind nursing faculty, as well as the current Nursing Student Association was an afternoon that meant more to me than I had expected. Hearing the School of Nursing director congratulate us for being the chosen applicants into the program made me feel proud, feel as though my hard work in the previous semesters was taking me places. Students involved in the Nursing Student Association gave us a short presentation, describing what to expect going through the program, explaining how close we will become with our peers, and just how fantastic the Nursing professor’s are…they truly opened my eyes for what is to come.

I am enrolled in 4 classes this semester, as well as two supplementary lab courses. After taking lots of general education prerequisite classes filling my freshman and sophomore semesters, I could not be more excited to finally embark on courses in which we learn what it is to be a nurse. This semester I have various introduction courses that are focusing on the elements of the nursing practice, such as the importance of positive interpersonal relationships with patients, completing tasks with diligence and precision, and always keeping the well being of those in need at the forefront of our attention. Each of my professor’s has familiarity working as a nurse in a variety of fields, some with elderly patients, some in pediatric care…the common tie that is concurrent throughout all of their experiences in the field is that they are crazy about what they do. Each says that they could not love the job more. They explain that helping people and having that face-to-face interaction is unmatched with any administrative or managerial position that they have had the opportunities to advance to. One professor told us a story just the other day about moving up and up in her department, finally being trusted with the most paramount responsibilities, and upon reaching that point, she wondered, what comes next? It was then, when she was at the top of her department, that she decided to move to another department and start all over again. She explained that nursing is always changing and offers insurmountable opportunities. I look forward to taking my place in this field and doing my part to help the patients for which I am held responsible. With your help, I will put forth my greatest effort to become the best nurse possible.

I again thank you for your substantial generosity.

Sincerely,
Amanda Ciulla
I am so grateful and honored to receive the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida Nursing Scholarship. It was incredibly kind of you and I sincerely appreciate your generosity. I have worked extraordinarily hard throughout my entire educational career and will continue to put forth the effort to reach my goals in college as well.

As a senior in high school, I participated in dual enrollment and took classes at my local community college. This allows me to start my first year at Florida Gulf Coast University with 35 credits. During this experience, I tried to take courses that would really challenge me. The first semester I took Arabic. I surprised myself at how easily I was able to pick up the letters and would possibly like to pursue this language in the future. My favorite courses during this experience were General Biology I and II. These were the courses where I developed my passion for the human body, leading me to major in nursing. I have also taken part in many extracurricular activities such as yearbook, sports teams and clubs. As a senior in high school, I was editor of my yearbook, secretary of class council, captain of the varsity tennis team and a member of Interact and student council. I enjoyed participating in activities to help my school and community and hope to do the same for FGCU. Through these extracurricular activities I have improved my leadership skills, which has helped prepare me for my future career as well.

I have also worked as a lifeguard and swim instructor since I turned 16. Through this I have learned how to interact and communicate effectively with students of all ages ranging from preschool to adult. After about two months of working at my local YMCA, I made my first rescue. This was a life-changing event for me. The thought that the life of someone else was in my hands made my heart race. After that day, I realized that I wanted to help people as a career. I felt that the best way I could do that was to go into a health profession, so I chose nursing. By going into nursing, I will be able to help others all around the world. I hope to study abroad and learn about other people and cultures during my college career. Also, it is one of my dreams to work in a third world country helping those who do not have enough money for adequate healthcare.

Growing up and living in the United States has been the biggest blessing anyone could have and I would like to give back by helping those in need. Blue Cross Blue Shield is such an important part of the healthcare industry. I am proud to say that they have helped me pursue my education in nursing. I have worked hard and pushed myself to reach my goals so far. I am so fortunate for this scholarship, which will not only benefit me, but those who I help after getting my degree. I look forward to the future. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kelsey Coons
I am honored to be one of the recipients of this scholarship. Thank you very much for your generous support in providing the funds I need for school. I am one of three children in my family enrolled in college, which makes it financially difficult on my parents to pay my college tuition. Therefore it is mostly my responsibility to pay for college, and this scholarship is a great assistance in my pursuit of a college education. My family has had many personal financial circumstances we have had to overcome, but God always supplied all of our needs. Throughout the semester I have been in pursuit of on-campus employment that will allow me to continue to support my schooling, as well as assist in providing the additional funds necessary to attend FGCU. While I am thankful for the Stafford loans to students, they only supply part of the total cost of education. Unfortunately, I did not graduate from a Florida high school where I would have been eligible to receive the Bright Futures Award given to students graduating with a 4.0 GPA. Although my dad had relocated to Florida during this time, my grandmother became ill, and my mom and I were not able to join him until a year later when she passed away. This scholarship is of great assistance to me and my family at this time. Thank you for your thoughtfulness in considering me for this scholarship, and I appreciate the help you have provided me with during this academic year at Florida Gulf Coast University.

At FGCU, I am currently involved in Student Government Leadership Development. Being a member of this club, I had the opportunity to attend the Student Leadership Summit 2008: Soar on the Wings of Change. To me, leadership style is learned from mentors, learned in seminars and exists as part of a person’s innate leadership skills developed over years. I am also involved in one of our campus ministries here at FGCU called Ignite. This year I have taken on the role of being a small group leader. I get the opportunity to meet with a group of girls every week and live life out with them.

I have attended Florida Gulf Coast University for two years and my academics are off to a first-rate start. Throughout the years I have been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA in college while also being involved in many other organizations and volunteer opportunities. I am a member of Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society at FGCU. This group recognizes high academic achievement among college students.

In the fall of 2009, I will attend Nursing School at Florida Gulf Coast University. After earning my nursing degree and becoming a registered nurse, I will seek employment at a hospital near my home in West Palm Beach, FL. While there, I hope to work in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It has always been my desire to work with newborns. Since I was in grade school, I have volunteered in the nursery at my church and have always enjoyed taking care of the infants. I think it would be a special experience to work with the premature babies and also provide support to their parents. This job could be upsetting at times, but could also be very rewarding. I know I will be able to make a difference in each family’s life and will be blessed to be a blessing to them.

Besides my career goal to become a registered nurse, it is my heart’s desire to be able to take my education and training to the mission field. I want to be part of a medical team and assist with the care and needs of those in third world countries that do not have the benefits of America’s health care. My hope is to use the professional training that I will receive in nursing school, combined with my compassion for other human beings, to try and change the lives of others for the better.

Thank you again for you generous support in helping me pay for my college tuition. This scholarship is of great assistance to me and my family now, and I hope to be considered for other scholarships in the future.

Sincerely,

Charissa Deckelmann
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity. It is my honor to have been chosen to receive this scholarship. It’s through the thoughtfulness of people like you, that I have been able to get this far through college. With that said, let me tell you a little bit about myself.

My name is Rosemita Delisca and I am in my last year at Florida Gulf Coast University. Originally, I attended Florida Atlantic University; however, I then decided to transfer to Florida Gulf Coast University to enroll in their BSN program in hopes of becoming a Registered Nurse. After I become certified as an RN and gain experience within the field for about a year or two, I plan to attend a graduate program to become a Certified Nurse Midwife. Based on my academic achievement, I was given the opportunity to join the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, the Phi Eta Sigma Chapter, and the Golden Key International Honour Society.

Before I got to this point of my life I had to overcome a lot of obstacles. I grew up in a low income, single parent home all my life. I spent the first 7 years of my life living with my aunt in Haiti because it was hard for my mother to work full time and take care of my brother and me. When I came back to the U.S., I had to learn English and adapt to a whole new culture. I had to grow up fast and become a responsible individual at a young age. While most eleven year olds were enjoying being a kid, I started working in order to help my mother manage the household expenses. I have always worked hard to support myself because I know things are difficult for my mother.

Since then, this is the first year that I had to stop working. I have been faced with many challenges since starting the nursing program. It has required a lot of time and commitment. After my first semester, I came to the realization that I had to sacrifice my job in order to succeed. This decision has not been easy on me because college is very expensive and I know that my mother does not have the funds to financially support my education.

Receiving this scholarship has been one of the best things that have happened to me. It is going to be a tremendous assistance to me. I really appreciate this offer and want you to know that it means a lot to me. It is through these thoughtful gifts that I have come to realize that heroes are really just everyday people.

Gratefully,
Rosemita Delisca
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart for offering me this scholarship. I would be more than happy to accept this offer, THANK YOU! This is the first scholarship I have been ever been offered so I would like to let you know that this means a lot to me. I would like to share a few things about myself with you, so you can learn a little about me. I am a very strong independent individual that decided to go back to school three years ago to get my BSN while working a full-time job as a Licensed Massage Therapist, Esthetician, and Doula. I completed several classes that were required of me for perquisites, in which I achieved a GPA of 3.8 at Florida Gulf Coast University. I worked very hard to raise my GPA up from when I went to college the first time around, a hard lesson learned. During this time, I received an A in both Anatomy & Physiology I & II, during which Dr. Solomon, my instructor, offered me an opportunity to go to a local hospital to see and attend a surgery since I was in the top 10% of my class after mid-terms. This was a wonderful experience, which I will never forget! Another way good grades have paid off for me since I am in the top 15% of my class at Florida Gulf Coast University, the Golden Key Honour Society offered me a membership, which I gladly accepted. This is an achievement that has made me realize where hard work will get you and if you put your mind to a goal you will achieve it. I also applied to go to Guatemala over spring break as a student nurse to assist a village with medical care alongside other nurses and physicians through Florida Gulf Coast University. I was accepted to go over spring break in 2011 but was unable to attend. I re-applied for spring break of 2012 and was accepted, which I am really looking forward to. I think this will be the opportunity of a lifetime as a student nurse to learn more about this wonderful profession I am entering into and how much of a need there is for nurses all over the world. You never know how an experience like this will affect your life in the future but I am looking forward to seeing where it takes my career.

Since starting the BSN program at Florida Gulf Coast University I have had a tough start due to a car accident that I was in on February 5, 2011. A gentleman in a Dodge 2500 t-boned my 2003 Expedition while I was heading south on 776, which caused me to roll several time, and the Jaws of Life had to get me out of the vehicle. Then three weeks later my Aunt was killed in a car accident in Montana so I thank God everyday that I am still alive to complete my goal of achieving my BSN. My grades were affected during the spring semester but to have gotten through the pain and trauma that I have endured over the last three months and still pass all my Nursing classes is a major triumph for me to celebrate. This experience has pushed me even harder this summer to bring my GPA back up so I can be accepted into a Master’s program once I graduate with my BSN. My ultimate goal is to become either a Licensed Nurse Practitioner or Certified Nurse Anesthetist. I am not 100% sure which pathway I will go down but I am sure I will make that decision when that time comes.

Other ways I like to give back is by helping people along with the environment that I live in. I have volunteered hours at the local Englewood Community Hospital. During that time I was able to assist in the emergency department along with delivering lunches to all the patients in the hospital. I also volunteer at Mote Marine Laboratory located in Sarasota, FL by walking our local beaches for turtle patrol. Turtle Patrol Volunteers recognize the different turtle tracks on the beach first thing in the morning, then call in any activities like a new nest or false crawls while at the same time cleaning up our local beaches by picking up trash that has been left behind by recent beach goers.

These are a few ways I like to give back to my community to make our society a better place for everyone. I hope this gives you a little insight into who I am and how much I truly appreciate your generosity. Again, I would like to THANK YOU for this scholarship and I would like to let you know that I will work very hard to make you proud of me for all my future achievements. I will continue to support everyone I meet in my life and share how important it is to give back! I will continue to give you updates as I experience new adventures as a student nurse.

Sincerely,

Keri L. Duff
Dear Sponsor of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida Nursing Scholarship, I would like to take this time to demonstrate my gratitude toward the Blue Cross Blue Shield organization. As a student I am full of excitement everyday as I acquire new knowledge that is bringing me closer to my goal of becoming a nurse. Yet, I see one small obstacle in this pathway to success. As a nursing major, lab fees, clinical attire, tuition, books, among many other expenses are the greatest barrier standing in the road to the success of many students like myself. However, with help from organizations like yours this obstacle becomes easier to overcome.

Additionally, as a cheerleader for the university, I lack the time to have a full-time or part-time job. After practices, workouts, campus events, and games, I spend the remainder of my time continuing my studies. When I entered college my mother told me that I have one full-time job, which is to be a student. From that point, I have exerted all of my effort into becoming successful both inside and outside the classroom. In which your organization’s thoughtfulness is helping me to continue my success in immeasurable ways.

From a young age, I have been a perfectionist and dedicated to whatever goals I set out to achieve. My most recent goal to achieve is receiving my college degree in nursing. As a sophomore I am excited to apply to Florida Gulf Coast University’s nursing program in the spring 2009 semester, which will bring me that much closer to my ultimate goal of becoming a nurse. After completing my two years in the Florida Gulf Coast University nursing program I wish to continue my education and become a nurse practitioner. I am fully aware that this goal will take immense amounts of time, effort, and funds, yet, I am completely dedicated to accomplishing this goal aside of these factors. Overall, I have had a few experiences in life that have assured me that nursing is the perfect job for me, which makes all of the hard work and expenses worthwhile.

I feel that it is important to explain how I realized that nursing became the study of my choice and how I still know that it is the perfect occupation for me. I first knew that nursing would be the perfect occupation when I began volunteering at Gulf Coast Hospital while in high school. I volunteered once a week for four hours each session in the emergency room throughout my summers. I felt an immediate need to help each individual that would come into the ER. As I watched every nurse, doctor, x-ray technologist, IV specialist, among many others, I knew that I was destined to become educated in the field of health and share my caring nature with others.

This desire to become a nurse was recently reinforced this past summer, when my father was in the hospital for three weeks in a medically induced coma. As I sat in the intensive care unit everyday with my father, I would observe each nurse as they carried out their required tasks. Most of the nurses were very caring and concerned about each patient’s needs; however, there were a few nurses that appeared to strongly dislike their job. At this point, I began to think that more devoted and caring nurses are needed in the medical field. I see myself as the perfect candidate to become a nurse that treats patients with the respect and dignity that they deserve. I believe that even one nurse that is rude, disrespectful, or heartless is too many, and I would like to incorporate my compassionate nature into this field.

Once again I would like to thank Blue Cross Blue Shield for your contribution. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated and will be utilized to the fullest extent. As a knowledge seeker I am committed to becoming the most educated and well-rounded nurse possible, which your contribution is helping me to do. I would like to thank you, as my continued success is built on relationships with organizations like Blue Cross Blue Shield. I appreciate your generosity.

Sincerely,

Jennafer Griffith
Dear Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Scholarship Sponsor,

I would like to thank you very much for your dedication through sponsorship of my collegiate career. I am honored to be awarded such a generous scholarship from such an esteemed organization involved in the ever-expanding healthcare field. Thank you to everyone who has put their time and energy into developing and continuing such a program as this.

I am truly overwhelmed with emotion as I near the starting date of my first year of nursing school. Excitement overflows as I prepare for the year ahead and gather all the equipment I will need. I cannot believe that this day has come so soon where I am actually going to be starting hands-on work in the career field that I am so passionate about. The past two years have flown by and although I have accomplished so much, truly I am just starting.

I know new trials and difficulties lay ahead of me both personally and scholastically but I feel that the end result is so worthwhile. I have continually proved to myself that I can make my dreams come true and enjoy the ride along the way. I have far exceeded my own scholastic expectations while attending Florida Gulf Coast University and have been blessed enough to become part of some of the highest honorary societies on campus. These accomplishments, along with your support, have helped increase my enthusiasm for continuing my education.

I am entering the Florida Gulf Coast University School of Nursing in pursuit of a bachelors degree as well as masters. Although I can not say which area of nursing I would like to specialize in because I do not yet have any formal training, in my past hospital internships I enjoyed wound care treatment the most. I found that the nurse’s role in a wound care treatment setting is much more personal and direct than in some other areas of nursing. Due to the nature of wounds, the patient may be in the office once to four times a week which gives the nurse a chance to develop special relationships with the patients.

As you can see, I feel that building a bond with a patient can really help their healing rate. Over my lifetime I have been in the hospital on quite a few occasions, and some were better than others. The times that I had nurses around who actually made me feel like they wanted to help me, not just that they had to, were the times that in what seemed like an unbearable situation I could feel under control. I have had a few strangers touch my life in such a way that I will never forget, and two of them are fabulous nurses who were passionate about their jobs. Unlike a lot of people who become nurses to follow in the family area of employment, my experiences in hospital and doctor office settings was the trigger for my interest in the healthcare field. I wanted to help someone the way I had been and be able to have a job that I could perform for the rest of my life and give back happiness and peace to another soul.

Thanks again for your generosity and devotion to helping up-and-coming healthcare workers pursue their passions so that we can in turn give back and serve you.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Hilliard
I am so grateful to receive this award. The cost of university can be a great financial burden but thanks to organizations like yours I can afford to attend. I am one of five children. This fall, four of us are enrolled in university. My older sister, Carolyn, is an FGCU graduate who is now in her third year of medical school. My younger sister, Christine, is in her third year at Lynn University and my younger brother, Michael, joins me here at FGCU as a sophomore. This is a great financial burden on my family; it is the generosity of such organizations as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida that makes this seemingly unfeasible goal a reality.

Through my studies at Florida Gulf Coast University, I would like to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue a career in nursing. I am not sure which field of nursing I would like to practice yet, but I do know that a nurse’s life is the life for me. My career plans also include getting involved in a non-profit organization such as “Médecins Sans Frontières.” My mentor and my mother Kathy Johnstone donated her time to this organization early in her career. I have seen the difference she makes in many lives and I would like to follow in her footsteps. My future plans would be complete with a family to travel and spend my time with.

Scholarship monies afford me the time to get involved in extracurricular activities rather than spending my time working. I have played an active role in revamping the FGCU Honors Program as an Event Coordinator in 2007 and Treasurer this year. I am a member of the Nursing Student Association FGCU Chapter and I have enjoyed being apart of the Student Government Senate where I served as Senate Pro Tempore.

Outside of school I love to stay active. I compete in triathlons around Florida. I recently competed in the Naples Fitness Challenge Triathlon where I placed first for women aged 20-24. I was raised in a household that stressed the importance of a nutritious, well-balanced diet and physical activity. It is the responsibility of each individual to stay healthy. Many people do not realize the impact they can have on their own health through healthy eating and regular exercise. My parents have always emphasized proper nutrition and physical fitness to me and my siblings. My grandparents have set an example of lifelong fitness; they both enjoy walks and swimming three times a week at 80 plus years of age.

I appreciate any opportunity I get to wind down after a long day of class, meetings and exercise. This usually involves a nice hot cup of tea with my mom and an episode of House or Law and Order. I love to go for walks in the evening when it’s quiet around my neighborhood, take in a little night air and gaze at the stars. I also like to get out with my friends on the weekend. A night out generally entails a hockey game or a get-together at one of my friends’ houses. These chances to relax and get my mind off school work are what keep me motivated and on task when it is time to get back to the daily grind.

I could not have this full, well-rounded lifestyle without your incredible generosity. Thank you for your tremendous support in helping me reach my goal of becoming a nurse.

Sincerely,

Andrea Johnstone
Thank you for your generous scholarship. What a wonderful surprise, and such perfect timing. I am heading into my last semester, and every penny I have is going toward school and money to take my boards.

I would like to tell you a little about myself and my goals. I was born in 1959 and grew up in a small coastal town in North Carolina. My mother was an LPN who raised four girls by herself. Most people considered us poor, but our family ties were stronger than any monetary challenges we faced. My mother always taught us to share and be of service to others. During my youth, seeking adventure and being curious about other cultures, I left the south and traveled extensively throughout Central America and Europe. Through my travels, I developed a love for cultural diversity and became interested in disenfranchised populations.

Instead of graduating from high school, I obtained a GED, but that did not stop me. I eventually relocated to south Florida, and through a NAVY scholarship, graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Florida International University. While in nursing school, I volunteered at HIV/AIDS clinics in Miami, helped in Homestead after Hurricane Andrew, and became directly and politically involved in making changes for the homeless population in Broward County, Florida.

My 16 years of nursing include ICU, Pediatrics, Medical Surgical, Post Partum, Labor and Delivery, Orthopedics, ER, and Primary Care. I served in the U.S. NAVY for 5 years as an Officer and RN. My career has been rewarding. I have worked in prisons with dying inmates, provided care to high-ranking navy officers, helped train military staff for field trauma, and worked in rural Emergency Departments. Of all my experiences, the most rewarding has been working in rural underserved medical populations.

In 2007, I returned to graduate school to fulfill a lifelong goal, of obtaining a Master’s of Science in Nursing degree and work as a primary-care Family Nurse Practitioner in a rural community. I did complete one year of graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) but chose to withdraw and relocate to southwest Florida to be with family. While at UNCG, I maintained a 4.0 GPA and worked as a graduate assistant. When I transferred to Florida Gulf Coast University, I made a commitment to continue striving for academic excellence. As a full-time graduate student, I have maintained a 4.0 GPA for the past year. To maintain this type of excellence, I took a year off from work, so finances have been very tight. That is one reason this generous award from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is so important: It will help me continue my goal of academic excellence.

When I graduate, I plan to work in a Federally Qualified Community Health Center as a primary-care Family Nurse Practitioner and be part of the solution for improving access to care and decreasing health disparities. Thank you again for the scholarship and recognizing my commitment to academic excellence. Hard work certainly does pay off.

Sincerely,

Lucretia P. Newkirk
I, Brittany Orlick, would like to personally thank you for awarding me this scholarship. You have no idea how much this means to me. I have worked extremely hard over the past several years to maintain my grade point average above a 4.2 (graduating Suma Cum Laude), active in varsity sports since my freshman year and participated in relay for life and other volunteer projects (awarding me the silver cord for hours of volunteerism). Any amount of money will help me toward my aspirations of going to college. You are very generous in giving this award. I’m positive that there are other people out there who were just as excited to be receiving the same email that I did. I was both shocked and delighted when I received a call from the woman at the Financial Aid Office, telling me that I had received a scholarship and she would be sending me the email soon to tell me more about it.

I will be using this money towards classes and books. This will help, with the increased cost of getting a higher education as I am not currently working. Luckily, Florida Gulf Coast University is not too far from my home (approximately an hour) so I will be commuting. Although it is an hour away, it is worth it to me because my mother does not have to pay for housing on campus. This way she will only have to pay for gas instead of a place to live. With her being a single parent it is hard for her to deal with the financial side of college. She has tried to give me everything I have ever wanted even when she wasn’t in the best financial position to do so. My mother is also very happy and thankful for this award due to the fact that she is having a hard time figuring out how to pay for all of this. I feel blessed and thankful for this scholarship, as every bit helps. My mother also would like to send her thanks, she has told me that every dollar helps and she is just as grateful as I am.

I have watched my mother my whole life pursue her career as an RN which is what has influenced me to go into the nursing program. This award is enabling me to pursue my dreams of becoming a nurse and have the ability to help others in the healthcare industry. I appreciate this act of giving and will use it wisely to pursue my goals and dreams of becoming an RN. I do plan on continuing my education to receive a master’s degree and the title of ARNP. As I begin this new journey in my life, I will remember that you assisted me in the first few steps to getting started. I am both excited and scared to begin college. This is truly an honor and a wonderful surprise. Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your generosity will not be wasted, but used wisely to assist me in accomplishing my goals and dreams.

Sincerely,

Brittany Alexis Orlick
Thank you so much for the scholarship, you have no idea how much it means to me. College is very expensive and that can sometimes hold people back from even going to college. I am so glad that there are people like you in the world that are willing to help people without even knowing them. The money that I receive from this scholarship is not only going to help me now, but it is going to help in my future because without this scholarship, I probably would not be going back to Florida Gulf Coast University. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Thank you!

I did not think I was going to be able to go back to Florida Gulf Coast University this year due to financial reasons. My family is middle class and my mom and dad are getting ready to retire, so they need to save their money for that and not give it all to me. They have helped me the past two years, but this year it is almost impossible. With the help of this scholarship I am able to continue to further my education and enjoy the college experience. I am majoring in Nursing and it is a tough program, so it is good to know that I do not have to worry about money. I plan on getting my Bachelor’s in Nursing and hopefully to go back to school to get my Master’s. Over the summers I babysit two little girls and love it, so I hope to be able to work with small children or babies once I graduate.

I love being involved in the school community, so that is why I became a cheerleader there. We cheer at every men’s and women’s basketball game and do charity events all over Fort Myers. We do cancer walks, hunger walks, and relief programs; it is a great feeling to help out. I have been cheerleading since I was about eight years old and I was so excited that I was able to be a cheerleader for Florida Gulf Coast University. Being a cheerleader not only makes me involved with the school, but it gets me involved with the community as well. All the fans that come out to the games mainly live in the community, we love them and it is so much fun to get to know them.

In high school, I graduated with a 3.0 GPA which qualified me for the Bright Futures Scholarship and that has helped me tremendously. I have worked really hard and kept my grades up and maintained a 3.5 GPA. I am in Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society and on the Dean’s list. I have worked really hard and I am grateful for everything I have earned. I really hope all my dreams can come true and to have encounters with more people like you. One day, I hope to have enough money to sponsor college students and help them get through college, so they can also follow their dreams.

In closing, I am so thankful for this scholarship. It has enabled me to go back to Florida Gulf Coast University and has given me so many opportunities. Please know that this is the best thing I could ever ask for. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Anne Purdin
I would first like to sincerely thank all of who were involved in granting me the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida Nursing Scholarship. I would like to explain to all of you just how helpful this scholarship is and how thankful I am.

I had many obstacles to overcome in my life beginning with my birth. I was born with an inefficient esophagus that needed immediate attention in order for my life to be spared. After six months of surgeries and careful observation by hospital faculty I survived and made it home with two feeding tubes until I was two years old.

I was fairly mature for my age as I grew older and even though I was not the most astute student in my earlier years, I was the most determined. I knew at a fairly young age that nothing was going to impede my learning or my ability to better myself as a person. I later had another personal challenge to overcome that probably kept me as determined as I am today, my parent’s divorce. I realized for the first time in my life I needed to take full responsibility for myself and assist my mother in paying the bills. This experience allowed me to be thankful for everything I have been given in life because I realized just how quickly it could be taken away from me.

I put my personal experiences behind me when I began college, but I remembered all that was done for me when I was born. I wanted to provide the same service that I received when I was in the hospital. I decided to go into health care and changed majors throughout different parts of healthcare until I stopped at nursing.

In my pre-nursing semesters I received a math scholarship three times in a row at Seminole Community College in Calculus I, II, and III, even though nursing did not require these classes. I realized even though I loved math I wanted a career that would bring me gratification in my life and truly help those in need.

I intend to eventually become a CRNA after working for a couple years as a critical care nurse helping those that need it the most. I am willing to do whatever it takes to become a CRNA and scholarships like these get me that much closer to my goal. I am fortunate enough to have been awarded the Bright Futures Scholarship, which pays for the majority of my schooling but living is very difficult to afford even with a part time job. If it was necessary to take out the loans to ensure my education then that is what I would do, but luckily there are scholarships like these and people that award these scholarship like you that make life on middle class college students a little easier.

I hope this gives you an idea of all that I have struggled through, but these struggles have made me a stronger better person and a more appreciative person as well. I am truly thankful for this scholarship and again would like to express my gratitude.

Thank you,

Mitchell Rachman
I want to take the time to thank you for the support you have shown for me in giving me this scholarship. I cannot tell you how blessed I am as a student to know that someone supports me as I work toward becoming a nurse. With this money I can focus more time and energy into my nursing classes. Your generosity means the world to me. Because of your support my parents and I will not have to work as hard to get me through college. I cannot express how grateful I am for your support and hopefully one day I can repay your organization back with the type of nursing care I was taught and truly love. I thank you once again for your support. I could not do this alone.

I would like to also take this time to give you some information about my life and future goals. I came to the United States at the age of five, English is my second language and it has been a hard road for me in school. I have always been taught the value of education by my family. They worked so hard to be here and to bring me up right. I hope one day I can also repay them by making them proud of me and honoring my family.

When my brother graduated college from Stony Brook University in Long Island, New York they were in tears knowing their hard work and sweat had paid off. I not only want to graduate in nursing for myself but for my family. I want them to know their sweat and pain has not gone to waste. They are proud of me for the success I have achieved in college. I have worked very hard and chose a major that they feel will bring honor. I believe nursing is a very honorable job with the care we provide to patients. Our care for patients is therapeutic not only physical but holistically. Even though I am a male, I have always loved to work with people and talking to individuals. The concept of teamwork is extremely important in nursing. I hope to one day influence others to be part of a team.

The next semester is going to be a lot of hard work. But I believe I can do it. I have always given 110% in this program. I have gotten straight Bs so far, and I feel very accomplished knowing I give everything I have and I don’t give up. That is the most important part to me. I will experience a lot of different clinical situations next semester such as dealing with children and babies for the first time. I am OK with babies, but I have always had a fear of children. My goal by the end of the next semester is to put aside my fears and give the best care. I want to have the best experience in my clinical time and learn as much as I can. Nursing is a never ending learning experience. Hopefully I can come back to FGCU to be part of the master’s program in nursing. My future plans are to work full time taking a year off of school to gain the experience I need for the master’s program. I have not found my calling yet in what field of nursing I am going to go into, but most likely I will be starting out in the medical-surgical unit. I am not sure which master’s program I want to enroll in. I have been debating between the nurse anesthetist program or the acute nurse practitioner program. Whichever field I decide to enter in the future I could not have done without your organization. I want to thank you again; this money will be put to good use. My education is very important to me. Without it I would be lost and my family would not be as proud of me. So on behalf of my family and myself I want to say your kindness and generosity will give me a brighter future and a brighter tomorrow. Thank you!

Yours truly,

Xin Wang
Once again I would like to start with expressing the gratitude
and appreciation I feel toward Blue Cross Blue Shield of
Florida. As I continue to progress in school it seems as though
my all of my hard work and dedication is finally paying off. I
cannot even begin to explain the appreciation I have for this
organization. It makes me feel very accomplished to know that
others have acknowledged my hard work and are willing to
reward me for it.

This summer I have big plans. While most students are at
home relaxing or maybe working a summer job, I will be here
taking a couple classes so that I will achieve the goals I have
set for myself. This summer I will be taking pharmacology,
and adult health I. To be entirely honest I am a little bit
nervous for these classes. I have been told that they, along
with pathophysiology, are the most challenging classes in
the nursing program. But if I want to graduate on time taking
these two this summer will keep me on track for graduation.
Not only will I be taking summer classes but I will also be
working as a Resident Assistant for FGCU Campus Housing
and Resident Life. This past school year was my first year “RAing” and I really enjoyed it. Even though
it can be at times very time consuming I feel very honored to be trusted with such responsibilities and
wouldn’t trade the experience for anything. This summer will most definitely be a huge hurdle to jump
over, but I have faith in my abilities and even though it will be a challenge I know I will be just fine.

I look forward to the years to come and the knowledge I will attain along the way. With this sense of
premature self-confidence I recently found, I see an ambitious future for myself. Ultimately, I plan to
continue my education towards a doctorate in nursing. In just under five years I see myself working as
a nurse practitioner in the area of cardiology. I would love to eventually work as a professor teaching
students just like me going through the nursing program so I may have the chance to have a positive
impact on students just as my nursing professors had on me. I am greatly appreciative of all who have
guided me throughout my unique educational journey. I attribute this to the love and help of my
family, the great help I’ve received from FGCU’s Adaptive Services, and my increasing determination.
Every year I have been striving to do better than the last. I can’t begin to express how great it feels to
successfully see this effort result in “straight A” grades which is always a high priority of mine. I am proud
of the person I am becoming and for the challenges placed before me that I must constantly overcome.
It can be truly defining once you learn to triumph over them.

I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me, the grace you have shown and the financial
support you have shared via this scholarship. I am the oldest of four, and my family constantly struggles
with the financial demands of supporting all of us. Your generosity contributes to my ability to continue
on in college, as I have to work to help with my education and living expenses. The gift of your
scholarship means much more to me than I could ever adequately express to you. Thanks again and
God bless you all.

With gratitude,

Emily R. Yawman
Cecilia Chandler

Cecilia graduated in 2003 with her MD degree from the University of Guayaquil, Ecuador.

“I will be a nurse because I want to make use of the knowledge I acquired in medical school, the skills developed through my career and working with the ill, and because I believe I have qualities that will make me a great nurse.”

Nancy Marie Confident

Nancy was originally from Haiti. She completed her Medical Degree in Mexico at the Instituto Politecnico Nacional School in 2003. She is currently working as a Monitor Tech at Edward White Hospital in St. Petersburg, FL.

“I always had a great respect for nurses, and now guess who is going to be one?”

Ikram Berry

Ikram is from Lebanon but went to medical school in Russia because of the war in her country. She graduated in 1992 from the First I.P. Pavlov State Medical Institute of Leningrad.

“I prefer studying nursing which is within the medical field. After getting the Bachelors in Nursing, I want to continue studying to get my PhD.”

Nancy Marie Confident
Scholarship Testimonial

My parents moved to the USA in 1992 with six children. They worked the most undesirable jobs in an effort to put food on the table. Because of their experience, they’ve vowed to instill the importance of education in us, in hopes of great things for our future. However, they were not equipped with the necessary tools to facilitate those desires. Though they did not know what needed to be done and nor did we, their message and personal experience were strong enough to motivate us to search for an alternative path. I started off in school of technology and became an LPN many years ago. There, I was briefly exposed to CRNA as a career option, became fascinated with the field, and made it my goal to someday become a nurse anesthetist. I was the first of six to start college in 2000. I encountered many downs as I navigated my way in the unfamiliar college scene. My father passed away in 2001 to cancer, never to fully see his dreams of his children becoming something in life realized. My academic performance began to improve due to a promise I made to myself that my parents’ hard labor would not be in vain. I paved the way for my younger siblings to also attend college with better success using my mistakes as learning tool. I gradually continued my career in the nursing profession, acquiring an associate degree as an RN in 2007, and BSN in 2010. Through dedication and hard work, I was able to raise my GPA from 2.0 to 3.15. This was not easy by far considering that I was married and had a sick child with multiple health conditions, who was referred to by his pediatrician as one of the most ill patients he had ever had. I later had a second child and had to juggle work, home, and school.

During all of my trials up to this date, I have always worked full time in an effort to support my family, while remaining active in the community with the youth of my local church for over 10 years. Once my objectives became clearer, I looked into the requirements for CRNA schools. I started working in the ICU in 2008, taking a $5.00 hourly pay cut, even though my husband now was unemployed. Soon my husband found himself in and out of the workforce, more often out than in. In 2010, I encouraged my husband to stay at home and just go to school. I realized that even though we may suffer today, our education is the most important key for opening the doors of tomorrow. This was not an easy decision for my husband, however, he quickly realized the veracity in my proposal. I found myself in another role as his tutor. He will be graduating with his associate degree this Fall with a 3.99 GPA. Because of my personal goal of becoming a CRNA, having stored up liquid assets became vital. I often worked overtime in an effort to save, while being a student myself, with an average of 4 hours of sleep daily. Through self-discipline, perseverance, and religion, I’ve tread up a path of success both academically and in my career. I will never be able to save as much as I want, but I have already surpassed what spectators from the outside looking in would expect.

I once heard that faith is taking a step forward when you don’t even see the staircase. My life has been lived by faith, and I know that God can provide and always will. I have set an example for my children to know that anything is possible once you’ve set your mind to it, and when obstacles arise, you just have to be like water, “when you can’t go through it, go around it.” I have always worked and paid out-of-pocket for both my education and my husband’s. Any source of financial assistance would be a gift from heaven to me and my family. Thank you for your consideration.

Jeanette Coutageux
Tatyana Golub

Tatyana graduated with her MD from Irkutsk State Medical University, Irkutsk, Russia, in 1998 and was a Fellow in Pediatrics at the Irkutsk Regional Children’s Hospital, Irkutsk, Russia from 1998 to 2000. Her interest in nursing is critical care.

“In 2004, we participated in the Green Card Lottery. I started work as a surgical assistant in Central Florida. I like my job but I also feel that I have the potential to make more of myself because of my medical knowledge.”

Miriam Diaz-Walker

Miriam completed her medical studies in Mexico in 1992 from the Autonomous University of Guadalajara.

She has worked as a case worker, health promoter and educator for the migrant workers community in Central Florida.

“Since I was a child, I had an attraction to people in white uniforms, particularly nurses. I saw the good job of a good caring and well dedicated nurse. This created a great impact on my never forgotten nursing profession.”

C. Victoria Framil

I would like to thank you for the generous gift that is allowing me to pursue my Doctorate of Nursing Practice at Florida International University. As part of the University’s inaugural class, I am excited to usher in this new program. Upon receiving my degree in December 2013, I will continue on at FIU as a professor. I believe strongly in educating our health care professionals and elevating the nursing profession.

Thank you again for this great opportunity.

C. Victoria Framil
MSN, ARNP-BC
DNP class of 2013
Nestor Guerrero

Nestor graduated from the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henriquez Unena in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. He is currently working at a hospital in Tampa in ancillary roles.

“I have seen first-hand the difference that nurses make in caring for a patient and their families and friends. And I feel that with my medical background and training as a nurse I could give so much to so many.”

Grecia Ibarra

Grecia graduated with her MD degree from Universidad Lisandro Alvarado, Barquisimeto, Venezuela in 1987 and specialized in Hematology at the Hospital Universitario de Los Andes, Merida, Venezuela in 1992. She also holds a Masters in Health Administration from Webster University, Webster Groves, Missouri, which she attained in 2005.

“I love being by my patients’ sides, serve them, be compassionate, help them, and make them feel that I’m there to help them live a quality life. I enjoyed being a physician and now I want to become a nurse because first, it will allow me to get back into the field and second, because it will allow me to experience the other side of patient care.”

Damir Hercinovic

Damir was a physician from the Republic of Bosnia. He completed a medical degree from the University of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1989 and came to the U.S. in 1993. He has been operating a produce market in Florida.

“I learned about the Foreign-Educated Physician to Nursing Program at FIU and have been interested ever since. The idea of working in the medical field again and helping sick people has made me excited. I feel like a man who has found his camel in the middle of the desert, a camel that he lost a long time ago without hope of ever finding it again.”

Grecia Ibarra

Grecia graduated with her MD degree from Universidad Lisandro Alvarado, Barquisimeto, Venezuela in 1987 and specialized in Hematology at the Hospital Universitario de Los Andes, Merida, Venezuela in 1992. She also holds a Masters in Health Administration from Webster University, Webster Groves, Missouri, which she attained in 2005.

“I love being by my patients’ sides, serve them, be compassionate, help them, and make them feel that I’m there to help them live a quality life. I enjoyed being a physician and now I want to become a nurse because first, it will allow me to get back into the field and second, because it will allow me to experience the other side of patient care.”
Marco Minaca

Marco graduated from the Central University of Ecuador in 1991. He was a surgeon. “I want to be the Good Samaritan who sees a wounded man on the road and without hesitation proceeds to help him, rejoicing that he has literally saved a man from death. I want to continue viewing my life with that perspective.”

Zarina Khodzhieva

Zarina graduated in the Tajik Abu-Ali Ibn-Cina (Avicена) State Medical University in 2006. She currently works as a Certified Nursing Assistant at St. Petersburg General Hospital. “My life-long dream was to become a doctor. At this time, I would like to take classes at FIU to become a RN.”

Servet Ozsoy-Tursucu

Servet is from Turkey, completed her MD degree at the Istanbul University in 1978, and practiced as an anesthesiologist for a number of years. “My professional goals are to get a good education in nursing, continue in the medical field, help sick people, and find a job that makes enough money for me to support my family.”
Eight years ago I embarked on a life-changing journey as I left for Ukraine to serve as an English Teacher with the United States Peace Corps. After the successful completion of an HIV/AIDS awareness week for the three schools in my town, I knew I wanted to continue serving the underserved both locally and abroad once I returned home. With a long time passion in community health, global health and health education, I began my prerequisites for what I believe is the ultimate altruistic profession: nursing. While completing my nursing degree, I had the opportunity to satisfy my passion in global health as I completed my last semester in Uganda.

At the local public hospital in Kampala, Uganda, I saw first-hand the hardships nurses and doctors face every day in the developing world: lack of medical supplies, short staffing, overcrowding, etc. I learned heart-breaking but important skills: how to be resourceful, how to triage and how to stay mentally focused amongst such injustice. The brilliant nurses and doctors I worked with do great things with so little. Their hardships are difficult to fix without monetary assistance, however, improvements can be made through education because education is sustainable.

In the United States we are fortunate to have access to the latest technology, theories and research. In the future I hope to give back to our global community by bridging the education gap, providing resources and education which are readily available here. Upon graduation I hope to become a successful nurse practitioner working in a community clinic or family practice, acquiring the skills needed to become a successful nurse philanthropist.

Now as I begin this journey towards primary care, I am honored to be studying at a university that shares the same passions as mine, in community and global health. I am determined to make my dreams a reality by working full time while I complete my Master’s degree. However, I already face great financial hardship as I struggle to pay the student loans which I acquired both from my undergraduate degree at the University of Florida and my Bachelor in Nursing at Johns Hopkins University. A scholarship from FIU would not only be an honor but also lessen the financial burden which I face monthly. Thank you for considering my scholarship application. I look forward to hearing from you and beginning this journey of higher education.
Yanet Perez

Yanet obtained her Medical Degree from Universidad FCM Mariana Grajales, Holguin, Cuba, in 1996. Since she came to the U.S. in 2004, she has worked as ER tech and a manager at a doctor’s office. “I have a great interest in becoming a nurse. I have been involved in the medical field for a long time. I have a great passion for medicine and I love to help others.”

Jorge Pena-Rondon

Jorge obtained his MD degree from the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 1981. He also had post-graduate studies in Hospital Management and Health Administration studies from Javeriana University, Bogota, Colombia. He currently works at Edward White Hospital as a Nurse Tech in the Progressive Care Unit. “I would like to become an RN because the RN plays an important role in the American Healthcare System and their job opportunities are very wide and diverse in many areas. I feel that I have very much to offer if I would be given the chance to join the American health services as an RN.”
Peter Stoyanov

Peter graduated with his Medical Degree from the Thracian University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. He currently works as a cardiac monitor tech at one of the hospitals in Tampa.

“All my life I have been working in the health care system and I see my future only as a health care worker. To become a nurse is a very important step for me in my development, maybe the biggest keystone in my way to fulfill my goals.”

Peter Stoyanov

Lenka Sulova-Anderson

Lenka graduated in 1998 with her Medical Degree from the Masaryk's University in Czech Republic.

“The most important reason I decided to apply for your program is my passion for medicine. I am ready to get back to the medical field. I think I can best utilize my broad knowledge and experience in your program.”

Lenka Sulova-Anderson
It is with great honor and gratitude that I accept the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Nursing Scholarship. I do not take it lightly that I was chosen as the recipient for this notable scholarship award, as I’m sure there were plenty of eligible candidates. I can assure you that the funds will be used to continue my accelerated nursing education at Jacksonville University, after which I will pursue an astounding career in the field of nursing. Again, I sincerely thank you for this opportunity and assure you that this award serves as a catalyst which will allow me to continue to strive for excellence.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Anita Carter

“... I assure you that this award serves as a catalyst which will allow me to continue to strive for excellence.” - Lindsay Anita Carter
Claudia received the BCBS scholarship while enrolled in the MSN with a specialty track of health systems leadership. At the time of the award she was the Chief Nursing Officer at Mercy Hospital in Miami, FL. Claudia retired from this role and began to teach in a university setting in the area of healthcare leadership and management.

Triffina received the BCBS scholarship while she was attending the MSN with a specialty track of nursing education. At the time of the award she was a staff nurse at Broward General. After completion of her graduate degree she transferred to the staff development department where she is involved with all aspects of education. In 2010 she applied to NSU for an adjunct faculty position in entry level and worked for us one semester.

Bruce was a student in the MSN program in the specialty track of health systems leadership when he received the BCBS scholarship. He continued to work for the Memorial Healthcare System in the step down unit. Bruce was an officer in Sigma Theta Tau and recently applied to the military.
Steve Seeley

Steve was a MSN student in the health systems leadership track when he received the BCBS scholarship. At the time of the award Steve was the Executive Director for Inpatient Services at Holy Cross Hospital. After graduating from the MSN program Steve became the Chief Nursing Officer at Jupiter Medical Center. This year he received the Nursing Leadership Award by the South Florida Organization of Nurse Executives.

Denise Howard

Denise was a MSN student in the nursing education track when she received the BCBS scholarship. She went on to enroll in the DNP program at Nova Southeastern University. She is employed at NSU and an adjunct professor in the RN to BSN program. Denise has developed the SSI enrichment series that helps to support academic success for the nursing students obtaining their BSN degree.

Deborah Saylor

Deborah was a student in the MSN program in the specialty track of Health Systems Leadership. She was the Chief Nursing Officer for Holy Cross Hospital when the scholarship was awarded. After graduating from the MSN program she went on to become the Senior Vice President for Nursing at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, Georgia. Two years ago she was awarded the nurse leader of the year in Georgia.
I would like to take a moment to sincerely thank you for your scholarship award for the registered nursing program at Pensacola State College. Without your assistance, my second semester would not have been possible. I am truly appreciative of your help. I look forward to completing my studies and serving my community in the nursing capacity. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Darla Kelley
I was recently awarded a $500.00 scholarship through the Florida Blue Scholarship Foundation. This award was greatly appreciated as I have been struggling financially. I drive 90 miles one way to school (I’m the only one in my class who has to drive this far) and with the fuel prices being so high, I have to pay out approximately $100.00 a week for gas. By receiving this award, it has helped me by going towards my tuition, therefore, it has freed up money that I had to pay out for gas. Thank you again for selecting me for the Florida Blue Scholarship. This is just one step close to helping me complete RN school.

Sincerely,

James R. Carter

Receiving the Florida Blue/Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholarship helped to ease my worries about how I was going to pay for school and allowed me more focus on becoming the best nurse I can be.

Marian Renee McClure

To the members and staff at Florida Blue: Words cannot begin to express how much I truly appreciate the generosity at Florida Blue. Being a scholarship recipient, I am able to continue my educational dream without creating a hardship in my family budget. My educational goal is to receive my Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. Thank you so much for the opportunity to continue to learn and improve my knowledge in the nursing profession.

Rachel Bradley
I was a Human Resources Manager for 9 years before staying home with my first child after having several miscarriages. My second child was born with rare cranial and brain stem abnormalities, and my husband and I found ourselves thrust into a scary, often intimidating new medical realm. We have worked hard to make our children’s lives as normal as possible, and we have sought the best medical treatments possible for our second child, leading to treatment at All Children’s Hospital (for all general care and NYU Medical Center for cranial surgery). While this has resulted in many medical bills and debt, we are thrilled that he is thriving and attends a regular 3rd grade class (accompanied by a nurse) and is able to participate in cub scouts. However, my son continues to have a trach, feeding tube, and must sleep on a ventilator. In 2009, I finally felt he was stable enough to me to attend St. Petersburg College to get my prerequisites in order to pursue my RN. My husband and I have limited nursing coverage, so one of my biggest obstacles was first making the big leap to return to school. Other obstacles include sleep deprivation, and keeping up with my son’s ongoing medical needs and appointments while attending a challenging nursing program. I am very thankful to have the support of my husband and children (they think it is fun that Mom has lots of homework too!).

Kerry Carlisle
I graduated high school in 1989. Being only the second person in my family to have ever graduated high school, my parents saw my accomplishment as enough to get me through life. My dream was to attend college. In the late 80’s a student had to rely on guidance counselors to help them navigate the world of financial aid and college applications. Unfortunately, having a mother that showed up to parent teacher conferences drunk and a stepfather known to do drugs did not put me on the top of the list of students that the counselors thought of as college material. I naïvely thought that having tests scores in the 99th percentile across the board would help them see me as more than what my parents were. To no avail, I was told that I was not college material by the counselors. With no one else to turn to, I joined the U. S. Navy in an effort to not follow in the footsteps of my parents. Enlisting in the U.S. Navy was the single best decision I have ever made. While in the service, I dedicated myself to being the best Aviation Electrician. Even then there were challenges. Women were just starting to join the ranks in the Aviation field. The school I went to had 600 men for every woman on base and first squadron 600 men and 10 women. We were some of the first women to work on the flight deck of aircraft carriers, well before we were officially allowed to be stationed on a carrier. The work was challenging and I quickly learned that the guys did not care about having women around as long as they did their job. While in the service, in 1992, I got the call that my mother had been murdered by her ex-boyfriend. As hard as that was to deal with, it was confirmation that I had made the right decision in not following in my parents’ footsteps and finding my own way in life.

After leaving the U.S. Navy in 1994, I was lucky enough to have 2 beautiful children. I was a stay at home mother for many years taking care of my daughter and son that has autism. At the time, I mistakenly thought that my children needed me too much for me to start taking classes. Monday, April 28, 2008, was the day that I realized I had been terribly wrong. That was the day that my 45-year-old husband had a stroke. Then on Friday, May 2, 2008, I was on the way to pick him up from the hospital and got a call from a friend that our house was on fire. In the course of one week, I went from having a great home, a husband that worked very hard to take care of his family and 2 great kids, to having no home, a husband that would no longer be able to work and 2 kids that were traumatized by events that had unfolded. That was definitely the wakeup call that I needed.

My education is a dream that has been ever present throughout my life, but one that I deemed to be too selfish to indulge in. My new reality showed me that I needed to not only get into the workforce but be able to ensure I could earn enough to support my family. My first challenge was to get my family in a home, buy new things, help the children cope and get my husband relatively healthy. The first three proved to be easier than the last. My husband’s health took a turn for the worse when he got a MRSA infection. His health, we thought, was finally stable enough for me to start classes for the spring term of 2009-2010 school year.

I have been taking classes full-time since then, summers included. I have maintained a 3.852 GPA so far having received a “B” in one class (much to my dismay) all while being a full time caregiver for my husband and the normal demands of being the mother of a child with added challenges. Since starting classes, my husband has had total of 3 surgeries and usually between 2 and 6 doctor appointments a week. While there are many challenges that I have overcome and continue to deal with, nothing will stop me attaining my goals. Financial reasons would be the only thing that could slow me down.

Allison Mammen
St. Thomas/University of Miami Joint Nursing Degree Program
Ashley Gutierrez

My name is Ashley Gutierrez and I am currently attending St. Thomas University. I am writing this letter to thank you for your generosity and donation. I am greatly thankful to be chosen as one of the recipients of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Florida Scholarship. As soon as I discovered that I was receiving this scholarship, I quickly told my parents the good news. My parents are extremely proud of me (thanks to you) and for that, I cannot thank you enough.

I just started my second year at St. Thomas University. Last year, I changed my major from Biology to Nursing and I have no regrets. Nursing is a career that makes me eager to finish school and begin working in the Neonatal field. Thankfully, this scholarship will give me more encouragement than what I started with. Again, thank you so much.

Erin Dunston

I am honored to be the recipient of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Florida Scholarship. With your help I will attend St. Thomas University as a freshman for the 2012-2013 school year.

I appreciate your confidence in me and willingness to contribute to my future education. I am in the pre nursing program with St. Thomas University and the University of Miami. I would like to thank you for lightening my financial burden which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of school, learning. I appreciate your confidence in me and willingness to contribute to my future education.

Erin Dunston
Nursing is a profession not defined by traditional boundaries. The sheer nature of the profession sets it apart from all others. Interestingly enough, despite a long history with pioneering leaders, a central foundation is lacking. Because of this, professional nursing has extensive room for growth and a bright future with many opportunities. In the near future, the forces that guide me to the professional and academic challenges of nursing will focus on education. A bachelor’s degree will be required for entry-level nursing. This will lend credibility where it is needed most, at the core where it affects future nurses. For as long as I could remember I have been taking care of people. When I was only eleven it was my job and duty to come home and help my brother and sister with their homework and cook dinner.

My name is Lizzette Chanti Massey. I was born at Bronx Municipal Hospital on September eighteen nineteen eighty-three. I am of Puerto Rican descent, born and raised in Bronx, New York. It was not until I turned eleven that I moved here to Miami with my mother, two sisters, and brother. My mother was a single mom who struggled to give us all that we needed. She never gave up and I admire her for that. Because of her I am the person that I am today.

At the age of sixteen I became pregnant with my first born, Desiree, then eleven months later I had my second child, William. Since then I have been a full time mother, student and employee. I started off working at Tallahassee Community Hospital as a critical care technician in the Intensive Care Unit. I then transferred to the Progressive Care Unit. On that floor I would sometimes have the same patient for several months and if I lost any of them it affected me as if a family member had died. This is what helped to finalize my decision to specialize as a nurse for the operating room or the emergency room. I would like to emphasize that my clinical experience does not draw upon a solitary area of critical care in the hospital. Instead, I furthered my education and obtained my Medical Assistant and Medical Billing and Coding licenses. Since then I have been able to practice in several specialties, which included Gynecological, Obstetrical, and Family Practice. This allowed me to gain thorough understanding of patient care as well as their needs.

Currently, I am back in school working to obtain my Bachelors in Science for Nursing and working a full time job in a Family Practice office, where I hold the position of Medical Billing and Coding Specialist. When I am not at work nor attending school I like to spend as much time possible with my children, engaging in activities in which they enjoy. I am responsible for taking my daughter to ballet practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Then on Mondays, Wednesdays, and an occasional Saturday I take my son to baseball practice. At my sons games I am what they call the baseball mom. This means that during the game I am in charge of keeping the players under control and that I provide them with snacks and a drink after the game is over.

Eventually, my goal is to finalize my career with a Nurse Anesthetist License. I still have a long road ahead of me but I am determined to give it my all and enjoy every moment of it.

Lizzette Massey
I would like to start this letter by saying thank you for giving me the scholarship from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund and North Dade Medical Foundation. I can’t express how much this scholarship has helped me and my family. My life now is less stressful because I know that I can finish my education and help my mother support our family. This scholarship has enabled me to effectively concentrate on completing my studies and has ensured that my studies were not burdened by any financial restraints.

I chose the nursing program at the University of Miami because the university has given me a lot of opportunities to increase my knowledge and improve my skills. I chose to become a nurse because I always wanted to make a difference in people’s life. A nurse not only helps others to feel better when they are sick, but we also influence individuals lives for the better, and sometimes we even prolong their lives based on what we do and say. My future profession is based on offering support and making a profound connection with patients. I believe that our main goal as a nurse is to take care of patients, give them advice and guide them. Indeed, nursing is a profession that can be very challenging, rewarding and fulfilling.

My main goal for the future is to become the best nurse that I can be. In order to be a competent nurse in my field, I would like to be well rounded and someday become a role model for others. It is also one of my goals for the future to go back to school and become a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA). However, as of right now I just want to graduate and continue learning to become an exceptional nurse so I can provide the best care to all my future patients. To conclude, I will always be thankful for your contribution toward my education.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Guiribitey Rodriguez
Lilibet Hernandez

I am extremely thankful for the scholarship from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund and North Dade Medical Foundation. This scholarship has allowed me to keep studying at the University of Miami by helping me with my educational expenses. It has given me and my family a peace of mind which allowed me to focus more on my studies, thus making my financial situation easier to be able to finish my education.

I chose the university’s Nursing Program because I feel I can obtain a great amount of knowledge and hands-on experience. I also feel it gives great opportunities as well as a chance for students to make a difference. I chose a nursing career because I have always wanted to help others and know that at the end of the day I have made an impact on someone’s life for the better. My goal as a nurse is to take care of the patient and for the patient to see me as their advocate and know they can count on me.

My future goals consist of being a competent, well-rounded and oriented nurse in everything I do. Also, in the future I would like to expand my studies and become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). As of now my main goal is to finish my nursing career and continue learning to be able to provide one on one care to all my future patients and I am very thankful for your contribution towards my future.

Sincerely,

Lilibet Hernandez

Sharifa Lindo

I am honored to be one of the recipients of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund and North Dade Medical Foundation. I want you to know how thankful I am to have your help during my time at the University of Miami. This scholarship has helped me to continue my education and make it possible to provide a bright future for my son.

After graduating high school I first attended St. Thomas University to complete my prerequisites before I applied to the University of Miami. Starting this fall I will be completing my senior year and looking forward to graduating with my Bachelor’s degree in Nursing. During my time in Nursing School I completed clinical hours in different areas like maternity, pediatrics, and the medical surgical unit. My passion for Nursing has grown so much more with the experience in the hospital. With each patient I try to form a bond in order to show them I care and want to help them get better.

For me, a Bachelor in Nursing is not where I will stop. I want to further my education and receive my Masters in Nurse Anesthetics. While spending some time in the operating room at Jackson Memorial Hospital, I got the opportunity to shadow my sister. What I like so much about Nurse Anesthetist is the feeling of playing such an important role in the patient’s care during surgery. Not only will I pursue my Master in Anesthesia, I want to give back to the community. I feel it is important that I show young women that regardless of any bumps in the road during your life, never let that stop you from achieving an education. I would be a great example to them because I had a son at the age of 18 and still pushed forward to reach my goal and provide a bright future for my child.

I want to thank you again for your generosity. It means a lot to me and my family. I look forward to one day helping other students the way you have helped me.

Sincerely,

Sharifa Lindo
My name is Anne-Laure Plaisimond and I am a 21-year-old aspiring registered nurse. I was born in Port au Prince, Haiti, where I was raised until the age of 6 with my two older brothers. On my 5th birthday my life was changed in the worst way possible when my father was shot and killed. About a year later my mother decided that it was best to move us to Florida where I have called the city of Pembroke Pines home for the last 15 years. Growing up without a father has impacted me in many ways but through it all I have my loving mother and two wonderful brothers who motivate me and encourage me to succeed on a daily basis.

During my senior year of high school my oldest brother was involved in a scooter accident that dislocated his right ankle. Due to his injury it took multiple nurses to reattach my brother’s ankle and pop it back into place. As I watched the team of nurses who worked on my brother I was immediately speechless; the way they spoke to my brother in a very caring manner, the way that they all worked together as a team to care for his ankle and lastly the way in which they carried themselves with such poise and confidence. On that very day I realized that I wanted to become a nurse. I want to be the nurse who loves her job, who looks forward to going to work, and who takes the utmost pride in her work.

On January 10, 2012, my mother was on the phone with Ralph, the younger of my two brothers who currently lives in Haiti when he started to scream when he felt the ground moving below him. There was an earthquake. The line cut off a couple of seconds later and we could not get in touch with my brother for about an hour after when he called to tell us that he was okay and that his apartment had not collapsed. That same night my mother tried for hours to get in touch with my grandparents, as well as both of my uncles who live in Haiti and had no luck. As it turns out, both my grandparents’ and one of my uncles’ homes had collapsed while they were inside. Through the grace of God and truly a miracle, my grandparents were able to safely get out of their home while it was collapsing without a single injury. As for my uncle, he managed to get out but suffered head trauma while his wife sustained minor scratches. Every day I am thankful that my family did not suffer any losses due to this tragic event but my heart hurts for the millions of people who lost their lives on that day.

Although this letter only contains a minor glimpse of my life, I wanted to share with you two of the many experiences that have helped me become the strong-minded determined young lady that I am today. With that said, I want to truly thank you for your contribution. Not only is this a contribution to my education but also it is a contribution to my future. I also would like to thank you for this contribution because it motivates me and pushes me to work even harder in continuing my education and fulfilling my dreams.

Sincerely,

Anne-Laure Plaisimond
I am pleased to have been selected to receive a $5,000 scholarship from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund and North Dade Medical Foundation. To me, this award is much more than a scholarship; it also is an opportunity to fulfill my educational and career aspirations. Furthermore, this award will assist in ensuring a promising future for me and my son.

For as far back as I can remember, whenever I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would proudly respond, “I want to be a nurse when I grow up!” When my siblings were watching cartoons, I would watch the Discovery Health Channel. I fell in love with the compassionate qualities of a nurse and the special relationship they shared with their patients. I decided at a young age that I wanted to be that empathetic, kindhearted person to help people in need, and I knew that a career as a registered nurse would allow me to do just that.

There was never a question of whether or not I would attend college. I was well aware that in order to obtain the career I longed for, college was a must. With this in mind, I started working toward a career in health care while in high school. I was enrolled in the Health and Human Services Academy at my high school, in which I was also dual enrolled at the local community college. The academy, in addition to dual enrollment, allowed me to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and as a junior in high school I worked as a CNA for about one and a half years, before graduating and beginning my college career as a nursing major.

I am currently a senior in the Traditional BSN Program at the University of Miami. As a young and single mother of a 21-month-old son, the obstacles I face as a full-time student in a demanding program are endless. However, I refuse to let it stop my progress toward my career goals. Raising a young child while continuing my education is not an easy task; it is both physically and financially draining. Therefore, when I was notified that I had been selected to receive the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund and North Dade Medical Foundation, I was elated. This scholarship undoubtedly helps to ease the financial strain that I’ve encountered as a single mother and college student. Words can’t express how grateful I am to have been chosen for this award. Thank you a million times.

Thank you,
Dionna Prince

Thank you so much for considering me for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund. I greatly appreciate your assistance in making my education more affordable. My name is Scott Sinclair and I am a 28-year-old married nursing student and military police officer in the Army Reserves. I originally studied criminal justice in Michigan but moved to Florida about 4 years ago and decided to pursue a career in nursing.

Many factors led to my decision to study nursing, but mainly I wanted to have the knowledge and opportunity to improve the lives of others. I find the subject of health to be extremely fascinating and have very much enjoyed the practical application of what I have learned during clinical rotations. Due to my education and experiences, I have already been able to answer the questions of friends and family and I like being in a position to help.

Upon graduating, I would like to work in a critical care setting for several years and become proficient operating in a stressful environment. This experience would be invaluable to me particularly as a soldier. I also plan to change my military job from a police officer to a nurse in the future. It would be very rewarding to use all of the tools I have learned to help fellow soldiers. The scholarship that you have so generously provided for me will greatly ease my financial burden and allow me to focus on my studies. Thank you again!

Sincerely,
Scott Sinclair
I had always wanted to be a nurse growing up, but it was when my brother was diagnosed with Type-1 Diabetes that I knew nursing was where I was being called to. He was only 11-years-old, and it was such a scary time for my family. It was the nurses that got him and my family through this crisis. They were so compassionate, caring, and provided my parents with the education and knowledge they needed to not feel scared to return home with their son and his illness. Since then, many people I know and love have gotten sick and have been in the hospital. It is always the nurses who they talk about, who were so kind and were their angels throughout their stay in the hospital. These nurses have been my inspiration to become the kind of nurse that brings light to a very dark day for some people. Finding my way into the field of nursing has had its obstacles, but being able to learn the skills required to help others, and being able to provide care to people who are in such desperate need, has been worth every obstacle along the way. I just hope to one day be that nurse that a patient talks about, that they remembered, and who made their awful days in the hospital, a little brighter, and who provided them with the care they needed to make it through, just like those nurses did for my brother and my family.

Sincerely,

Abigail Dewitt

“I just hope to one day be that nurse that a patient talks about... who provided them with the care they needed.” - Abigail Dewitt
Nursing was never a part of my life plan; I had always wanted to be a teacher. This goal changed, however, when my cousin was diagnosed with leukemia and my family and I were submerged in the world of healthcare. Throughout my cousin’s fight with cancer, I became aware of three things: excellent nursing care is absolutely priceless; teaching, my first love and passion, is a very large part of nursing; and that I wanted to become a nurse and care for patients as the nurses did for my cousin. Although my cousin lost her fight with leukemia three years ago, her fight and spirit live on in my pursuit of a nursing degree. I know nursing is not just a job, but a life-long career that I will give my heart and soul to.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Jamison

“I know nursing is not just a job, but a life-long career that I will give my heart and soul to.” - Rebecca Jamison