

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #5

Age: 19 | Race/Ethnicity: White

Parenting: No children | Major: Welding

While education can open many doors, success relies on initiative. I am a hard worker, responsible, and determined. I have the desire to achieve my goal of earning a degree in Industrial Technology as a female welder. The only obstacle holding me back now is the financial aspect.

This scholarship would give me an opportunity to pursue my dream occupation in Industrial Technology to become a successful welder through Parkland College. I took an Agricultural Mechanics class which gave me the opportunity to learn to weld and find my passion. I got involved in our FFA chapter and became our reporter for my senior year. Going to a nearby college allows me to stay in my community, be involved in the lives of our future FFA members, and save money while still achieving my dream of being a welder. Receiving financial aid would allow me to be a successful and productive member of society while creating the means to support my future. Being a female going into a male-dominated field can be challenging. I have many younger girls who look up to me and consider me a role model, and doing what I love no matter the challenges shows younger eyes they can do whatever they put their minds to, and I can get them excited for seeking a career in trades. My family has supported my dreams and pushed me to achieve them, and I have become independent and responsible, which is why I will be paying for my education on my own. I am taking the initiative to apply for scholarships because I have the determination and desire to earn a degree in Industrial Technology to become a welder.

**All essays presented as written in scholarship applications.*



Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #6

Age: 25 | Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American

Parenting: Single parent | Major: Occupational Therapy Assistant

I have chosen occupational therapy (OT) because I always like to help people. I received OT services from preschool throughout grade school to improve my speech and handwriting skills, including writing cursive and sensory impairments. When my mother had back surgery, an OT visited my house twice weekly and worked on her daily living skills, including learning to use a reacher to stack the cups in the top cabinets, bathing, and showering. This first-hand experience working with an OT planted the seeds that I could also pursue a degree in OT. After completing an associate's degree in applied science as an OT assistant, I plan to get my bachelor's degree. I have the desire to work with children in outpatient or rehabilitation facilities because of the experience that I had growing up. I have been the primary caregiver for my mother at home since high school. I have selected Parkland because despite the school being far from my home, I am motivated to receive the best education and support to pursue my academics. I make a two-hour drive between my home and Parkland College 3-4 days a week. I've been experiencing car problems which have been affecting my attendance in in-class lectures.

I currently work as an after-school caregiver for a child with cerebral palsy three days a week. I attend to the child's needs, including providing daily medication, assisting with self-care tasks such as transferring to a wheelchair, feeding, grooming, toileting, and creating a playful and safe environment. I have also volunteered at several camps where I have put my OT skills to work.

Despite the challenges of being a caregiver for both my mother and a child with cerebral palsy, helping them has inspired me to pursue a career in occupational therapy to help more people. I have faced challenging obstacles but refused to back down and maintained good grades. I believe that I am the right candidate for this scholarship because I possess the strength and determination to accomplish my goals.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #8

Age: 19 | Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American

Parenting: No children | Major: Architecture

My major is architecture, due to my passion for design and creation. Upon finishing college, my goal is to work in an architectural firm to gain more experience to create a firm of my own. Receiving scholarships would help a lot, as I am a first-time college student with limited income. I rely on financial aid while working at Kohl's and being a student ambassador here at Parkland College, to ensure my stability.

During my time in school, I have participated in science-related clubs and activities that allowed me to focus more on physics with the Science Club and to go a little deeper by joining the Astronomy Club. By the end of this year, I realized I had a deep passion for blending creative construction with science.

I volunteer with the Wesley Food Pantry and local races like marathons. Being a part of the student ambassadors has been such a rewarding experience because it lets me contribute to the campus and connect with the students coming to Parkland College. Through my experience, I chose Parkland because it offered me the best opportunities for my future. Coming from a small town, where pursuing higher education wasn't encouraged, I faced challenges. Raised by my single mom who had me and my sister at a young age, I learned independence early in life. It was quite the struggle as much as I hate to admit it. By the age of 15, I was working full-time to support myself. Balancing work and studies throughout high school was tough but rewarding; I managed to save up for a car which became my ticket to Champaign-Urbana after graduation. This move has been the best decision I have made. Here, there are programs like the Pathway to Illinois, professors and advisors who want you to succeed, and a community that lets you get involved.

I deserve to be selected for a scholarship because it's an opportunity for me to fully dedicate myself to my education. Being a first-generation college student, I've faced challenges in managing both school and financial pressures. My ultimate goal is to work on continuing to build a better community, whether it's physically through architecture or my words when speaking with others. This scholarship isn't just financial support but a source of inspiration for my academic journey.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #10

Age: 18 | Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American

Parenting: No children | Major: Criminal Justice

Growing up in a household with a single mother raising ten children, financial struggles were a constant companion in my journey through life. Despite the challenges, I embraced responsibility early on, entering the workforce at the age of fourteen. I worked hard to help my family and still chase my dreams. This strong desire, along with my unwavering dedication to schooling, has led me to want to work in criminal justice.

My decision to major in criminal justice stems from a deep-seated passion for advocacy and a fervent desire to pursue truth and justice. It has always been my dream to become a lawyer, and I view my academic journey as a crucial step towards realizing this ambition. Upon completing college, my goal is to attend law school, where I can further hone my skills and knowledge to advocate for those in need. Coming from a background where every penny counted, I understand the value of financial support in achieving academic goals. Despite working a lot to support myself and contribute to my family's welfare, the financial strain remains.

Choosing Parkland College was a great choice. The idea of starting my college experience at a smaller institution felt less daunting, providing me with a supportive environment to transition into higher education. Moreover, being closer to family has been a source of comfort and stability.

The journey to this point has not been without its share of obstacles. The loss of my brother and father, mere years apart, tested my resilience and resolve. Additionally, the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted my high school academic performance. However, through determination and perseverance, I reclaimed my academic footing senior year.

My story shows how being strong and determined can help you overcome tough times. Even when things got hard, I stayed focused on my education and goals, never giving up. I am confident that with the support of a scholarship, I can keep pushing forward and inspire others.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #12

Age: 18 | Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic

Parenting: No children | Major: Liberal Arts and Sciences

There aren't enough women in science, and I would relish the opportunity to change that. There are even fewer Latina women in STEM fields. I want to be a part of the change in that stereotype. Women, especially minorities, do have the ability to complete STEM fields. They are capable and intelligent enough to take on the challenges in STEM, and we are equal to men in every way. I want to go into the field of meteorology. Not only do I want to graduate from meteorology, but I also want to have the opportunity to have a more excellent education.

Early in my life, I grew up with a single immigrant mother. My mother had me when she was nineteen. My biological father was sent to prison when I was two months old and has been there for my whole life. At a very young age, I learned that life is hard. I had to watch my mother work more than twelve hours daily. I remember her barely being able to walk when she got home from her job. She had to overwork herself to the breaking point to support me. Not only did she work, but she also wanted to get an education. She would only sleep 3 hours due to the work she had to do every night. She would sacrifice so much for me to have a good future. With that, I promised to work hard in school to better myself and my future. Parkland College will help me get the education I want at an affordable price. I want to start my career without debt and provide for my mother as she supports me.

Even though we did not have much, I have always made the best out of everything given to me. Growing up, I had the opportunity to be on a swim team. After my first time swimming, I fell in love with it. I competed in many swim meets and made state throughout my swim journey. In my last year of high school, my teammates voted for me to be the swim team captain. I learned a lot of viable leadership skills. I helped all of my team, whether it was swimming, school, or emotional problems. I became someone they leaned on. This scholarship will allow me to further my education to have a career without worrying about money. I want to start my career prospering rather than having a ton of student debt in my name. Parkland will help me achieve the future that I have always wanted.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #13

Age: 31 | Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American

Parenting: Single parent of 2 children | Major: Nursing-AGS

I did not always know I wanted to be a nurse, but I did know I always wanted to work with people. My passion for nursing dates back to a time when I was on the other side of the nursing world. I was a young, 21-year-old girl, recently married and having her first baby. Due to some complications with that pregnancy, I lost that baby. That was one of the hardest moment's of my adult life. One thing I specifically remember during that time was the care, love, and comfort I got from my nurses. I cannot remember their names, but one thing I do remember is how they made me feel. They held my hand, prayed with me, cried with me. They showed compassion in a way I could have never imagined. From that day, I knew that I wanted to one day be that person for someone when they feel the most vulnerable and alone.

Although I have been a nurse for a few years, I want to challenge myself and further advance in my career goals. I always knew I wanted to continue on with my education, and that I would know when the right time to do so came along. After working in pediatric homecare the last few months, I have grown such a love for it.

As a mother of two young children that I have the privilege of raising, it limits how much of my finances can go towards chasing my dream of advancing my education. The reason I have chosen Parkland College is because it has given me the opportunity to start my dream of becoming a nurse. Having graduated from its LPN program, I would like to return to finish what I have started. I strongly believe that my drive and determination can make an impact and a difference in the healthcare field. My dream is to work with kids and watch them develop in ways that they never knew they were capable of. Seeing the progress and being a part of that is the most rewarding, selfless act a human can do. I hope to continue to be that voice, that educator, and that safe space that so many people need.

**All essays presented as written in scholarship applications.*



Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #15

Age: 55 | Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic

Parenting: Single parent of 1 child | Major: Art and Design

My major is Art and Design, and when I finish my associate degree, I will be transferring to a university to pursue a bachelor's degree in graphic design. My goal is to become a children's book author and illustrator, where I can have complete creative control over the writing, illustrations, and design of my books. Currently, I am a dedicated full-time student at Parkland College while balancing a part-time job working 29 hours per week as a caregiver for a client battling Alzheimer's, a challenging role.

I am seeking a scholarship to alleviate some of the financial burdens I faced due to the loss of my Medicaid coverage. Earnings just above \$19,000 have disqualified me from receiving medical benefits, which previously helped me cover expenses related to my medications for high blood pressure and diabetes, as well as doctor's appointments. Also, it has helped me get a new laptop for school to be able to do my homework.

My journey to this point has been marked by overcoming significant personal challenges I have successfully battled, such as anxiety and depression. The challenges stem from mental, verbal, financial, and emotional abuse and a controlling relationship with my ex-husband and the father of my children. Following my divorce, in 2018 I embarked on a new beginning, recognizing that returning to school was the key to achieving financial stability. In hindsight, this decision was one of the best I've ever made.

At the age of 55, I find enormous satisfaction in going to school and gaining a thorough education, all in the supportive environment of Parkland College. Currently, I am the primary caregiver for my autistic, developmentally delayed, and cognitively impaired son. I am an active member of TRIO and I also engage in a variety of cultural events. Overcoming the hurdles of ADD and dyslexia, I am grateful for the assistance provided by the Accessibility department, which has been crucial in my academic career. In addition, I am an active member of the Art and Astronomy clubs, all of which contribute to my overall development as a student and individual.

The scholarships will help me grow in my skill sets in illustration and graphic design, allowing me to achieve my ambitions of becoming a children's book writer, graphic designer, and 3D digital animation animator as well as placing me in a financial position to give back to the community in the years to come.

**All essays presented as written in scholarship applications.*



Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #16

Age: 18 | Race/Ethnicity: White

Parenting: No children | Major: Secondary Education - Special Education

A young boy walked around the periphery of the playground alone and I joined him. His name is “Nicholas” and he was diagnosed with autism. As the other kids on the playground interacted in groups, Nicholas walked alone. I made it a point to go around the track with Nicholas five times before I joined my girlfriends at recess. I was a seventh grader when I first met Nicholas; little did I know at the time, this would spark my passion to become a special education teacher. I come from a family consisting of just me and my dad. This in some way would often make me feel different from my friends. Almost twenty years ago, my dad, a pediatric nurse, chose to become a father. He did this via a surrogate. This was not typical for a single man to do in the Midwest, but nevertheless, he believed he could give me the same love as two parents. In my opinion, he surpassed this goal. My dad was my safe haven through good times and bad. I always gravitated towards helping those that were considered “different” in some way or another, probably because I often felt “different” myself. Not only was my family different but I was also part of a 504 plan at my school. This would allow me more time with test taking and reading assignments. Before graduating from this plan, I often was embarrassed as I hid this from my friends.

Coming from a single-parent family, I believe a scholarship would be greatly appreciated in meeting my goal of becoming a special education teacher. I am hoping to attend Parkland College in order to meet the needs of this degree in a more realistic, economical means that a community college would allow. I hope to someday transfer to a four-year program such as UIUC to complete my education.

I have been an active member in a group at my high school which pairs a student from the general education population with a student from the special education program. I have been a mentor for a student during my lunch period, integrated physical education, and integrated art class. This past year, I have become the president of the program. During my summer, I have participated in a summer camp program for children with disabilities. This has been a rewarding experience as I have learned during these weeks to be with my camper 24/7, an opportunity which has only enhanced my skills as a future teacher.

I hope that the Scholarship Committee understands that receiving a scholarship would allow me to become the teacher I wish to be and advocate for those children who need a safe haven as my dad gave me.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #22

Age: 36 | Race/Ethnicity: White

Parenting: Single parent of 3 children | Major: Early Childhood Education

My major is Early Childhood Education. I chose this field of study because I have always had a love for children. I love seeing them learn and grow every day. The look they get when they figure something out makes the job all worth it. I would love to have my own classroom when I am finished with school. This scholarship would help me finish college and show my boys no matter how old you get, you can finish school. Financially I do struggle. But I try my best to keep moving along. I chose Parkland because it was close to home and also provided online courses, which is so helpful for me. I am currently working as a teacher's aide at the local Catholic school. I have made the dean's list for the fall of 2023. Being out of school for nearly 20 years is a big education gap. But I know I can do this. I want to show people that even a single mom can do it. I want to show my kids anything is possible if you try your best. I would like to be selected for this scholarship because I am a hard worker and it would help me to get my degree.

Women of Impact Scholarship Applicant #24

Age: 34 | Race/Ethnicity: White

Parenting: Single parent of 2 children | Major: Nursing-ADN

I am a 34-year-old mother of two. I graduated high school in 2009; that same year I became a CNA. My life changed after that. I've been working as a CNA for 15 years now, and I've learned so much. However, I knew I was destined for more, and I found Parkland College. I love Parkland! I've been attending since 2017. The atmosphere is so energetic, colorful, and bright. It's just a positive place for me. I wouldn't want to go to any other school. My major is nursing; I plan on going all the way to get my BSN. I've wanted to be a nurse for as long as I remember. My parents never went to college and neither did any of my siblings. However, someone had to break the chain, and that was me. It makes me very happy to make my family proud. My grandma is a nurse, and I always admired her being able to help people and being smart, strong, and independent. I always thought of a nurse as a superhero, and I wanted to be that.

This year—after many years of retaking classes, setbacks, and trials, having almost given up—I had the privilege of acceptance into the Parkland Nursing program. I have struggled with alcoholism since 2011, and it brings me great joy to celebrate my 3rd year of sobriety in June alongside acceptance into the Parkland ADN program. This is literally a dream come true. I would have never gotten this far without my sobriety, my family, friends, and Parkland. To say I am thankful is an understatement. My dream nursing career would be a school nurse, or a nurse specialized in addiction. If I can help someone the way someone helped me when I was at my lowest, than I've succeeded in my goal. I am so proud to have this amazing opportunity ahead of me. During the last couple of years, I've had to cut back on work, focus on school, and care for my children. I love being a stay-at-home mom right now. Money is tight, but we have everything we need, and that's all that matters. I am working hard to better the life of my family, and this scholarship would be a blessing.

Thank you so much for your time and dedication!