

# BayCoast “Angels” Surprise Local Nursing Students with Scholarships

Imagine you are a student, asked to attend an important meeting, only to discover that meeting offered a surprise so unexpected, it would dramatically change your life forever.

That’s exactly what happened at Signature Healthcare’s Brockton Hospital School of Nursing (SH/BHSON) in Brockton, MA. During an emotional presentation in January of 2022, BayCoast Bank awarded seven nursing students from Fall River and New Bedford, each with a \$10,000 scholarship to help pay for their education at the prestigious nursing school.

“We had no idea this was happening,” said Raylyn Gant of Fall River. “We received an email saying we had to go to a mandatory meeting. This was a big surprise.”

Students selected for these generous awards have experienced unique challenges in their pursuit of a quality education. Dean of SH/BHSON, Jean Gouveia states, “The majority of our students come to us with significant financial need. Many are parents and single parents looking for a career pathway to achieve financial security for themselves and their families.”

There wasn’t a dry eye in the room when each recipient came forward to accept their scholarship and share their personal stories, along with their heartfelt gratitude.

“I’m the first one to go to college from my household,” said Ashley Del Rio of New Bedford. “College means a lot to me. I work to pay for everything on my own. This scholarship means so much. I truly thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

For Gant, she has a very personal reason for aspiring to

become a nurse. "My older brother was born with special needs and the doctor told my mother he wouldn't survive past three months. He's now 31, and he inspires me every day." The scholarship, Gant says, will help her pursue her dream of becoming a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) nurse. "This means the world to me. I have been so stressed about paying for school. This is amazing."

The scholarship opportunity evolved after SH/BHSON reached out to BayCoast, asking if the Bank could assist talented students who were experiencing financial difficulties. After hearing their moving stories, BayCoast was delighted to step in and offer generous support.

The assistance didn't stop there. Ten months later in November of 2022, the students were surprised with a second round of scholarships to help cover the cost of their final year in the program.

"The BayCoast angels strike again," said nursing student Christine Farland. "I have yet again been blessed with your scholarship. My burden has been lifted and I am so grateful. I appreciate it more than you will ever know."

For Laurel Perez, receiving this second scholarship has left her overcome with emotion. "What an absolute honor it is for me to be able to write another thank you letter. For someone like me who was really struggling, this is yet another big change of a lifetime. To know this scholarship has paid off my balance for the rest of the school year moves me. My family and I couldn't be more grateful."

"BayCoast Bank has a strong history of supporting education on the South Coast," said Nicholas M. Christ, President and CEO of BayCoast Bank. "This gift highlights two key areas where we endeavor to make a difference – education and healthcare. Achieving a nursing degree will not only help these students support themselves and their families, but it will also

benefit our healthcare system and the local residents it serves.”

Additional members of BayCoast Bank expressed their best wishes to the scholarship recipients, offering words of inspiration.

“You have experienced struggles, but I want you to know, you are not alone,” said Evelyn Ranone, FVP, CRA Officer for BayCoast Bank. “I am so honored to work at BayCoast Bank because it is in moments like these where we can help make an impact on people’s lives. We are thrilled to help you achieve your goals because we know your nursing degrees will not only help your families, but also help the people in your communities.”

Adds Del Rio, “When Evelyn announced that we were going to be receiving another scholarship... my eyes filled with tears at the thought of the people at BayCoast being so generous to someone like me. I cannot tell you the relief I feel not having to worry about working overtime every day to pay for everything. If it wasn’t for your generosity, I would not be where I am today.”

Brockton Hospital School of Nursing is an integral part of Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital. Originally established in 1897, the school has been at the forefront of nursing education and has graduated over 2,700 nurses, mainly from southeastern Massachusetts.

It is the only two-year Registered Nurse (RN) Diploma school that still exists on a hospital campus anywhere in New England.

“We thank you for investing in our nursing students,” said Lisa Pedranti, Manager of Annual Giving at SH/BHSON. “You are helping to craft intelligent and driven caregivers that we will all rely on in our future!”

“We congratulate these very deserving students,” said Christ. “There are very few professions in life that are more noble. We are honored to help you and we wish you the best of luck.”

