

WTG *Achievers*

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About WTG

The 21 private, or independent, colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to Wisconsin, educating nearly 53,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need help to attend the college of their choice.

The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965. Its goal is to help financially needy Wisconsin citizens to succeed. There are only enough funds allocated to WTG to cover about half of the needy students who apply every year. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom WTG has made a difference.

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Lakeland Junior Chooses Community Service



Gina Vrtochnick of Sheboygan, a junior at Lakeland College

Gina Vrtochnick is on the ground floor of something special at Lakeland College. The sociology major is studying to earn a certificate

in nonprofit leadership, a program offered through a joint effort of Lakeland and American Humanics, Inc., a premier provider of nonprofit leadership education.

A huge piece of earning the certificate is serving an internship with a nonprofit organization – 300 hours of work, to be exact.

Without the help of her Wisconsin Tuition Grant, Gina, a Sheboygan South High School graduate, wouldn't be at Lakeland.

She wouldn't have the opportunity to take advantage

of Lakeland's nonprofit management program. Lakeland is the first Wisconsin college or university to offer the nonprofit leadership certificate.

Just as WTG money is vital to Wisconsin's private school students, nonprofit organizations like United Way, the Red Cross, and the YMCA are vital members of their communities. Lakeland recognizes the need these organizations have for quality leaders.

Gina served an internship with the Sheboygan Red Cross

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Silver Lake Education Major Is Grateful



Laura Backhaus of Newton, a sophomore at Silver Lake College

Laura Backhaus, a sophomore at Silver Lake College, knew she wanted to be an elementary school teacher since the first grade. Financial aid such as the Wisconsin

Tuition Grant is helping her to achieve that goal.

One of eight children, Laura learned to prioritize at an early age. "I understood that my parents would not be able to pay totally for my education. The financial aid package made available by Silver Lake College and the Wisconsin Tuition Grant have helped a lot."

Work is an important part of Laura's college experience, as it is for many. Most students – and especially students receiving financial aid – also need to work to make ends meet. However, work for Laura serves an educational as

well as a financial purpose.

Through high school and college, Laura has continued to work part-time in order to help pay for her education. During the summer she works for the City of Manitowoc Recreation Department. Among her duties in that position is the Adventure Camp. Designed for eight- to thirteen-year-olds, the camp introduces the participants to local parks and county sites.

Since her junior year at Lincoln High School in Manitowoc, Laura has also worked every Friday as a teacher's aide at St. Francis

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GINA VRTOCHNICK *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

chapter this past summer, and during the school year, she helped a Lakeland staff member with the college's United Way Drive.

The latter project was part of an assignment she fulfilled in a fundraising class taught by Associate Professor of Sociology Don Francis.

"I had never fundraised before, so it gave me some hands-on experience," Gina said. "I knew a lot of the professors that I had to talk to, so it was a comfortable setting starting off." During her Red Cross internship, Gina worked on the annual fund, calling to solicit donations and setting up face-to-face meetings with smaller businesses.

"It gives you a better understanding of what goes on within a nonprofit organization – the fundraising, marketing, and communicating with volunteers," said Gina. "Those are things

I can't experience in the classroom. But experiencing them makes what I learn in the classroom more relevant." Gina is hoping to land another internship next summer, perhaps with the Sheboygan United Way.

Dr. Francis, working with Lakeland's Resource Development staff, secured a \$10,000 Community Involvement Award from S.C. Johnson Fund for scholarships for students serving internships.

"Once they're out in the field, our students get to test the nonprofit sector and see if this is what they want to spend the rest of their life doing," Dr. Francis said. "If you like what you're doing, you've found a niche."

The Wisconsin Tuition grant has helped Gina Vrtochnick to find her niche, so she can use her education to make Wisconsin a better place.

FACT OF THE MONTH

A recent survey by the National Science Foundation shows that the odds of an individual taking a job in-state increase more than tenfold if that person attends high school and college in the same state. Increased financial aid to Wisconsin students could help stem the brain drain.

LAURA BACKHAUS *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

Xavier School. "It's a wonderful way to understand the teaching profession and establish a relationship with professional mentors and advisers, which is so helpful with my college studies," Laura said.

The ability to sustain that relationship with teachers in the field was one of the reasons Laura selected Silver Lake College. She also cited the fact that the college was close to home, and that she appreciated the intimate environment and class sizes, which meant more individualized attention; the quality of the teachers at the college; and the friendliness and helpfulness of the

support staff. "If you have a question, you will get an answer from the people at Silver Lake," she said.

Laura's professors at Silver Lake College return the compliment. Betty Wyatt, director of Early Childhood Exceptional Educational Needs, said, "Laura is a positive influence and contributing member in our class." And according to Sister Alice Marie Hickok, director of the college's Special Education Clinic, "Laura is an asset to the clinic. She is sensitive to her students' needs, and creative in providing meaningful, motivating learning experiences."

Sister Marcollette Madden, assistant professor of education at Silver Lake and Laura's academic adviser, is well aware of her dedication. Sr. Madden said, "Laura is an intelligent, perceptive, caring young woman whose scholarship, world view, and commitment to others make her exceptional."

Because of financial aid such as the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, Laura is on her way to achieving her lifelong goal. Laura noted, "I'm grateful that with this help, I am able to concentrate on my education and fulfill my commitments to both studies and work."

Wisconsin's Private Colleges and Universities

Alverno College *Milwaukee*
 Beloit College *Beloit*
 Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
 Carroll College *Waukesha*
 Carthage College *Kenosha*
 Concordia University *Mequon*
 Edgewood College *Madison*

Lakeland College *Sheboygan*
 Lawrence University *Appleton*
 Marian College *Fond du Lac*
 Marquette University *Milwaukee*
 Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design *Milwaukee*
 Milwaukee School of Engineering *Milwaukee*
 Mount Mary College *Milwaukee*

Mount Senario College *Ladysmith*
 Northland College *Ashland*
 Ripon College *Ripon*
 St. Norbert College *De Pere*
 Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
 Viterbo University *La Crosse*
 Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

