

## About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-four private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 56,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The Wisconsin Tuition Grant, now known as Wisconsin Grants, was enacted in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Each month, Wisconsin Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites at WAICU-member campuses for whom Wisconsin Grants have made a significant difference.

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## Student finds 'perfect fit' at Bellin College

Caring for others has always been a passion for Ashley Wallner, class of 2020 Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at Bellin College. Ashley was a certified medical assistant at a clinic in Wisconsin Rapids before coming to Bellin College for a nursing degree to add to her list of attributes, which include wife and mom to three girls: Calleigh, 10, Braelynn, 7, and Peyton, 4.

It wasn't until she gave birth to her first child that she identified her interest in nursing and women's health.

"My labor and delivery nurse sparked my interest for nursing and women's health, but at that time, being a new mom and going to school to be a medical assistant, I didn't think going to nursing school was going to be feasible," she said. "Little by little, I took classes and applied for the associate degree nursing program at the local technical college in my hometown."

A chance call and relocation helped lead her to where she is today — nearing graduation in May 2020.

"On delivery day for my third daughter, my husband received the call that he had been promoted at work and we needed to relocate to Green Bay," Ashley said. "I knew taking classes one at a time was

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## Admiration for social justice drives Marian University student to make an impact

The Marian University community doesn't just recognize the name Brianna Horton — they recognize her.

While she's run an offense for four years as a point guard for the Sabres women's basketball team — being named a 2018 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar and making the Scholar Athlete and Dean's List every semester — the senior has also led countless university efforts to help those in need.

The Racine Horlick High School graduate was raised to appreciate social justice and charity, and by entering the Social Work program, she's well on her way to achieving her dream of making a career out of assisting those in need.

"I've appreciated my education because it's helped me get out of my comfort zone and led to so many volunteering opportunities, helping people and hearing their stories," she said. "It's been amazing to actually do things that help others, instead of just sitting in a classroom or reading a book."

There was a time when Brianna became concerned she wouldn't be able to receive this education at all. Early on at Marian, she was placed on a financial hold and left unable to register for classes. The Wisconsin Grant, though, changed all of that.



Ashley Wallner



Brianna Horton

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**Ashley Wallner** continued from page 1

not going to get me very far, so I searched out colleges. Bellin College was a perfect fit. I jumped into nursing school with both feet and three young children and haven't looked back."

While not always knowing she wanted to go into nursing, Ashley knew she wanted to help people. She also recently participated in the college's medical mission trip to Guatemala.

"I told everyone growing up I was going to do two things in my life, I was going to be a mom and I was going to help people or animals," she said. "I have helped many people through my work in healthcare, but my most rewarding experience of helping people has left me humbled and forever changed. Helping people in Guatemala made me realize how much more I wanted to help people." Upon graduation, Ashley hopes to work in labor and delivery after passing the NCLEX exam to become a registered nurse.

"There may be plans to return to school in the future for my master's degree, but I would like to gain experience and get settled before I fully decide," she said.

Financial aid including the Wisconsin Grant helps make college a reality for many other students across the state, just like Ashley.

"Without the help of grants such as the Wisconsin Grant, I would not be able to attend college full time while my family lives mainly off of one income," Ashley said. "Financial aid has allowed me to continue to be in college with less worry about where the money may come from."

**Brianna Horton** continued from page 1

"The Wisconsin Grant helped get me over that hump, it helped pave the way for me to be able to register for classes," she said. "Without it, I would have run into a lot of roadblocks – it definitely helped me get to where I'm at today."

And where she's at today includes being a staple at countless organizations around Fond du Lac, serving her community by:

- Answering phones for the St. Vincent de Paul Call Center
- Helping the Salvation Army's Warming Shelter
- Interning at ASTOP Sexual Abuse Center
- Making and serving soup at The Souper Bowl, an annual Marian-hosted human trafficking awareness event
- Packaging health kits for The United Way
- Serving food at The Salvation Army
- Speaking out against sexual assault at conferences, jails, and schools
- Volunteering at The Arc Fond du Lac, an organization that empowers those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become independent

Planning to enter graduate school next year, earning her Master's in Social Work will take her one step closer to helping children and families as a medical social worker.

"I've seen the impact people in this position can have," said Brianna, who was first exposed to the career when her grandfather was in the hospital. "Seeing the difference they can make, how they can make so many people feel comforted – I want to be that person for someone."

And while Marian will undoubtedly miss being able to witness her selflessness firsthand, the community is taking comfort in knowing she is moving on to helping even more people.



*Wisconsin's Private, Nonprofit Colleges and Universities*

Alverno College - Milwaukee  
 Bellin College - Green Bay  
 Beloit College - Beloit  
 Cardinal Stritch University - Milwaukee  
 Carroll University - Waukesha  
 Carthage College - Kenosha  
 Concordia University Wisconsin - Mequon  
 Edgewood College - Madison

Herzing University - Milwaukee  
 Holy Family College - Manitowoc  
 Lakeland University - Plymouth  
 Lawrence University - Appleton  
 Marian University - Fond du Lac  
 Marquette University - Milwaukee  
 Medical College of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
 Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design - Milwaukee

Milwaukee School of Engineering - Milwaukee  
 Mount Mary University - Milwaukee  
 Nashotah House - Nashotah  
 Northland College - Ashland  
 Ripon College - Ripon  
 St. Norbert College - De Pere  
 Viterbo University - La Crosse  
 Wisconsin Lutheran College - Milwaukee

## FACT OF THE MONTH

More than 63,500 students from across the state receive a Wisconsin Grant.

Source: Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB), 2017-18