

## About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-three 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 53,000 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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## Dedicated, Driven Mount Mary Student on Track for Nursing Degree

Mary McDonald of Menomonee Falls found a community that cares at Mount Mary University.

Receiving financial aid has allowed Mary to attend Mount Mary, where she is a junior in nursing. "My mom and dad gave up so much to help me pursue my education," Mary says. "I want to prove to them that my educational journey was worth the price. In a way, getting a degree feels like I'm fulfilling their hopes and dreams along with my own."

Her parents worked hard and saved for her to attend a private high school, Divine Savior Holy Angels in Milwaukee. Now an adult, she is taking on the financial burden of paying for college on her own. She never doubted she would attend college after high school, but she acknowledges that funding has posed a significant challenge.

"Without the Wisconsin Grant, I would not have been able to afford college. I rely on the grant money to help lower the cost of each semester," says Mary, who works three on-campus jobs and another part-time job off campus. "It would simply not be possible for me

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Mary McDonald

## Northland College Senior Thankful for Wisconsin Grant

Admittedly a bit hesitant about the prospect of leaving Ladysmith, Wisconsin, and going off to college, Liam Knoll applied to three colleges during his senior year of high school.

Visiting Northland College, Liam found a tight-knit campus community, a location close to home, and a significant financial aid package, all of which shaped his final decision to attend Northland. In his first week, he participated in the Outdoor Orientation Program and found the experience further affirmed his college choice.

"It was a welcoming atmosphere right away. Through the canoeing trip I went out on the water for the first time. I had so much fun and met so many other people new to Northland," he says. Now, even as a senior, Liam continues to appreciate the campus size and the relationships it facilitates. "I love how small it is and how easy it is to get to know pretty much everybody."

It is no surprise that Liam knows so many people on campus as he wasted no time creating connections between his academic programs, career aspirations, and campus involvement. Having an interest in journalism, Liam started at Northland as a writing major, later adding a second major in English.

Along the way he discovered several experiences on Northland's campus that aligned with his interests.

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Liam Knoll

**Mary McDonald** continued from page 1

to attend without grants and scholarships.”

She believes that the long-term goal of financial stability will bring a measure of independence that otherwise wouldn't be possible. “A college degree will give me the freedom to decide to do whatever I want with my life,” she said. “With a well-paying job, I won't have to rely on anyone to get me the things I need to have a comfortable life.”

After graduation, Mary will use the knowledge she gained from her professors and peers to help patients and give them a full, caring experience. She knows the importance of compassion through both the lens of Mount Mary's mission-driven education and through her own experiences. “A lot of people in my family struggle to take care of their health, so I want to break that cycle,” she says. “It also means that I will be able to take care of my mom and dad, so they won't have to keep working so hard.”

On campus, Mary is an active participant of the Promise Program, a federally funded TRIO Student Support Services program that provides academic, career, and financial support to a group of 140 first-generation and limited-income college students each year. Being part of this program has helped her make friends.

She also has built solid study habits and time management skills that she passes along to others. Her tips include making the most of every minute. “Every class is important,” she adds.

**Liam Knoll** continued from page 1

Liam has been with the Northland College Student Publications (NCSP) since his first year. As a staff writer with NCSP, Liam created and distributed content reflecting the student experience through the on-campus publications *Drifts* and *Mosaic*.

Additionally, this summer Liam completed an internship with Alumni Relations, researching lesser-known aspects of the college's history and writing articles that will be featured in the alumni newsletter in celebration of Northland's 130th anniversary this year. For the past three years, Liam also has held a work study position with the Dexter Library on campus.

It is this experience he attributes to defining his future career aspirations. After he graduates in the spring of 2023, Liam plans to pursue a graduate degree in library science and aspires to be a children's or school librarian. “I had people in my life who introduced me to books and stories, and I want to give back to the community and make a difference in that way,” Liam adds.

Reflecting on his college experience so far and his future career aspirations, Liam believes financial support for college was crucial to his journey. “I would not be here if it weren't for the Wisconsin Grant. I'm so grateful for it. Without it I would have had to take out more loans.

“I'd have more debt,” he adds. “I'd have to go through school more slowly, working as I go, or I wouldn't be in college at all. I'm so grateful I've had this opportunity. It's so important to students like me, so we can pursue our studies and have future careers that are so needed in this state and society.”



*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  
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**

**The ROI of a college education is nearly 14 percent, far exceeding investment benchmarks such as the long-term 7 percent return on stocks or the 3 percent on bonds.**

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2019