

WTG *Achievers*

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About the WTG

The twenty private, or independent, colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without 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 State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965 to help financially needy Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the needy students who apply for the WTG are turned away every year for lack of funds. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom the WTG has made a difference.

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Stritch mom finds calling in child's health issues



Lolita Lee from Milwaukee, a junior at Cardinal Stritch

When her tiny newborn son was born with necrotizing enterocolitis—an inflammation of his intestinal lining—Lolita Lee's future vocation began to take shape. One of triplets, Lolita's son was hospitalized for two

months following his birth and underwent a colostomy, which is a surgery redirecting the colon, and shoulder surgery.

“He had been away from me for two months already, so I decided to take care of him at home,” says Lolita, a single parent of four, about her decision to take on the responsibility for her son's care during his recovery.

Learning about his illness and helping with his home health-care regimen, Lolita developed an interest in nursing that eventually led her to enroll in the associate's

degree program at Cardinal Stritch University.

“Having just moved here, I didn't know too many schools in the area, but I kept hearing positive things about Stritch,” said Lolita, who settled in Milwaukee in 2002 to be closer to her extended family. “And the location was very convenient for me.”

After graduating from her associate's program in 2005, Lolita opted to continue at Stritch to earn her bachelor's in nursing degree, which she expects to complete in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Future teacher finds exciting, new 'orientation' at Northland, thanks to Wisconsin Tuition Grant



Kari Gorr from Beaver Dam, a freshman at Northland College

Kari Gorr is a newcomer to Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. She arrived on campus last fall and immediately dove into the education program.

“I ultimately want to teach high school English,” she says. “I like to read and I've always loved my English classes.” So far, Kari, as a freshman, has taken her first English class and looks forward to getting even more involved in the English and education programs.

She feels Northland College offers some unique programs, including the Outdoor Orientation program.

“I did a five-day trip that included visits to Hurley, Bayfield, Ashland, and

Hayward,” she explains.

Outdoor Orientation at Northland College is a mandatory program for every new student. The trips introduce students to the college, including its commitment to the environment. Each program is led by a current Northland College student.

Some trip itineraries include backpacking in the Porcupine Mountains or the Superior Hiking Trail, canoeing and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

LOLITA LEE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

2007. A 1984 high school graduate, Lolita was an honor roll student and, at the time, had aspirations to become a doctor. Yet life after graduation led her to take business courses instead and eventually work as a retirement specialist for a financial planning company.

Now life has led her in an entirely new direction. Following her next graduation from Stritch, she hopes to one day work as a patient coordinator, an administrator, or possibly with the families of children needing the same types of treatments and procedures as her own son.

Because of the health concerns of her children, the recent loss of her grandmother, and the day-to-day challenge of caring for her four children and managing her tight finances, Lolita has had to work hard to make ends meet.

Having been in the Army Reserve for six years in the 1980s, Lolita re-enlisted in 2002 doing

clerical work two days a month. In exchange, she receives tuition assistance and a modest monthly income.

In addition to that assistance, Lolita is grateful that her financial aid package—which includes the Wisconsin Tuition Grant along with other grants and loans—has allowed her to pursue a new career field at a university where she feels at home.

“Stritch has small class sizes, and I like that,” says Lolita, who has developed close relationships with other students in the nursing program.

Right now, Lolita is studying for her nursing boards and is just entering the beginning stages of her bachelor’s program. She looks forward to the day when she will complete yet another degree and be closer to pursuing the opportunities that await her in the workforce.

FACT OF THE MONTH

Completion rates for students seeking bachelor’s degrees are higher for students at private nonprofit colleges. A study of students who entered college in 1998 showed that the likelihood of a graduate’s finishing in four years was 85 percent higher at private nonprofit colleges than at public institutions.

Find full summary at USDOE, “Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2004; Graduate Rates, 1998 & 2001 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2004,” p. 12.

KARI GORR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

camping on the Apostle Islands, rock climbing, bike riding, and learning about the history and culture of the area.

Kari’s trip focused on getting to know the area. It also gave her the opportunity to make some new friends within Northland’s tightly knit community. “I didn’t know anyone when I came on campus but I made friends fast,” Kari says.

Kari chose Northland College because of its small-town atmosphere and location.

“I didn’t want to attend a big school. Northland is five hours away from home, which is probably the farthest I’d go.”

Kari finds plenty of ways to keep busy at Northland, even though Ashland is half the size of her hometown of Beaver Dam. Part of Kari’s financial aid package involves working in the financial aid office. The opportunity gives her a chance to see just what goes into financial aid packages. She takes the job seriously because the Wisconsin Tuition Grant

plays such a significant role in funding her own education.

“Without the grant, I don’t know if I could have attended Northland College,” Kari says. “If I had the opportunity to talk to the people that are giving me the financial aid, I would thank them over and over again. Their contribution is helping me to further my education and to get the career and life that I want.”

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

