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 58,000 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 qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the low-income 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 significant difference.*

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WTG helps mother and daughter at Alverno

Gail and Becky Patten of Janesville, seniors at Alverno College

A few years ago, Gail Patten of Janesville was looking into colleges for her teenage daughter Becky. She remembers telling the interim pastor at the church where she worked as a part-time secretary that she wanted to find a school "where the people really care about you." The pastor, whose wife worked in the assessment center at Alverno College in Milwaukee, recommended the liberal arts college for women.

"I checked out Alverno for Becky, then I checked it out for me," said Gail, who was so impressed with the college, its programs, and its flexible schedules that in 2005 at age 52 she enrolled as a transfer student and is majoring in communication, management, and technology. Becky, too, enrolled as a transfer student in 2005 and is majoring in community leadership and development. While their hope was to graduate together, Gail will graduate in December 2008 and Becky one semester later in May 2009.

The mother and daughter are in Alverno's Weekend College program and have been living the college experience together—including their lengthy every-other-weekend commute from Janesville.

"We went from, 'Mom, do I have to go to lunch with you?'

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Mount Mary nursing student is passionate about her college education

Lisette Whittaker of Milwaukee, a sophomore at Mount Mary College

The excitement in her voice and the look on her face show just how thrilled Lisette Whittaker is that she's completed her freshman year at Mount Mary College.

"I can't believe it, it went by so fast!" she exclaimed.

It was a busy year for Lisette, 19, of Milwaukee, who is pursuing a double major in nursing and Spanish. In addition to carrying a full course load, she joined the Blue Angels softball and soccer teams—a first for her for both sports—even though she's a tennis buff at heart.

Passionate about her education, Lisette is a shining example of what can be achieved when a student gets the help she needs to attend college. With the aid of the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, Lisette is able to not only reach her potential, but work toward her dream of becoming a pediatric nurse as well. A college education holds the promise, possibilities, and success for anyone who has the desire for a bright future.

Lisette, a graduate of Rufus King High School in Milwaukee, comes from a family of seven children, and she realizes she might not have been able to attend Mount Mary had it not been for the Wisconsin Tuition

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GAIL AND BECKY PATTEN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to 'Now I can't go to school without you!' " Gail said.

The experience has also strengthened their mother-daughter bond. "I think in some ways this has brought us closer together," Gail said.

The past several years have been an emotional and financial adjustment for the Patten family. Gail's husband passed away unexpectedly and she found herself raising four children, including one with disabilities, on her own. Although she had already been working part time, her husband provided the majority of financial support to the family; now Gail wants to be able to step into that role. Her hope is to find a job working for a medium-sized company handling in-house marketing and media relations projects.

It is thanks to the Wisconsin Tuition Grant as well as other grants, scholarships, and loans that the Patten women have been able to attend college.

"I certainly would not have been able to go to college if I hadn't received this financial aid," Gail said. "This has been an extremely positive and encouraging experience for me and it is really important for me to be able to provide for my family."

Both Becky and Gail said attending Alverno has been transforming. "Overall, I feel like I'm learning true life experiences—how I fit into the community and how I fit into life," Becky said. "The classes are so much smaller compared to other schools, so you really get to know the professors, and the students all really want to be here."

Gail said, "This has been so empowering, and empowering is a word that really fits Alverno. It has impacted my life in so many ways."

FACT OF THE MONTH

More education leads to higher earnings for people 25-to-64 years of age. In 2005, median income for a high school graduate was $26,968; for a bachelor's degree graduate, $44,217; and for a graduate with a master's degree, $53,993.

U.S. Census Bureau

LISETTE WHITTAKER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Grant and other grants and loans arranged by the college financial aid office.

"It has definitely helped me," she said.

Personable, energetic and curious, Lisette makes friends easily. She is involved in numerous student activities on campus and has been instrumental in planning a variety of student-oriented events, such as Christmas on the Mount, Spring Fling, and Movie Night. Next fall she plans to join the International Club and to explore acting.

In addition to her event planning responsibilities, Lisette is a tour guide for the Admission office and works in Student Affairs. This summer, she will be helping spruce up the campus for the new school year. Lisette has also been accepted as a resident assistant for the 2008-09 school year, meaning she will supervise students in the residence hall.

Living, working, and studying at a women's college has allowed Lisette to get to know students, faculty and staff more easily—a plus for her, she said.

"I like it when people know me and that everything is nearby, like the library, the Cyber Café, the classrooms—and I like the small class sizes," she said. "The faculty encourages me to do my best and is so supportive."

All of this is a balancing act, to be sure, but Lisette has embraced the opportunity to make the most of her time at Mount Mary.

"The most challenging thing has been time management for all of my classes, sports, clubs, and work," she said. "I had to prioritize everything and figure out what comes first. Of course, my education does."

Wisconsin's Private Colleges and Universities

Alverno College *Milwaukee*
Beloit College *Beloit*
Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
Carroll University *Waukesha*
Carthage College *Kenosha*
Concordia University *Mequon*
Edgewood College *Madison*
Lakeland College *Sheboygan*
Lawrence University *Appleton*
Marian University *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*

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