

About the WTG

The twenty private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 60,000 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.

WTG Achievers is published monthly by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), 122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703-2723; 608-256-7761; mail@waicu.org.

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Sky is not the limit for this WTG recipient

Stefanie Gonzalez has made the most of her time at Milwaukee School of Engineering. A senior biomedical engineering major, Stefanie said, "I love any class where I am able to learn how engineering principles can be used to improve the quality of life of others."

She didn't waste any time taking what she learned in the classroom and laboratory and putting it to use in the real



Stefanie Gonzalez of Milwaukee is racking up achievements that are out of this world.

world. The summer after her freshman year, Stefanie was an intern at NASA's Johnson

Space Center in Houston. She worked with nuclear scientists to study the effects of space radiation on the human body and analyzed radiation exposure rates for

astronauts. The next summer, she worked in the Depart-

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WTG helps future Peace Corps volunteer

For Amy Jo Nowak, a junior at Ripon College majoring in German with an education minor, college wasn't exactly a foregone conclusion. She was only five when her mother, who was raising Amy and her older sister alone, succumbed to cancer. An aunt and uncle took them in but did not adopt them, so when Amy turned 18, she was on her own.

"I owe them everything that I have, and they always pushed for higher education," she said.



Amy Jo Nowak of Rhinelander is shown with Isabella, an orphan she befriended in Guatemala.

"I transferred to Ripon College because of its quiet and safe feel. I have had friends who have gone to big universities and fallen into drugs, alcohol,

and other problems. I didn't want that to be my educational experience. Ripon is a comfortable school where everyone has a place."

At first, Amy didn't think she

could afford a private college, but her financial aid package at Ripon—which included a WTG—made it possible.

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Stefanie Gonzalez continued from page 1

ment of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, where she learned the fabrication process of micro/nano structures.

When she returned to Milwaukee, Stefanie assisted with research at the Medical College of Wisconsin Department of Neurosurgery to understand the biomechanics involved in blunt trauma of the brain and spinal cord.

A recipient of the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, Stefanie said, "I am very grateful to receive financial assistance because it allowed me to focus my time on academics, community, and professional endeavors." She said she chose MSOE for its academic reputation, job placement rates, and small class sizes. "What attracted me to my specific program is that students are trained in the six different aspects of biomedical engineering while participating in interactive labs."

Stefanie recently completed a second internship at NASA's Johnson Space Center, working on the redesign of the International Space Station's Health Maintenance System medical kits that were launched in April on the Russian Progress Spacecraft, 42-P.

Outside the classroom, Stefanie is involved with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the Biomedical Engineering Society, and Healthcare Without Borders. Through these organizations, she has spent time mentoring Milwaukee-area youth and traveled to El Salvador to prepare a health clinic for use.

Not even the sky is the limit for Stefanie. After she graduates from MSOE in December 2011, she plans to pursue a graduate degree through the National Space Biomedical Research Institute, and perhaps later an M.D./Ph.D.

FACT OF THE MONTH

Between fall 1980 and fall 2010, enrollment at Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges and universities more than doubled. Total enrollment now stands at a record 60,781 students.

Source:
WAICU research archives

Amy Jo Nowak continued from page 1

"If not for the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, there is no way I could ever get an education; I couldn't even buy books. 'Estimated Family Contribution' is a factor considered in the financial aid process. Mine is \$0."

After Amy graduates from Ripon, she may head to places that aren't so secure. "What I am most passionate about is education, particularly for women in underdeveloped places. I feel that education is the only long-term way to solve the major problems of the world," she said. "I plan on joining the Peace Corps after graduation, and hope to

teach in North Africa or the Middle East before returning home."

Despite all she has overcome to get to this point in her life, Amy knows all too well the walls society can build around us. The walls become higher and stronger the further you get from prosperity and stability, as Amy learned firsthand while volunteering at an orphanage in Guatemala last summer.

"When I was younger, I wanted to be an astronaut, but all of the kids in my kindergarten class told me that was a 'boy's job.' I didn't realize until recently how

strongly that shaped what I thought I could do. I don't want that to happen to others."

Thanks to Amy, life for her future students will be filled with opportunity.



Join the fight to protect the Wisconsin Tuition Grant along with financial aid for all Wisconsin college students. Find out more at ProtectFinancialAid.com.

Wisconsin's Private Colleges and Universities

Alverno College *Milwaukee*
Beloit College *Beloit*
Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
Carroll University *Waukesha*
Carthage College *Kenosha*
Concordia University Wisconsin *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*

