

Open the Doors

BURSARY PROGRAM 2017





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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Alana Poynter	6
Chelsea Blake	8
Christine Probe	10
Derek Jorgenson	12
Elizabeth Rogers	14
Emily Balfour	16
Felicity Youngward	18
Georgina Caspers	20
Jerod Dobson.....	22
Josie Ruoss	24
Kasandra Peltzer	26
Lobsang Nima	28
Matt Lavery	30
Megan Butz	32
Melanie Caron	34
Michelle Chan	36
Miranda Myndio	38
Natasha Allen.....	40
Shamaya Blanchette	42
Tatiana Zavyalova	44
2016-17 Bursary Recipients	47





Tuition and fees have skyrocketed, classes have closed, and rural schools have been hit especially hard.

Introduction

What is Open the Doors?

Open the Doors is a provincial campaign that addresses BC's post-secondary education funding crisis. BC is quickly becoming a place where only the rich can afford to go to college or university. High tuition fees and institutional underfunding are preventing thousands of students from getting the education they need to get ahead.

Since 2002, provincial funding for post-secondary students has decreased by 20% after inflation. As a result, students have had to pay higher fees and are struggling with rising living costs.

In some regions, students arrive on campus to find that the classes they need aren't offered, or there isn't space for them. Others have had to delay their graduation because a course wasn't offered when they needed it. In 2013, BMO's annual student survey found that B.C. students expected to owe an average of \$35,000 when they graduated. That figure has only gone up, meaning many prospective students are not even bothering to enroll because they can't afford the fees.

Everyone who wants to should be able to get an education, regardless of their income — and without being saddled with a lifetime of debt. It's what we need for BC's economy to thrive, and for families to build a better future.

Who's behind Open the Doors?

Open the Doors is a campaign by the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE) and faculty associations throughout BC. The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators and its member unions have been serving the needs of BC's educators for over forty years. They represent over 10,000 educators and staff at BC's colleges, teaching universities, and institutions.

Why does it matter now?

There's a provincial election coming up on May 9, 2017, and it could change the course of public education in BC. Tuition and fees have skyrocketed, classes have closed, and rural schools have been hit especially hard. In one school, 100 course sections were cut.

Alana Poynter | Practical Nursing

My name is Alana Poynter and though I have a typical teenage pregnancy story as so many others, I will try not to bore you with all the details. Let's start by saying that it seemed like every time I went back to school something had stopped me, from sick children, deaths of family members, helping recovering drug addicts, broken bones and a car accident in 2007. Put my dream on hold. The main difference in my story is that I have never forgotten my true calling in becoming a nurse. It may have taken a few years longer than most to get to where I am however, I am doing it!

A little history of how I got here. At the tender age of 18 I became a mother to the most beautiful girl. My role as a teenager looking to go to college was put on hold. Her father and I had an unconventional relationship that had many breakups and an additional second child, our lovely son. Despite the many challenges of a single mother, I worked full-time and always seemed to make time for some part-time studies here and there. I managed to earn a high school diploma, a Health Care Aide certificate as well as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) diploma. I opened my own licensed childcare facility in Nova Scotia. As my children grew older my passion of becoming a nurse started to become more real. I would finally have the time to return to school and gain that desired diploma in nursing. I started off small and did some part-time courses through the Nova Scotia Community College and within a month, I applied to their nursing program. Accepted, yet put on a waiting list is where I was happy. Another year passed and my son graduated high school and then I decided to apply to many other colleges across the country in order to get accepted right away. The urgency wasn't due to impatience, it was due to my age. I felt that I was getting to old to return to school and didn't want to be seen as too old for college. My drive and passion was even stronger now than before to finally become a nurse. I said "the first college to accept me without a wait list, I am going". Guess who was lucky enough to have me enter their doors? College of the Rockies!! Within a few months, the house was packed up, things were sold and I was off to beautiful British Columbia. The financial burden of moving from one coast to another was definitely not going to stop me nor was any other financial burden. My first year was a struggle (mentally and emotionally) but none-the-less, I was able to flourish and grow. I became the British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU) student liaison of College of the Rockies along with becoming a part of the Canadian Nursing Student Association (CNSA) of COTR.

On September 6 2016, I started my second year in the LPN program. Not only will I graduate in June of 2017, I plan on returning to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with a specialty in neonatal care. I will reside here in BC and with my specialty I plan on working in remote locations across Canada. The Open the Doors Bursary has not only helped me financially, it helped me physically and mentally as it allowed me to focus my energy on my studies without having to work as many hours while in school. For this I will remain grateful to every opportunity that opens up my way!

Alana Poynter



With this bursary I was able to decrease my working hours in order to concentrate on finishing the LPN program.

Chelsea Blake | Practical Nursing

My name is Chelsea Blake. I am twenty years old and I was born and raised in Kimberley B.C. I am an active learner and remain eager to continue my education in the Practical Nursing program at College of the Rockies in Cranbrook. This June of 2016, I successfully completed year one of the program with Honours and hope to be as successful in year two. Through my post secondary school experience I have found that finances are a worry. After attending a seminar for a student loan through College of the Rockies I was unable to receive the financial aid because my parents have “adequate” income according to the application and was told I am unable to apply for financial aid independently until I am 21 years of age. This past month my mother retired as a nurse herself leaving the financial stress of school to increase drastically. If I were to obtain this bursary it will help me pay for books and remaining tuition. A second barrier that I have experienced through post secondary education is working as a server to help pay for school while trying to complete the program at the same time. I have found this very difficult to balance time management between full time school, work and all that life brings; this bursary will give me more time for self-care and subordinate my worries about not having the money to pay for school.

My goal is to become a Licensed practical Nurse by graduating from College of the Rockies in June of 2017. I would then like to work for a year and gain valuable experience in the field before bridging into the Bachelors of Science in nursing degree program. This bursary has helped me open up the doors to finishing this program successfully and puts me on the right track to further my education and complete school as a Registered Nurse. This bursary has helped decrease my financial stress throughout the semester and has helped me complete the program with the values I have set for myself which include being: focused, caring, competent, and respectful to all patients I am fortunate enough to support.

I hope to be a nurse of great integrity. Growing up I lost a friend to cancer, since then I have felt the want and need to help others in similar situations and be a positive influence on the difficult journeys their life brings. When I complete the Practical Nursing program I hope to gain full time employment in acute care to save money in order to pay my mother back for school, be able to move into my own place and support myself. I feel very thankful to be receiving this education in order to have a successful future with financial stability and the ability to one-day raise a family. I want to thank-you for awarding me the “Open the Doors Bursary” – it will greatly assist me in achieving my career goals.

Sincerely

Chelsea Blake



With this bursary I am able to pursue my career opportunity as an LPN. I am very grateful to be supported in my education journey.



Christine Probe | Business Admin

I was born into a poor family who resided in Surrey, BC. When it came to music, art, education, and sports, the kids in my family didn't have the same opportunities as kids from higher income families. I was only able to attend school funded programs, while other kids had a wide range of programs to choose from, since their parents could afford it. Both of my parents worked hard and rarely had the time or energy to help me with my school work. Things got pretty stressful at home and I decided to move out of my parents' house at the young age of sixteen. In turn, I had to work a full-time job to be able to pay rent. School and work together were too much for me to handle, so I had to pick one. Obviously I wasn't going to live on the street, so I chose to put school off until my life settled down. Well, life did not settle down; I moved to Cranbrook, BC with my boyfriend and I ended up being a mother to a little boy named Cameron when I was just twenty-one. Unfortunately, the relationship that I had with Cameron's father dissolved when he was just fourteen months old. It was my son and I against the world, and we moved from place to place for 3 years. Then when I was 24, I was pregnant again and gave birth to a little girl named Kacey. I ran a daycare from home for four years until I decided that it was finally time to go back to school.

Now that my kids are older, I can go to school and achieve the goals that I have been longing for. It has been my dream to own and run a business since I was a little girl. I would really like to receive a diploma in Business Administration so I can do most of the work myself, without having to hire people to do it for me. I may not be able to run a business right off the bat, but if it isn't possible then I will find a job at a bank in the mean time. I would enjoy being able to share my knowledge with others in the form of financial advice. However, I am required to take certain courses to obtain a diploma in Business Administration such as: Accounting, Microeconomics, Business Math, English, and Business Law. The courses that I need will cost about \$7000 throughout the two-year program. This bursary has opened doors for me by giving me a little more financial breathing room and one less thing to worry about, so I can concentrate on my studies.

My future will be amazing because I am going to make it that way. I am going to have a great career that actually interests me, freedom to travel, a nice house with a big yard, and a horse or two. Soon, I will possess the means and knowledge to put money away for my own children to go to school so we can escape this poverty trap. I will be able to do anything I want, but most of all I will be happy and bring happiness to my family. In my future, I see never having to worry about money again, smiling and laughing a lot, and just enjoying life with my family. My education has not only opened an array of doors for me, but for my children as well.

My history helps you recognize that I can overcome struggles, my plan shows you that I am excited and determined to succeed, and how I see my future gives you insight to how hard I will work.

Sincerely

Christine Probe



This bursary has opened doors for me by giving me a little more financial breathing room and one less thing to worry about, so I can concentrate on my studies.

Derek Jorgenson | Adult Upgrading

My name is Derek Jorgenson. I am 26 years old. I was born in Regina, Saskatchewan. My father's job required us to transfer to different locations. After leaving Regina we moved to Sicamous, B.C. and in 1998 our family moved to Cranbrook, B.C. Growing up in Cranbrook I volunteered at the Fort Steele Heritage Town. I enjoy sports, playing five seasons with the Rocky Mountain Football Club. Due to medical problems I missed a great deal of my last two years of high school. To assist me in completing my high school my parents hired tutors that allowed me to graduate from Mount Baker Secondary in 2008. While my health issues have since been resolved, during my period of illness it impacted my ability to complete classes I now need to improve myself. On leaving high school I worked towards an electrical apprenticeship, but after the first year I was unable to find anyone to apprentice me. I looked at leaving Cranbrook to find an apprenticeship elsewhere in B.C. but was unsuccessful. Realizing I needed training to find employment I completed the Culinary Arts/Professional Cook Training Program. In 2014 I entered the work force cooking at a variety of locations. While I enjoyed what I was doing I was not able to financially support myself as wages in the cooking industry were at or just above minimum wage. My parents assisted me in obtaining my class 3 driver's license in the hope that this would open the door to a better life. My first opportunity resulted in employment with a company that allowed for local work. To stay employed though I had to move to the lower mainland. Living on the coast was very expensive. Over time the company I worked for was unable to provide full time hours. I stayed with it in the hope that things would improve, however, they did not. I exhausted my savings as I sent out numerous resumes in an effort to find employment within the trucking industry. It was tough but I eventually found work operating large vehicles. Unfortunately the work turned out to be short term. I felt defeated. Unemployed and struggling to live. My family was doing their best to support me financially. I was not happy about that though. I wanted to make it on my own. My parents convinced me to come home. I am glad that we did. We had long conversations about my future, career opportunities and the need to pursue upgrading and a post-secondary education.

My goal is to pursue a career in the health care field. I am a people person. I like to work with and help others. I want independence. The ability to make a living that will allow for a better future. A future that will give me the opportunity to have a family and the ability to support them. I suppose one could call me a late bloomer. After my employment experiences I came to realize that while there is no shame in labour work it lacked security in the long term. I now realize more than ever the importance of a solid education and have decided to enroll in the LPN program.

With upgrading and the successful completion of the LPN Program I know doors will open to a life time of employment opportunities. Opportunities that will make me feel better about myself. Employment that will provide for a more secure future.

Sincerely

Derek Jorgenson



My immediate goal is to complete my upgrading in Math, English and Biology, so that I can go into the LPN Program in the fall of 2017. This bursary has been an enormous help by covering some of the costs associated with upgrading my education.

Elizabeth Rogers | Education Studies

To say a door has been closed suggests the door had previously been open. For my life in particular, I would say the closing of doors was not the issue, but instead doors simply never being opened, or simply not being there. Throughout my family and education history, I've experienced many barriers preventing me from even arriving at doors of opportunity.

Throughout my life, I've moved 8 times. I've lived in one state, 6 provinces, and 14 houses. By the time I had graduated in 2014, I had attended 9 different schools. If I were to say there was one barrier to rule them all, it would be inconsistency. Being the youngest in a family of 6 kids, I've had to adapt to not being able to afford a lot of things other families could pay for. This is another barrier I've had to overcome, and a huge reason the 'Open the Doors' bursary is a great help to me. By 16, I had a job, and by grade twelve I was often working 30 hours a week to save up money for my life after graduation, as well as taking on extra college-level courses. I am not writing this to brag about my accomplishments, but rather to demonstrate that barriers in life can produce positive consequences. A quote by Peter Marshall that I love goes as follows, "When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure." I have learned to be adaptable through the continual change in my environment, friends, and school. I have learned to make most of my resources despite a lack of financial stability. Stressful family dynamics, parental separation, and ongoing mental and emotional instability, produced a necessary resilience in my character. Anxiety, developed from the inconsistency and experiences in my childhood, often prevented me from walking through doors, if they were opened for me. Overcoming that anxiety is another reason for the career goals I have. In learning to be driven, motivated, and overcome barriers placed in my life, it's made me passionate about helping others do the same.

Over the past few years I have discovered that I have a desire to work with kids. Some experiences that have allowed me to see this are volunteering at camps, and leading children and youth at my church's youth group. I want to help children that also have barriers in their life. My desire is to walk alongside them as they learn to overcome those obstacles; this can take many forms but I do know my end educational goal is either teaching, occupational therapy, or special education. This is why I've decided to start my undergrad in elementary education at College of the Rockies, with the possibility of going on to a Master's degree in the future. I'm excited to study education and work hands-on with kids through practicums. Starting my education at College of the Rockies has already opened up many doors in my mind as to what I can achieve and the opportunities that are available for me. The Open the Doors bursary has helped put me on a path toward making that become a reality.

Sincerely

Elizabeth Rogers



My education has helped me realize my strengths, abilities, and passions. Now I want to contribute to society with my skills. Funding like the open the doors bursary is helping me reach these goals.

Emily Balfour | University Studies

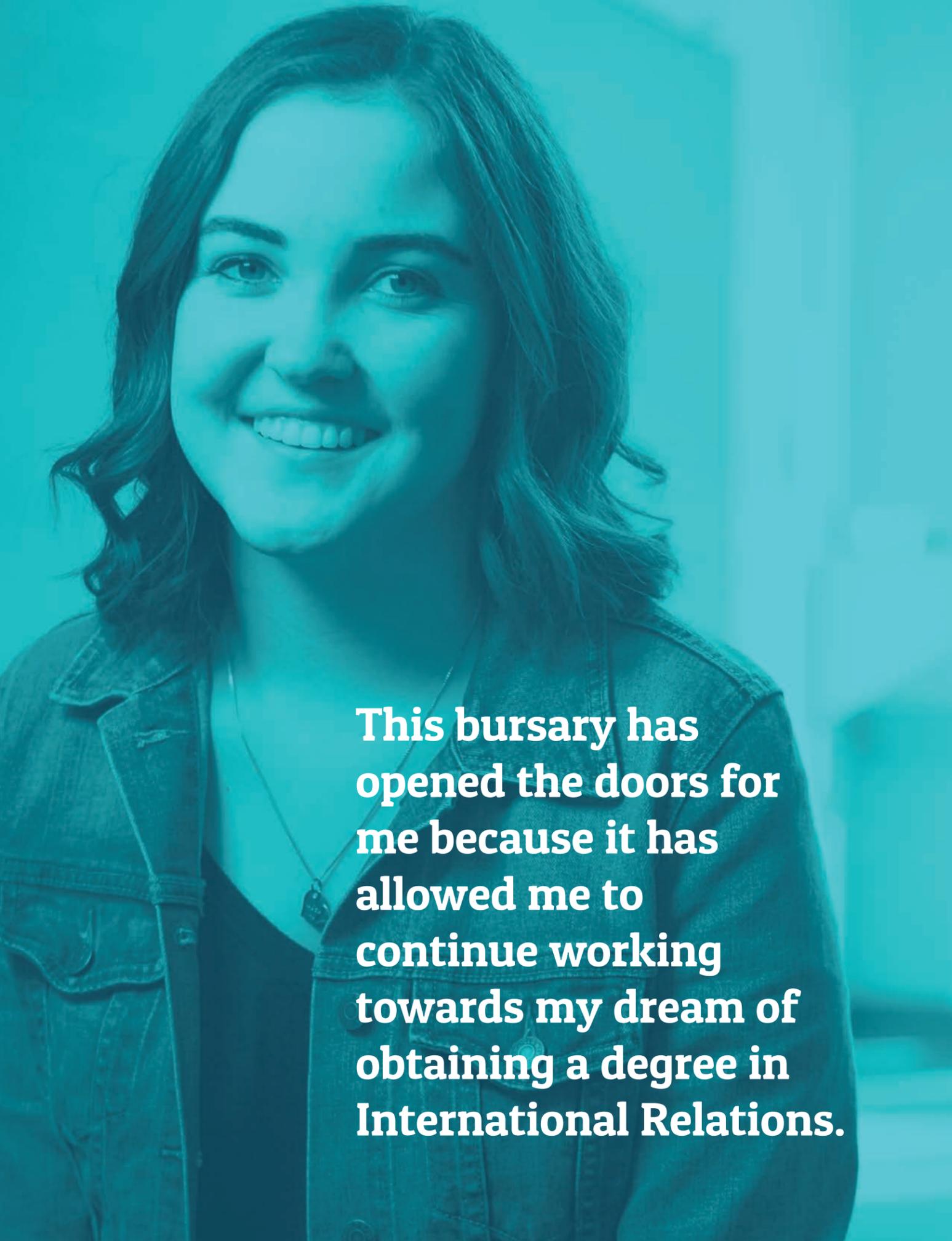
My name is Emily Balfour, and I started my second year at the College of the Rockies in September. A door that has been closed for me is the “financial door.” I am financing my education by myself, working two full time jobs to pay for my tuition, living expenses, and other fees. This is a large burden on my education, as I must devote much of the time that I need to use for studying or doing homework to my jobs. I am financing my own education as I do not want to place that burden on my parents, who are under enough financial stress already.

My educational goal is to earn my bachelor degree in International Relations, with a minor in Political Science. After I earn my bachelor, I plan to go on to earn my Masters in International Relations and Political Science. This bursary has helped “Open the Doors” by providing assistance for me to finance the beginnings of my education, and allowing me to devote much more of my time to ensuring I am the best student I can be. This bursary helps tremendously by starting me on my way to achieving my goals.

My biggest goal is to use my education to work at the United Nations in Humanitarian Aid, Post-disaster Infrastructure Development, and Human Rights Affairs. Working for the United Nations would be a dream come true for me, as I have a great passion for Humanitarian aid and Human Rights Affairs. When I am successful, my life would consist of going on humanitarian aid missions to countries that have been affected by disasters (natural or otherwise) and providing immediate aid to the citizens of these countries. After the initial aid process is finished, I would work with Post-disaster infrastructure development to help rebuild a sustainable environment for the citizens, where foreign aid is no longer needed, and the country can begin to rebuild itself. In addition to Humanitarian Aid and Infrastructure Development, I also dream that my life would include defending human rights, and fighting for equality and justice around the world. This would include some of the issues I am most passionate about, including women’s rights, indigenous rights, the right to education, and the right to proper healthcare. My education will help me “Open the Doors” by providing me with the necessary skills and qualifications to work for the United Nations, as well as other non-profit organizations, such as the Red Cross, and Amnesty International. Working for a non-profit is my dream, and my education would allow me to do that.

Sincerely

Emily Balfour



This bursary has opened the doors for me because it has allowed me to continue working towards my dream of obtaining a degree in International Relations.



Felicity Youngward | Business Admin

My name is Felicity Youngward, I am a married mom of 2 very active little boys (ages 3 & 6) my husband and I run the Kootenay Country Inn and Suds' and Dud's Laundromat here in Cranbrook along with my parents. I have wanted to go back to school for a while, but always found that the time wasn't right. But last year I decided that I should just take the plunge. However, my main barrier to furthering my education is lack of money. After taking two years of University right out of high school and financing it completely with student loans, I decided I really didn't want to do that again. Also in running your own business, the owners don't always get paid. The other barrier is available time. However, with the part-time program that is available on-line which really worked well for me last year, and I hope that it continues to do so this coming year.

My Plan is to at least complete the Certificate of Business Administration; however, I would really like to do the diploma or even the Bachelor. In order to do this, I need to manage my personal finances correctly so that I can continuously be taking courses. This bursary will assist me in taking the courses that I want to take without stretching my family's finances to tight. Now that I have started this program I would like to complete it in a continues stretch of time without any breaks.

If I am successful for the bursary then I will be less stressed out about the financial aspect of going back to school, so I will be able to enjoy and concentrate on successfully completing my courses. Completing my education will give me greater confidence In running our current business and any future business. It will also provide an example to my children that is never to late to start something new and to succeed at it. .

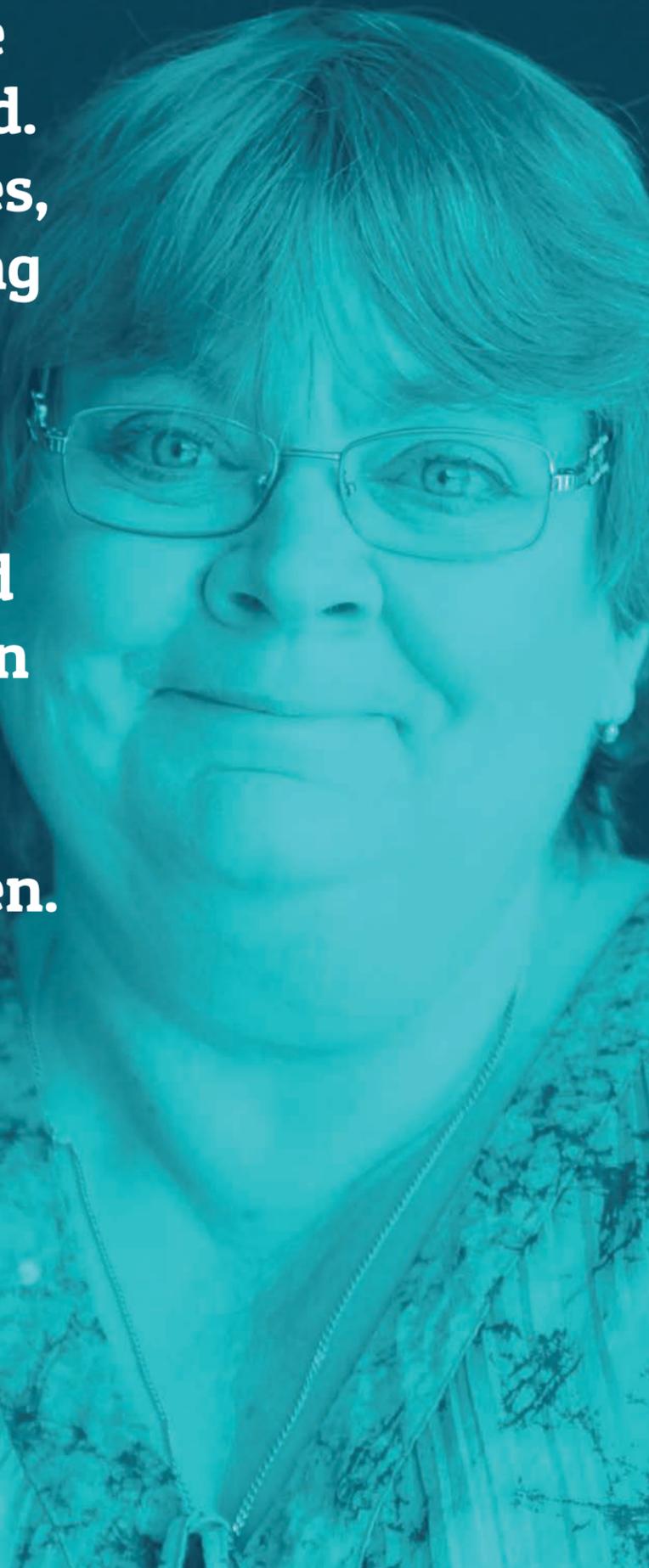
Sincerely

Felicity Youngward

**The open the doors
bursary has increased
my confidence in
myself and given me
something to work
towards. Eventually
it will help me run
my own business**



Our family income is fixed and limited. Besides tuition fees, books and traveling to Cranbrook for classes, we are struggling to manage household expenses. The open the doors bursary helped alleviate some of this burden.



Georgina Caspers | Family Studies

My life choices as an adult have been strongly influenced by a hearing loss that was the result of a bicycle accident at the age of thirteen. I have always felt limitations because of the disability. What made my situation more frustrating was that no one acknowledged the disability and it wasn't until I was in my mid-forties that I was fitted with two hearing aids. That opened up my world enormously. Enrolling at College with excellent supports has been life changing. Spacing out my courses over two years has enabled me to concentrate on my studies and carry on with family life.

I have had many jobs ranging from catering, mowing lawns, teaching swimming lessons, nanny, paper delivery, cooking, laundry, janitorial work, clerking, traffic control and housekeeping. These jobs have been at minimum wage level with no prospect of higher wages. I have been married for twenty-five years and because of my husband's disability, I have always had to work. We have one son attending college who lives with us during breaks. We moved to the Kootenays from the Okanagan expecting a less expensive lifestyle. I approached KES and they sponsored me through the "Bridging for Women" course. It gave me the incentive to change my life and do something that I would enjoy as a career.

I have completed certification for the Human Service Worker course with the immediate goal of completing requirements for the Diploma level. My ultimate goal is to receive a Bachelor of Arts in Family Studies which I can realistically manage at the rate of three courses per semester. At present I am working on call at a senior lodging facility. Our family income is fixed and limited. Besides tuition fees, books and traveling to Cranbrook for classes, we are struggling to manage household expenses. In class I will need a typewell stenographer to record the conversations onto a computer so I can follow the class discussion. I have an FM system that connects me directly to the instructor and I have tutoring expenses. A bursary would help immensely with college fees.

With a degree in Family Studies, I want to concentrate on senior and disabled programs. There are several job options available in Creston through TAPS, Community Living, Cresteramics, KES, Interior Health, Swan Valley Lodge or Crestview Lodge. These options are currently out of my reach. I would have financial security and the satisfaction of a rewarding job.

Sincerely

Georgina Caspers



Jerod Dobson | Practical Nursing

I was born on June 1st 1989, the youngest of 4 children by my loving parents, Ben and Connie. I was a quick learner as a child, as I was taking my first steps at 6 months, and also saying whole words by that time. However, I was also sick. I was diagnosed with a rare disease where my body attacked platelets, a blood cell needed for clotting. (Idiopathic thrombocytopenia, or ITP) Many children don't survive this, because any bump or bruise could end up being fatal; consequentially, I had a nurse watching me 24 hours a day to ensure I stayed safe. Clearly I survived that, but it had lasting effects throughout my childhood and adolescence.

One day though, a friend convinced me that I should be a nurse. She told me that because of my caring and loving personality, and my quick ability to learn, I would be a perfect fit. I asked a couple of other friends who were in that field, and they agreed I would be very good at the job, and it would let me do something that I felt made a difference. So, somewhat because I didn't have anything else, I applied to COTR's practical nursing program, and was accepted. I was so happy doing the school work. My friend was right, it was a perfect fit for me. I did very well in all my classes, and got along famously with all my classmates and instructors, and enjoyed it immensely. And in May, I received a notice that I made the honors list.

Currently I am in my last year of Practical Nursing at COTR. While in school I need to work 2 days a week to pay for my mortgage, and live with my parents because I couldn't afford a place in Cranbrook, they also helped me with food and other expenses. After some time, the load was too much for me, and I had to cut back from 17 hours of work a week to 8. Over a few months of that I ran up a credit card debt for my bills and necessities. The Open the Doors bursary helped to ensure my financial security during the school year. It also helped me not have to work as many hours so that I can focus on my studies.

After I graduate I plan on working with my new nursing license and getting myself in a comfortable place financially and I don't have to work more than 40 hours a week. Once that happens I plan to "bridge" from being an LPN to an RN, which opens up a lot of employment opportunities. With that being a bachelor of science, I can go on to use that for an assortment of post-graduate studies. I haven't planned that in detail, but I know currently I love what I'm doing and I certainly want to upgrade to become a registered nurse when possible.

I want to thank CORFA for offering this opportunity that will help many students on their way to attending COTR. I know as well as for me, personally, it was therapeutic to even write this and visit my past for a little while.

Sincerely

Jerod Dobson



The open the doors bursary helped to ensure my financial security during the school year. It also helped me not have to work as many hours so that I can focus on my studies.

Josie Ruoss | Teacher Education

My name is Josie Ruoss and I was born and raised in Cranbrook B.C. I was brought up in the outdoors and my parents have always encouraged me to take risks and seek out adventures. I enjoy backpacking, skiing, rock-climbing, biking, and creating art. My childhood centered around being outside has made me develop a passion for our local environment, which is expressed in my art work and hobbies.

Finding outdoor focused opportunities in my community is easy; I participated in the Get Outside B.C. program to enhance my leadership skills, however due to an ACL injury, from skiing, my activities that I could be involved in were severely limited. This was difficult to deal with because of my active life style. I became very unhappy that summer because I was sitting out on activities. My knees slowly improved and I continued on to participate in the Teen Bugaboo Climbing Camp and Take Back The Wild, a summit focused on conservation. Unfortunately this past winter I tore my ACL for the second time, again closing the doors to the activities I enjoy, as well as limiting the amount that I can work at a job. My biggest barrier I have faced in furthering my outdoor experiences is time commitment. Juggling a job, injuries, time spent making art, time spent outside, and school, is no simple task. Financially it has impacted me greatly as outdoor gear is not cheap, nor is education after high school.

Early in my high school years I decided that I wanted to pursue a career focused around inspiring others to find their passion for the outdoors. My goal is to educate others about our local environment as well as protect it. Because of my interest in leadership I chose to peruse a Degree in Education at Collage of the Rockies. To reach my own educational goals I plan to continue to stay involved and active in my community. My goal requires money to pay for my schooling, opportunities to gain job experience, and time to enjoy my hobbies. The Open The Doors bursary would relieve some of my financial burden, which would provide me with more time to spend learning rather than working.

In my future there are hopefully no more knee injuries. I aim to be on new adventures, discovering new places, and climbing more mountains. My education will provide me with both flexibility and stability. It will allow me to spread my knowledge as well as enhance my own. It will open the door to a life filled with creativity and learning experiences.

Sincerely

Josie Ruoss

Education has opened the doors for me because it is helping me achieve my goal of becoming a teacher and has given me the skills to be successful in my future.



Kasandra Peltzer | Adult Upgrading

My name is Kasandra Peltzer, I am nineteen years old and come from a single parent family. My father has tried his best to raise both myself and my younger brother, and has made sure we are given every opportunity possible. My father doesn't have a lot of money at the end of the month, and even less that he can save. This bursary has helped ease the stress of managing our finances, even if it is for just one semester.

It is entirely my own fault that I am even in this situation, in the first place. I wanted to go to the College of the Rockies to obtain my BC Adult Graduation Diploma as I never finished secondary school because of certain social difficulties. In short, I was afraid to attend school, and was absent a majority of my time there. I didn't feel safe, and I purposely started to avoid it as much as possible. A negative learning environment put me in a difficult place both with students and faculty. I want to get my life back on track, as education has always been important to me, and it hurt to see my grades drop significantly in the past. After having such a hard time with school in the past it pained me to admit that I needed help, but looking online I found College of the Rockies and was relieved to see that they offered such a course, and that I didn't have to do it alone. My fears and anxieties haven't gone away, but I hope to overcome them nonetheless.

Its been tough these past few years, but I hope that after my successful completion of the program, I can continue attending the College of the Rockies and hopefully be on my way to a successful career. There are so many courses and programs available that I haven't fully decided what I want to take yet, but I have been leaning towards either a career in health or maybe a trade. I have struggled with my health, both mentally and physically, and I strongly believe that mental health is very important and should be looked at with the utmost discretion. Working in medical or a health facility would give me the opportunity to help those who need it most. On the other hand, I know how much trade careers and experts are needed, and that I could have a very fulfilling future working in such an environment, especially one that would take me outside an office setting. I'm not the greatest writer, and there is a lot I still can't talk about, but I know that I am very lucky to even be able to say this much at all. It has taken me years to open up, and even more to become the person I want to be. The Open the Doors bursary has helped ease the path financially and has given me the extra push out the door to have a successfully education with the College of the Rockies.

Sincerely

Kasandra Peltzer

Without education and the open the doors bursary I wouldn't be able to have the academic background to enter a degree program.



Lobsang Nima | Upgrading English

I grew up in a small village in Tibet. School was not considered very important. Like most people in my village, I never finished school. I quit school when I was about 12 years old to help my family at home. My family are nomads and they had large herds of yak and sheep to look after. Many times, I looked after our animals. Other times, I gathered wood from the forest for the stove or I got water from the river because we didn't have any running water. There were many jobs to keep me busy.

As you may know, Tibet is controlled by China and Tibetans do not have much freedom in their own country. When I was 18, I escaped to India so that I could finally meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I traveled by foot through the Himalayas with a small group of people. The first time I didn't make it. I stopped to help a friend who got hurt and we got separated from the rest of our group. But on my second try, I made it. It took us one month to reach northern India. It was very difficult and dangerous. Many times we didn't have food for days. We had to travel at night so the police didn't catch us. When I finally reached Dharamsala, India I did not have any money. I found out that I can study Tibetan and English at a school for Tibetan refugees. This is where I learned English for the first time. The program is just for a couple years though. When I finished, I wanted to learn more but I didn't have money for a private school.

After many years, I met my wife. I came to live with her in Canada in 2009. I wanted to improve my English so I studied with free ESL classes for new immigrants. But I stopped after about 6 months because my wife was a student and I needed to make money for food and rent. I worked as a cook in a restaurant. I stayed in that job for six years. I liked my job but I thought that this is not what I want to do forever. Sometimes I thought about going back to school but I thought I am too old to learn. This March, I came with my wife to Cranbrook because she got a job here. This is when I really started to think more about what I want to do for the rest of my life.

My goal is to work with seniors. This is something that I have always wanted to do. It is my dream job! I am good with seniors and I really love them. When I was young, I grew up with my uncle. I really loved him very much. But because I was young, I only thought about playing with my friends. One day my uncle got sick suddenly and he passed away after one month. I was so sad and I realized that I didn't spend as much time with him as I should. I made a promise to myself that one day I will work with seniors and I will think of them like my uncle.

To reach my goal, I plan to take the Health Care Assistant program here at the College of the Rockies. But before I can start that program, I need to improve my English more so that is why I am taking the English Language Program now. The Open the Doors Bursary is a very big help for me to pay for tuition, textbooks and maybe even a bus pass. This time, I really want to take this golden chance to get more education.

Sincerely

Lobsang Nima



To reach my goal I need to improve my English. The Open the Doors Bursary is a very big help for me to pay for tuition, textbooks and maybe even a bus pass.

Matt Lavery | Adult Upgrading

My name is Matthew Lavery and I was born and raised in Cranbrook BC. I have been accepted into UT Sciences at College of the Rockies this fall to begin my education in the field of Environmental Sciences/Engineering.

A major barrier that is now standing between me and my goal of Environmental Sciences or Engineering education is a lack of money, not to mention the continual rise in post-secondary tuitions costs, textbooks and living expenses for students. Science textbooks are incredibly pricey, and I will have to pay extra for lab courses. My textbooks alone will be \$1,098.30 brand new if I purchase them at the COTR bookstore. This means that although tuition is lower at COTR than most universities, textbooks will still be high and I have to pay extra for science labs.

The plan for my schooling is to take the first two years of my sciences at the local college in hopes to save enough money to attend University of Victoria or UBC-O until my degree is completed. To get a degree in environmental engineering it can take anywhere from 5-7 years (depending on your coarse load). In addition, attending university for 7 years can cost upwards of \$80,000 (not including text books, housing, food, etc.). In an attempt to offset this extreme cost I have been working at Canadian Tire since I was 15 (minimum wage) and, despite my efforts, I have fallen drastically short of what I need to complete my education. I will be continuing to work part time at my job; however, I need to make sure that I am not working too much at the detriment of my grades. I am hoping to keep my GPA high so I may be eligible for scholarships in my future, and to be accepted in a university to continue my studies.

Receiving this bursary has helped alleviate some of my financial burden and the stress that comes it. The bursary has been used towards textbook purchases for my first year at the college.

Once I complete my education at COTR and move on to complete my schooling at a more costly institution (UVIC or UBC-O), I hope to find a career in Cranbrook (or East Kootenays) where I can give back to the community and region that has done so much for me. Having an education will open hundreds of doors in the way of finding a career which can support both my family and that can allow me to maintain a lifestyle balance. Hopefully I will be able to contribute to environmentally sound decisions in our region as it increases in population and infrastructure. I have been working for minimum wage for over 3 years now, and I know I could never afford to purchase a home or raise a family on it. So for me, education is a way to move forward, and to give back.

Sincerely

Matt Lavery

Education has opened my eyes towards what my future career might be. I had no idea what I wanted to do when I started college. Now I would like to pursue environmental engineering.



Education has opened the doors for me to be able to provide for myself and my daughter.

Megan Butz | Practical Nursing

My name is Megan Butz, I was born and raised in Cranbrook, BC. I recently have been through the biggest challenges of my life. A few years ago I had my daughter Malia, and she has been the biggest blessing in my life. When she was one, suddenly, we lost our “home” although, I wouldn’t call it that anymore. I was very fortunate that I had family to take us in, who we have lived with since.

My daughter is the reason why I am succeeding in life. Without her I would not have the motivation that I do to open new doors to my life. In September 2013, I began at the College of the Rockies upgrading my high school so I could go on to post-secondary school. In September 2016, I began my last year of the Practical Nursing Program.

I have experienced many barriers throughout my journey so far. Financially, it’s hard being a student because school is a full time job. Working while in school has resulted in days where I have never felt so tired in my entire life, but, you cannot survive with no money. Mentally, it’s draining trying to be the best mom ever, while still managing to keep up my grades. It’s challenging to find balance in life when you have so much on your plate. Some days I feel like it’s all coming to an end and I can’t do it anymore. Then I realize it’s the little things that keep me motivated like receiving my exam marks with a grade “A” or hearing my daughter say “I love you”.

My goal is to finish the Practical Nursing Program at the College of the Rockies. I will reach my goals by being a successful student and I will keep letting my successes be my motivation. If I take a step back I will come back and take two steps forward. This bursary has helped to open new doors by relieving some financial burden. Once I complete the program I will be working in Cranbrook, BC to gain knowledge and experience. Later, I look forward to continuing my education at the College of the Rockies because I know as a door always closes a new one opens.

Once I finish this last year of practical nursing educating I will be opening new doors for my career. I know when I reach my goal I will be able to provide for myself and my daughter. We will be able to have our own place in Cranbrook where we can call home, and I cannot wait for the day I open that door. I will feel successful once I graduate because that means I am so close to my dream and just thinking about this sends shivers down my spine. I am amazed how far I have come and I am proud of myself both as a student and as a mom.

Sincerely

Megan Butz



Melanie Caron | English Upgrading

Hi, my name is Melanie Caron. I went back to school at the College of the Rockies in 2012. I wanted to graduate because I need a high school diploma for my dream job. I started in the Young Parent Education Program, and I was helping with the children at the same time. Then I went to Adult Upgrading, but it was very difficult for me because English is my second language. My teacher, Sharon Richardson, proposed that I do ESL in the International program, so I started the program at the lowest level. I did wonderfully because the teacher helped me very much, but I also studied very hard. The program changed this year, and it was going to be really expensive for me to keep doing the International Program, so I came back to English upgrading to try to finish my courses. I was glad to come back with Sharon because she is very good, and she helped me finish English 70.

I am studying hard and hope to graduate in June 2017, and that will help me to apply for the job I want. Sometimes it is very difficult for me because my husband is not home. He needs to go away for his work, and I am alone with two children, which one is special needs. Also, I volunteer with the Air Cadets because I am hoping to work there when I graduate. They believe in me and want me to work for them, but I can't until I finish upgrading. My husband and I are struggling with money because he needs to pay to live away from home when he works somewhere else and to pay for us at home at the same time. When it's spring time, he doesn't work for months, and it's really hard. I was running a business before, but it was too difficult to work at the same while trying to finish school and take care of the children.

I made the decision to concentrate on school and focus on my children, but that brings the stress of paying to finish high school. I have been struggling with school all my life because of my learning disability, but I am still trying to finish. I am not giving up, but sometimes I need to stop attending because it's too expensive for me to keep going to school. I feel that I move one step in the right direction and then take two steps back when I have to take one or two semesters off. At graduation this past year, I saw lots of friends who I had gone to school with over the years graduate, and it made me sad that I was not on the stage with them.

I have a few more courses to complete and that will cost me \$1,377. I cannot get the AUG funding because my husband makes more than what is allowed. I am now 40 years old and still at school. The open the doors bursary made a big difference for me. I volunteer with the Air Cadets, but I want to finish school and become a paid Air Cadet Officer, my dream job. Walking across the stage at graduation will help me feel proud of myself for achieving my goal, but also, my family will be proud of me for not giving up.

Sincerely

Melanie Caron



**The open the doors
bursary has put me
on the path to getting
my dream job working
as an officer for the
Air Cadets**

Michelle Chan | Business Admin

My name is Michelle Chan. I am Kenyan. I am the first born in my family and I grew up along one of the biggest slums in Africa, known as Kibera. I have always been responsible for my family, this brought along my position in the household as a co-parent. I am an amputee as well as an accident survivor. My involvement in a road accident during my last year in primary school, which determined the quality of education I would receive thereafter, put tremendous financial constraints on my family. Therefore, I was not able to finish high school. We were and are not well off to begin with, but this event took a terrible toll on my family; financially, emotionally and spiritually. Fortunately, my family was able to borrow money and hold fund-raisers to pay for numerous surgeries and my release from hospital. This accident caused the death of two of my best friends who were both under the age of 15. I suffered not only physical pain but emotional to recovery, but the process has led me to discover a strong, wise, and ambitious girl. This year, due to my late arrival, I was able to enroll only in English 90 and two business courses, accounting and economics. As an international student, I had to pay full tuition fees for three courses. This has now set back my academic plan, for I have to make up the extra courses over the next semesters or add an extra semester on at the end. Having only three courses made me ineligible for any international scholarships even though I had excellent grades and a strong work ethic.

My goal is to be a successful figure in the business administration field. I want to be a symbol of hope and possibility to all girls, indicating that females can climb the corporate ladder too and excel in their positions. In the next four years, I want to receive my Bachelors in Business Administration and utilize my newfound skills later on, by working for a non-governmental organization. The Open Doors Campaign Bursary is my motivation for success during this semester and will push me to achieve greatness to the best of my ability. This bursary is the foundation on which my educational success is set because the knowledge and skills I receive will be instrumental for my future.

My educational success will allow me to be more active in my community. I will be in a position to run an outreach program in Nairobi, Kenya that creates awareness and opportunities for the less privileged locals in the educational sector. Through my education, I will be in a position to financially assist my family back home by ensuring that my younger siblings are educated and my parents are taken care of. I would like my story to be motivational to others by showing them that labels are not limits that hold you back from your dreams or define your future. The education I receive through this bursary will serve as the first step on the ladder to my dreams, and I pray that I prove to be deserving of it.

Sincerely

Michelle Chan



The open the doors bursary has given me the opportunity to rise above circumstances that would stunt my growth as an individual.

Miranda Myndio | Education Studies

My name is Miranda Myndio. I graduated in 2013 from Chinook High School, in my home town of Lethbridge, Alberta. Through my high school years, I was a multi-sport athlete and the recipient of the Chinook "Athlete of the Year" awards for the three consecutive years I attended. Athletics has always held a strong influence on my life. I have participated on more than 13 teams, mainly basketball and volleyball. As well, I have three provincial gold metals to my name. To this day, I continue to value the traits of confidence, attentiveness and respect that sport has taught me. However, when it came to my high school graduation, I made the choice to take a break from sport and put my education first. In the fall of 2013, I attended the University of Lethbridge to pursue a career in dental hygiene. Only a single semester passed before I realized my heart did not belong in the field of science. My dream has always been to work with children. When the winter arrived, I decided to take a year off. I started working full time in order to save up for my next path in life; to become a teacher.

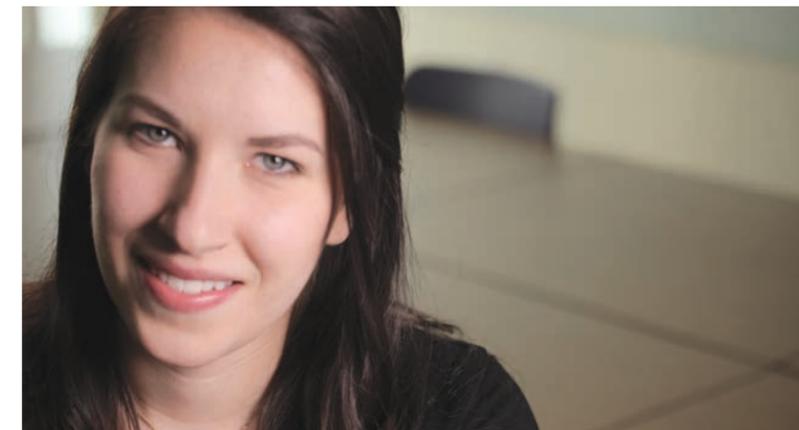
Last year, I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the College of the Rockies on a volleyball scholarship. I absolutely loved my experience at the Cranbrook campus. Class sizes were small, teachers were helpful, and the quality of education was fantastic. Most importantly, all of my courses apply toward my degree. More than the schooling aspect, the College of the Rockies has provided me the opportunity to rejoin a team and play a sport I love. I was granted a returning position to the Avalanche team for fall 2016 and winter 2017. More than anything, I would love to fill the position. Unfortunately, I fear the costs of another year of school away from home will be too expensive. I currently work two full time jobs to put away as much as I can. However, there are not enough hours available to save up the money required to live on my own.

My dream is to become a teacher as I strive to be a positive influence and role model. I want to communicate the importance of being a kind person. I hope the kids I one day teach will grow up asking questions, and make their own informed decisions. My goal is to be the best person I can be, and hopefully encourage my future students to be their best as well. Even though this dream will not become a reality for a few years, my passion and desire motivates me to keep working hard toward my goal. The Open the Doors Bursary has alleviated some of the stress of being able to attend my last available year at College of the Rockies, and take me one step closer toward my dream of teaching.

Sincerely

Miranda Myndio

The open the doors bursary has given me the opportunity to further my education and bring me closer to my career as a teacher.



Natasha Allen | Upgrading English

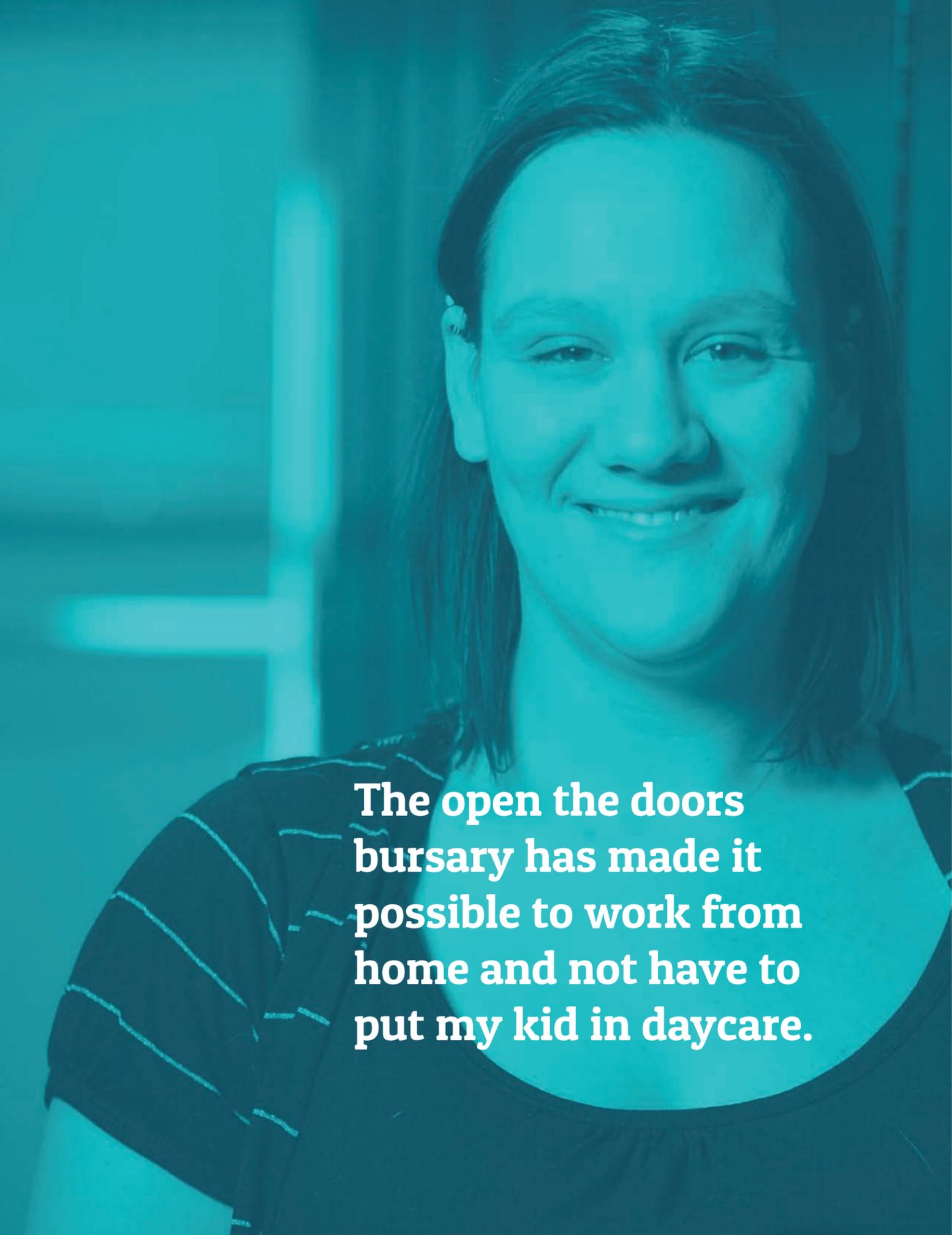
My name is Natasha Allen, I am 24 years old. I was born in Kelowna, but have lived most of my life in Cranbrook, British Columbia. My Mother and Father both abused drugs and alcohol, and I was taken into foster care at the age of five. In addition to my family issues, I have suffered with cerebral palsy and my left leg has been twisted since birth. My spine has a curvature deformity due to limited muscular and skeletal developments. That being said, I work hard to lead a normal life. I pay my bills and set new goals for myself. I work a full time job as a janitor and clean homes on a part time basis to make ends meet. I am good at what I do. However, my body will not take the stress I place upon it much longer. I need to educate myself and find employment which I can sustain physically. I am not looking for a hand out, just a hand up to make my life better.

My goal is to take a one year course in office administration. I have worked a maternity relief position at Melody Motors in Kimberley, British Columbia. I enjoyed the variety of duties I had assisting with day to day operations in the office. I enjoy working with people, and I am outgoing, and confident in the work I do. This bursary has given me a part of the financial support I need to make a change through education. I have recently met with an advisor and realize that I need to upgrade my English and math for one semester. Then I am more able to apply to the office administration program.

When I am successful in the office administration course, I can move forward with earning a better living; which will not have the negative impacts I am dealing with now. Such as, swinging a mop, heavy lifting through out day, and working night shifts. I believe that through the many paths this course can lead me, it will open the door to finding my true passion in life.

Sincerely

Natasha Allen



**The open the doors
bursary has made it
possible to work from
home and not have to
put my kid in daycare.**



Shamaya Blanchette | Arts & Science

My name is Shamaya Blanchette, I'm 19 years old and I grew up in the small town of Kimberley BC. I was raised in a single parent family with my older sister. I never felt under privileged but I realize now growing up in a small town lots of doors were automatically closed from lack of opportunity. Living in a single income family I started working at 15 so I could participate in extracurricular activities. Since graduation I've been working at a minimum wage job and will continue working throughout my studies. I also have been privileged to travel to under developed countries where I experienced a much lower cost of living compared to our standards, and witnessed people living in poverty. Still, people in these countries seemed happy despite not having all the comforts that our culture is accustomed to and expects. Our society is very materialistic and cost of living is much higher than what I experienced while traveling. I learned that I could get by with a lot less, but I know an education will help me to get a living wage and effectively contribute in our society.

My goal for this year at College of the Rockies is to start my educational path so I can get a better understanding of what type of career I want to achieve. Ultimately I wish to get a Bachelor degree. Currently I am considering two quite different careers; dental hygiene and accounting. I have registered in a full course load for the fall and winter semesters. I am looking at the fall semester as being an exploratory one, but I am still trying to get all the prerequisites I need for dental hygiene in case that is the path I chose. I will need to transfer to an institution away from home if I chose a dental hygiene program and I know the tuition and living expenses will be a challenge. As I work through the school year I will be trying to save for future education. This bursary will help me to begin my studies at College of the Rockies. The smaller class sizes at College of the Rockies will better prepare me when I transfer to a larger institution.

I hope when I have met my educational goal I will be able to find a job right away. In the next few years I see myself working in a position where I begin to establish myself in my own home in Victoria BC. I will have enough money to travel more and pursue my hobbies and interests. I live a healthy lifestyle which includes a vegetarian diet and fitness activities both outdoor and indoor. In my future I will have children so I want to ensure I have a career with the income to support my family and at the same time allow me to have quality down time with my family. With my career I'll be able to help my children pursue their passions as they grow up. I see my children going to university or college and hope to be able to help them financially when they are ready. In my retirement I will have fond memories of my work achievements and have a comfortable pension to still afford me travel and other leisurely pursuits. My education will help open doors for me by providing me with the knowledge I need to achieve my goals and the social experience of meeting new people.

Sincerely

Shamaya Blanchette



Education has opened the doors for me because it pushes me to achieve the goals I set for myself.

The open the doors scholarship helped me start full training and allowed me to immerse myself in the language learning process.

Tatiana Zavyalova | English Upgrading

Hello, my name is Tatiana, I came to Canada from Russia, from the city of Yekaterinburg, 6 months ago. In Russia I lived 40 years, and reached a good standard of living, had a good job as an accountant in a big company, an apartment and a car. But to achieve this I had a lot to learn and of course, work hard. Now, when I moved to Canada to be with my husband, I have had to start all over again, I am willing to learn and work as sitting at home for me is painful but without the ability to socialize and find a job, I feel helplessness and a failure as a person. I do not understand English and cannot communicate freely, I can't go to the hospital or to the store alone and I have to always take my husband. It depresses me, makes me feel weak and helpless. My husband helps me very much, and tries to support me in everything, but I still feel the stress of misunderstanding of English speech and a general ignorance of the English language.

My main goal right now in Canada is to learn English, my plans are to find a job. Knowledge of the language will help me to adapt to a new country and to communicate with family and friends. Without knowledge of the language I feel useless. It so happened that in high school I taught French, English I started learning only recently and so far my results not up to par. I can't socialize and I'm having difficulties even with a visit in the shop. To achieve my goals in training I need professional teachers to teach me language almost from scratch, I want a full immersion in the English language. I have met many Russian women who have enrolled in your college, and they all have very good remarks about teachers at the College and have begun to speak good English. I want to learn English by the professional teachers in your College, but training is expensive, this scholarship helped me start full training and allowed me to immerse myself in the language learning process. That means I can stop feeling inadequate and I can be useful to society, people, family and will be able to find a job.

In the future I plan to find a job as an accountant, working in a bank or other business. Knowing English, I also would be able to undergo specialized training in my specialty, or choose a different direction for my work. I can help my family buy a house one day. I will be able to communicate with friends, family, my husband, and be able to communicate with my husband's daughter which is very important to me. I can watch movies in English and read books. In General, I can live a full life and not feel inferior.

Sincerely

Tatiana Zavyalova



Open The Doors Bursary Recipients

COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES 2016/17

Adriel Goodman	Felicity Youngward	Miranda Myndio
Alana Poynter	Georgina Caspers	Morgan McLean
Braeden Logan	Jacie Trudeau	Nahoko Sugihara
Brittany Schira	Jerod Dobson	Natasha Allen
Caitlynn Benson	Jennifer Majewski	Paige Johnstone
Chelsea Blake	Josephine Ruoss	Rawnie Brooks
Chris Lavery	Kasandra Peltzer	Sarah Wood
Christie Popoff	Katherine Wyne	Seamus Damstrom
Christina Probe	Kellirae Gouw	Shamaya Blanchette
Danica Hayes	Kennedy Koop	Spencer Janzen
Derek Jorgenson	Koby Thibeault	Susan Higgins
Elisabeth Rogers	Lisa Petrie	Tasha Gilmour
Emily Balfour	Lobsang Nima	Tatiana Zavyalova
Emily Scheller	Matt Lavery	Tessa McHolm
Erin Mailey	Megan Butz	Thi Lien Do
Eva Boucher	Melanie Caron	Tracey-Anne Howell
Evgenia Haugen	Melanie Van Adrichem,	Tracey Chapple
Felicia Green	Michelle Chan	Yvette Duguay

How can I get involved?

Start by pledging your support for a robust, accessible, fully-funded post-secondary system. Also follow Open the Doors BC on Facebook. There, you'll find campaign updates, stories from BC students and educators, and ways to join the conversation.

And finally, share openthedoors.ca with your friends and family. We need everyone to say that our post-secondary education system is vital for our economy, and our future.

High tuition fees and institution underfunding are preventing thousands of students from getting the education they need to get ahead.

Lets keep the doors open.

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Post-Secondary Educators
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