

Student Updates

Emma C. 2017 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Best Overall Student

My name is Emma C. and I'm at freshman at Stanford University. With the help of a rotary scholarship I've been able to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher and learning Spanish in one of the most diverse yet challenging colleges around the nation. I'm currently halfway through spring quarter and can't believe my first year here at Stanford is almost over! I've met amazing people, found new communities, taken multiple psychology classes (my presumed major at the moment) and joined actives including running club, Stanford Undergraduate Psychology Association, Stanford Pre-Education Society, and I even volunteer with students on Saturdays and tutor a group of fourth graders. My current plan is to major in Psychology and double minor in education and Spanish, before co-terming and receiving my Masters in elementary education and my teaching certification at STEP. I recently found out I received a fellowship to teach at a rural school in Costa Rica this summer and can't wait to further improve my Spanish and teaching skills. Stanford is truly making my dreams come true and thanks to your scholarship I am where I am today. Once again, thank you so much for this amazing scholarship and opportunity!

Elizabeth N. 2014 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Best Overall Student

On June 8th I will graduate with a B.S. in Environmental Science & Resource Management with a focus in Wildlife Conservation and a minor in Environmental Studies from the University of Washington, Seattle. During my time at UW, I was fortunate enough to embark on major adventures through my studies. I was able to study abroad, travel, conduct undergraduate research, sail on a research vessel from Seattle to Alaska, and to hike, snowshoe, and conduct fieldwork too many times to count. In the summers, I worked as a camp counselor in Haines, Alaska and interned with SDOT's Urban Forestry department. I currently spend three days a week working at the Woodland Park Zoo. After graduation, I will be working for the U.S. Forest Service as a forestry technician in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. I plan to travel after my season with the USFS and attend graduate school in the fall of 2019.

Outside of the classroom, I learned valuable lessons as well. As a high school wrestler, I tried my hand as a collegiate Judoka. Here is where I learned that even though the sport beat me down quite a bit, it was still worth getting back up again for. I relate this to my life when times are hard. I found my niche in rock climbing. This is where I learned trust and true inner strength. It is a sport that I hope to continue pursuing until my hands are arthritic and my doctor tells me an 80 year old woman shouldn't be hoisting herself so high in the air any longer. I have also made amazing friends here at the UW. Lifelong friends, sisters. I've lived with a combination of the same women since we were bright-eyed freshman in the dorms. It feels like we've grown up together, and I truly love living life with them by my side. People are so important.

As I gear up for graduation, life is proving capricious and the future is proving hazy. Giving up my identity as a student for the first time since Kindergarten is a strange concept to wrap my mind around. School was always a safe and constant structure for me as I've grown up in a low-income, single parent household. Though the future is unclear, my time at UW has brought my true self into the light. I've

never felt more sure about my identity in this crazy world, and that is a comforting thought as I brace myself for the unknown.

I cannot thank Whatcom Dollars for Scholars or the Bellingham Rotary Club enough for their generous support as I made the transition from Squalicum high school to UW. Thank you to all for providing me with the financial means to pursue my passions and learn so many necessary lessons through my time at university.

Anders P. 2013 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Most Improved Student

I am writing to thank you for awarding me the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation scholarship for the Most Improved Student in my senior year at Sehome High School.

For the first two years of high school, I attended an online school program and my GPA suffered, and I lost motivation to excel in my studies. However, in 2012, after reflecting and hearing the encouragement of my friends and family, I made the decision to enroll in classes at Sehome. Here, my teachers cared about me and stimulated me to put forth my finest efforts. During my last three semesters, I got all As.

The Rotary Club of Bellingham's generous scholarship enabled me to attend Whatcom Community College, where I became an Honors Program scholar and concluded my studies with a 4.00 GPA. After attending Whatcom, I transferred to Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business in New York City, where I now study finance and management. I am pleased to say that I will be graduating summa cum laude on May 19, 2018, and I will begin working as an associate consultant at HBMJ Consulting in New Jersey.

Thank you for believing in me and helping me achieve my dreams. I am forever grateful for your encouragement and financial support, and I promise to pay forward the kindness that you have shown me.

Kristen H. 2017 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Mike Mischaikow Scholarship

Your support this first year of university has helped so incredibly much. I am still at the University of Washington in Seattle, and am on track to double major in Applied Math and Business. This year I have enjoyed being involved in the StageNotes performance troop, and acted in The Addams Family musical this past winter. I have also participated in the UW Leaders mentorship program, which is a part of the Associative Students of the University of Washington (ASUW), and AOII, a women's fraternity. I have also recently been elected the Director of Finance of Dance Marathon UW (a club which raises money for the Children Miracle Network Hospitals) and have been working as a barista at Diva Espresso for close to a month. This summer I will be living in Seattle, taking an online class in Business Law, and continuing to work on the weekends, as well as working as a group leader for UW Summer Youth Programs educational camps. I wish you all the best!

Kadyn M. 2017 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Most Improved Student

I was able to use the scholarship this year, and have been very grateful of it. Scholarships, financial aid, and my part-time job have been the only way for me to get through my first year at Western Washington University. I could not have afforded it otherwise, and the RCOB scholarship that I received was vital to my success. I was able to focus on my classes without the stress of needing finances. I did well in all of my classes and have applied to get into the Computer Science Major this quarter. The RCOB is a wonderful and generous community, and I am very thankful that they exist for the better of Whatcom County.

Rachel T. 2017 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Most Improved Student

This past year at The Evergreen State College has been truly remarkable in terms of my growth as a pioneer. I have begun to take steps toward a career in alternative energy systems and architecture, with my learning at Evergreen encompassing green building, tiny homes, the history of modern technology and community health. I have been extremely lucky to have participated in such a powerful first year at a four-year institution, and I am so honored to communicate my thanks and appreciation for your generosity. Knowing that I am supported by my home community is powerful, and I would not have been able to afford much of this year had it not been for your kindness. With all of my heart, thank you.

Britt N. 2015 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Award for Vocational Excellence

This past year I have working on my prerequisites for Dental Assisting while attending Bellingham Technical College. After a long and hard decision, I believe that I have finally made the right choice. I want to thank you again for holding the scholarship for me as long as you did, I really appreciate it! As of right now, I have two classes to complete before I can officially apply for the dental program. I hope to get accepted and start the program this fall. The money awarded to me from this scholarship was such a huge help! It helped me cover the cost of my college classes for two quarters. I am very excited to hopefully start my program this fall and to start working towards my future. I never thought I would choose this type of career, but I'm very glad that I discovered it. Thank you again for everything!

Alberto M. 2017 Recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Award for Vocational Excellence

My experience has been good here at BTC, I'm learning a lot more than I imagined. My first quarter of HVAC/R (Heating Ventilation Air Condition/ Refrigeration) was learning the basics of electricity, plumbing, and refrigeration. We started off by learning how to draw wire diagrams and how to properly connect copper tubes to withstand high pressures, then after a couple of weeks we were ready to build our own mini freezer. We used all the knowledge that we have studied and put it to use. The first step was piping in our copper tubes, we had to bend the tubes using hand held benders, then connect them into the compressor and evaporator. Next was charging the system with nitrogen, this is for a leak test to prove there are no leaks we sprayed all the connecting joints with a liquid, if the system had a leak the liquid will create bubbles. When the system passed the leak check we had permission to charge the system with refrigerant, which was a little tricky but I got the hang of it. After that we had to take temperatures and installed pressure switches, which shuts off the system if the pressure is either too high or too low, we also installed ETC electronic temperature control (thermostat.) Second quarter we started working on refrigeration systems that you would find in supermarkets and we also learned all about ice machines, this was a little harder because it brought in circuit boards and knowing the basics

of how they work, also ice machines have so many wires that making the diagram would take up about half my day. Now I'm in third quarter and working on gas furnaces, we started off by learning how to thread our on pipes and creating a sort of box shaped out of pipes that had to with stand 15 psi for five minutes, which was hard but fun. I'm working on a natural gas furnace and it's pretty nice, I enjoy this program a lot and I'm glad that I have the opportunity to be here at BTC and the support from Whatcom dollars for scholars has helped me so much, thank you for everything. I plan to come back to BTC next year and complete this two year program and to get a job right after school.

Hannah T. 2013 recipient of Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award Best Overall Student

Hello Rotary Club of Bellingham! My name is Hannah T. and I received a Dollars for Scholars scholarship as a graduating senior of the Class of 2013 from Squalicum High School. I graduated last May from Yale University with a bachelor of science in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, and a personal curricular concentration in healthcare policy and economics.

On campus I was heavily involved in student government and the Vietnamese and general Asian-American cultural communities. I was a member of the Yale Cheerleading team--cheering for Yale's football and men's and women's basketball teams--and was an active leader in Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. I did scientific bench research throughout my four years and summers at the Yale School of Medicine, studying cancer genes and proteins, and supported by several fellowships I was awarded through the school. I was also active in the greater New Haven community, serving as the only undergraduate on the executive board of a student-run free clinic that provided care to many un- and under-insured patients in the area, and as an active volunteer at Yale New Haven Hospital.

This year, I have returned--albeit only briefly--to the West Coast, and am currently working in downtown Seattle as a healthcare consultant at Navigant Consulting, with a focus on public payers and governmental healthcare policies. My work has been incredibly interesting and I have learned an immense amount about the complex drivers of our healthcare system in ways beyond what I could have learned in my classes. My experiences in this role have only confirmed my long term goal of creating change in healthcare... but moving forward, as a physician and leader.

I am extremely excited and elated to announce that I will be starting medical school at the Washington University in St. Louis in about two months from when you read this at the meeting. I will be pursuing both an MD and an MBA with the hopes of making truly sustainable and systemic change in medicine by creating measurable reductions of health disparities in the most vulnerable in our communities. Although I do not yet have any idea of what specialty I want to pursue, I am excited to be a clinician, an advocate, and a trailblazer. I hope that my background as a daughter of refugees and as a first-generation student will bring a new perspective to the field and a personal steadfastness to my mission.

Medicine has always been what I wanted to do since I was a young child, but I am realizing that what draws me to it, is more than just a natural intersection of my passions for science and service. Rather, it is a calling to care for the people that I recognize as extensions of my family. Ten years ago, I could not have imagined the opportunities that I have had, and the ones that lie before me now. Thirty years ago, and my family could not have imagined that they would come to America, nonetheless send and graduate their grandchildren and children through college and on to graduate school. I could not be where I am today without such a strong and encouraging community. Thank you, Rotary Club of

Bellingham, for all of your support. I am dedicating my life to ensure that the hopes, the sacrifices, and the work of those that have come before me and alongside me, will change our world.

Javier D. 2016 Recipient of the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award for Vocational Excellence

Thankfully, I was able to use the scholarships I was provided with and I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to attend college with the aid of the amazing people that helped me out with the cost. During my time attending college, I have learned so much about the trade I decided to study, and hopefully around this time next month I will be putting my new skills to the test when I graduate on June 20th as an electrician. So once again, I want to thank all the people at the Rotary club in Bellingham for awarding me this opportunity to be able to attend college.

Maclean C. 2013 Recipient of the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award for Most Improved Student

Since I have received the scholarship, I have graduated from the University of Washington with a BS in Neurobiology with Honors in June of 2017. I am currently working in Seattle as a research scientist for UW Medicine in a research lab that studies Merkel cell carcinoma. Right now I am working on applying for medical school and my applications will be submitted in mid-June.

The scholarship I received from the rotary club was very beneficial in terms of easing my financial burden during my time as an undergraduate student. I cannot express enough gratitude for the scholarship!

Angela R. 2016 Recipient of the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement

My name is Angie R. and I am currently a student at Whitworth University where I just finished my second year. I am currently pursuing a major in Psychology, with the hopes of continuing on to graduate school to earn a Masters in counseling. I am also earning a minor in Spanish, which I hope to use to make me a more versatile and aware individual; as well as Philosophy, for which I have found a deep love for through taking several philosophy courses here. I'm excited to say that I have been successful in my studies so far, earning a cumulative GPA of 3.98 and being inducted as a member of Psi Chi, the International Honors Society for Psychology. The money I received from the Dollars for Scholars program was helpful in funding my first year of study and made it possible for me to return for my remaining three years to finish my Bachelor's degree. Thank you for the support, and I hope that other students are similarly blessed with opportunities to pursue their goals through higher education.

Dillon R. 2015 Recipient of the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award for Best Overall Student

I am a rising senior at Loyola Marymount University studying biochemistry. I have been incredibly active on campus, taking on various leadership roles, such as the 2017-2018 Director for Environmental

Responsibility of the Associated Students of LMU (ASLMU), the incoming Chief Communications Officer of ASLMU, the 2018 VP of Spirituality for the Ignatians Service Organization, as well as the 2016-2017 VP & 2017-2018 Service Chair of ACS-Certified Chemistry Society. I have also led the annual First Year Retreat for two years and was also a leader of an Alternative Spring Break trip to New York, focusing on LGBTQ+ health. I also regularly volunteer at a local clinic in Venice that provides free HIV/STI and Hepatitis-A screenings, needle exchange, food pantry services, and psychological counseling for low-income individuals. I also volunteer at a Marycrest Manor, a convalescent home for the elderly, as well as Central Juvenile Hall, 186th St Elementary School, Heal the Bay foundation, the Amanda Foundation, a no-kill animal shelter, and the Guadalupe Homeless Project. I have worked as a physics TA, organic chemistry TA and biochemistry TA. Finally, I have conducted research for the last three years on type II diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, cancer and heart disease. This is the same research that named me a Goldwater Scholar honorable mention. This summer I will be conducting research at Montana State University through a competitive REU program on DNA repair enzymes and hydrogenase complexes. I have been able to achieve all of this while maintaining a 3.98 GPA and it is because of generous donors like the Rotary Club of Bellingham that have allowed me to focus more on my studies and extra curricular activities, and less on the financial burdens that come with achieving higher education. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Caitlin J. 2016 Recipient of the Rotary Club of Bellingham Foundation Scholarship Award for Best Overall Student

I have just finished my sophomore year of college. I have been on the President's list every semester I have attended WSU. This year has been pretty exciting as I have been accepted into the 7-year program for veterinary school. This means I will start classes at the WSU Veterinary College one year early, and I will also graduate with a BS in Animal Sciences by the end of my fourth year. During this next upcoming school year I will also have the opportunity to study abroad in Spain. During the 2017 summer I also studied abroad in Scandinavian countries through a program with the Honors College. I have been able to stay debt free thus far with help from you! I want to thank all of you for helping me accomplish my dreams!