

## **PERKINS STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES FROM ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

### **Black Hawk College in Moline, Illinois**

A student at Black Hawk College in Moline, Illinois, who is a single parent with three children, benefited greatly from Perkins funding. Through Perkins funding, this student received tutoring assistance and financial support for textbooks and vocational materials. Perkins staff provided the student with study skills for her coursework and job training skills for future employment. After a successful experience with her own tutoring, this student went on to become a peer tutor herself. She completed an Accounting Clerk certificate, then went on to receive an Associate of Applied Science degree in the field of Accounting Specialist. After graduation, the Rock Island County Corps of Engineers hired her in her field of study. This student is now working on her Board of Trustees Bachelor of Arts Degree (BOT/BA) through Western Illinois University.

### **Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois**

A current male student returned from Iraq from his service with the Marines to enter the associate degree nursing program at Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois.. He chose CSC because it was close to home and affordable. He plans to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing after CSC.

A middle-aged male dislocated worker with nearly 20 years in at Briggs Manufacturing completed his GED certificate then went on to complete a Welding Certificate and is currently employed at Mid-State Manufacturing Co. in Galesburg, Illinois.

### **Chicago City Colleges – Kennedy-King College**

A 25-year-old male student, who was an economically disadvantaged single parent enrolled at Kennedy-King College in 2001 and graduated with an Associate Degree in Nursing in 2004. He grew up in Chicago's crime-ridden Roseland Community. While enrolled in the Kennedy-King nursing program, he received mentoring and academic support services made possible through Perkins funds. He took and passed the State of Illinois Licensure Examination for Registered Nursing in 2004 and is now employed at Ingalls Hospital in Harvey, Illinois, as a registered nurse in the emergency room. His future plans include obtaining a double masters degree in nursing and public health and obtaining licensure as a nurse practitioner. Perkins funds assisted this male student in completing his nursing program, improving his way of life and contributed to the increase in the number of men in the nursing profession, which is categorized as one of our state's critical workforce shortage areas.

## **Chicago City Colleges – Harry S Truman College**

Stephen was a high school dropout who had been working minimum wage jobs for four years. Alexandra wanted to develop her talents into marketable skills, but lacked the funds to attend college. David suffered a stroke that left him unable to continue his job in corporate management. All three found hope in Truman College's Automotive Technology Program, a program supported by the Perkins funds.

Stephen was given financial aid to cover his first two semesters. After that, his grades were good enough to qualify for a Salvation Army grant. He gave up the financial aid so that it would be available to someone else. Alexandra hopes to open an automotive consulting business that, among other things, will usher more women into this high-paying profession. David will simply enjoy a job that pays a third of what he used to make, but leaves him free of the stress that contributed to his stroke.

## **Danville Area Community College in Danville, Illinois**

In the spring of 2004 a young woman sought assistance from the Student Support Services Department at Danville Area Community College. A single mother of two young children, she was working fulltime as a CNA and enrolled fulltime in the nursing program at DACC. While she was doing well academically, she was struggling financially. Through the use of Perkins funds, Student Support Services was able to purchase an expensive required book so the student could complete her program of study. Near the end of her program of study Student Support Services was also able to pay the fees for her to be fingerprinted, as required by law. In addition, the office used Perkins funds to pay for this student to take the State Board of Nursing Exam. The impact the usage of Perkins funds had on this student is evident in the message she wrote on a thank you card she sent to the Student Support Services Department in August of 2004:

I just wanted to let you know how much your time and efforts have helped my family. I did pass the state boards!! I am officially a LPN! I got a new job within a week, and I've never made this much money before. I can't tell you how much this means to me, and you helped make it all possible. Thank you. Thank you.

When I last spoke with this young woman, she did not plan to remain an LPN forever. In the near future she expects to resume her nursing classes and complete the Associate Degree in Nursing at DACC and then hopefully go on to pursue her BSN.

## **Elgin Community College in Elgin, Illinois**

One student in the nursing program at Elgin Community College is a single mother of a child with disabilities who is preparing for a profession that will allow her to provide a stable financial future for her and her child without relying on government assistance. Another student in the program is a middle-aged woman whose husband became unemployed shortly after the 9/11 attacks and relocated to Elgin. Yet another student in the program is a dislocated worker whose position was eliminated when the dot.com market collapsed.

In fall semester 2004, Elgin Community College was able to open up an additional 40 slots in the nursing program. Without the additional lab and equipment, made possible in part by Perkins funds, the college would not have been able to serve additional students, many of whom are in similar circumstances to the students mentioned above. The education provided to these students will not only allow them to make a living wage, but will also provide well-educated, caring nurses to fill the ever-growing need for health care providers in our country.

## **Heartland Community College in Bloomington/Normal, Illinois**

Jim is a 37-year-old high school graduate enrolled at Heartland Community College with Ocular Albinism, considered legally blind. His former work experience was in construction and due to his failing eyesight Jim had experienced too many close calls to remain on the job and needed to find alternative career direction.

Jim needed to refresh his math skills and started out as a part-time student. During this time Jim explored career options and programs of study and decided on Computer Networking. This degree was completed with a perfect 4.0 GPA. During his tenure with Heartland Jim was provided with support services, made possible in part by Perkins funds, including note takers in class, some enlarged textbooks and some recorded text, and a large screen monitor in the computer lab. The lead faculty member teaching Networking identified a software program that darkened the background of the screen to allow Jim to view needed materials.

Jim currently owns and operates his own computer business.

## **Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois**

A young woman, Heidi, with a broken down car, parents on state aid and disability, completed the cosmetology program at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois, while working two jobs. She sat for her Cosmetology license exams recently and has been hired locally. Perkins stipends for kits and support for program equipment was critical to her success.

Raoul is a second-generation Latino immigrant. Both parents are illiterate in two languages. Raoul enrolled in the Auto Mechanics program at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois while in ESL classes. He learned technical language at the same time as basic English. He graduated last year and is running the bilingual sales functions of a Rockford auto parts distributor. Perkins funds provided academic support services for Raoul, as well as a tool kit lease program that gave him access to the equipment necessary to gain the skills that enabled him to gain NATEF accreditation.

## **Illinois Eastern Community Colleges – Olney Central College in Olney, Illinois**

Grace Wyatt says, "I'm really glad that I'm going back to school. It makes you feel better about yourself when you achieve and reach your goals." Wyatt's decision to return to school followed the deaths of her son and husband. "I knew after my husband's death that I had to get a job, but I had no skills," she said. Then, Wyatt learned about the Perkins Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program at Olney Central College in Olney, Illinois. She was apprehensive about entering the classroom 35 years after graduating from high school. "I thought, 'Maybe I'm too old to be going back there,' but the help the program staff gave me made it easier," she said. Wyatt began taking classes in January and hopes to complete a certificate in Information Processing next year.

## **Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, Illinois**

Crystal is a dislocated worker who was referred to Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, Illinois for evaluation of a learning disability that was hampering her efforts to complete a retraining program. The Special Needs Coordinator at IVCC worked with Crystal to diagnose her learning disability and provide support services, such as a note taker. With the assistance from the Special Needs Coordinator, Crystal completed the Certified Nurse Assistant program and is now working full-time in that career.

Janette entered the single parent program at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, Illinois as a junior in high school in November of 1999. She graduated from high school and worked at Walmart where she quickly advanced to a management

position. She returned to IVCC in the summer of 2002 to study for a degree in accounting. She is working full time and attending classes part time. She is half way through her program with 32 credits and a GPA of 2.8.

### **John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois**

Diana approached staff at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois about financial assistance, as a single parent of four children with no marketable skills. She was receiving state aid, however, she knew that her family's current lifestyle would not improve without change and concentrated effort on her part. Diana enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at John A. Logan College, where she received childcare funding and travel expense reimbursement through Perkins funds. She graduated from the Early Childhood Education program. She no longer needs assistance from government agencies and is currently a valued employee at a childcare resource organization where she assists other parents in need.

### **John Wood Community College in Quincy, Illinois**

Sheila was a Perkins non-traditional career student in Law Enforcement who enrolled at John Wood Community College in Quincy, Illinois in 1994. She had a baby and dropped out of school for awhile but came back. She had difficulties with her math classes, but with Perkins-funded support services, she successfully completed her program in December and is now working as a correctional counselor at IDOC-Western Illinois Correctional Center. Sheila now has a good paying job earning \$20/hr. plus benefits. She credits her A.A.S. degree in Law Enforcement with helping her move up in job classification and wage.

### **Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Illinois**

KC, a nursing student at Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Illinois, received Perkins Grant Assistance in the form of childcare services, uniforms, and transportation assistance. KC graduated in December of 2004, and is now employed in her field. Without childcare assistance, KC could not have come to school nor completed her degree. She is now gainfully employed and has a better life for herself and her children.

## **College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois**

A battered spouse was not yet legally separated or divorced from her abusive husband, and, therefore, was not eligible for financial aid without her husband's income information. The emergency funds program at College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois, which is supported by Perkins funds, was able to help her to meet some of her financial school obligations, so that she could obtain skills to be self sufficient.

## **Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois**

The following newspaper article from the spring of 2003 highlights the success of Jenny Munro, a student in Lake Land College's Office Technology Program. The program includes a state-of-the-art simulated office environment provided in part through Perkins funds. The excerpt below was taken directly from an article by Dawn Schabbing in the "Mattoon Journal Gazette," Mattoon, Illinois, May 14, 2003. As a follow-up two years later, Jenny is now scheduling/training coordinator at CCAR in Charleston, Illinois. She will earn her bachelors degree in organizational leadership from Millikin University in December 2005 where she is on the Dean's List. Her husband, a police officer, served in Iraq and is now back home.

Jenny Munro took a second chance with an opportunity at Lake Land College a year ago. And now she hopes to start a new career working as a medical transcriptionist. Munro will be among estimated 608 graduates eligible to receive their diplomas at 7:30 p.m. Friday. at the LLC Field House. In June 2002, then a 39 year-old employee of McLeodUSA, Munro found herself downsized out of the company when the call centers were consolidated and moved to Springfield, MO. She worked at the Loxa Road location. "Through the Illinois Employment and Training Center the opportunity was there for me to go back to school. They came to our facility explained it all to us," said Munro.

## **Lewis & Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois**

Natasha was an economically disadvantaged, single parent when she decided to pursue her goal of becoming a Dental Hygienist. She qualified for the Pell, Map, and SEOG grants and public assistance, yet the costs of required supplies and materials exceeded the amount of financial aid she received. The Perkins Student Support Project provided Natasha with her required uniforms, shoes, models, gloves, masks, goggles, and other sundry supplies and materials throughout her studies. In December 2003, Natasha graduated with honors (GPA of 3.32). Natasha successfully passed her national and state

board exams and is employed full time as a Dental Hygienist in a Periodontist's office earning approximately \$45,000 per year starting salary. While she remains a single parent, Natasha no longer receives any type of public assistance and is a contributing member of her community.

### **Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois**

Jose, a Spanish-speaking person, entered Lincoln Land Community College's Basic Nursing Assistant course in the spring of 2002. He spoke only broken English and had a difficult time with the tremendous amount of reading that was required for the nursing course and also had a learning disability. Were it not for the support services available through the Carl Perkins grant, Jose would not be completing a Licensed Practical Nurse program and planning to enter the Associate Degree in Nursing program to become a Registered Nurse, and Springfield would have missed out on one terrific nurse.

### **McHenry County College in Crystal Lake, Illinois**

A single parent was working at a steel plant and raising two boys all by himself. He started out at the company working nights pouring steel. He eventually worked his way up to a day job but could not be promoted without further education. He enrolled in the McHenry County College Academy for High Performance, a program developed, in part, with Perkins funds. This program allowed him to attend school one night per week and still be available for his sons. He completed his associate degree in Manufacturing Management in 4 years and was promoted to management. This same program helped a Hispanic female student raising two children complete her associate degree in Manufacturing Management and get her promoted into management in her organization.

### **Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, Illinois**

Lisa S. is a Hispanic first-generation college student who is a single mother. She began her studies at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, Illinois in the Phlebotomy program, and with Perkins tutoring assistance, she completed the program, passed the Phlebotomy certifying exams, and entered the Nursing program. She successfully completed the Nursing program, passed the NCLEX licensing examinations, and is now a registered nurse-team leader at a nearby major medical center Surgical-Heart unit. Because of Perkins assistance throughout her studies at Moraine Valley, Lisa now serves as an advocate for the many Hispanic patients coming to her institution.

## **Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois**

As a student at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois said, “As a disabled, married parent of three children, returning to college after 23 years was a very hard decision for me. Unfortunately, I could not return to my job of 20 years due to my disability. My goal in returning to Parkland was to acquire the education and retraining necessary to become employable in today’s business climate. By setting this goal, I was able to focus on what needed to be done to attend Parkland.

Fears that adults face in returning to college include fitting in as a student, being able to do the required coursework, finding the right classroom, stress of finding the money to pay for college, will there be quality time with the family, and will I have the dedication to finish the required studies.

One of the most important programs that I utilized was the Perkins Grant program. It provided instructional counseling services, tutoring, financial support for supplies and course fees uniforms, and disability services where accommodations were arranged so that I could physically attend my classes. Without the aid of the Perkins Grant, the burden on my family and myself would have been too much to overcome. I know my journey through Parkland would not have been successful without the assistance of the Perkins Grant program ... you can quote me on that.”

## **Prairie State College in Chicago Heights, Illinois**

K.D. found herself unemployed after “September 11, 2001” at the same time that she became the sole support for herself and her three children. She entered Prairie State College’s Nursing Program, where she received assistance from the college’s Displaced Homemakers Program. She has excelled in her course work and was recently inducted into the PSC Nursing Honorary Society. She is employed part-time at an area hospital and will be graduating in May of 2005. She states,” Things looked pretty bleak for our family a few years ago. Now, with the education, training and financial assistance I’ve received through Prairie State College, I’m feeling very positive about my future. My kids are proud of me too!”

## **Southeastern Illinois College near Harding, Illinois**

A 40-year-old man, who knew no other trade but coal mining, lost his job as the coal mines in southern Illinois closed one by one. His disabled wife and family depended on him for support. He enrolled in the nursing program at Southeastern Illinois College and will graduate in May 2005 with an associate’s degree in nursing. Academically, throughout the last three years, this gentleman has maintained an exemplary grade point average. He is in the top ten percent of his class. Immediately after graduation, he will obtain full-time employment. Numerous area hospitals and health care centers have

expressed an interest in recruiting him to work in their facilities. Without Perkins support, this success story would not/could not have occurred.

## **WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

After completing her GED, Dawn, then a single, pregnant, unemployed woman, became a student in the Nursing Program at Waubonsee Community College in Sugar Grove, Illinois. Dawn has worked closely with Student Support Services at the college and expects to complete her program this spring. Dawn is making a life that she and her son can be proud of because of the programs and services provided at Waubonsee and supported by Perkins.

## **William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, Illinois**

A woman at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois tells the following story:

“My name is Mary and I have been involved with the Women’s Program at Harper College for two years. I was basically homeless and had no idea how I would continue. I was unable to make the simplest decision on my own.

Thanks to your program I am now in my second year at Harper. The incredible women involved in your program never gave up on me. No matter how many walls I seemed to hit, this group of women kept my head above water. If it were not for your encouragement I don’t think I would have lasted this long.

Times are still very hard for me and I really don’t know where I will get the money for this semester’s books. My hours have been cut back at work and it’s very difficult to find a job that will work around my class schedule.

The only thing I know for sure at this point is that I can’t give up; I have too many people supporting me to consider that possibility. I know that in the long run the sacrifices I make now will enable me to provide a better life for myself as well as my family. Going back to school at my age was intimidating for me, but it has made me a stronger person. The confidence I have gained through my education is priceless.

The look of pride on the faces of my sons when they tell people about me can’t be measured. That’s only one gift that your program has granted me that can never be replaced.

Thank you for all the assistance I’ve been given to date.”