

Scholarship Success Stories



Megan Waterman's Story

2011 recipient of the AAUW Healdsburg Branch SRJC Scholarship

Since I can remember, I have gravitated towards children and enjoy encouraging their development. In fact, when I was in junior high in the early 1980s, I volunteered at a preschool across the street, and this launched my desire to teach. After graduating from high school I took my first full-time job as a preschool teacher at A Special Place Preschool in Santa Rosa. While I loved my preschool job, sadly, I could earn more as a live-in nanny. Turns out that this was an excellent career path for me, as the individual attention and nurturing I could provide the children have created bonds that have lasted a lifetime.

As life would have it, in 2007, I was diagnosed with a devastating disease that brought my life to a halt. While physically debilitating, this period of time eventually led to immense mental and physiological growth as I realized that my passion for education and teaching had not yet been fulfilled. So at the age of 40, I set on a journey to become an elementary school teacher.

First I had to complete my Associate's Degree in early childhood studies at SRJC which ended up taking me about 10 years to accomplish because of work and life getting in the way. I was ready academically to transfer to Sonoma State, but financially was another issue. It was then in 2011 that the Healdsburg AAUW branch awarded this middle-aged woman the biggest educational gift possible. A hefty scholarship that allowed me to pay for books, tuition/fees, and other expenses I faced. I can't say too often just how much this scholarship meant to me, both financially and personally. The pride and recognition bestowed upon me provided a strong foundation for my continued growth.

In 2012, I graduated from the Liberal Studies Hutchins program at Sonoma State University with a concentration in elementary education. From there I moved to the University of San Francisco to get my teaching credential and subsequently stayed for another year to complete a masters degree in Teaching Reading. In doing so, I can happily report that I became the first person in my family to complete this level of education.

I then followed the typical job path teaching in the area public school system. But after three years, I decided that my passion and calling was more closely aligned with small group and individualized education as a homeschool teacher, tutor, and customized-special instructor of reading and math, roles I joyously continue to provide to my clients, their families, and my community of Sebastopol.

THANK YOU Healdsburg AAUW! You have made a difference in my life as well as all those children and families I have touched along the way. (The photo is from my Master's graduation from USF in 2015.)