

Carolyn Boustany's Story

2018 recipient of the AAUW Healdsburg Branch High School Scholarship



College just never seemed possible for me. I didn't get straight A's or skip a grade like my older brother. Even though I too had good grades, I had always prioritized the sports I played over academics. But I did want to go to college and gain from the experience I would have. So, in my senior year at Geyserville New Tech Academy I applied to a handful of schools and ended up attending California State University, Sacramento, which turned out to be a great fit for me.

I'm most happy to report that after my four years at Sac State, I graduated in May 2022 with my B.S. in Family Studies and Human Development. The AAUW scholarship you provided helped me afford the dorms and school supplies during my first semester away from home and laid the foundation for the remainder of my college experience. Having the financial burden of tuition, rent, school supplies and fees can make a student feel extremely stressed, but your scholarship provided the resources and motivation needed to push through my struggles. In this first year, I was building a lifestyle foundation that sustained me throughout the rest of my college career.

Although I'm sincerely grateful to my family for the assistance they provided, my financial responsibility for rent/schooling was very significant. Learning to manage and balance my education/work expenses and experience actually opened some useful doors. While carrying a full load my senior year, I also did an internship at a safe home for women and children where I helped make and serve meals and play with the children in the daycare. I would do this 3 days a week, while also working part-time with the athletic department at Sac State and full-time at Target. I worked extremely hard to be able to be the first person in my family to graduate from college and make myself and the people who care for me proud. I still live in Sacramento, and I currently work as a team lead at Target, do on-demand work for the athletic department at Sac State, and hold an internship at a nearby school district. With the internship, I mentor children at different grade levels who have gone through trauma with the aim of giving them a positive role model to interact and engage with. I find so much joy in being able to help children find their passion and see them start to believe in themselves, just like the AAUW scholarship committee believed in me when I started my journey.

I can easily say that since the end of my undergraduate years, I have never been so proud of myself in all aspects of my life. I always struggled with my confidence with anything I do. I truly believe the challenges I faced during school made me so appreciative of the support I received from my family, friends, professors, and programs that awarded me scholarships to make it possible for me to earn my degree. Not only did organizations like AAUW support my education, but they were a huge part of me gaining more confidence in myself and believing that I could do things that I never imagined I could achieve. At the end of the day, nobody can take away my education and I am forever grateful for it all.