

Dear Sponsor of the Indspire's Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards,

Halu! My name is Katie Saunders, and I am an Inuit student studying at the University of Alberta. I am going into my second year of Bachelors of Science in Nursing. This will be my third year of University, as I was enrolled in the Transition Year Program for Indigenous students in 2019, as my first year of University. My first year starting off in the Transition Year Program was absolutely amazing. Unfortunately, I was not born or raised within Labrador where my family resides. This left me very detached from my culture, leaving me not knowing much about our culture. My first year of University was when I was finally able to reconnect with my culture and family in and across Canada. I truly never felt happier or more myself until then!

Unfortunately, I grew up with my family members being quite ill, where I spent an unfortunate amount of time in hospitals and long term care/palliative care homes. This is where I found my passion and my drive to help others in need. I am working towards becoming a registered nurse, where I am hoping to work on a pediatric unit, specifically with cancer patients or neonatal patients. I am open to travel and work anywhere in the world! My plan is to get my foot in the door here in Edmonton, Alberta, then from there hopefully get employed somewhere across Canada or even the United States. It would truly be rewarding to work in Labrador and Newfoundland in the small Indigenous communities! I would love to work at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Hospital in Labrador, so I can support the community where my Indigenous family currently lives and originates from.

I greatly appreciate the support the sponsors have given me! As a nursing student, it is very difficult to manage work life and school life. Due to that, I had to choose school over work to better my studies. During the summer months for the past two years, I have been working to save up for school, but it has just been barely enough. I found my mental health declining this year with always needing to be studying, working, and isolated indoors due to COVID-19. I felt as if I could not enjoy life like I used to. This bursary lifted weight off my shoulders and the pressure of always needing to be working. It allowed me to feel as if I was always one step ahead of my payments for school. For example, this bursary is being used towards my 2021 Fall semester of my schooling, and as I continue to work I am saving up money for the rest of my semesters, rather than fighting to just make enough money to get by. Deep down I am so so grateful for this bursary, as it has not only helped me with financial support, but it has also allowed me to improve my mental health, instead of constantly worrying about my finances.

Nakurmiik!!! Thank you greatly for your generous support! I appreciate it so much! :)

-Katie Saunders