



THE AAUW GREATER NAPLES BRANCH AND THE GREATER NAPLES AAUW CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC. CONGRATULATE THE 14 AMAZING LOCAL WOMEN AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2023!

Started and supported by members of the AAUW Greater Naples Branch and supported by other donors, the Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation, Inc. has awarded scholarships to deserving local women annually for 22 years. Our mission to provide scholarships to deserving local women began in 2001 with a program to assist adult women returning to school to pursue Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's degrees. In 2018, we added a program of scholarships for deserving local high school senior girls and older women pursuing Bachelor's or Master's degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM).

This year, we are proud to award five scholarships for local adult women and nine scholarships for women pursuing STEM degrees. All 14 are outstanding:

- **BYLINDA BRUNY - STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Bylinda is completing her high school career, dually enrolled at FSW and Lorenzo Walker and has already been working at Discovery Village retirement home and Physicians' Regional. She applied to 10 colleges and was accepted by all of them. She selected USF for its Biomedical program. Her goal is to be a neurosurgeon. As she stated in her essay, "I am a black woman from a low income household, so I know that becoming a neurosurgeon won't be easily achieved. Every good thing in life will come with trials, and I am willing to face them because I know the result will be worth it all."

- **PEYTON DAVIDSON - JEANNINE STETSON TRIBUTE SCHOLARSHIP**

Peyton is a senior at Gulf Coast High School who is enrolled at Embry Riddle. She is very involved in JROTC and plays Lacrosse while maintaining a high GPA. Peyton will major in

Homeland Security and Intelligence with a minor in Military Science. Her career goal is to become a Tactical Intelligence Officer in the US Army. In the words of her Lacrosse coach: "Peyton will go on to be one of the most successful alumni to pass through the halls of Gulf Coast. She is destined to leave her mark on this world and will be a wonderful ambassador for Gulf Coast High School and as an Officer in the US Army."

- **EMMA DISARRO - McMAHON FOUNDATION STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Emma is graduating with a high GPA from Naples High School with a resume of awards and activities, including serving as a lifeguard and playing on the soccer team. Emma intends to study engineering at USF. In the words of a Sergeant for Collier County Sheriff's office who wrote Emma's recommendation letter: "With a passion for engineering, Emma has clearly demonstrated creativity, leadership skills, and an extraordinary ability to problem-solve. While each of these unique traits will propel Emma to success in any endeavor, they are uniquely suited to lead a team in designing complex systems faced by contemporary engineers."

- **EMMA FERNANDEZ - McMAHON FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP FOR AN ADULT WOMAN**

Emma is a previous recipient, who is pursuing a Master of Science in Public Health at Johns Hopkins, after completing her Bachelor's in Family and Child Science at FSU. Emma is focused on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and public policy. Emma is from Marco Island and attended Lely High School.

Emma wrote: "My desire to work in public health has stemmed from my ability to tailor my education towards women's health issues and epidemiology, which has allowed me to gain the skills and education needed to create a more accessible, effective, and reliable healthcare system. With this degree I plan on, in my career and education, promoting social justice through research-informed policy."

- **CESSIA FLORES-ELWIN - STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Cessia is a Palmetto Ridge High School Senior who has been accepted to FGCU to study biology. Her goal is to go on to dental school. Along with her strong record of community service and involvement at her school, she has also been invited to participate in various STEM programs. She wrote an exceptional essay in which she described her hard-fought journey to overcome an eating disorder and to help other girls with body image.

- **VIOLETA GIRA - DELLATORÉ REAL ESTATE COMPANY SCHOLARSHIP FOR AN ADULT WOMAN**

Violeta is a hardworking 34-year-old immigrant who is pursuing her bachelor's degree in legal studies at FGCU. She works as a paralegal in a law office and to pay for her degree, she also works a second job as a server. In his recommendation letter, Her professor said, "Violeta is a self-starter and goes beyond the minimum to achieve her goals."

- **TORI GUARINO - LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR ADULT WOMEN**

Tori is studying biology at FGCU with a passion for ecosystem remediation, a critical field of study for the Southwest Florida area. In his recommendation letter, her professor wrote: "In addition to having the intelligence and energy for coordinating and conducting field research, Tori has an admirable environmental ethos. Besides having exceptional drive, environmental

values, and personal responsibility, Tori is academically gifted with a strong record of coursework in the “harder” sciences of cell and molecular biology and chemistry.”

- **KELLY GUERRERO-FLORES - JEANNINE STETSON TRIBUTE STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Kelly is graduating from Golden Gate High School and is dual enrolled while playing in the band. She has been accepted to FGCU and intends to study civil engineering. In Kelly’s own words, “The opportunity to receive a college education would not only help me learn the foundations of the engineering industry, but also share it with other young people. Studying is but one part of this journey, I plan to use it as an opportunity to show students who may be interested that it is a welcoming place for people of any background- as I have experienced first-hand.”

- **VANESSA KINLEY - JANET MARTIN WELCH MEMORIAL STEM SCHOLARSHIP of the Southwest Florida Women Giving Together Giving Circle**

Vanessa is graduating from Bonita High School and is dual enrolled at FGCU, where she plans to pursue her degree. In Vanessa’s own words, “With the rapidly growing Southwest Florida population becoming intensely more aged, our area is suffering an employment drought in the medical field. It is with this urgent local problem in mind that I plan on continuing my education at Florida Gulf Coast University for my bachelors and strive to graduate from FGCU’s master’s in physician assistant studies program. After graduation, I plan to stay local and use my gained knowledge to serve the area I was born and raised in. With heart disease killing more Americans than anything else, I have a passion for specializing in cardiology.”

- **LIANNA LARSON: - THE BLANCHE AND JOHN REBAR MEMORIAL STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Lianna is a previous recipient pursuing a degree in Biological Engineering at UF. She currently holds a research position and a part time job on campus along with her rigorous class load. In Lianna’s words, “My chosen major is biological engineering with a specialization in Biosystems. The reason I chose this major is because the career that I want is to conduct research into the world of biofuels and help create more sustainable sources of energy. The work of a biosystems engineer is to bridge the gap between the engineering world of figuring out solutions to problems for the benefit of users and the betterment of daily life and the search for knowledge and understanding that the traditional field of biology is rooted in.”

The Blanche and John Rebar Scholarship Fund honors the memory of Blanche Rebar, a longtime and dedicated member of AAUW and of the AAUW Greater Naples Branch, and John Rebar, her husband, who supported her and AAUW’s mission of promoting equity for women and girls.

Read more about them at <https://greaternaples-fl.aauw.net/local-scholarships>

- **KAYLA MIRANDA - LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR ADULT WOMEN**

Kayla is not only a 2023 recipient but also a new AAUW GNB member! Kayla has a Bachelor’s in nutritional science and is pursuing a nursing degree. In the words of Dr. Goldberg, who wrote Kayla’s recommendation letter, “She has been exceptional as both a medical assistant and research assistant. She is headed for a career as a Physician Assistant, and I am confident she will be an excellent one.”

- **SHARON SAINT-SURIN - JEANNINE STETSON TRIBUTE STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Sharon is a senior at Lely High School with a passion for Mechanical Engineering. Her resume reflects significant involvement in her school with the National Honor Society and band and an impressive paid internship with Raytheon Technologies last summer. She has been accepted to Johns Hopkins. The director of the Lely High School Band wrote the following about Sharon: "I don't think I have had a student like Sharon in my years of teaching. She makes everyone's day better when she comes into the room either with her positive attitude or her solution to any problem at hand. Her drive to be the best student, musician, and person makes her the ideal student and has encouraged so many around her to follow in her footsteps to success."

- **LILIANA SALAZAR-JUAREZ - FRIENDS OF BAYVIEW I STEM SCHOLARSHIP**

Liliana will be graduating from Immokalee High School. She is dual enrolled and plans to attend FGCU. In her well-written essay, Lianna wrote: "It was during my high school years when I truly grasped the power of this two-letter simple word: no. I recognized that to accomplish everything I was capable of because of my parent's hard work and sacrifice, that I would have to say no and create healthy boundaries and set priorities to be the best daughter, sister, student, and friend that I possibly could be. Instead of saying yes to every potential task, I learned to politely decline the request and let the person know of my current commitments."

- **JASMINE VEGA - VINCENT DIBIASI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR AN ADULT WOMAN**

Jasmine is working to complete her bachelor's in social work while also working as a substitute teacher and for Catholic Charities. She is intent on becoming a social worker and serving the community of Immokalee where she was raised. In her essay, Jasmine articulated her goals as follows: "With a master's degree, I will be able to work to better my community, to encourage the youth in my town to push for something great. I will be able to provide a safe, open, and honest space to help my community heal."

The Foundation has a Named Scholarship Opportunity for a minimum donation of just \$2000. This is an opportunity for business owners, individuals and families to provide a named scholarship without the responsibility of recruiting or selecting scholarship candidates.

For more information about the scholarship programs, go to <https://greaternaples-fl.aauw.net/local-scholarships/>

AAUW Greater Naples Branch and Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation, Inc. are affiliates of AAUW, [AAUW.org](https://www.aauw.org).