

This year, King County Nurses Association awards 15 scholarships of \$4,000 each to deserving nursing students from King County. Recipients include students seeking initial licensure as RNs or in graduate entry programs, as well as registered nurses returning to earn BSNs or advanced degrees. Students receiving scholarships demonstrate an understanding of equity and social justice through creative ideas to improve health disparities in our community. They embody the values of collaboration, compassion, innovation, and community wellness. Since 1993, KCNA has awarded \$737,750 to 320 students.

Valerie Weiss Award

Awarded to RNs working toward advanced degrees in nursing or a related field. The award is made as a legacy to Valerie Weiss, ARNP, MN, MA, whose professional commitment was an inspiration to her colleagues and patients alike.

MASTER'S



HEM ACHARYA is pursuing a master's degree in psychiatric nursing at Walden University. As a medical interpreter at Seattle's downtown public health clinic, he was instrumental in mobilizing health literacy among recent immigrants and refugees. He experienced being a refugee himself

at the young age of 12, spending time in India and eventually making his way to the U.S. Hem has educated hundreds of refugee families about immunizations, disease prevention, and mental well-being. He is passionate about advocating for people at their most vulnerable, being a nurse who keeps altruism, autonomy and benevolence top-of-mind while caring for patients.

Nurses offer holistic care addressing the underlying causes of poor health... and help create individual- and community-targeted solutions through education.

PhD



MIHKAI WICKLINE is in the PhD program at UW. She has always wanted to be a nurse, training as a CNA while still in high school. After years of clinical practice in oncology and bone marrow transplant settings, she took the leap to become a nurse educator. Mihkai has worked and volunteered as a nurse for foster

youth, the Real Escape from the Sex Trade organization and others. Growing up in a family with 17 kids (two biological, one adopted and 14 foster siblings), along with her work as a nurse, and facing the challenges of autism in her family, are all experiences that have shown her the importance of trauma-informed care. Mihkai is committed to applying her lived experience along with anti-racist, non-judgmental practices, and bearing witness as an educator, especially for BIPOC nursing students. She is a presenter, guest lecturer, published author and member of numerous professional organizations.

Nurses should be at the forefront of questioning the status quo and should be leaders in standing up for change that advances equity.

DNP



KIM HENRIQUEZ is in the Population Health & Systems Leadership DNP Program at the UW. At a young age, she acted as a language and culture bridge for her immigrant family. She used to dream of “making it out,” but now she wants to “get back in” to help her community.

Kim is determined to make a difference at a systems level by building trust and addressing factors beyond the clinic setting. She approaches problems using a “Two-Eyed Seeing” framework, with one lens through her indigenous cultural background and the other through her Western training and nursing education. She is a member of SoN BIPOC Student Retention & Support Workgroup at UW and a part of the Equity and Social Justice group at Public Health Seattle, King County. Her advisor states, “I don’t think I have ever worked with someone as amazing as Kimberly ...”

I became a nurse knowing I was meant to uplift my community.



JULIE LITTLE is in the DNP Program at UW. Above all, Julie is an advocate, seeking out those who suffer from stigma or other factors that keep them from accessing care, including the LGBTQIA+ community, people experiencing homelessness and substance use and those seeking reproductive health

justice. Julia led the development of the Street Medicine Team for Public Health Seattle King County, and her efforts changed the way public health approached the needs of the homeless during the pandemic. Early on, she volunteered at a Ugandan Health Clinic and later joined Doctors Without Borders in Northern Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Burundi/Tanzania and South Sudan.

My desire to learn, grow, and do better for my clients and communities that have been historically marginalized and underserved feels more urgent than ever.



RANDEE ROBINSON is in the DNP Program in psychiatric mental health at UW. Inspired by her nurse mother, Randee has been around hospitals since she was very young. As she grew up, she realized that she wanted to be a nurse for those who have been oppressed, rejected, left out and excluded. At Harborview

for over 10 years now, Randee’s lived experience with racism and discrimination makes her the “go-to” nurse for her colleagues’ most challenging patients. She is also known as a fearless nurse leader who steps up to defend the vulnerable. She is part of the Area Health Education Center Scholar’s Program that helps to improve access and quality of care in low-resource areas. She has volunteered in homeless outreach programs locally as well as Liberia, implementing a triage system in an ER and setting up use protocols for a clinic.

I am deeply invested in advocating for marginalized communities ... I want to help those who have felt rejected, cast out and excluded.

GRAD ENTRY/DNP



LINA SAEDAY is working toward her DNP at Seattle University. She was most drawn to nursing, and midwifery in particular, because of how it combines advocacy and connection with technical skill. Lina believes in taking action to make a difference. For instance, upon witnessing the devastation

of ongoing war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, her home country, Lina co-founded Ahwatna (“our sister”), an organization supporting women victimized and displaced by war. The organization raised \$25,000 for health care and supplies for rape survivors in hospitals and refugee camps. Lina is known for her compassion, initiative and leadership, and she is most passionate about tackling health care disparities.

As an immigrant woman of color, I knew that pursuing a career in midwifery would allow me to bridge the diversity gap in health care and be an advocate for underrepresented women.

Basic & Graduate Awards

Scholarship awarded to students enrolled in associate or baccalaureate degree programs preparing for careers as a registered nurses as well as those pursuing graduate degrees in nursing.



JEAN CLAUDE CISEKEDI is at Seattle University, following in his mother's footsteps of being a nurse. Originally from the D.R. Congo, he identifies with and validates the immigrant experience. His mission is to improve people's health and lives through activism and innovation, including promoting

healthy eating, physical activity and treatment of substance misuse. Jean Claude has worked with various marginalized populations, including LGBTQ patients in Africa, the homeless and HIV patients. He volunteers providing food for homeless people, educating them about how to find healthy food. He is active in the Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization and has a desire to serve in an advanced practice nursing role.

Using my voice in activism and innovation, I can bring real change to the health of my communities.



LO'CELLE COX is a student at Seattle University, where she is fulfilling her mission of social justice through nursing and lifelong learning. She is naturally good with children and is drawn to working in labor and delivery or pediatric nursing. Lo'chelle has triumphed over many roadblocks to stay in school,

repeatedly proving that her tenacity and persistence pay off. As a first-generation college student, she never gave up, continuously pushing herself to fight for her dreams and having the courage to ask for help. She now volunteers to help fellow students who are struggling.

My mission of social justice, lifelong learning, and respect for the whole patient excites me as a future nurse of color.



LIBBY ERICKSON is working towards her ABSN at UW. She collected valuable skills along her route to nursing: studying mechanical engineering, teaching in a Detroit public school and volunteering in the Peace Corps in Cameroon as the pandemic began. With each experience, she deepened her

understanding of health care inequity and systemic racism. While the pandemic left many people hopeless, it inspired Libby to find an outlet to help through nursing. She has experience as an EMT, ER nurse and is also interested in pediatrics. She is a passionate advocate for the homeless and volunteers for the University District Street Medicine.

An education in nursing will empower me to aid in health crises of the future, both big and small.



KIBROME FELEKE is in the fast-track BSN program at UW with a background in social work. He found his calling to be a nurse at a young age in Ethiopia while caring for his critically ill father, who was unable to get the care he needed. He has worked with many vulnerable groups, including

sexually abused youth, refugees, families in crisis, homeless, people with disabilities and older adults. He is passionate about helping low-income families and communities of color, as well as families with children who have disabilities. Kibrome volunteers in community outreach and health promotion through Serve Ethiopians Washington organization and others. He is a first-generation college student, father of two and speaks French, English and three East African languages.

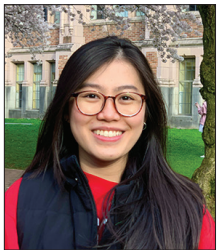
I am passionate about helping people; and in particular, working with low-income families and communities of color.



HAWA HARED is in the BSN Program at Seattle University. Hawa grew up caring for younger siblings and aging relatives, so it wasn't a surprise when job shadowing a nurse cemented her path. As an African American, Muslim, Indigenous and BIPOC woman, she offers a unique perspective

that helps bridge many gaps. She has a keen interest in advocacy, education, community outreach, and policy development for those who do not have a voice. Hawa is a member of the Mary Mahoney Professional Nurse Organization and has volunteered as a youth mentor through East African Community Services, as well as with the Lifelong organization where she helps prepare nutritious food for chronically ill people.

As a young African American Muslim woman, I have always envisioned myself as a support system for individuals in my community.



TRINA LE is attending the BSN Program at the UW. Growing up in Vietnam, she saw the stresses of everyday life take a toll on the health of many, especially her father. Her interest in pursuing nursing as a way to educate people about prevention and well-being was born. But it was one single

moment in the ER that truly cemented her calling to be a nurse: bringing her first patient back to life in the ER. Trina is driven to help make medical care more accessible and tackle health inequity in her community. She aims to work as an RN in an ER department or adult critical care and looks forward to advocating for preventative, life-long care in her community.

I want to become a nurse, a health care provider that my family, parents and community didn't have before.



MARYAM KHASAWNEH is in the BSN Program at Seattle University. She grew up in the Middle East and in Alaska and is bilingual in English and Arabic. At a young age, she faced the difficult decision of following the path set by others or breaking connections and pursuing her own dreams. She

chose the latter, and thus began her journey in nursing.

In particular, she is interested in becoming a SANE or ER nurse. She is a fierce advocate, especially for women fighting for self-determination and equity. At the height of the pandemic, Maryam volunteered in infection control for a hospital in Alaska and in vaccination clinics. Most recently, she volunteered with the Seattle/King County Clinic. A member of the equity and justice committee at SU, she is working on building a food and supplies pantry for struggling nursing students.

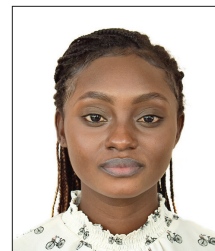
As a nurse, I want to identify injustices in my community and contribute to the fight in dismantling the systems of oppression that exist in our health care system.



RUDI RUBIO MONDRAGON is in the ABSN Program at the University of Washington and is on track to earn her DNP degree and become a nurse midwife. In addition to caring for birthing families, she is a passionate advocate for sexual and reproductive health access with gender-affirming care for all. In addition to supporting

the LGBTQ+, Latinx and other marginalized populations, Rudi is a staunch advocate for immigrant farmworker communities like the one where she grew up. She is one of her cohort's Track Leads at UW, is active in social equity activities, volunteers her time with various organizations, all while caring for three children as a single parent.

I am guided by the foundational belief that community self-determination, wholeness, prosperity, and wellness can be either supported or hindered by access—or lack of access—to basic health services.



FAITH MUTUKU is a first-generation college student at the UW. She was inspired by her nurse mother who worked under acutely difficult conditions in Kenya. At the start of the pandemic, Faith saw the reality of an overwhelmed system while working at a community health clinic in Kenya. Her interest

in nursing is centered around prevention and nutrition. Her goals include working on the international frontiers in public health and developing policies to improve health outcomes and nutrition status around the globe. She is a champion of universal access to health services for all.

I was born to care about people, which fuels my ambitions to work in the health-related field.