

Scholarship Program

2026 RECIPIENTS



This year, the King County Nurses Association awarded 18 scholarships of \$4,500 each to nursing students from King County, an increase of three scholarships from previous years. Recipients demonstrated a commitment to equity and social justice through innovative ideas to address health disparities and promote community wellness. Since 1993, KCNA has awarded \$946,250 in scholarships to support 368 nursing students.

Valerie Weiss Advanced Award

Awarded to post-licensure registered nurses working toward advanced degrees in nursing. The award is made as a legacy to Valerie Weiss, ARNP, MN, MA, whose professional commitment was an inspiration to the nursing community.



TUAN LE, MBA-HA, RN, AMB-BC is a board-certified ambulatory care nurse and family nurse practitioner student at Frontier Nursing University. As an immigrant, he brings a deep understanding of cultural

humility and barriers to care. Inspired by early experiences in Vietnam, he is passionate about prevention and health equity. Tuan maintains a 4.0 GPA while serving underserved populations. He holds degrees in community health and health care administration, combining clinical care with leadership.

I aim to become a provider who not only treats illness but also advocates for innovation ...



DAVID DREW, RN is a board-certified psychiatric mental health nurse and KCNA member with more than a decade of experience in disaster health, sexual and reproductive health, school nursing, home health and psychedelic-

assisted therapies. For the past six years, they have served on the Geriatric Psychiatry Unit at UW Medical Center – Northwest. Drew is currently pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Population Health and Systems Leadership at the University of Washington.

Nursing and justice are inseparable, and I will continue to practice with this ethos as my foundation.



KAYLA CLARK, RN is committed to advancing equitable, compassionate care, particularly for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities. Inspired by experiences in psychiatric care, she is pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice

in Psychiatric Mental Health at the University of Washington. Kayla has supported initiatives to expand mental health access and believes in holistic, trauma-informed care. Her goal is to develop community-driven solutions that reduce disparities, expand access, and improve long-term health outcomes.

I aspire to create accessible, community-centered mental health care while addressing systemic barriers to wellness.



SALMA AL-SAMMURY, RN is a first-year Doctor of Nursing Practice student at Seattle University, specializing in women's health and midwifery. She earned a degree in Medical Anthropology and Global Health, where her

research focused on maternal and infant health outcomes in underserved East African communities. This experience inspired her commitment to advancing equitable, culturally responsive maternal health care through advocacy and evidence-based practice.

I aspire to make a meaningful impact in nursing by improving maternal and infant outcomes ...



VAN TRAN, RN is a Doctor of Nursing Practice student in the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Washington. She works as a registered nurse, charge nurse, and preceptor at Overlake Medical

Center. As a Vietnamese immigrant and first-generation graduate student, Van is committed to health equity and patient-centered care. She is passionate about improving outcomes for older adults and medically complex patients through accessible, culturally responsive health care.

I hope to deliver equitable, compassionate care that ensures every patient ... is heard, respected and supported.

Core Plus Award

Awarded to students enrolled in associate or baccalaureate degree programs preparing for careers as registered nurses. This category is also for registered nurses completing an RNB program as well as for pre-licensure students pursuing an advanced degree.



AMANUEL NURGA is a Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at the University of Washington with a background in public health and experience in memory care. He currently works as a Medication Technician supporting older

adults with dementia in King County. His journey from public health research to direct patient care has fueled his passion for mental health, patient advocacy, and equitable care. Amanuel is committed to ensuring all patients feel seen, understood and supported.

I aim to provide care that is both clinically strong and deeply human, especially for those often overlooked.



CHRISTINE VU is a second-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at Seattle University, committed to ensuring no patient suffers in silence. Growing up in an immigrant Vietnamese family affected by chronic illness and

health care stigma, she witnessed barriers to care that shaped her passion for health equity. Through her work as a nursing lab technician, caregiver, and Camp Kesem student leader, Christine advocates for patients and is dedicated to improving outcomes in immigrant communities through care, advocacy and research.

I hope to act as an advocate for immigrant patients and their families ...



DANIELA GALVEZ MARES is a first-generation Mexican American and nursing student at Highline College working toward her associate degree in nursing. Her path to nursing was shaped by a life-changing diagnosis

and bone marrow transplant, where compassionate care inspired her to pursue the profession. Now four years post-transplant, she works at Seattle Children's Hospital in the Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. Daniela is committed to returning to the transplant community as a nurse and advancing equitable, compassionate care for underserved populations.

The care I received during my darkest moments became the light that guided me toward my purpose.



DOROTHY ADU GYAMFI is a certified nursing assistant pursuing her Associate Degree in Nursing at Shoreline College. A wife and mother of two, she brings over eight years of midwifery experience in Ghana, supporting women and

families in resource-limited settings. Her global health background fuels her passion for maternal health, patient advocacy, and equitable care. Dorothy is committed to serving underserved communities and aspires to become a Certified Nurse-Midwife and leader in community health.

I have seen what happens when patients are unheard, and I will be the nurse who listens, advocates, and changes that story.



FABRIANNE HANDOKO, known as Fabs, is a nursing student pursuing an associate degree at Lake Washington Institute of Technology. Originally from Indonesia, they bring a global perspective shaped by over a decade of health care experience and

a commitment to patient care, compassion, and resilience. After moving to the United States independently, Fabs navigated major transitions while pursuing nursing. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, they advocate for inclusive, equitable, and culturally competent care, and they support health equity through student leadership.

I hope to use my journey to create a space where every patient feels safe, respected, and seen.



FAUZIA TOMNO is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Seattle Pacific University, while working as a patient care technician. Originally from Kenya, her transition to the United States shaped her resilience,

adaptability, and commitment to culturally responsive care. Through balancing work and school, she has developed a deep appreciation for compassion, connection, and patient advocacy. Fauzia is dedicated to addressing health disparities and promoting equity while providing patient-centered care that helps individuals feel heard, respected and valued.

I chose nursing to be a source of strength and advocacy for patients.



GERSHOM KOINEI is a nursing student at Seattle Central College and a patient care technician at Northwest Hospital. Growing up in Kenya and witnessing the effects of poverty and health disparities inspired his commitment to nursing

and social justice. Influenced by family caregivers and his own experiences in a marginalized community, he is dedicated to providing holistic, compassionate care. Gershom is developing the clinical and leadership skills needed to improve health outcomes and support the emotional well-being of diverse patient populations.

My goal in nursing is to use and transform my personal history of adversity into a career of advocacy ...



MADHAV KHANAL is an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at the University of Washington, with a background in community outreach and advocacy. From supporting rural farmers as an agricultural

officer in Nepal to serving as an equal opportunities officer in Hong Kong, he has championed equity and inclusion across diverse communities. Madhav brings those experiences, along with his scientific training and front-line clinical experience, to his nursing education as he prepares to advance accessible, high-quality care for underserved populations.

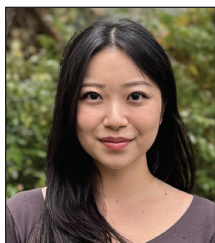
I aim to provide care rooted in empathy and cultural humility to make my patients feel safe, heard and respected.



MARIAMA DARBOE is a certified nursing assistant who earned a degree in Earth and Space Sciences with a minor in Entrepreneurship from the University of Washington in 2023. After working in consulting and as a caregiver, she discovered a passion for supporting others

and transitioned into health care. Mariama now works as a Certified Nursing Assistant on the oncology unit at EvergreenHealth and will begin the University of Washington Accelerated Nursing Program in September 2026. She is committed to advancing health equity through compassionate, culturally responsive care.

I aspire to empower patients and families through care that is both skilled and compassionate ...



MIRA TSUNODA is a junior nursing student at Seattle University, committed to preventive care, patient education, and holistic nursing practice. Born in Japan and raised in Hawaii, she brings a multicultural perspective and dedication to serving diverse communities. Through

her clinical training, Mira has developed a passion for improving access to care and connecting patients with resources that support long-term health and well-being. She is actively involved in cultural student organizations and values culturally responsive, patient-centered care.

I want to make health care something patients can navigate with confidence, not fear ...



NAHOM GEBREMESKEL is a Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at Seattle University whose journey into health care is rooted in resilience, advocacy, and service. Originally from Eritrea, he brings a unique perspective shaped by adapting to a new country and

navigating unfamiliar systems. As a certified Tigrinya-

English medical interpreter, Nahom witnessed the impact of language barriers on patient care. He is committed to advancing health equity and providing compassionate, culturally responsive care to diverse communities.

I want to be a nurse who builds trust, empowers patients and creates a sense of belonging in health care.



RUTH ANGELINE ELOKA

HONA is a mother of three and nursing student at Shoreline Community College pursuing her Associate Degree in Nursing. Before entering health care, she worked as a television host in Cameroon, developing strong communication

skills and a talent for connecting with diverse audiences. After moving to the United States in 2016, her experiences with pregnancy and childbirth inspired her to pursue nursing. Ruth is committed to providing compassionate, holistic care that empowers patients and families.

I hope to use my resilience and compassion to support patients during their most vulnerable moments.



WING YIN (ELLIE) CHEUNG is an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at the University of Washington. Raised in Taiwan by parents from Hong Kong, she brings a multicultural perspective and a passion for serving diverse communities. After working in

medical laboratory science at UW Medicine, she was inspired to pursue nursing to connect more directly with patients. Fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, Ellie is committed to providing compassionate, culturally responsive care and advocating for patients and families.

I want to become an advocate for patients, making sure their needs are heard ...

KING COUNTY NURSES ASSOCIATION

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