

# Giving 101

Okanagan College continues to experience phenomenal growth at all its campuses and last year educated and trained more than 19,000 people.

The Okanagan College Foundation matched the growth by increasing the financial aid given to students.

BY JENNIFER SMITH

A mortgage and car payments are kind of like an immovable object sometimes.

No matter how hard you may try to will them away, once you've started a family and life has begun, there's really no budging from the reality of those commitments.

This is part of what makes returning to school seem so daunting, at least as mother-of-two Sarah Craddock tells it.

"Money was definitely an issue. I had no idea how I was going to pay for it, I just knew I needed to proceed," said Craddock, 33, who decided school needed to be part of her future last winter.

Now juggling a six-year-old, a nine-year-old, a husband and studies to become a Licensed Practical Nurse, she makes it all sound old hat; but it wasn't so easy in the beginning.

"When you didn't go to school right out of high school, it kind of feels like it slips away," she said.

Nevertheless, after her diabetic husband had a health scare, she weighed

the possibility of having to go it alone with little to no education and two children, against the threat of simply cracking the books to upgrade some courses and head back to school, and decided furthering her education was a really good idea.

Today, with the help of the Ernest & Irene Dayton LPN Tuition Bursary, she is well on her way to a more secure future. The award was established by Irene Dayton in memory of her husband, Ernest. "I just love meeting the students and learning how much the award helps them," said Irene Dayton.

The bursary is just one of 1686 scholarships, bursaries and awards Okanagan College gave out this past year and Okanagan College Foundation executive director Kathy Butler said the foundation is on track to provide the same, or more, this year.

"Since 2006—so not quite four years—we've given out \$3 million dollars," she said. "And last year, between program support and the scholarships that represented, we gave out just over a million dol-

lars."

The foundation raises money for student support as bursaries and scholarships, in addition to its capital fundraising campaigns, which help build-out the college campuses throughout the Southern Interior.

"We're constantly in fundraising mode," Butler said.

Bursaries go to help students with financial need; scholarships to those with outstanding academic achievement and awards to those who have performed admirably while attending the college.

For students like Craddock, the money provides that useful, even critical, helping hand to get through each semester and stands as a prime example of how a little philanthropic spirit really goes a long way toward securing a future everyone can enjoy.

Once she graduates, Craddock and her family will be in a far better position in life, but so too will the community where she chooses to work, as she helps nurse many generations through rough periods in their own lives.

For Penticton residents

Neal and Sheila Davies, the process of donating was also a pretty critical way to help themselves through a difficult period in their lives.

In 1988, they're 20-year-old daughter, Susan, was on her way home from class on a cold Friday evening when she hit an icy patch in the road and lost control of her car.

Susan did not survive the crash, but her parents wanted to honour her in a way that recognized where she was at in life, the choices she had made so far, and help ease the path of another student on a similar journey.

They decided to create a bursary that would go to a student returning to school after taking time off, as Susan had, and to ensure that the student was following her field of study.

"Because she had worked and saved up to go back to school we thought, well, that would be a way to help further her idea," said Sheila, who believes her daughter was likely headed for a career in social work or law.



*Michael Ankerman received the William E. (Bill) Woodruff Memorial Award in June 2009 from Terry Tuck. He was the first recipient of this new Award which recognises a student in the Trades Faculty.*

The Davies' money is designated specifically for a female criminology student. The foundation tries to ensure they have bursaries, scholarships and awards for students in every field of study, according to Butler, who says there are also a few left open-ended for those with outstanding need or achievement.

For Michelle Barg, who has received the \$1000 bursary from the Davies two years running, the money helps ease the burden of trying to study and recover from her own car accident.

Entering her second year at the college, and pursuing that same criminology diploma, she was hit by a drunk driver just before mid-terms of the September semester, sustaining considerable injuries, including a head injury which makes it very difficult for her to retain information.

Despite the traumatic accident, she has never taken time off from her coursework and, somewhat miraculously, keeps her grades up just as high as they ever were—though she is no longer able to work as much as she once did as she needs the time to study.

"The neuropsychologist said I should have taken the semester off, but I didn't," said Barg, noting with a hint of pride that her grades never even dipped in the immediate aftermath of the accident.

For the Davies, meeting

the young women, like Barg, who receive their award each year has taken on a life of its own and given new purpose to a donation originally intended to honour their daughter. Sheila said she now sees the bursary as a way to credit remarkable people who, to a one, are making sacrifices and doing something truly extraordinary for their future.

And there are many young men out there doing the same.

Michael Ankerman, for example, said the award the Okanagan College Foundation helped him secure after completing his Structural Welding Certification couldn't have come at a better time. He was the first recipient of the William E. (Bill) Woodruff Memorial Award, established by Terry and Steven Tuck in memory of Terry's father, Bill.

Ankerman was already employed as a commercial diver and dive instructor when he returned to school to add a few more skills to his tool belt.

He worked hard through his program, which culminated with the \$500 award for a job well done—though at the time, no one, not even Ankerman, realized just how well he had done his job as a student.

Throughout his training he had been exhausted, even falling asleep in his welding booth, but trying to press on.

Ten days after graduation doctors diagnosed

him Hodgkin lymphoma, a cancer of the white blood cells. It took three months of intense treatment, during which he used the \$500 award to pay medical bills and pick up some tools for when he returned to work seven months later.

Today he's back on the job and volunteering as a fire fighter and thankful for the help he received.

"It helped out a lot. It was kind of the perfect time to get it...It meant I kind of did the right thing and made the right choices while I was going to school.

"The cancer just kind of made all the time studying and physical time worse; so this just made me feel appreciated," he said.

The Okanagan College Foundation is just one of many philanthropic endeavors people like Irene Dayton, Sheila and Neil Davies, and Terry and Steven Tuck, or even you can contribute to—and those donations do not need to be made right away.

One of the growing trends for charities is a move toward, planned gifts, expectant money the foundation knows will eventually come to their coffers via a will or estate. They receive annual donations, gifts in kind and gifts of securities—for those looking for the tax relief that brings.

For those looking to help, there is always a way to do so. What have you done to help someone else lately?



*Sarah Craddock received the Ernest and Irene Dayton LPN Tuition Bursary from Irene earlier this year and is continuing her studies towards becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse.*