

Jenny Fund Scholarship
Update on 2025 Awardees
November 13, 2025



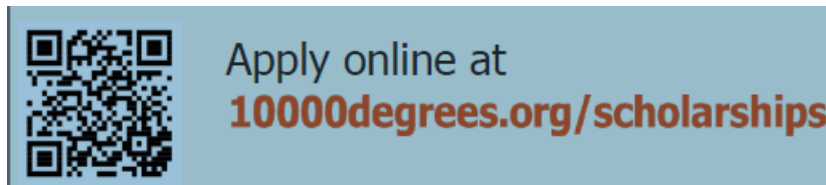
Dear UCW Church Family,

Many many thanks to all of you who have contributed to the Jenny Fund! In celebration of Jenny's November birthday, and your generosity, I am writing (together with daughters Dawn and Alli) to provide an update on the 2025 scholarship recipients. This report includes the name, referral organization and a personal statement written by each of the seven students selected to receive a Jenny Fund Scholarship for the current-academic year. All students have received their 2025 award, have enrolled in college, and have begun classes. Support is being provided by the Jenny Fund through the *Fundacion A. Jean Brugger* in Nicaragua and through *10,000 Degrees* in the U.S. Both organizations generously provide academic and social support as well as supplemental funding, as needed, to ensure that the students have what they need to stay in school and succeed. Our plan is to continue to support Jenny Fund students who stay on track academically through all four years of college.

Many thanks to all who have referred students to the Jenny Fund; in many cases, we don't know who the nominators were, but our detective work revealed that two of the scholarship winners were nominated by congregation member Jon Bassett. Thank you to Tanya Lazar for designing the Jenny Fund logo, which Jenny loved because it is not only a book but also an open door. And thank you to David Spertner and Amy Clark Feldman (pictured below) for nurturing the relationship between Union Church in Waban and our wonderful partners in Nicaragua. Applications for students in Nicaragua are being coordinated by the Brugger Foundation. The application portal is now open for American students (until the priority deadline of March 2, 2026). As a reminder, The Jenny Fund prioritizes students who have any of the following characteristics:

- o Low income
- o Previously in the foster care system
- o Facing housing challenges
- o Are refugees (especially from Ukraine or Kenya)
- o Are building a life after release from incarceration
- o Are from minority racial and/or ethnic groups

American students who would like to apply for support can find the portal (and assistance) here:



If you would like to encourage a student to apply, please refer the student to this website, and please let us (Alli, Dawn, or John) know the student's name, so we can provide support.

Here are the 2025 awardees and their personal statements:

In Nicaragua

Photo below shows José (center left) and Sarahí (center right) with David Spertner and Amy Clark Feldman

José Ismael Núñez Rivera is enrolled at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, UNAN-Managua, Nicaragua, working toward a degree in medicine. He was referred by the Fundación A. Jean Brugger.

"My name is José Ismael Núñez Rivera, a new Fundación A. Jean Brugger scholarship recipient. Through this letter, I would like to express my gratitude for this great opportunity you have given me as one of your new scholarship students, and for welcoming me as a member of your family, which is a fundamental foundation for continuing my university studies.

In January 2025, I submitted my documents to the university for the medical program, and, thankfully, I was selected for my high academic performance. We started on February 10th at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua,

UNAN-MANAGUA, where I've made several friends and established very good relationships with my classmates. This year, my subjects are: Anatomy I, Integrative Biology I, Molecular Biology, Human Histology I, Human Embryology I, and Medical Biophysics.

My plan is to focus on achieving my dreams and goals. Thank God, I'm positive about this new phase. I've had the support of my family, especially their advice and encouragement to keep me moving forward.

My future vision is to finish my university degree and choose a specialty, if God allows. I feel happy and motivated by your tremendous support. May God bless you. Thank you for being part of my professional development.”



Sarahí Franchesca Mendoza Altamirano is enrolled as a first-year Pharmacy student with UNRMA-Jinotepe, Carazo. She was referred by the Fundación A. Jean Brugger.

“Please accept my cordial greetings. I hope you are in good health. With deep gratitude, I express my sincere thanks for your generous support of my education. Your help represents an invaluable opportunity for my academic and professional growth, allowing me to pursue a career in Pharmacy and move closer to my goals with determination. Thank you for believing in me and making this dream a reality.

From the moment I was selected as a beneficiary of Fundación A. Jean Brugger, I felt a mixture of excitement, gratitude, and commitment. Knowing that I had the support of an institution that believes in the potential of young people and in education as a tool for change has been an immense motivation for me. As I began this new stage, I found myself in an environment of support and dedication. The foundation not only provides financial support but also a mentorship that makes me feel part of a community committed to the academic and personal growth of its students.

As a pharmacy student, I am excited about everything I will learn and the opportunity to develop in a field I am passionate about. I am committed to giving my all, not only as a thank you to the foundation, but also to my sponsors. I bid farewell with the commitment to give my all in this new phase and with the hope that, one day, I can repay this gesture by helping others as you have done for me.”

In the United States

Kaitlenn Paz-Benitez graduated from Malden High School in Massachusetts in 2024. She is a first-generation student enrolled in the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program with the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Kaitlenn identifies as Latina.

“My career interest is to specialize in OB/GYN sonography to monitor pregnancies and women’s reproductive health, as well as fetal echocardiography to keep track of the heart health of developing fetuses. I am passionate about using diagnostic imaging to help detect congenital heart defects early, ensuring better outcomes for both mothers and babies and to help those who need healthcare the most.”



During my junior year of high school, I enrolled in a program that allowed me to take college classes at Bunker Hill Community College. Balancing both high school and college coursework proved to be a challenge, and at times, it felt overwhelming. The first semester was particularly tough, as I adjusted to a heavier workload and the higher expectations that came with college-level classes. Despite the pressure, I stayed organized, sought help when necessary, and worked diligently to meet deadlines.

After graduating, I am actively building on the lessons I’ve learned. I am seeking opportunities in the healthcare field to apply the knowledge I’ve gained and gain hands-on experience. By staying connected to the medical environment, I have deepened my understanding of patient care and refined my skills, all while working toward my goal of becoming a sonographer. These experiences have only reinforced my commitment to this career and strengthened my drive to continue learning and growing.

I’ve also come to appreciate the importance of being part of a supportive community—whether in school or in life. The people around me made a significant difference in helping me stay on track and believe in myself when things felt challenging. Just as I leaned on others during that tough time, I know that in the future, being able to rely on a community will be essential in helping me achieve my goals. My aim is to pay forward the support and opportunities I’ve received by helping others along the way. The lessons I’ve learned will guide me in my future career and beyond, empowering me to make a positive impact in the lives of those I work with.”

Adraya Martin graduated from Calhoun High School in Alabama in 2025. She is a first-generation student enrolled at Alabama State University with a major in Pre-Med. Adraya was referred by The Elmore Bolling Initiative, and identifies as African American.



“The human brain with its billions of neurons firing in perfect harmony has always fascinated me. Its role in shaping us into the people we are and having the ability to adapt and heal us makes it the most interesting subject to study. What motivates me to pursue a higher education is my interest in neuroscience and my desire to help people. College is my pathway to achieving my dream of becoming a neurologist, a field that not only will challenge me mentally but will allow me to make a meaningful impact on people’s lives.

One of the main reasons why I want to go to college is my curiosity about the human nervous system. The neurology field continues to grow day by day discovering new and different ways to treat people. I wish to be part of the research and innovation that can help those with neurological illnesses enjoy better lives. By studying neuroscience and medicine I will gain the knowledge and abilities required to identify and manage illnesses like Alzheimer’s disease, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis.

My drive to learn extends beyond my studies. I have a history within my family with neurological disorders that had an effect on them. Listening to the struggles of how my family dealt with conditions like bad migraines or having an aneurysm has made me more determined to become a neurologist who can provide both treatment and hope. By becoming a neurologist, I hope to not only alleviate suffering but also contribute to the advancement of medical research to find better answers.

Another reason for going to college is to get hands-on learning research and experience. I am excited to collaborate alongside experienced professors and medical professionals, gaining knowledge beyond the textbook. College will give me the opportunities to participate in lab work, internships, and clinical experiences that will develop me into a skilled medical professional. Furthermore, higher education serves as a stepping stone for individual development. College is not just about academics, it's also about developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and resilience skills which is a key component in the medical field. It will push me to think critically, put a lot of effort in, work with others, and prepare me for the challenging yet fulfilling future that lies ahead.

My interest in neuroscience, the drive to help people, and my dedication to lifelong learning is what inspires me to attend college. I am thrilled of the new journey ahead

and the knowledge that I will gain along the way. By pursuing a higher education, I'm starting down a path that will enable me to significantly make an impact on the world."

Iyanis Wallace graduated from Central High School in Alabama in 2025. He is enrolled at South Carolina State University with a major in Applied Exercise Science. Iyanis identifies as African American and was referred by The Elmore Boling Initiative.



"From a young age, I have always been curious about how the world works. Whether taking apart electronics or asking endless questions in class, I found joy in learning and discovering new things. My family has always emphasized the value of education, and watching my parents work hard to provide opportunities for me inspired a strong desire to pursue higher learning. I see college as a vital step toward achieving my goals, both personal and professional.

My motivation to attend college is deeply rooted in my ambition to create a better future for myself and others. I want to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to make a meaningful impact in my community. College will give me access to resources, mentorship, and hands-on experience essential for implementing my ideas. I am particularly interested in exploring new opportunities that will help me grow intellectually and socially.

Beyond academics, I see college as a place for personal development. It is a space to meet people from different backgrounds, build lifelong friendships, and discover more about myself. I am excited about the opportunity to learn not just from professors but also from peers who bring diverse perspectives. Attending college is more than earning a degree—it is about becoming the person I aspire to be and laying the foundation for a purposeful life."

Sherly Arias graduated from Match Charter Public High School in 2025. She is a first-generation student enrolled at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences University with a major in Medical Diagnostic Sonography. Sherly identifies as Latina, and was referred by Jon Bassett, a high-school teacher affiliated with the Church of Waban.



"From a young age I was always fascinated by the way doctors and nurses could help others. I remember going with my

grandma or my mother to her doctor's appointments and I was just so intrigued by everything and I was always so curious and was constantly asking everyone I saw in scrubs a question.

My junior year I was a part of a program called Harvard Medscience, it solidified that I definitely wanted to be a part of the medical field when it came time to apply to colleges. I was also drawn to the career of medical imaging for the simple fact that they are an important part of medicine, just as much as nurses and doctors. In my family, breast cancer is genetically inherited, my grandma has had it, and my aunt has passed away from it. I made it my mission to help those who struggle with cancer, and to be a part of the healing journey for them.

I feel as a medical sonographer, I would achieve my dream of helping others and being able to improve their lives through diagnostic imaging. Massachusetts College of pharmacy and health sciences, has an amazing medical imaging program and I would love to be a part of it. The campus is amazing and close to home, which is very important to me. I want to help others the way they have helped my family, to overcome the hardest parts of their life as well as mine. going to college will solidify all the handworks my parents have done, I want to make them proud as much as I want to help others.”

Christine Dartois graduated from March Charter Public High School in 2025. She is a first-generation student accepted to Rhode Island College with a major in Medical Imaging. Christine identifies as African American and was referred by her high school teacher, Jon Bassett, affiliated with the Church of Waban.

“From an early age, I have been fascinated by the impact healthcare professionals have on individuals and communities. With a family full of nurses, CNAs, and lawyers, I have witnessed firsthand the dedication required to make a difference. Seeing my family members advocate for and care for others has inspired me to pursue a career in healthcare.

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to work at Children’s Hospital, an experience that reinforced my desire to enter the medical field. Working in the Child Care Center gave me the chance to see what some of the BCH staff are doing behind the scenes. Running a children’s center with children as young as infants (6 weeks) to 5 years old showed me that I’m more interested in the technical and diagnostic side of medicine rather than direct patient interactions with children.

There are only a few schools that offer this program, and Diagnostic Medical Sonography is more than just performing scans—it’s about using technology to detect issues early, providing answers, and offering reassurance. Through this field, I will

contribute to building healthier communities while advocating for patients who may not have a voice. My goal is to be a healthcare professional who not only diagnoses but also supports and empowers those in need.

To me, Diagnostic Medical Sonography is a field for those interested in both healthcare and technology, which I am passionate about. Going to college is an opportunity to expand my education while also helping the community of people I will work with by providing essential diagnostic imaging, all while performing tasks that are minimally invasive.”