



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LAFCU awards college scholarships to 3 women pursuing new careers

LANSING, Mich. — Three women who see education as the direct path to a new career have been selected winners of the 2018 LAFCU Women Helping Educate Every Lady, or W.H.E.E.L., Scholarship Essay Contest.

The winners are Vagdevi Anyapu, Lansing; Maryam Abbas, East Lansing; and Jessica Miyamoto, Holt. Each receives a \$1,000 scholarship to attend Lansing Community College (LCC) fall 2018.



Displaying their winning essays, LAFCU scholarship winners (with frames) are, from left, Vagdevi Anyapu, Maryam Abbas and Jessica Miyamoto. Also pictured are, from left, LAFCU's Alyssa Sliger, marketing and communications specialist, and Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, chief marketing officer; and Steve Slocum, LCC Foundation development coordinator.

“The path to a career is often interrupted by family obligations, especially for women,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer. “We’re proud to select Vagdevi, Maryam and Jessica as the 2018 WHEEL winners and as role models for others, demonstrating it’s never too late to pursue a career for which you are passionate.”

Winners were determined by their one-page essays about their career choice and their inspiration to pursue that career.

Vagdevi Anyapu is returning to school to enter the health care information technology (IT) field. Shortly after completing training as a dentist in India, she and her husband moved to Michigan. Learning how to live in a new country and caring for her son was her full-time job for a few years. Now she is inspired by her husband’s work in IT and will start classes for a certificate as a computer software tester for a career path that was not traditionally open to women in India.

“With degrees in medicine and IT, I hope to help bridge the gap that breaks with gender norms and creates a new crossover between two very different fields,” Anyapu says. “I want to be a role model to my son, future kids and the women with whom I interact.”

Maryam Abbas, a 2016 graduate of East Lansing High School, is using the LAFCU award to complete an associate degree at LCC, then transfer to Ferris State University to pursue

a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She is inspired to give back to her community and to her parents.

"I love our education system and how it can open doors to opportunities students can't even imagine," Abbas said. "Having been the target of harassment because of my Muslim faith, I want to provide a safe learning space for students."

Jessica Miyamoto, a wife and stay-at-home mother to three children, will apply the award to her first semester in LCC's nursing program. She completed prerequisites attending LCC part time since 2016, and has timed entering the full-time program concurrently with her twin daughters beginning kindergarten.

"My inspiration is my children," Miyamoto said. "It's important for children to see their parents succeed and struggle to succeed, as my kids see me study and do homework. I hope that by doing my job well – providing selfless, high quality care to my patients – my children will understand the importance of compassion for others."

LAFUCU created the W.H.E.E.L. program to encourage women to pursue the education needed to enter or re-enter the workforce or to advance their careers. The scholarships support the credit union's long-standing 'people helping people' mission.

About LAFUCU

Chartered in 1936, LAFUCU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative open for membership to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school in Michigan and to businesses and other entities located in Michigan. The credit union serves nearly 63,000 members and holds nearly \$700 million in assets. LAFUCU offers a comprehensive range of financial products and services as well as an expanding complement of financial technology solutions. Members enjoy benefits such as low fees, low interest rates on loans, high yields on savings, discounts, knowledgeable employees and nationwide access to fee-free ATMs and ITMs. A recipient of the national Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award for credit unions, LAFUCU enriches the communities it serves by supporting many organizations and causes. To learn more about LAFUCU, call 800.748.0228 or visit www.lafcu.com.

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