



A Legacy of **CARE**

Former PCC English instructor Geo. Staley's life was changed by nurses who supported him during hard times. It inspired him to create the Endeavor Scholarship, which helped nursing program graduate Sabrina Nichols on her journey through PCC.



Sabrina Nichols
Endeavor Scholarship Recipient

“I had to put my educational plans on hold when I found out I was pregnant.”

I worked as a graphic designer at the time, but felt like the apparel industry stifled my creativity. I'd planned to pursue a bachelor's degree in studio art when I learned I would be a mother.

My parents, both trade school graduates, always told me: 'You have to go to college if you want to get a good job and make money.' My father is permanently disabled from his military service, which made me eligible for Veterans Affairs education benefits that paid for school. That money got me through six years of community college while I pursued an associate degree in art.

My pregnancy derailed the next step in my school plans and it was an overwhelming time. But I focused my energy on my daughter's arrival, which culminated in a beautiful, life-changing birth experience. That's when I knew I wanted to be a nurse and support other families.

“I finally feel stable — and thanks to my scholarship, I won't have to live paycheck to paycheck anymore.”

I chose PCC first. I knew it wouldn't be easy to go back to school as a single mom, but I've always been a community college gal.

After my first year of classes at PCC, the education benefits from my dad's disability ran out. I needed money quickly to pay rent and tuition. The Endeavor Scholarship came when I needed it most, helping me make ends meet, focus on school, and be able to spend more time at home to answer questions like: 'Mom, can we bake cookies?' It's truly amazing to me that people support students by giving generously.

I'm 32 years old now, and I just graduated! I'm especially excited to start saving for my daughter's education since she says she wants to grow up to help people like I am.”

Sabrina Nichols completed her associate degree in nursing in 2024 and quickly got a job as a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and postpartum nurse. Her journey through PCC's nursing program was supported by the Endeavor Scholarship from Geo. Staley along with the Sharon Helzer Nursing Scholarship.

Geo. Staley

Retired PCC Instructor and
Amo DeBernardis Legacy Society Member

“I like to do things a little differently.”

I don't wear name tags at meetings, only own running shoes, and like being under the radar. I practice kindness — a conscious decision I made years ago.

My belief in helping students is informed by having been a community college student myself. The smaller classes and individual attention helped me uncover a love of learning and led me to teach for four years on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. When I accepted a faculty role at the PCC Rock Creek Campus, I knew I had found the perfect job — teaching students from all walks of life and learning from their inspiring stories.

After several years at Rock Creek, I began giving monthly to the PCC Foundation so I could help support the students who struggled each day. Then, I started giving annually and increased the amount as finances allowed. I am aware of the unearned privilege my life afforded and glad that I could help counteract some of life's unfair outcomes.

After my wife passed away, the grace of her nurses inspired me to establish the annual Endeavor Scholarship. I wanted to help single parents, like Sabrina, graduate with the skills necessary to launch a career and support their families. I've also decided to add to the scholarship with a planned gift.

Throughout life, we can decide what to do for others. At PCC, we support our students by meeting them in their critical decision-making moments and helping them find what they need to keep going.”

Geo. Staley taught writing and literature at PCC for 25 years. He created the annual Endeavor Scholarship to invest in students who are studying nursing, education, or technology and who are single parents. Geo. has included a future gift to PCC through his estate plans and is a member of the Amo DeBernardis Legacy Society.



WHY

By Geo. Staley

Married at 20, with a daughter,
lived in low-income public housing.
Worked as a garbage collector for 3 yrs.,
drove a dump truck, 3rd shift for another yr.
For 2 yrs. we were on food stamps,
topped by 6 months of unemployment for us both
— all before the age of 25.

Not once did we even think
we wouldn't rise above all that.

And when we did go on to
successful careers
early retirements
nearly 50 yrs. of marriage

I have never forgotten
the guys I worked with back then,
the people we lived among
— all those who didn't have the opportunity
to come along with us.

Trajectory
Spring 2020