

By Shelly Springborn

When Valerie Flynn learned she was eligible to return to college through the state's Futures for Frontliners program, she was ecstatic.

What made the difference for her actually being able to follow through on her college dream was receiving a \$1,000 Beth Anderson New Student Scholarship from the Montcalm Community College Foundation to help pay for books, materials, tuition and fees that weren't covered under the state program.

"I was so excited when the state announced the Futures for Frontliners program. I knew it was my opportunity to go to college," Flynn said.

As a resident of the Sand Lake area, when Flynn applied to MCC, she realized that she was an out-of-district student. Futures for Frontliners would pay tuition and fees for classes at in-district rates, but she would have to pay the difference between the in-district and out-of-district tuition rates out of her own pocket, as well as expenses for books and materials.

Flynn is a first-time college student and the first in her family to attend college.

MCC Foundation scholarship helps Sand Lake woman **achieve** her dream

"I am excited to set an example for my two daughters," she said. "I want them to know it's never too late to achieve your dreams."

Flynn nearly had to forego college, though, when her husband was injured and off work for several months.

"Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to go to college," she said. "We just didn't have the extra money at the time to cover the out-of-pocket college costs. The scholarship really helped us a lot.

"During my first semester, I didn't have to pay for anything. This semester, I had to pay for a book," she said. "Receiving the scholarship allowed me to focus on my schoolwork."

Flynn enrolled at MCC in fall 2021 and is pursuing an Associate Degree in Business Management. She works full-time in patient access services with Spectrum Health.

"I have a lead role that I love," she said. "My goal is to gain more education so I can hopefully move up within the organization."

Flynn encourages others not to be afraid to follow their dreams.

"Trust the process and don't be afraid to reach out," she said. "I just applied for the scholarships on a whim and wasn't sure I would qualify. I was surprised and excited when I was awarded the scholarship." ■

For more information

Visit montcalm.edu/scholarships

Montcalm Community College student Valerie Flynn, of Sand Lake, received an MCCF Beth Anderson New Student Scholarship, which helped her achieve her dream of attending college.

