

the mission

Provide Educational Scholarships

the commitment

Help Vermont Students

the goal

Secure Brighter Futures



remarkable
JOURNEYS.

remarkable
STORIES.

remarkable
PEOPLE.

If you are a regular reader of our newsletter, you know how proud the Curtis Fund is of the accomplishments of our grantees. Our grantees speak eloquently about their experiences and achievements so we like to share their stories as often as we can by letting them speak for themselves.

**Thanh
Nguyen**



**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, 2013
MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY, MINOR: ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, 2017 M.ED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
WORKING AT UVM AS AN ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR**

“ I learned to value the importance of education at a very young age and I am very happy that I was able to achieve my dream and my family’s dream.”

Thanh, who also has the “American” name Teasella in addition to her Vietnamese one, says that she was mainly influenced by her family to pursue college. “I was raised in a family full of dreamers. Both of my parents were lucky enough to get their high school diplomas, so they ingrained in me the idea that I must go beyond—to achieve higher education. I learned to value the importance of education at a very young age and I am very happy that I was able to achieve my dream and my family’s dream. I am the first in my family to go to college.”

But, it was her grandfather who had the most influence. “My grandfather never set foot in school so he grew up learning how to write on his own. He was the one who taught me the real value of education and he encouraged me to push myself as far as I could go. He said, ‘Don’t be afraid of learning. Education is a gateway to a better life, therefore, take every opportunity that comes your way.’ This is my daily reminder as I push myself to do better and I’m very proud to say that I’m on my way to finish my second promise to him, which is completing a master’s degree.”

Thanh entered college and worked two jobs to pay the bills. She fully expected to be heavily in debt when she graduated. “I didn’t know about the Curtis Fund until one day in my sophomore year; I received an email from my then VSAC advisor, Matt Bourgault, saying he wanted to nominate me for the grant. It was unexpected and I was very grateful for the opportunity! Receiving the Curtis Fund was a huge help for me financially! I was able to cover some tuition and supplies for school and I was able to have a little more time to focus on studying. Also, my parents didn’t have to worry about working extra hours to help me pay for school.”

Currently Thanh is working as an Admissions Counselor at UVM while completing her graduate studies. She says, “I want to thank the Curtis Fund and VSAC for assisting me on my journey to higher education. My VSAC outreach counselor guided me through the college search process and helped me find my passion. The Curtis Fund helped me be a student. I am forever grateful for what you’ve done for me. I don’t think I would be where I am today without the help! Thank you for helping me and many other students around the state achieve our dreams!”

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Naomi Holm



**UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, 2019 MAJOR: BIOLOGY
CURRENTLY A SOPHOMORE WITH PLANS TO ATTEND MEDICAL
SCHOOL AND BECOME A TRAUMA SURGEON**

Naomi is an ambitious young woman on her way to become a Trauma Surgeon. But, in order to achieve that goal she realized that, "It was important for me to go to college because I wanted to prove to myself and to my family that I can push myself to get to my dream career. It was also important for me to make a bright future for myself. The health care field is very competitive and the career that I have chosen to pursue requires a few degrees. My motivation was that I wanted to go further than both of my parents did and I wanted to push myself to have a great life and a great job."

With a Mom who is a single parent raising three children, Naomi knew she could not rely on her family to pay for college. "The Curtis Fund was important to me because it gave me support in paying for my tuition and it greatly factored into where I went to college. If I didn't receive the grant, I still would have gone to school, but I would have had a lot more financial need to worry about. In addition, this grant greatly helped my family. The money helped out my mom so much by taking some of the stress off her to pay for my college education."

Naomi's relationship with VSAC has been very important, as well. "My Outreach Counselor and I have a very good relationship and, even though I am in college, I still call my VSAC Counselor with any questions that I have. I am very glad that I was able to be part of such a great program."

Naomi has found inspiration in her Medical Professions teacher. "She cares so much about her students and wants them all to succeed in school and in life. She always takes extra time to make sure that all of her students are getting the support they need and are learning the material. My teacher is also a Registered Nurse. I have never had a teacher who cares so much about her students. I look up to her and one day I hope that I can be just like her and influence people just like she does."

“I am very proud and thankful that I was chosen to receive this scholarship. This scholarship means that there are other people out there who believe in me.”

The Curtis Fund grant has been important to Naomi in more than money. "This scholarship means that there are other people out there who believe in me and are supporting me through this journey to my ultimate goal of becoming a Trauma Surgeon. It means a lot to me and I am very proud and thankful that I was chosen to receive this grant."

Samantha Gorton



**JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE, 2016
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATED MAGNA CUM LAUDE
WORKING AS A YOUTH CASE MANAGER
AT THE LAMOILLE FAMILY CENTER IN MORRISVILLE VT**

Despite having a difficult childhood, Samantha has always been determined to have a better life. "As a small child, my great-grandmother always spoke to me about one day becoming a college student. My family always encouraged me to do well in school. I grew up in a chaotic, but loving family who always encouraged me to believe that I could do anything I put my mind to. Even though I missed many school days due to being sick or because we moved to yet again

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OR FORMER RECIPIENT OF
A CURTIS FUND GRANT?
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another new home, I always saw the importance of school and knew that, one day I would go to college.”

Besides knowing from a young age that she wanted to go to college, Samantha also wanted to be a role model for her siblings. “I wanted to set an example and show my younger siblings that if you truly set your mind on something, you CAN achieve that goal. My plan has worked so far—two sisters are in college and my 17-year-old little brother plans to attend college.”

Receiving The Curtis Fund grant was a significantly large portion of Samantha’s financial aid. “Because of the financial support I have received through the Fund, I have a career and a hopeful future. I am able to live a significantly less stressful, more financially stable life in order to help myself, my family, and the people in my community.”

In addition to the assistance from the Curtis Fund, Samantha credits many others for her success. “My VSAC counselor, started working with me in 11th grade and has always believed in me, even when I felt like the path to college was impossible. She told me I was smart and helped guide me into college. I am forever grateful for that.” She goes on to say, “There are a number of teachers and others who supported me throughout my school years. I went to fourteen schools before graduating high school and at every single school there was at least one teacher, janitor, lunch lady, bus driver or school staff member who encouraged me and who believed in me.”

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Samantha is now working with youth. “Because of my education, I can help other young people who are experiencing some of the same difficult situations that I grew up in. I am a first-generation college student who is determined to make a difference in the lives of many others.”

“It’s an honor to have been given the Curtis Fund grant. Scholarships, like the Curtis Fund, truly do provide young people the opportunity to overcome adversity and become active members in their communities. But, for me what is even more exciting is that in the future, when I have built some savings, I plan to financially support this Fund in order to help keep students in college.”



The Times They Are Changing

And the pace of change is accelerating. Having grown up in the 50s, change didn’t seem to come fast enough for me, but for my grandchildren, their phones—yes “their” phones—change every two years.

Recently in the news, it was announced that 2,000 people were going to lose their jobs at Carrier plants in Indiana in the next 2-3 years. Their work was to be outsourced to Mexico. Fortunately, 850 of the jobs will stay in the state, thanks to technological advancements and a \$16M capital investment by Carrier in their Indianapolis plant.

The jobs that will stay will be high-skilled, high-value added, requiring well-trained, educated employees familiar with the technology (think robots and automation) that will be installed in order for Carrier to remain competitive with the low-cost, labor-intensive plants around the world.

Carrier will be doing what the auto industry did years ago. We now make more and more Hondas, BMWs, Mercedes and other foreign cars, in the US than we did 20 years ago, thanks to modern technology and highly-skilled American employees in plants across the United States. Granted, it requires fewer employees to make a car today than when I was a child, but the jobs are more complex and, hopefully, more rewarding.

When I started my career, 35% of all US jobs were in the manufacturing sector. Today, the number of jobs in that sector is down to 10%, but the percent of GDP in manufacturing has steadily gone up due to increased productivity, thanks to technology and automation.

Where am I going with this? Education, education, education. Change is inevitable and we need to educate every single American to better prepare for this new and ever-changing world. This applies, not only for jobs in manufacturing, but in all sectors of our economy. The scariest part of this story for most of us—and this is playing out every day in businesses across the country—is when a company shuts down and the employees realize the skills they have today are not the skills they need for tomorrow’s jobs. The times are changing and education is key. More on that in our next newsletter.

Joseph Boutin,
Chair, Curtis Fund Board of Trustees



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SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Donate today!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

The way to help

Critical to the fundraising effort is raising awareness of the Fund. We've developed this newsletter to broaden our outreach and we need past grantees to help us with future editions. If you are interested in saying thanks by helping out, please contact The Curtis Fund by going online to www.thecurtisfund.org/support/volunteer or call Lynette Chase at 802-865-1861

*Welcome to all of our new and former
CURTIS FUND GRANTEES, FRIENDS & FAMILY!*

Help Us Do More!

The Curtis Fund needs your help to continue its mission. Whether you are a former grantee, a family member of a recipient, or a friend of the Fund, you can make a difference for a student just like Thanh Nguyen, Naomi Holm, or Samantha Gorton.

Please consider making a donation to the Emma Curtis Fund today in whatever amount feels right to you. Every contribution—large or small—matters and you will be helping a student when help is needed most. Thank you so much!

Your Gift Will Make a Difference!

All contributions are tax deductible to the limit of the law. Please donate online at www.thecurtisfund.org/support-the-fund/donate or send your check in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you!

