



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Nov. 13, 2020

### LAFCU awards LCC scholarships to 3 women pursuing delayed careers

LANSING, Mich. — LAFCU has awarded college scholarships to three women who are pursuing education needed for careers that have been postponed by life circumstances.

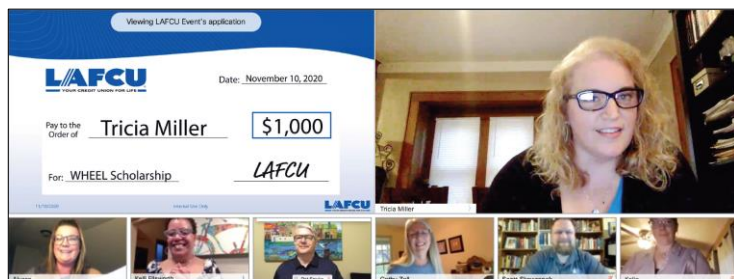
Tricia Miller, of Lansing; Tess Poynter, of Williamston; and Sarah

Rigney, of Mason, each received a \$1,000 scholarship to Lansing Community College (LCC) through the Michigan credit union’s Women Helping Educate Every Lady, or W.H.E.E.L., Essay Contest.

“The 2020 winners of LAFCU’s W.H.E.E.L. program are inspirational in their pursuit of education,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer. “Life circumstances prevented them from attaining a traditional path to a career, and they are demonstrating that it’s never too late to do what you love and make an impact.”



LAFCU’s Alyssa Troub, top right, congratulates W.H.E.E.L. Essay Contest winners, bottom row from left, Tricia Miller, Tess Poynter and Sarah Rigney at a virtual scholarship presentation. Also pictured are LAFCU’s Patrick Spyke and Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, and Lansing Community College Foundation’s Cathy Zell.



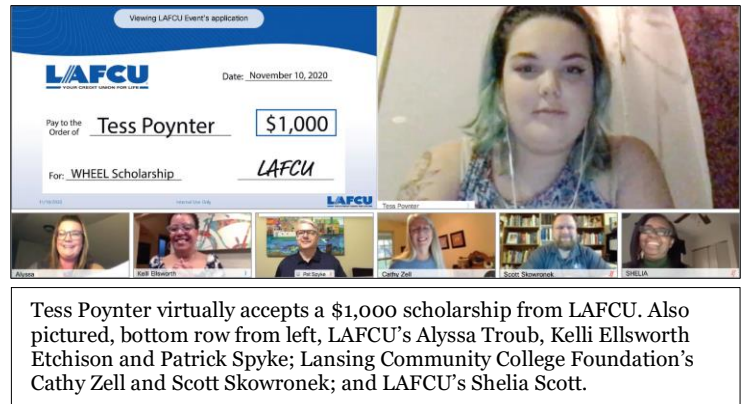
Tricia Miller virtually accepts a \$1,000 scholarship from LAFCU. Also pictured, bottom row from left, LAFCU’s Alyssa Troub, Kelli Ellsworth Etchison and Patrick Spyke; Lansing Community College Foundation’s Cathy Zell and Scott Skowronek; and LAFCU’s Kellie Swiger.

Winners were determined by their one-page essay about their educational and career goals, why they want to pursue them now, and their inspiration for pursuing them.

**Tricia Miller** is returning to LCC to complete the nursing degree she started 21 years ago.

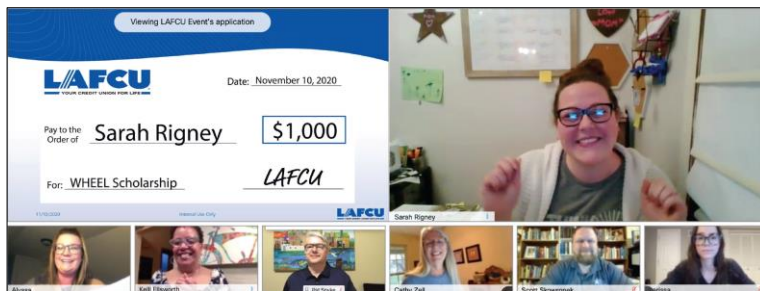
“I wanted a career in medicine before marriage and children,” Miller recalled. “While taking care of my elderly parents five years ago I realized I was still passionate about caring for others, and there was still time. I would have never guessed I’d be in college at the same time as my two children, and we would be comparing homework and professors.”

**Tess Poynter** is entering college for the first time, four years after attending high school. She developed mental health issues in high school that prevented her from graduating with her class. After getting proper treatment and earning a GED diploma, she’s ready to start the education needed to become a psychotherapist.



Tess Poynter virtually accepts a \$1,000 scholarship from LAFCU. Also pictured, bottom row from left, LAFCU’s Alyssa Troub, Kelli Ellsworth Etchison and Patrick Spyke; Lansing Community College Foundation’s Cathy Zell and Scott Skowronek; and LAFCU’s Shelia Scott.

“I want to make a difference in people’s lives,” Poynter said. “I’m focusing on mental illness because I want to help erase the stigma surrounding it and help those afflicted with it by showing them there is a way out and that they are capable of a fulfilling life.”



Sarah Rigney virtually accepts a \$1,000 scholarship from LAFCU. Also pictured, bottom row from left, LAFCU’s Alyssa Troub, Kelli Ellsworth Etchison and Patrick Spyke; Lansing Community College Foundation’s Cathy Zell and Scott Skowronek; and LAFCU’s Larissa Moyer.

**Sarah Rigney** also realized nursing was her calling after providing end-of-life care for a relative. She hasn’t been in a classroom since 2007 when she completed a bachelor’s degree in psychology at Central Michigan University.

“I see a wonderful world, but there are too many people hurting,” Rigney said. “When we see need, we don’t have to remain in a stagnant situation. I’m also motivated to be a good example for my children. It’s never too late to make a difference.”

The W.H.E.E.L. Essay Contest provides scholarships for adult women who need higher education for employment, re-employment or to move into new careers to improve their lives and those of their families,

Eligible applicants were Michigan residents, LAFCU’s geographical service area, but were not required to be LAFCU members. The scholarships support credit unions’ long-standing ‘people helping people’ mission.

## **About LAFCU**

Chartered in 1936, LAFCU 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 more than 68,000 members and holds over \$835 million in assets. It was named a Best Credit Union to Work For in 2020. LAFCU 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. A recipient of the national Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award for credit unions, LAFCU enriches the communities it serves by supporting many organizations and causes. To learn more about LAFCU, call 800.748.0228 or visit [www.lafcu.com](http://www.lafcu.com).

# # #