

Fairy Godmothers

NEWS RELEASE

For more information, please contact: Deb Skidmore, communications chair, 785-456-3496.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fairy Godmothers grant special wish for local woman

By Deb Skidmore

Communications Chair Fairy Godmothers

MANHATTAN, Kansas -- At a low time in her life, Jennifer Garrett said she needed a fairy godmother. She got one. Actually, she got 700 fairy godmothers!

Garrett said she was blessed by the non-profit organization in Manhattan known as Fairy Godmothers. This organization is women helping women in this area. In Garrett's case, she was awarded a Hand Up Grant that is helping her accomplish her goal to become a registered nurse.

"This has been HUGE in my life," Garrett said. "I can't wait to be a Fairy Godmother and give back by helping others."

Garrett was the first recipient to receive the HUG from the Fairy Godmothers.

The HUG is a financial assistance award for a course or certification program that will lead to employment or job advancement.

"This was another step forward to help empower women in improving their lives," said Tara Claycamp, head Fairy Godmother of the organization. "We wanted to give a 'Hand Up' to qualified recipients."

Garrett, 36, is a single mother, who began her educational journey in 2015 at the Manhattan Area Technical College. She said her love of health care influenced her decision to go into nursing. Her first class was for a Certified Nursing Assistant.

She said Fairy Godmothers had a role in her entire nursing education helping her pay 100 percent of this course (CNA) through one of their other grants.

Judy Regehr, grants committee chair, said, "Fairy Godmothers have been helping women in the community with grants for over 10 years. These grants repair cars, fix teeth or pay for items these women can't get help with anywhere else."

Garrett said she was fortunate to get one of these grants to begin her nursing education.

"I would not have been able to have done this (education) without the Fairy Godmothers," Garrett said. After completing her CNA, Garrett said she finished her Licensed Practical Nursing in 2017, and began her Registered Nursing degree in January 2018.

"But I was short on money for tuition and books for the final semester," Garrett said. "I had applied for loans and found the interest rates terribly high. I was worried I was not going to be able to finish.

"I was really discouraged and was in talking to my guidance counselor at MATC. She is the one who told me about the new HUG grant. She had flyers on her desk that had just been delivered the day before by

a Fairy Godmother from the organization.”

Regehr said, “The Hand Up Grant goes a step beyond our traditional grants to help women improve their careers and their lives. It will help women become financially independent through education.

“Jennifer was awarded \$3,000 in June to finish up her last semester,” said Regehr. “Fairy Godmothers wrote a check to the vendor (Manhattan Area Technical School).

She explained that four members of the Grant Committee looked over applications that were sent to them from Shepherd’s Crossing. Shepherd’s Crossing is where applicants apply for the HUG, and Shepherd’s Crossing does the initial screening. Then, interviews of the recipients followed.

Regehr said three schools in Manhattan are eligible for applicants to attend with this grant. These are Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan Area Technical College and Bellus Academy. Additionally, the Fairy Godmothers assign a mentor to each grant recipient.

“Getting the HUG was the happiest day of my entire summer!” said Garrett. “I called everyone I knew, and I emailed my counselor and thanked her for showing me the new HUG flyer.”

Dec. 15, 2018 is graduation day for Garrett. She said she will be so happy to have completed her RN degree.

“Working on the RN degree is the hardest thing I have ever done,” she said. “I am in the classroom 35 hours a week plus clinicals. I study three to six hours a day, and I also work 12 hours a week at Meadowlark.”

In her free time, Garrett said she enjoys going for walks and to the movies with her son, Edward. She said they also help each other study.

“I try to make time to volunteer also,” she said. “I help with health physicals for low income residents of Manhattan and assist with transportation on Sunday so people can attend the Methodist Church.”

Additionally, due to the September flood in Manhattan, Garrett said she loaned out ‘Sally’ – her 1996 Subaru to friends who lost their car in the disaster.

After graduation, Garrett said she plans to stay in the area.

“My long term goals are to be financially secure, own a home and help others,” she said. She added she hopes to travel to Hawaii, Japan, Guam and Europe.

Until then, Garrett said she will continue trying to read more and listen to old music like Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and Credence Clearwater Revival.

“I am an old soul,” she said. “I love nostalgia. That is probably why my apartment is decorated in 1950s décor.”

Happily she smiles and said, “Fairy Godmothers helped me from the start of my journey as a CNA and now have come full circle helping with my RN degree. I don’t know where I would be without this amazing group of women.”

Fairy Godmothers is affiliated with the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation, a non-profit organization. Anyone interested in applying for a Hand Up Grant should contact Shepherd’s Crossing at 785-776-1470. This agency will help determine if you are eligible for this grant. Fairy Godmothers determine awards on a competitive basis. The maximum amount of a HUG is \$3,000. This grant can go to tuition, books and any other necessities for education.

