

Dear Dr. Garland,

I received your letter thanking me for my contribution. I just wanted to let you know that it is not exactly you who has to thank me, but more me who has to thank you.

My parents never had to consider saving money for me to go to university because in Germany attending college classes is essentially free. Plus, neither of them attended a university so they never thought to plan for something like that even if you had to pay.

Baylor and the School of Social Work gave me an amazing gift in form of a big, big scholarship. It was so incredibly unbelievable that I had to call Dr. Myers the day I received the scholarship offer to make sure there was no misprint or miscommunication. Then, I was able to do a happy dance and hug my husband, Matt, because I would be able to attend Baylor for a year to receive my Master's degree.

This, in turn, helped Matt and me to begin paying off our student loans—after I began my first social work job—in a more timely manner than we would have been able to otherwise. So giving back is just logical to me now. Maybe over the years we will be able to “give back” the whole scholarship and help other hopeful future Baylor students to do their own happy dance.

Thanks for all you guys do and for making such a big difference in my life. I probably learned more about being a social worker in my 10 months at Baylor than in my four years at the school where I got my undergraduate degree. And it has not only taught me about my profession, but about how I can make a difference in people's lives every day—and not only financially, but spiritually as well.

So please don't thank me, but just consider yourself as having paid this opportunity forward so I could attend, and now I am paying forward so someone else can attend Baylor and be a great social worker in the making.

*Rike Bowman*

Rike Bowman, MSW '10