

Pell Grant Testimonials

Miles Community College

Miles City, Montana

March 21, 2011

The Federal Pell Grant program is the largest source of federal grant aid supporting higher education students. Approximately 20,000 Montana students receive a Pell Grant. The U.S. House of Representatives has proposed cutting the Pell Grant Program by more than \$5.7 billion (H.R. 1).

At Miles Community College alone, nearly 90 percent of students receive financial aid. Nearly half of those students are eligible for Pell Grants. The following testimonials, written by Miles Community College students in their own words, tell the story of what Pell Grants mean to these students and this community.

Tina Bean

As a single parent, without a formal education, I felt like I had to work harder and longer than everyone else. I dropped out of high school in the late 80's and after years of struggling, finally got my GED in 2001. I then entered college full time in 2008, after having found out about financial aid, Pell grants in particular. Even though I worked full time there would have been no possible way for me to pay tuition, fees and book costs without Pell grant funds, let alone be able to pay regular expenses like food and rent.

I have 3 children that need a role model and someone to look up to. I wanted that person to be me. I had suffered years of low self-esteem due to childhood issues and never thought I would accomplish anything in life. I wanted MORE!! I am now due to graduate May 13, 2011 with an Associate's Degree in Nursing. NONE of this would be possible without Pell grants and the WIA program funding. I feel better about myself and even my children have noticed a change in me. I am so proud of myself and know I will be able to support my children without having to be on any government assistance again. I will feel better encouraging my children to continue their education as well. I know I will not be able to pay for ALL of their college education and expenses but will definitely help as much as I can. Pell grants would be a great asset to them as well.

I agree that program cuts are necessary, however do these cuts need to be in a place that is helping those that need a "hand UP" not a "hand OUT"? Pell grants are helping those without the financial resources attain goals in their life that would otherwise not be attainable. A single mother with 3 children getting government assistance of just food stamps alone would cost \$591 monthly which adds up to be \$28368 for the same amount of time I have been attending college. This does not include the Medicaid funds, daycare assistance IF they work, WIC, and cash assistance. Because of the \$17248 in Pell grants I have received I will now become an active taxpayer and will be costing the government \$0. I think that is a great trade off.

Tina Bean

Future nurse and Proud Pell grant recipient

David Becker

I am a father of two and have a wife who was working at McDonald's at the time I was thinking about going to school. We were tired of being broke. We started researching what Miles Community College had to offer and what I could get financially to help me start school. I never would have made it as far as I have without the Pell Grant Program and other student aid programs that I received. Now, because of the help from the Pell Grant Program, I am going to graduate this May and am already employed at Frank's Body Shop in Miles City. Without the connections that I have made by going to college, I would have never been employed this soon. The Pell Grant Program has helped me be able to provide more for my family by allowing me to graduate with a degree.

Megan and Morgan Jacobsen

To whom it may concern:

We are students from Miles City, Montana receiving financial aid—one form of which is through pell grant awards. It has been a tremendous help to our financial position as we make our way through school.

Everyone has unique circumstances and some things just don't work out according to plan. It is for this reason why we believe that everyone should have an education. When our mother was young, she gave up her full-ride scholarship and her schooling to get married to our father. Ever since then, she has regretted not getting her education. In our world today it is hard to survive off of one income. Our mother has always worked little jobs here and there trying to contribute to our father's income and support our family, but decent jobs are hard to come by without a degree.

Our family's financial position in life has always been a worry. Money in our family has never come easily. We all have had to work very hard for what we have and continue to work hard for what we need. Our parents are still paying off our father's student loans and cannot help us or our other siblings with anything more than our basic financial needs. For the past two years we have paid for our education with the help of scholarships and grants. *Without this help there is no way that we can pursue our education without contracting extensive debt.* We are very grateful for the help we have received but we, as many others, are still attending school and will continue to need help.

Our position is a hard one; but we know that there are those who have it harder than we do. Without funding, *many* people will not be able to go to school, earn a degree, and get a job—not just us. We hope that you will consider the value of education for our country. By giving aid to students through grant funds, it will not only benefit the students, but society as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Megan E. Jacobsen
Student Nurse

Morgan E. Jacobsen
Student of Natural Resources

Xina Niles

March 18, 2011

Senator Max Baucus;

Today I was asked to address you with the issue of Pell Grants.

It has been brought to my attention that the government would like to cut these funds. Sir, without these grants I would not be able to attend my Community College, here in Miles City, nor will I be able to further my education at a Montana University.

I am 43 years old and a displaced worker brought on by a failing economy. I chose to go back to school, college, to further my academic knowledge and better myself and my community and my country by being more educated. If these funds are cut, I will not be able to continue my education. For three semesters I have depended on the Pell Grant to help me pursue my Associate of Science at Miles Community College and without it would not have this great opportunity to become a degree holder. It is because of MCC that I now have the chance at the prospect to attend an Internship in Washington D.C., under you, Senator Max Baucus. If these grants are cut, I can only think of the disservice we are doing to our United States of America, as less education becomes available to more citizens our worth becomes less, we have nothing to fall back on, our children and their children will suffer. Our future depends on higher education.

So if not for me, then for our children's future, do not cut these grants they are necessary to build a strong and prosperous country with a healthy economy.

Thank you for your time Senator,

Xina Niles

Student, Miles Community College

Justin Peterson

I am currently attending MCC where I will receive a degree in small business management in May of this year. Before I started school, I was working as a carpenter fulltime and as a cook on the side. Ever since I was a young boy I have wanted to own a construction business. About six years ago, I tried my hand at running a business but it was a failed attempt. I believe the reason I failed was because I didn't have any real knowledge on how to manage a business financially. I then decided to look into some schooling. I came here to MCC to find out the cost of attending. I found out that it was going to be too much for me to afford. I went to the financial aid office and got signed up. It turned out that I qualified for financial aid. I received a federal Pell Grant that paid for all my tuition and fees for my first year at MCC. Without the help of this Pell Grant, I would not have been able to pay for school on my own. Now I am right around the corner from receiving my degree. With the knowledge I've been able to learn at MCC, I have successfully registered my business under the articles of organization and the business has one year of profitable operations. I feel that none of this would have been possible without the help I received through the federal Pell Grant.

Jeana Stanton

March 18, 2011

To start off with I would like to introduce myself. My name is Jeana Stanton and I am a 33 year old single mother of two wonderful children. I have been through a lot of challenges in my life and I always have people ask me, "How do you do it?" and the answer to that question is that I have to because I have to be there for my children and choose to do what is right for my children.

I then started to think about what I wanted to do with my life and too tell you the truth it was really hard for me to decide (with the economy the way it is) what I wanted to be when I got older. As I was thinking about what I wanted to do with my life, I had so many questions going through my head. I had questions like how am I going to afford to go through college and not only that, but how am I going to do it with two children. Well, I just had no choice but to do it. I called Miles Community College and I asked them how to get started and what kind of help was I able to get to better my life with the career that I am choosing to do.

As I was talking to the financial aid advisor she was telling me that there was help out there for us as being single mothers, and that is when I got really excited about attending college. I got all the paper work that I needed, filled it out and sent it back as soon as I could because I wasn't going to miss out on this great opportunity that I was going to experience. I handed in the paper work and when I got the word that I was able to get help I just wanted to cry because I was so happy about bettering my life.

I guess what I am trying to say is that I know that with me being a single parent there is no way that I could have had this great opportunity of attending college, bettering my life and not only my life, but also my children's lives. I have had the best experiences and have learned so much by attending college that I am so grateful for all the help that I have received from them. I know that if I didn't have the help from the Pell Grant that there is no way that I would be able to attend college and so that means that there wouldn't be any way that I would have been able to get a better paying job.

Sincerely,

Jeana Stanton

Parker Williams

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Parker Williams and I am in the Nursing Program with Miles Community College. I am a single mother with two kids: a 5 year old boy and 1 year old girl. I am writing to say that I think that if I wouldn't have had help through my scholarships and PELL GRANTS, I would not have been as successful or even stayed in school at that. This money has helped me out so tremendously that words can't even describe how it has. I have been struggling to make ends meet to keep a roof over my children's heads, food on the table, and a stable environment for them while trying to get an education to better my life so I can support my kids and maybe have a good life ahead of them. I do not think I would be able to stay in school if I did not have my PELL GRANTS. This is something that I whole heartedly count on to help me get through each semester as I cannot get a job while going to school full time, taking care of two kids, and making sure my grades stay at a 75% or higher that is expected of us in the Nursing program. All I have ever wanted was to be a good mother and to have an education to where I can make something of myself and provide for my two beautiful kids. It is not possible for me to get through school without my scholarships and PELL GRANTS. I do not have any help from family or friends with money or anything. So I am not able to pay money out of my pocket to pay for books, tuition, supplies for the nursing program and anything else that comes along with school. I have learned so much going to school so far and am very excited to become a nurse and fulfill my dream of becoming the best that I can be and also being able to support my children.

Sincerely,

Parker Williams