

Insight

UNDERSTAND YOUR WORLD



THE CANDIDATES

GOP HOPES RISE FOR 'REAL' ANSWERS;
SANDERS SUPPORTERS
'FEEL THE BERN' 2B, 3B

COMMENTARY

Return to school reveals future of health careers

Returning to the California State University, Stanislaus, main campus in Turlock for the first day of the nursing school term was a little bit like coming home. Except this time I was there to help present two Health Careers Scholarships provided by Health Plan of San Joaquin and to offer encouragement to other students.



BY VALLERI GAMMON
Special to The Bee

articles provided by Health Plan of San Joaquin and to offer encouragement to other students.

While I only recently graduated from Stanislaus State, there is no time like the present to repay the support I received during my own health career education. At the beginning is exactly the right time to start encouraging students to not only find ways to be involved within our communities, but also to focus on how much our Central Valley will need and value them during the coming years after they graduate from one of the nation's finest, most innovative nursing schools.

SEE HEALTH 1B

FROM PAGE 1B

HEALTH

...ment that every part of our health care system is not clear, regular messages to those and future students...
...I had no idea how I was going to be able get through college, let alone earn my degree and become a practicing nurse. That was the same year that Health Plan for San Joaquin started awarding scholarships throughout its service area in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties to students who were pursuing a health career.

COMMENTARY

Return to school reveals future of health careers

BY VALLERI GAMMON Special to The Bee

Returning to the California State University, Stanislaus, main campus in Turlock for the first day of the nursing school term was a little bit like coming home. Except this time I was there to help present two Health Careers Scholarships provided by Health Plan of San Joaquin and to offer encouragement to other students.

While I only recently graduated from Stanislaus State, there is no time like the present to repay the support I received during my own health career education. At the beginning is exactly the right time to start encouraging students to not only find ways to be involved within our communities, but also to focus on how much our Central Valley will need and value them during the coming years after they graduate from one of the nation's finest, most innovative nursing schools.

Thanks to the many changes brought about by President Barack Obama's health care law, the Affordable Care Act, more people than ever are able to access quality health care. The pressure to serve each of these Californians, at the highest levels, is already having an impact on the stretched network of Central Valley health providers – from nurses to doctors to pharmacists. Each of these professions is critical to our ability to continue delivering timely access to quality care.

As the nursing profession has evolved to stay abreast of the needs of this fast-changing health care landscape, it is important that every part of our broader community send clear, regular messages to these and future students:

- We need you to succeed in your college career.
- When you do graduate and begin your professional career, we need you to stay and practice the art and science of 21st century nursing in this community.

In 2009, when I started at Stanislaus State, we were at the start of the Great Recession. My father, like so many Americans, lost his job.

Back then, times were tough for my family. I had no idea how I was going to be able get through college, let alone earn my degree and become a practicing nurse. That was the same year that Health Plan for San Joaquin started awarding scholarships throughout its service area in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties to students who were pursuing a health career.

I was among those fortunate enough to receive an HPSJ grant during each of my years at Stanislaus State. Even more valuable than the much-appreciated money, was the belief in me that HPSJ signaled from the start. That was exactly the kind of encouragement I needed.

That is also the kind of encouragement I want to give to the next generation of health professionals.

I am thrilled when I get the chance to speak with these young women and men as they embark on their own journeys. I hope they will join me on roads that lead them back home, to live and practice in the Central Valley.

Valleri Gammon is a recent Stanislaus State graduate who lives in Manteca.

