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Media Contact –Danielle Rush

Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

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Scholarship offers a second chance for students to finish their college degrees at Indiana University Kokomo

KOKOMO, Ind. — An Indiana University Kokomo scholarship gives Amy McNew a second chance to fulfill her dream of working in health care.



McNew, 36, received a \$500 “Complete IU Kokomo” scholarship; available to students like her, who left college a few credit hours short of graduation. She had been accepted into the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program three years ago, but back surgery left her with physical restrictions that made a career in nursing impossible.

By August 2014, she plans to have earned a Bachelor of General Studies degree, with a focus on science, which will prepare her for her chosen career as a patient case manager for a hospital or health care organization.

“The scholarship was the push I needed to get started in another direction,” she said. “I earned my licensed practical nursing degree in my late 20s, and discovered a passion for taking care of people. Then, all

of a sudden, it was gone. Now, I have a chance to use my desire to help patients, but in another way.”

This is the second year IU Kokomo has offered the \$500 scholarships. Andrea Vaughn, from Anderson, was the first to complete her degree with the scholarship in December 2012. She only needed one class to graduate.

The scholarships are available to people who have been out of college at least two semesters, live in north central Indiana, attended any IU campus within the last five years, and earned at least 90 credits with a 2.5 GPA.

Many of those eligible need just one or two classes to graduate, said Candy Thompson, director of general studies and distance education.

“Life just gets in the way of college for some people,” Thompson said. “If they’ve already earned 90 credits, they’ve put substantial effort into their college education. We just want to offer a little push to get them back to finish it.”

McNew, who lives in Kokomo, looks forward to working as a case manager, helping patients navigate the health care system, coordinating their care, and connecting them with community resources, as a support system.

“This will allow me to have patient contact, without being on the floor as a nurse,” she said. “I can still help people, and be sure their needs are being met, which is what it’s all about for me.”

She is taking classes in philosophy, literature, psychology, and math during the fall 2013 semester, and is involved on campus as a writer for the student newspaper. She plans to take spring semester and summer school classes to finish her degree.

McNew finds she enjoys being a college student.

“I was more ready this time than I was when I was younger,” she said, adding that she has more quiet study time with her stepchildren grown and on their own. Her son, a Kokomo High School freshman, shares her study time.

“He likes when we do homework together,” she said. “He likes to ask me, ‘How was your day, do you have any homework?’ like I do with him.”

The program is funded with a \$30,000 grant from Complete College America, a national nonprofit organization that works with states to increase college completion. According to the Lumina Foundation, Indiana ranks 40th in the country in college degree attainment. The campus is also using the grant funding for degree mapping programs and three-year degree programs in education and business.

For more information about the scholarships, contact Thompson at 765-455-9406, or caanorma@iuk.edu.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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