

# John Durand Scholarship Program Awards Five Scholarships for 2025-2026 Academic Year

With great pride and pleasure, the John Durand Scholarship Program presents the five outstanding students awarded scholarships for the 2025-26 academic year. Last spring, each received a \$650 scholarship. In addition to a record of their academic standing, each candidate submits a personal statement that shares a little more personal information; their hopes and ambitions, motivations and experience. As you will discover in the following excerpts from their personal statements, these folks are enthusiastic about their futures and confident they will help make a better world. We think so, too. Congratulations to all!

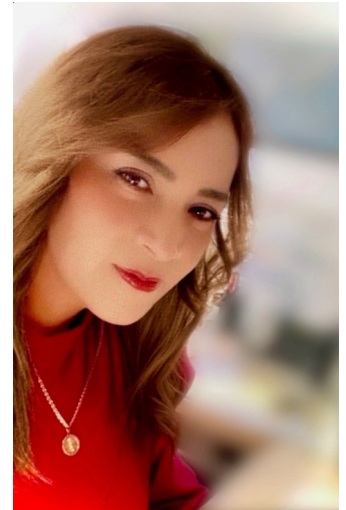
## **Leydi Carina Evans**

Accounting, Des Moines Area Community College, Des Moines, IA

In Bogota, Colombia I was a professional with a degree in accounting. I was certified and worked in a large financial institution managing staff and many various accounts. I thought transitioning to similar work in the US would be easy, but I was wrong. The basics are the same, but the details are more complicated. I found my skills are there, just need to understand the American way of doing them.

Because of this, I enrolled at Des Moines Area Community College in their business administration program. Doing this has helped me and I enjoy being a student and I enjoy learning. Being in America has brought its challenges and benefits. My husband and his family have been amazing. They have been so welcoming and accommodating. If I am chosen to receive this scholarship, I plan to use it to further my learning of American business practice and further my understanding of the American culture.

Leydi is the wife of Jim Evans. She is the daughter of Edgar Arturo and Mira Grimaldo Lozano.



## **Ellen Margaret Keppel**

English, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

I am currently finishing up my second year at North Dakota State University-Fargo. I have gotten involved with the English Honors Society and Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship. Some standout classes that I have taken are Introduction to Publishing, Practicum in Publishing, and Multicultural Literature. In these courses I have learned about culture, analysis, editing and the process of publishing.

Now, understanding these things more deeply than I could've imagined, I feel equipped to go forth in the workplace. I am learning how to be a diligent, thoughtful worker. I will graduate with my Bachelor's Degree in English, a minor in Psychology, and a certificate in Publishing. After graduation I hope to obtain a job in technical writing or publishing. Either of these careers would suit my major and my interests in editing and communication.

Ellen is the daughter Andrew and Kristin Raine Keppel



## Bailey Ripley

Nursing, Winona State University, Winona, MN

I am currently in my third year of college studying nursing. My freshman year consisted of completing prerequisite classes for the nursing program, and while I enjoyed what I was learning, this year – my first year in the nursing school – has been my favorite year. I have had the opportunity to do my clinical hours at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. It has been extremely rewarding to work with a variety of patients and apply what I have learned in real life. Plus, I have witnessed some amazing things like an open-heart surgery.

My clinical hours have provided me with a deeper understanding of what it means to be a nurse, and has confirmed that nursing is the right path for me. Once I graduate, my hope is to work at Mayo Clinic to start my nursing career. No matter where I end up, I look forward to providing compassionate care for my patients.

Bailey is the daughter of William and Jennifer Ripley.



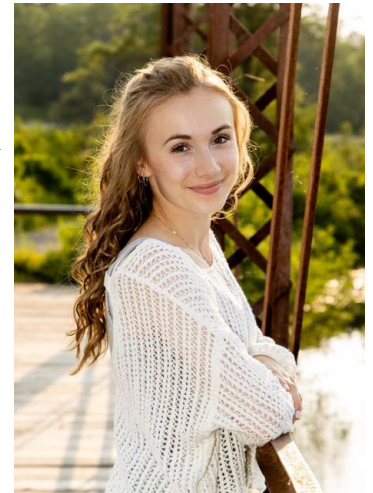
## Isabella Ripley

Paralegal, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Eau Claire, WI.

I really enjoy being involved in numerous things in order to be a well-rounded person. I am treasurer of my high school student council, vice president of National Honor Society, and a member of the Spanish Club. I am heavily involved in music, as I am a member of the Spooner Select Choir and the St Francis church choir.

I love watching and playing sports. I played volleyball my freshman and sophomore years in high school and softball throughout. I've played on multiple travel softball teams that played all over the Midwest. After high school I plan on attending Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire for paralegal in hopes of making a difference in the area of law. I am excited to pursue this career and I would like to be able to help many people solve their problems and resolve conflicts.

Isabella is the daughter of John and Jennifer Ripley.



## Levi Thornley

Pre-Physical Therapy, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, WI

My fascination with the world of health began during my sophomore year when I needed to attend several physical therapy sessions following foot surgery. I realized that physical therapy was a career path that I was deeply interested in and one I would like to pursue. My passion for sports and personal wellness has also fueled my desire to pursue a career in physical therapy where I can help athletes and others recover from injuries and improve their health.

This scholarship will support my goal of completing a pre-physical therapy program, then attend graduate school, and ultimately have a meaningful impact on the lives of athletes and individuals in need of rehabilitation. My long-term goal is to work in a clinical or sports setting, helping people of all ages to regain mobility and physical health.

Levi is the son of Sheila Durand Thornley and Robert Thornley

