



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** The Illinois Pioneer Coalition Provides Scholarships for Individuals Choosing to Work with Illinois's Aging Population.

Marion, IL April 25, 2022- The Illinois Pioneer Coalition (IPC) advocates and facilitates deep system change and transformation in our culture of aging so that those aging in Illinois can ensure that they get the care and services that they need, want and deserve. Pivotal in this mission are those individuals who provide care in long term care communities throughout the state. This was the motivation for the IPC providing two \$1,000 scholarships to current employees in long term care who are committed to furthering their own education.

The scholarships were awarded in honor of Vivian and Mary Tellis-Nyak, who while they consider Illinois their home, have nationally challenged healthcare providers to critically look at how care is provided. Mary, a nurse by trade and Vivian a renowned long-term care researcher, have spent decades considering the impact that the care provider has on people's quality of life, with research showing that there is a direct correlation. This holds true even more for those who consider nursing communities and assisted livings as their home because care in these entities have a tendency to be institutionally driven.

When staff embrace people for who they were and are, it benefits the elder, the families and the staff because relationships form. Those individuals who specialize working with older adults and who are committed to person centered care are at the heart of this transformational change. It can be a struggle for staff who are committed to caring for our frail elders to find the financial resources to further their education. The IPC has recognized this, which became the motivation to offering these \$1,000 monetary awards to care providers who have expressed their person-centered commitment through the scholarship application and board interview process. This year, Vivian and Mary Tellis-Nayak, selected the final two recipients from the final four applications selected by the IPC executive committee. Through thoughtful review those receiving the \$1000 scholarships are:

- Samantha Gardner from Champaign, Illinois. Samantha is currently employed by Arbor Rose Tolono as the head nurse. She is currently enrolled at Lakeview College of Nursing-LPN to RN BSN Bridge in Danville, Illinois.
- Samantha Sickmier from Belleville, Illinois. Samantha is currently employed at Clinton Manor Living Center as a Direct Support Professional and has recently completed the Certified Nursing Assistant program. Samantha is currently enrolled at Beck School of Practical Nursing where she plans to graduate in December, 2022 with her LPN degree.

This year, Vivian and Mary decided to personally contribute \$1000 so \$500 could be awarded to:

- Amber Gorman from Rockford, Illinois. Amber is currently employed at Symphony North Woods as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She is currently enrolled at Rasmussen University in the AND program and has plans to complete her degree in December, 2022.

- Hailey Bybee from Scheller, Illinois. Hailey is currently employed at Residential Living Center. She is currently enrolled at Rend Lake in the LPN program. She has plans to graduate in June 2022.

The Illinois Pioneer Coalition is a 501-3c organization who 100% volunteer board. For more information on the IPC, it's mission or the scholarship, contact:

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