



Associated Colleges of Illinois

Vanessa Murillo
Trinity Christian College
ACI General Scholarship



Vanessa Murillo came to [Trinity Christian College](#) as a first-generation college student, interested in a career to make a real difference. As she prepares to begin her senior year, Murillo is focused on a major in social work and a possible career working with teenage mothers or in child protective services. Murillo, from Chicago, says she likes the idea of working directly with clients.

"For social work, you can work in school setting, in a hospice setting, foster-care system or nonprofit organization," Murillo says. "So, I wanted to do something where I knew I didn't have to limit myself and also knew that I could work with children, adults or any age group that I wanted to work with in the future. I think social work gives you that experience of real-life issues that every person goes through – connecting people to resources in any kind of environment, in any situation they're in."

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Murillo's knew teenage mothers when she was in high school and knows the challenges they face. "Teen moms, single moms, need resources, need guidance, and I want to be that person," she says. "I want to help people who are young teen moms."

To make ends meet while she's in college, Murillo works two jobs – in Trinity Christian's Social Work Department and in its fitness center. She also makes monthly tuition payments. With a younger brother and a new baby sister living with her parents at home, Murillo says she doesn't want to ask for family help to pay tuition. "I want to show I can do this on my own," Murillo says.

That's why she was grateful to be selected by the college for an ACI General Scholarship. "When I did receive that ACI scholarship, it was like, 'Oh, thank the Lord, I don't have to worry about it for this month.' Because it really makes a difference in my tuition, it really does."

Murillo says Trinity Christian College is perfect for her because it is close to Chicago, not too big and made her feel at home. "I only visited five colleges, and Trinity was the first one," she says. "I started visiting others just to have perspective, but I knew after visiting the colleges that I wanted to come to Trinity. I felt like everyone was so willing to open their hearts to me."

Murillo has earned academic achievements at Trinity. She has been named to dean's list and was inducted into Phi Alpha, the national honor society for social work. Murillo is also an active participant in Sabor Latino, a club that promotes Latino culture at Trinity Christian.