



Associated Colleges of Illinois

Monique Clayborne
University of St. Francis
McGraw Foundation Emergency Financial Aid



Monique Clayborne will soon graduate with a degree in social work from the [University of St. Francis](#) (USF) in Joliet. Describing herself as a person "with a heart for people," Clayborne says her social work major has led to a specific interest in child welfare. "I'm very interested in behavioral health. Upon graduation, I could see myself working and advocating for children in social services," she says.

From Waukegan, Illinois, Clayborne chose USF because of its small classes and opportunities to learn from experts. "It's kind of intimate, which was actually the thing I needed," she says. "I know many people that have graduated from USF, and they just spoke so highly of it." Plus, the university's social work program was well regarded, Clayborne says.

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Clayborne resides on campus among students who are mostly younger than she. "I have a son that's some of these kids' ages," she says. "The great thing is that I see them as my equal. We're in class together. They're my classmates. They're my friends. We learn together. We hang out

together. We talk outside of class. I've developed genuine relationships with people younger than me, different ethnicities, so it's actually been really great."

Through ACI, Clayborne was awarded a scholarship from McGraw Foundation Emergency Financial Aid, one of a few sources of financial aid on which she depends. "It was just a little bit that I needed, and that's what ACI provided. So, I'm very grateful for that. This is a tremendous blessing and another opportunity for me."

Clayborne is active in the Social Work Club where she is the National Association of Social Workers' liaison. She is also active in Phi Alpha, the social work honor society and the Augustus Tolton Honor Society, for high achieving African American students. She is also an intern at the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Will County, which helps abused and neglected children find safe and secure homes.