



**Morgan Mendiola**  
**Lewis University**  
***A. Montgomery Ward Foundation Scholarship***



Morgan Mendiola, Romeoville, Illinois, set her sights on becoming a teacher and possibly, a college professor. She chose to attend nearby [Lewis University](#), with a dual major in secondary education and psychology. Now a sophomore, Mendiola made it through her freshman year, the pandemic year of 2020-2021. She says she made many friends and worked with great instructors.

"I thought Lewis was perfect for me because not only is it really close to my home, but it also had the majors that I wanted," she says. Plus, Mendiola wanted to attend a college that was different from the school her older brother and sister attend, Joliet Junior College. Both work in a hospital, she says. Her father is an engineer, and her mother is a nurse.

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Her decision to become a teacher goes back to her high school days. "Once I got to high school, especially during my junior and senior years, I really had a passion for it, for teaching. I realized that I wanted my focus to be specifically on high schoolers because I had some really rough times when I was in high school. I know that my teachers were

my backbone. I want to repay that kindness," she says. She'd like to teach psychology or sociology, or other subjects in the social sciences. Mendiola also hopes to teach at the college level one day. "I feel like college professors have such a passion for what they do, and they really are incredible people," she said.

A financial aid counselor at Lewis University helped connect Mendiola with the A. Montgomery Ward Foundation Scholarship through ACI. Like many students, Mendiola finances much of her education through grants, loans and scholarships, with some help from her parents. "The last semester, spring of 2021, I definitely was struggling a lot financially. I did a bit of math with it. I realized the only way for me to stay afloat with all of my bills as well as paying for tuition, I would not only have to be a full-time student, but I would have to be a full-time employee."

The A. Montgomery Ward Foundation scholarship made a significant difference. "I don't think I would have been able to finish off this semester as strong as I did without the help of this scholarship," she says. "It really saved me. Those who helped fund the scholarship, really did help me a lot."

The pandemic limited Mendiola's chances to join clubs or participate in extracurricular activities at Lewis University, but she hopes to change that this coming year. Away from school, she works on the wait staff at an independent- and assisted-living facility for older adults, a job Mendiola says "is fascinating and fun."

Mendiola is grateful for her college experience made possible in part by her scholarship through ACI. "Scholarships and donors can really have an impact on students," she adds.