



Olivia Rill
Elmhurst University
ACI General Scholarship



Olivia Rill grew up surrounded by both firefighters and paramedics. Her father is firefighter and paramedic. Two older brothers followed the same career path. Their influence is one reason she is studying at Elmhurst University for her own medical career in nursing. Another reason Rill chose nursing is a favorite cousin's career as a physician's assistant, she said. Perhaps the most significant reason is rooted in her own family's experience as a foster family. She recalled when she was young, her parents would be asked to foster infant children. They would pick up the children from the hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). "I would beg my mom every time to take me, Rill said. "I got to experience the NICU firsthand and really fell in love with it." She grew up in Chicago with five brothers and sisters, including an older sister and younger brother adopted by her parents.

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Rill chose Elmhurst because she could join the university's nursing program as a graduating senior in high school. Classes are small, including the nursing classes. She knew she could do well in such an environment. Her career goal is to work in a hospital NICU as a nurse, with the possibility of more specialized education later.

Rill wanted to live on campus, which she says helps with her studies and college experience. She finances room and board costs, while her father pays tuition expenses. At Elmhurst, Rill works in the university's financial aid office, where she learned about scholarship opportunities, including the ACI General Scholarship she earned. "This scholarship for my family has brought a lot of relief," Rill said. "It has been challenging to pay for a college education with several family members at home. My Dad works very hard to support our family. I work a lot in between classes and am grateful to contribute. This scholarship has just felt like a breath of fresh air."

"It allows for some wiggle room but is also a weight lifted off a lot of people's shoulders," she continued. "Because it doesn't just affect me. It affects my three siblings and my parents."

She is thankful for donors who make scholarships for students like hers possible. "It really helps you believe in kind people again when you hear of individuals who will donate their own hard-earned money to benefit other people," she said. Without those funds, she probably couldn't live on campus, and the college costs would be a greater burden to her family.

In addition to her job in the financial aid department at Elmhurst, Rill works as a nanny for two Elmhurst families. She is a member of the university's Student Nurses Association, writes for Elmhurst's student newspaper, *The Leader*, and volunteers her time with Special Olympics, working with students through the Elmhurst Learning and Success Academy.