



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
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Meet Your
2023 Alumni
Awardees

Krystal Owens:
The Power of
Opportunity

A **Spartan** of
Healing
Communities

United through Scholarship

2023 Scholarships & Awards Banquet

The College of Nursing hosted a full house for this year's Scholarships and Awards Banquet. Students, alumni, and friends of the college came together to celebrate Homecoming 2023 and the accomplishments of the Spartan Nursing community.

The evening was guided by a theme of lighting the way forward. Every member of the college's community can guide each other along the path to success, as evidenced by a quote from Mary Ann Radmacher, a prominent writer and poet. The quote reads, "As we work to create light for others, we naturally light our own way."

The banquet honored this academic year's scholarship recipients and supporters of those scholarships. Some scholarship recipients spoke on behalf of the cohort to express their gratitude for the financial assistance. "My success will be the success of MSU, and I will proudly carry that with me no matter where I go," said Marie Adkins, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner student and recipient of the Behavioral Health NP Scholarship. "I am a proud Spartan, and I will make MSU prouder."

The Scholarship and Awards Banquet also honored this year's Alumni Award winners. Teberah Alexander, BSN '03, was awarded the Alumni Service award for her collaboration with Detroit Renaissance High School and Excelling Nursing Academy. Emily Krueger, DNP '22, received the Recent Graduate Achievement Award for her professional achievements. Her efforts at Trinity Health Grand Rapids increased patient compliance after knee and hip arthroplasties from 60% to nearly 100%. Joan Brueggeman, BSN '87, was awarded this year's Distinguished Alumni award, the highest award a College of Nursing alumni can receive from the college. Brueggeman holds several leadership roles in national case management associations and a passionately dedicated Spartan, serving on the CON Alumni Board since 2017.



Meet the 2023 Alumni Awardees



Teberah Alexander

Alumni Service Award

“Many long hours went into the Future Nurses Program, traveling overseas teaching, making donations and sharing my time giving back to people around the world. It means so much to know that the work I am so passionate about also resonates with others.”



Emily Krueger

Recent Graduate Achievement Award

“It’s because of my education that I can make a difference and that I can feel like a high-quality, high functioning clinical nurse specialist. I can, and I will because I am a Spartan Nurse.”



Joan Brueggeman

Distinguished Alumni Award

“As a nurse, you get the rare opportunity to help others at their most vulnerable. You are blessed to be a healer, teacher, friend, and confidante. If you take the love and compassion that you have and give that to others, I believe you will succeed.”



I
AM
A
SPARTAN
OF
HEALTHCARE
HISTORY

The Power of Opportunity

Krystal Owens, director of Student Affairs, describes decision to give back

TW: Depression, self-harm

Krystal Owens knew from the moment she stepped onto Bowling Green State University's campus as a first-generation college student that she would be a scholarship donor. A recipient of several scholarships in her undergraduate career, Owens now ensures that MSU nursing students have access to financial assistance, including starting scholarship endowments of her own.

Owens will begin that mission of supporting students financially with a new endowment: the Krystal K. Owens "You're Not Alone" Scholarship Endowment. This fund benefits marginalized students in the College of Nursing, particularly "first-generation college students, students of color, academically and economically disadvantaged students, and bereaved students."

"I want to remind people that they are not alone on their journey," said Owens.



Her first endowment was based on a major life experience attending college on scholarship, although it wasn't her most impactful life experience. Her journey with mental health held that title.

Owens shared that she began to experience post-partum depression after her first son was born in 2011. Her community had very little knowledge of mental health at the time. "I couldn't understand how I could experience depression after having my son that I love much," said Owens. "I thought it was just something I could shake off, but in actuality, I couldn't shake it off."



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Owens's battle with depression reached a peak in December 2013. Against the advice of family, she decided to check herself into an in-patient psychiatric hospital. "It was the scariest time of my life," said Owens. "It was my first time being away from my son, but it was what saved me."



Very few people knew about her mental health journey until this point. "I haven't been open with my mental health journey because of the stigma behind mental health," said Owens. Then a student's plea for help opened the door for Owens to connect her work and her experience.

Seeing how the student responded to Owens sharing her journey proved how impactful it was to hear another person's story who may be experiencing a similar trial. The student was empowered to reach out for help from her family, and Owens decided to connect her experience with her interest in philanthropy.

Thus, the Krystal K. Owens Recognizing Mental Resilience Endowed Scholarship was created. When the endowment is fully funded, it will support nursing students who have been impacted by behavioral disorders or mental illness or are committed to mental health promotion, including students on track to become Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners.

Owens hopes this scholarship and sharing her story will help break the stigma around mental health. "I just want to talk about it like the warriors that we are while battling through our journeys."

To help fund the Krystal K. Owens Recognizing Mental Health Resilience Endowed Scholarship, please contact the CON Development Office or scan this QR code.



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