

Palm Beach State College graduate receives Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship

(Boca Raton, Fla. – May 11, 2010) This fall 21-year-old Alejandra Pozzo will have plenty of time to study when she attends the University of Miami to pursue her nursing degree. She plans on travelling daily from her family's home in Boca Raton to Coral Gables on Tri-Rail, a three-hour commute.

Pozzo was awarded a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship of up to \$30,000 to complete her bachelor's degree. She learned of the honor at the annual Honors College Graduation Luncheon on April 30.

"I started crying the second I heard my name called," Pozzo said. "I'm still in a state of shock, it really hasn't sunk in yet."

Pozzo's dream began when she was 10 years old. Her family moved from Peru to the United States over a decade ago, settling in Boca Raton. It was a calculated move on her parent's part to bring their children to a country that offered them limitless educational opportunities.

Pozzo graduated from Boca High School in 2006 and began taking classes at Palm Beach State's Boca Raton campus where, due to financial restraints, she could only attend part time. She enrolled in Honors College courses, joined the Phi Theta Kappa chapter and met Associate Professor Bobette Wolesensky, the faculty advisor for the Boca Raton campus PTK.

"She is a quiet, powerful force who doesn't like to take individual credit, she is more than content to let her acts speak for themselves," said Wolesensky, who admits to becoming a "second mom" to Pozzo. Wolesensky helped her with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship application process, with Pozzo often camped out at Wolesensky's dining room table, writing and re-writing the necessary essays about her life and ambitions.



Pozzo was accepted into the University of Miami's nursing program six weeks ago, but wasn't sure if she would be able to attend without the scholarship money. With her parents struggling financially, she didn't have the money for the application fee. Wolessensky paid the \$300 fee after Pozzo came to her office and filled out the necessary forms.

"She told me if she didn't get the scholarship that money would be gone forever and wouldn't be able to pay me back," said Wolessensky. "I told her I was blessed, that it's not a lot of money to me, at this point in my life."

As for her three-hour daily commute, Pozzo said, "I won't mind. It will give me plenty of time to study. I've come a long way already."

Pozzo is only the third Palm Beach State College student to be awarded the Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship since the Jack Kent Cooke began offering them. The first recipient was Karen Pain, now a math professor at the Lake Worth campus. The second was Candace Payne, who graduated from the College in 2008.

Note to editors: Caption for photo: Associate Professor Bobette Wolessensky with Alejandra Pozzo.

Serving more than 50,000 students annually, Palm Beach State College is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing the bachelor's degree, associate degrees, professional certificates, career training and lifelong learning. Established in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, it offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

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