



REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES'
FOUNDATION INC.

2025 Scholarships, Grants and Awards of Excellence

The RPNF presents its 2025 Scholarships, Grants and Awards recipients, honoured at the Annual RPNF Scholarships, Grants and Awards Reception held virtually on May 13, 2025. The RPNF proudly celebrates the accomplishments of Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and Psychiatric Nursing students. The 2025 Reception featured the RPNF's 3 scholarship and 2 grant recipients, 3 Awards of Psychiatric Nursing Excellence awardees, 2 Gold Medal recipients and the 2024 Bursary recipient.

For more information about the RPNF's Scholarships and Grants, go to <https://www.rpnf.ca/scholarships/general-information/>

RPNF Undergraduate Scholarship (3rd Year)



Rhianna Nelson
Brandon, MB
Brandon
University

Rhianna brings contributing experience through her work in a range of para-professional roles, gaining valuable knowledge working with individuals experiencing enduring psychiatric illnesses, addiction and homelessness, engaging in mental health assessment, supportive interventions, crisis intervention and outreach. Rhianna places high value on empathic, therapeutic relationships where the needs of individuals are met with dignity and respect. Rhianna notes that her perspectives on culture and diversity have been enriched by opportunities to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities.

RPNF Undergraduate Scholarship (4th Year)



Alexandria
Baluta,
Winnipeg MB
Brandon
University

Alexandria worked throughout her degree program as a Midwife Assistant and private care assistant, and noted the mutual learning opportunities between these paraprofessional roles and her psychiatric nursing studies. She has volunteered as a mentor for breastfeeding mothers, and student mentor within the psychiatric nursing program. Alexandria recognizes the significance of biopsychosocial-spiritual aspects of every individual's circumstances, and has come to appreciate the importance of the whole person and the critical power of kindness. Alexandria successfully navigated her study schedule while proudly parenting their baby, born between her 3rd and 4th year of the degree program.

RPNF Undergraduate Scholarship (4th Year)



Kira Koehler,
Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan,
Brandon
University

Kira worked as a para-professional in long term care, and acute in-patient units in both adult and child & adolescent psychiatry throughout her program, honing rapport-building skills and learning de-escalation techniques as well as the value of working on a team. Given that her interest lies in working with youth, Kira also worked as an undergraduate nursing employee in a child & adolescent crisis program, refining her assessment skills, enriching therapeutic interviewing and conversation skills, and gaining exposure to medication reconciliation and crisis intervention. Kira brings lived experience to her role as a psychiatric nurse which informs her practice, and affords her a level of unique understanding and empathy.

RPNF Marlene Fitzsimmons Grant



Matthew
Parrenas, North
Vancouver, BC

This grant supported Matthew's presentation of his research poster, "Policy Prohibiting Practice: The Non-regulation of Registered Psychiatric Nurses and the Call for Pan-Canadian Advocacy" at the 2024 Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses 2024 National Conference "Leading Change: The Future of Mental Health and Substance Use Nursing in Canada" in November 20, 2024. His presentation offered a critical appraisal of existing regulatory policies affecting registered psychiatric nurses in Canada, emphasizing the enduring influence of historical and political factors on current practices. His research called for legislative changes across provinces to support the regulation and integration of RPNs into all Canadian healthcare systems.

RPNF Indigenous Studies Grant



Kirston Blom,
Regina,
Saskatchewan
Brandon
University

Kirston is a band member of Peepeekisis Cree Nation and Metis descent. This grant supported Kirston's presentation of her abstract at the National Gathering of Graduate Students, October 9 - 11, 2024. Kirston convened with other like-minded Indigenous graduate students to gain valuable knowledge, present her abstract, and enhance the development of her research to authentically reflect Indigenous methodologies. Kirston is committed to highlighting the systemic gaps that Indigenous people face in healthcare and justice settings, noting that Indigenous offenders with complex mental health needs and cognitive disabilities encounter significant barriers, such as a lack of specialized care and culturally competent professionals.

RPNF Bursary, Brandon University Foundation (2023)

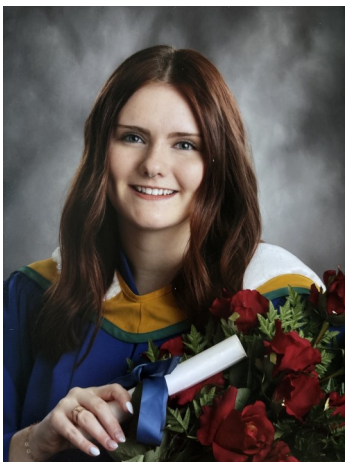


In 2005, the RPNF made a contribution, matched by the Province of Manitoba to create an annual bursary through Brandon University Foundation, offered to a 3rd year student, moving into their 4th and final year of the Bachelor of Science in Psychiatric Nursing Program, through Brandon University.

Megan June Roziere was the 2024 recipient of the RPNF Bursary!

Medal of Excellence-Brandon University, B.Sc.P.N.

The RPNF's Medal of Excellence is awarded annually to a graduating student who has consistently demonstrated leadership, academic excellence and clinical proficiency in the Bachelor of Science in Psychiatric Nursing Program, from each Brandon University campus. Criteria includes involvement in professional, community and/or student activities, high achievement in clinical courses, including the senior practicum, and high attainment in prescribed coursework. The 2025 recipients are:



Courtney Nicholson
(Brandon Campus)



Jelaine van der Meulen
(Winnipeg Campus)



REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES' FOUNDATION INC.

2025 Scholarships, Grants and Awards of Excellence

The Awards of Excellence in Psychiatric Nursing Practice are presented to nominated Registered Psychiatric Nurses (practicing in Manitoba) to acknowledge contributions of RPNs to the profession within the four domains of Psychiatric Nursing practice: leadership, clinical, education and research. This year the foundation presented three awards.

RPNF Award of Excellence—Clinical



Lendre Pilon, RPN.
Beausejour, MB

Lendre has worked at Milner Ridge Correctional Centre since 2012 as a Correctional Psychiatric Nurse. Lendre works with individuals in the criminal justice system who are often marginalized and significantly stigmatized. She provides screening and comprehensive assessments for high risk individuals who are incarcerated. Lendre takes a notably compassionate and non-judgemental approach, thinking outside the box and prioritizing continuity and follow-up for individuals when they leave the centre, mitigating recidivism.

Lendre is highly respected on the multidisciplinary team, and has gained the trust and regard of the team's psychiatrist, the Director of Health Services, Senior Management, frontline Correctional staff and Health Service colleagues alike. She is a leader on multiple levels, including covering for her supervisor, mentoring newly graduating psychiatric nurses and students and modeling a confident, well-informed approach among her colleagues. Lendre values teamwork and participates in planning with other community partners such as Forensic Psychological Services and Community Mental Health Programs. She is calm under pressure, ensures that she has all of the critical information before making decisions, and is appreciated for her critical thinking.

RPNF Award of Excellence—Clinical



Kayla Lemieux,
RPN Winnipeg, MB
Winnipeg,

Kayla works as a Registered Psychiatric Nurse within the emergency department at HSC, WRHA women's addictions treatment, Remand Center and the Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). Kayla is a leader in her clinical work developing, implementing and evaluating strategies that directly benefit both clients and their families. In her various roles, she regularly leads care planning initiatives that encompass a holistic and client-centered approach. Whether she is facilitating urgent interventions in the emergency department or advocating for the safety of women in treatment, her approach is thoughtful, ethically-implemented and tailored to meet the complex needs of the individuals she serves. Kayla's deep understanding of the barriers faced by vulnerable individuals is backed up by advocacy for more inclusive and compassionate care models. She works collaboratively with other professionals to improve service delivery in the emergency department, jail, and community settings, ensuring that the most effective and evidence-based practices are adopted. She navigates complex situations with the highest standard of integrity and respect for client confidentiality and rights. Her ability to address ethical dilemmas in a compassionate and professional manner has earned the trust and admiration of her colleagues, managers and patients. Kayla's approach considers client dignity and safety and ensures that individuals feel valued, heard, and prepared to make informed decisions about their care.

Kayla is respected among colleagues and the broader community alike for her clinical judgement and use of leading practice interventions in her work with individuals who present with high risk features. She remains committed to ongoing professional development, completing her Masters in Counselling Psychology degree subsequent to her psychiatric nursing degree.

RPNF Award of Excellence-Research



Dr. Candice Waddell-
Henowitch, Brandon,
Manitoba

Dr. Waddell-Henowitch, RPN, BScPN, MPN, PhD, an Associate Professor at Brandon University has made significant contributions to the field of psychiatric nursing by addressing various gaps in the literature through her extensive research. For example, she has advanced evidence-based psychiatric nursing practice through research in critical areas, including the health and mental well-being of rural Canadians, Indigenous men's health, community wellness, and sexualized violence. Additionally, she has explored anti-racism strategies in psychiatric nursing education. Dr. Waddell-Henowitch's research is guided by trauma-informed and culturally sensitive methodologies. She also plays a pivotal role in mentoring and guiding undergraduate and graduate psychiatric nursing students, particularly those in the Master of Psychiatric Nursing program, as they undertake their research and complete their theses.

She contributes to innovative educational practices through her ongoing professional development, training, and research. Fostering inclusivity is important to her as she creates welcoming environments that support diverse learning needs. She disseminates her research findings in a variety of ways, including peer-reviewed articles and presentations. Dr. Waddell-Henowitch has an impressive academic portfolio, with 30 published manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals and over 40 peer-reviewed presentations. She has actively contributed to the academic community by serving as a peer reviewer for numerous grants, manuscripts, textbooks, and conference abstracts. Additionally, Dr. Waddell-Henowitch is the President of the YWCA Westman and is on the Board of Directors for the YWCA of Canada. She has an extensive history of service to the Faculty of Health Studies and Brandon University, and has played key roles on several committees, including the Brandon University Senate Research Committee and the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee.

RPNF 2025 Annual General Meeting

The RPNF will hold its AGM on Monday, May 27, 2025 at 12:00 CDT by Zoom. All are welcome! Please email info@rpnf.ca for AGM Package and Zoom Link.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurses' Foundation is incredibly proud of the accomplishments of the RPNF Scholarships and Awards recipients. They are an inspiration to the profession and are leaders in the field. Join us in congratulating the winners on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) or visit our website at www.rpnf.ca, and join our mailing list by signing up at <https://www.rpnf.ca/support-the-foundation/be-on-our-mailing-list>.

A sincere thank-you to our Registered Psychiatric Nurses' Foundation Donors who make these Scholarships and Awards possible. Go to <https://www.rpnf.ca/support-the-foundation/donations> to learn how you can support the RPNF.