

Alonda Bardney, Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Recipient

Aspiring Veterinarian Balances Art and Science to Be a Leader in the Community

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[Aspire2STEAM.org](https://aspire2steam.org), which provides educational scholarships and mentoring to young women and girls who are working toward careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts, or math (STEAM), has awarded Alonda Bardney an ASPIRER scholarship made possible through a kind donation from CompTIA. CompTIA is a leading voice and advocate for the \$5 trillion global information technology ecosystem; and the estimated 75 million industry and tech professionals who design, implement, manage, and safeguard the technology that powers the world's economy.



Alonda Bardney, Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Recipient, at the 2022 MANRRS Conference in Columbus, Ohio (manrrs.org)

“Alonda Bardney’s scientific mind combined with her advanced communication abilities help her to understand and ‘speak’ foreign languages of a different kind,” said Cheryl O’Donoghue, CEO at [Aspire2STEAM.org](https://aspire2steam.org). “Imagine being a doctor where you can’t ask your patient what’s wrong. A veterinarian develops a different way of knowing and empathy is one of Alonda’s superpowers.”

Alonda, a freshman at University of Wisconsin, Madison, found that many of her hardest life lessons helped forge her personal strengths. A major turning point for her on her journey to college occurred during her 6th grade year. At this time, she was verbally and emotionally bullied by one of her close friends. Struggling with the cognitive dissonance this situation brought forth, Alonda thought to express her feelings through writing. She was able to craft poems and short stories that engaged not only the sadness she was feeling but also the fun and lightheartedness she often experienced in her dreams. “My 6th grade bullying experience was a turning point for

me that allowed me to realize my enjoyment of writing,” said Alonda. “This experience has helped me become a stronger writer as well as a creative thinker.”

Another pivotal experience for Alonda has been her longtime involvement as a member of the Girl Scouts organization. “Aside from the delicious cookies, being a Girl Scout taught me multiple life lessons that are rooted in leadership and decision-making skills, as well as how to care for others, build community, and be a courageous and a confident individual,” Alonda said. Her years spent as a Girl Scout helped solidify her career choice to become a veterinarian, in addition to volunteering at the Anti-Cruelty Society since she was in the 7th grade.



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As a future veterinarian, Alonda is particularly interested in animal welfare along with neurology and neuropharmacology. She finds the pharmaceutical relationship with animal behavior to be fascinating, especially how different medications influence each patient differently. Going

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forward, she desires to continue research in this area along with vaccine outreach to decrease the number of animals suffering from preventable diseases. Additionally, Alonda is acutely aware that in veterinary medicine, the patient care plan not only involves the animal but also the pet owner. “Veterinarians must include the dynamic relationship between the pet and its owner in the patient’s care plan,” said Alonda. “This requires compassion and understanding so that the safety and overall health of the animal is regarded with a high level of thought and care.”

In her free time, Alonda engages in a multitude of creative outlets. Topping her list is her passion for listening to music as well as journaling to reflect on both her current and past self. She finds it helpful to read old journal entries to notice personal growth and uncover opportunities to grow further. Also, in 2021, Alonda submitted one of her art pieces to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago titled “Winter Wonderland.” The artwork featured her and her cat and reflected the joy they shared and allowed her to tap into

her inner child to acknowledge not everything she does has to be taken seriously. As Alonda moves forward through her college years, she plans to continue her creative interests along with being involved in campus dining services, taking part in university clubs, and visiting the gym. She finds these activities help her to refocus herself to feel relieved, free, and productive both outside and in the classroom.

About Aspire2STEAM

Aspire2STEAM.org is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which has earned Guidestar's Gold Seal for integrity, transparency, and accountability. Aspire2STEAM provides

educational scholarships and mentoring to young women and girls who are working hard—aspiring—to achieve careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts, or math. Aspire2STEAM is committed to helping women and girls with a hand up over the incredible barriers of student debt and rising education costs, and the real, ever-present opportunity barriers that keep them out of most male-dominated industries.

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