

SVEC Scholarship Program Creates Lifelong Friends

Submitted by Grace Blanchard,
SVEC scholarship recipient ('16)

During our senior year of high school, Sarah Daley and I both applied for the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative scholarship. At the time, Sarah and I didn't know each other. She was a student at Wilson Memorial High School and I went to Highland High School.

After receiving the delightful news that we each had been awarded one of the 10 scholarships valued at \$1,000, Sarah and I met at the spring scholarship banquet in Bridgewater.

I remember feeling very excited to attend this event, but I was also a little emotional. A generous gift, the SVEC scholarship was also a reminder that I would be leaving my home to attend college in just a few months. I was nervous! Sitting at our dinner table, Sarah and I soon discovered that we would both be heading to the University of Virginia that fall ... a new friend!

It felt meant to be.

Today, Sarah and I are still friends. We share a favorite study spot and, last semester, we even took a class called global humanitarian crisis together. Whenever I run into her around the grounds, I'm reminded of how we met through the SVEC scholarship. I think about my home community and the meaningful support it has given me.

For the SVEC scholarship essay, Sarah and I both answered the prompt: "How a college education would improve ourselves and our community." As we begin our third year at the University of Virginia, I can say with confidence that we both continue to live out this prompt in



From left: Grace Blanchard and Sarah Daley.

our student lives, always making the most of U.Va.'s educational and cultural opportunities.

Both in love with our school, we also agree that our beloved home communities and the valuable experiences we had growing up around the Shenandoah Valley have influenced our interests and guided our majors.

Sarah is currently majoring in global

studies with a minor in public policy and leadership. She is the director of community service in her sorority, and she is a youth and school programs intern at the International Rescue Committee in Charlottesville. After interning at America World Adoption Association (AWAA) this past summer, she hopes to work in the nonprofit or NGO sector as an adoption policy analyst or humanitarian to serve international orphans and vulnerable children.

For me, I'm a student in U.Va.'s Frank Batten School, majoring in leadership and public policy with a minor in government. I serve on the third-year Class Council and I'm a docent at the Fralin Art Museum. I'm also the leadership chair of my sorority and an active member in Reformed University Fellowship.

After interning at The Highland Center, a local non-profit organization in Highland County, I'm especially interested in education and economic development policy, specifically in rural localities. I feel a close connection to the rural community and I'm passionate about the future of small-town America.

After graduating, I hope to pursue a career in public service and state government.

I'm very grateful for the generous support of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and for the wonderful friend it brought into my life, too!

Note to member-owners: Please check svec.coop/scholarships for more information about SVEC's scholarship program. Applications for 2019 are expected to be available soon.

Apply Now for 2019 VMDAEC Education Scholarships

Any high school or home-school senior graduating in the spring of 2019, and whose primary residence is served by Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, is eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship from the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives' (VMDAEC) Education Scholarship Foundation. The scholarship is to be applied to a two- or four-year college or trade school.

The online application is posted at svec.coop/scholarships, vmdae.com and co-opliving.com/community/scholarship.

The deadline to apply is Friday, Feb. 8, 2019.

An applicant must be entering his or her first semester at a post-secondary or technical/trade school in the fall of 2019 and scholarship funds must be used towards tuition, student fees, room and board or textbooks.

The scholarship foundation's board of directors will select recipients based on criteria including financial need, academic achievement and a student's personal statement. **Successful applicants will be notified no later than May 31, 2019.**

In 2018, VMDAEC's scholarship foundation awarded 56 scholarships.