

NCCFF Selects Five Non-Traditional Scholarship Winners in 2023

Once again, Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF) presented five of its Non-Traditional Scholarships to adult students in the Nebraska City community who are seeking to improve their skills in current jobs or help them secure jobs in another field.

In the past two decades, 85 Nebraska City adults have received Non-Traditional Scholarship to help them reach their career goals. Winning NCCFF Non-Traditional Scholarships in 2023 were: Susan Bartman, Shannon Buckminster, Leigh Calfee, Benjamin M. Foust and Mark Fritch.

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Susan Bartman is pursuing a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Nebraska – Kearney. She has taught special education, grade 9 through 12, at Nebraska City Public

High School for the past two years. Before this, she taught for seven years at Bellevue East High School.

“Receiving this scholarship allowed me to focus on my studies and personal development, and I believe it can do the same for others,” Susan said. “I want to continue to help all students to find their personal version of success.”

“I like that the people’s lives I affect every day live in the same community as me,” she continued. “Nebraska City has been a great place to raise a family.”

Shannon Buckminster is pursuing a Master of Science in Organizational Healthcare Administration at Peru State College. She has worked at Ambassador Health in Nebraska City for almost seven years. “I started out as



Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund 2023 Non-Traditional Scholarship winners hold up the ceremonial checks they were presented at the NCCFF's annual meeting. From left to right are Susan Bartman, Benjamin M. Foust, Shannon Buckminster and Mark Fritch.

a nursing home administrator at the Ambassador Nebraska City and worked there for four years. In 2020, I accepted the Chief Information Officer position at their corporate office.”

“I hope to work for Ambassador Health for as long as they will have me!” Shannon said. “I love to mentor other healthcare professionals inside and outside of our organization.”

Shannon said she is licensed by the State of Nebraska as a Nursing Home Administrator Preceptor, which allows her to train other new nursing home administrators. “I hope to continue to develop this skill and mentor those in the community that wish to pursue this career path.”

Leigh Calfee is pursuing a Secondary Certification from Peru State College. She is currently a first-year English teacher at Nebraska City High School as well as the head Speech coach. Leigh has an associate degree from Iowa Western Community College and an undergraduate degree in English at Peru State College. She also did graduate work in English at Northwest Missouri State University.

“I love Nebraska City because it is a wonderful small town,” Leigh said. “I have a fantastic support system here, and our public schools are phenomenal.” She is grateful to the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund for this scholarship. “It will enable me to complete my certification courses with zero debt,” she said.



Leigh Calfee

“I absolutely encourage other people to apply for this scholarship in order to make college affordable and achievable,” Leigh said.

Benjamin M. Foust is pursuing a Master of Art of Teaching Mathematics from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He is a 2000 graduate of Iowa State University (ISU) with a major in Mathematics and Education. “My current teaching assignment at NCPS is 8th grade math,” he said. “I cover three levels of mathematics including Pre-Algebra, Algebra Concepts, and Algebra I.” This is his 6th year with NCPS.

“I still have another 15 or so years to go before retirement, so my current plan is to spend them in Nebraska City,” Benjamin said. “I wanted a place that was close to colleges that would offer me the chance to access higher education more easily. “My family and I will be firmly rooted in this community, and I plan to continue to work with and for the people of Nebraska City and Otoe County.” After getting his master’s degree, Benjamin hopes to teach dual enrollment classes for Southeast Community College.

Mark Fritch is pursuing a Doctor of Education from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He has been the superintendent of the Nebraska City Public Schools since July 2020.

Fritch said he wants to continue to learn as an educational leader. “I want to help Nebraska City Public Schools meet the needs of each student in our pursuit of a culture of excellence.”

“We have a student population that is not growing in number but is growing in need,” Fritch said. “The ability to meet the needs of all students as a school district and community will be a challenge. The saying, ‘It takes a village to raise a child’ will become even more important in the future from my perspective.”

Fritch said he is thankful and appreciative of this NCCFF scholarship. “A part of the reason I am returning to school and even applying for this scholarship is to continue to be a role model for my own children and others,” he said. “Learning never ends.”