

Laura Gundersen

Enriched Academy Scholarship for Alberta High School Students

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### Anticipating Success

In September, I will make the challenging transition into postsecondary at the University of Calgary, where I will study commerce. This next phase of my life will require me to take on a far more active role in managing my finances. For years, this looming future had been a constant source of stress, one that I wanted to ignore for as long as possible; but now, with it only a few short months away, I no longer feel the pressure weighing down on me. Instead, I feel prepared to face my new responsibilities, equipped with the knowledge necessary to effectively manage my finances.

One of the biggest causes of my anxiety about postsecondary education had been the uncertainty. The template budget spreadsheet that I received in the course was extremely helpful in alleviating this. I used the template to create a budget for my first year of university, and I found that it made the vague, uncertain future much more manageable and defined. I now know how much I have available to spend on everything from groceries to clothes to streaming services, and, as a result, have a clearer vision of how my life will look.

The Financial Literacy Program has introduced me to concepts that will be essential both for the handling of my personal finances and for my academic career. Finance is, of course, a key part of the Bachelor of Commerce degree and, with the knowledge I have gained, I will have an easier time fully grasping essential concepts. I believe this will give me a helpful advantage in the competitive environment of university.

Even at a young age, I had made the decision that I was going to attend postsecondary, whether it would be trade school, college, or university. Having witnessed my mother's struggle

to find work with adequate compensation without postsecondary education, I was determined that I would not go through the same; and, as soon as I was old enough to understand what student loans were, I knew they would be necessary for me to achieve this goal. I have heard horror stories of people spending their whole lives with student debt piled high, no end in sight, as well as encouraging stories of those who paid off their debt in only a few years. This program has given me the tools I need to keep myself happily in the latter category. Student loans had seemed to be an incomprehensible and unknowable monster, yet now I can see how they can be effectively utilized in a beneficial way that does not hurt my chances at future financial freedom, but, in fact, increases them.

Another way this course has begun supporting my journey to financial freedom is by sharing the Real Estate Rental Inspection Checklist, Rental Application, and Lease Agreement with me. I hope to utilize these in the future as a landlord, as I have had an interest in investing in rental properties for some time. These documents will also be incredibly useful immediately, as I plan to rent an apartment for the upcoming school year and it is advantageous to know what to expect. Additionally, I may have an opportunity to be an on-site property manager for a relative in the next year or two. A comprehensive list of areas to inspect, an outline of the typical responsibilities of tenants and owners, and a list of the usual rules and regulations for a tenant will aid me greatly in all of these roles.

The Financial Literacy Program has given me a solid foundation to stand on in tumultuous, changing times. Instead of being tossed around in the deep waters of new financial responsibilities, I have been handed a lifeboat and oars to paddle my way through, calmly and steadily. I am prepared to start university, follow my budget, apply for student loans, rent a home, and, in the future, invest in rental properties myself. I am no longer fearing the future, but eagerly anticipating what is to come.