

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE AWARD

Kimberly Gauthier

2008-2009 DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE

Inspirational attitude and academic excellence have earned Kimberly Gauthier the honor of being named the 2008-2009 Distinguished Graduate by the Valencia Alumni Association.

Kimberly went from being a full-time homemaker to a full-time student after a health scare with stomach cancer forced her to put her life in perspective. She realized that she had always regretted not going to college and she worried that if something ever happened to her husband, she would have trouble providing for her two young children. So she decided to go back to school.

Inspired by her children's enthusiasm for learning, Kimberly decided to study education at Valencia. At first it was difficult adjusting to college life but with hard work, determination and the support of her family, she was able to adapt quickly.

Mathematics professor Debbie Garrison, who nominated Kimberly for the Distinguished Graduate award, said, "When I first met her, Kimberly admitted that math was not her strongest or favorite subject, but she was a very conscientious student who truly had an interest in learning and mastering the course material."

In the end, professor Garrison said Kimberly's "final average was the highest in the class. She has shown that she is capable of excelling academically and being a catalyst to learning for others in the classroom. I predict great things in Kimberly's future."

While it was difficult juggling schoolwork and taking care of her family, Kimberly still managed to excel in school and become involved in student activities and community service.



At Valencia, Kimberly served as an active member of Valencia Future Educators and Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

Outside of school she served on the PTA, volunteered for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society National Neighborhood Drive and served as an Additions Volunteer in a second grade class at Deerwood Elementary School.

Kimberly was recently named to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges for 2009 and is also the recipient of several scholarships, including the Charles M. Potter Valencia Foundation Scholarship, the Valencia Alumni Association Scholarship and the Phi Theta Kappa Justin Harvey Alpha Gamma Omega Scholarship. She made The National Dean's List in 2007 and has been on Valencia's President's List from 2007-2009.

With a 4.0 GPA from Valencia and 3.57 GPA overall, Kimberly graduated from Valencia in December with an Associate in Arts degree focused in education. She is currently attending the University of Central Florida, pursuing a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in mathematics.

In the future Kimberly plans to pursue a master's degree so that she can one day return to Valencia as a professor.

"I believe that community college is the secret treasure of higher education and a harbinger of dreams," she said. "Once, a long time ago, I was frightened of the future, but due to my experience at Valencia, I realize that with hard work and determination I can make my dream come true."

For outstanding accomplishments in academics, extracurricular activities and community service, the Valencia Community College Alumni Association proudly honors Ms. Kimberly Gauthier as the 2008-2009 Distinguished Graduate.