

Congratulations to Rebecca Swint, 2020 WTS-LA Back-to-School Scholarship Winner



Rebecca Swint (WTS-LA Back-to-School Scholarship Recipient), 2020

Some take the road the less traveled by choice, opting for a nontraditional path. Others find their lives shaped by events beyond their control. Still others choose a path and must also respond to external events to create a meaningful life. 2020 WTS-LA \$6,000 WTS-LA California State University, Northridge/Back to School Scholarship winner Rebecca Swint's life was shaped by numerous events, but she responded to them to create a successful life all her own.

"I have spent the majority of my 20+ year career working in project & risk management, and compliance. I left college in 2003 to pursue a lucrative project management career at Microsoft, but I was laid off after 13 years due to offshoring. My lack of college degree has made it difficult to find comparable work since then, and in 2019, I went back to college full-time to finish my degree.

"Growing up, I was placed in foster care at age 6 and was moved around multiple times. I coped with my chaotic upbringing by finding stability at my schools whenever I moved. I became an honor roll student, and was placed in the Gifted & Talented program in 5th grade. Because I grew up in poverty, I knew I'd have to work full-time to put myself through college and maintain my own household, and in the past, paying bills has taken priority over college. When my career took off in 2003, I put my education on hold...

"Although it's been challenging to juggle these responsibilities while focusing on my education, once I went back to school in 2019, I've been on the Dean's Honor List, and I'm committed to earning my degree and re-entering the workforce armed with new skills by 2022...I've been an environmental activist since my teen years, and an evangelist of public transportation in LA. I love the accessibility of the Metro & Metrolink systems in LA. I am excited to study this field so that I can combine this knowledge with my project management background and work to make public transit a logical choice for LA's commuters."

A junior at CalState University, Northridge, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Urban Studies and Planning, Environmental Planning and Sustainability, Swint maintains a 3.46 grade point average and already holds an AS-T in business administration. But Swint also excels outside the classroom with numerous professional and volunteer affiliations including Project Angel Food and the Monday Night Mission, as well as being a parent volunteer at her children's elementary school. Not everyone could balance school, life, and work so efficiently. But Swint is not your ordinary college student.

“She is a creative problem solver, a team player, and an expert at coordinating complex projects with tight budget constraints,” explains senior project manager Amanda Johns. And she would know. Johns and Swint worked closely together for a number of years. Johns explains. “She regularly achieved over and above performance expectations at our company. Rebecca was always open-minded and ready to take up new challenges to ensure that our organization’s targets were met. Additionally, Rebecca created and maintained a comprehensive business continuity and disaster recovery plan. This ensured there were no interruptions to our business during local natural disasters and is still a core part of the business’ continuity planning today.”

The road must be traveled. The question that always remains is, how? Some choose a nontraditional path. Others can only respond to events that befall them. But there is a unique few who surmount challenges beyond their control while choosing a less traditional path to succeed in life. Rebecca Swint is one such person.