



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS



2023 ASSP Foundation Academic Scholarships

We are excited to share with you that thanks to your support, the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) Foundation has awarded \$334,500 in academic scholarships and career development grants to 153 individuals to help them achieve their educational and career goals in the occupational safety and health profession.

“For over 30 years as ASSP’s charitable arm, the ASSP Foundation has helped thousands of students and professionals continue their education in workplace safety and health,” said former ASSP Foundation Chair Trish Ennis, CSP, ARM, CRIS. “The consistent support from donors shows that safety and health careers are vital in helping to protect workers everywhere.”

The 2023 awards include \$305,500 in academic scholarships for 107 graduate and undergraduate students preparing for or supplementing their occupational safety and health careers at 52 colleges and universities. The ASSP Foundation awarded \$29,000 in career development grants to 46 safety students and professionals who are working to advance their careers through certification, conference attendance and similar learning opportunities. Career development grants will continue to be awarded throughout the year.

Please scroll through the following pages to learn more about the those impacted by your donations and read their direct words of gratitude for your investment in their future.

[View the full list of awardees here.](#)

Thank you for entrusting the ASSP Foundation Board of Trustees with stewardship of your investment.

Three years ago, I couldn't even tell you what OSHA or OSH stood for, what duties a safety professional had, and thought that industrial hygienists worked in a dentist's office. Now, I graduate a proud GSP with a plethora of experience in a variety of industries including construction, pharmaceutical, food, and even mining. All of this would have been impossible to achieve without the support system of my outstanding program faculty, mentors in my internships, and organizations like ASSP that promote the development of young professionals such as myself.

The financial assistance I have received will aid me in continuing my journey in safety as I go on to further my education in graduate school. A developing field even today, I aspire to be a safety professional that continues to redesign and redefine what safety can look like in the industry. Finally, through my career and own example, I hope to become the gateway and inspiration for other young girls and women to gain an interest in a career path they perhaps had never even considered themselves having a role in.



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\$1,000 ASSP Foundation Scholarship, funded by ASSP National Capital Chapter, in memory of Janet H. Sprickman

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What attracted you to the safety industry and how has your education affected your opinion of the field?

Upon starting my time at Grand Valley State University, I was a biochemistry major. It did not take me very long to discover that while I loved the content in my courses, I could not foresee myself in a lab environment - I was much too social for that and I craved a role where I could work in teams, build relationships, and get out into the field. By a stroke of luck, I was introduced to the Occupational Safety and Health program and I was immediately hooked.

There are many things that I love about the field of safety, one such being that it combines my love of the sciences and interest in working in teams into a career that utilizes both of those to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to keep the workplace safe. I love that the nature of the safety field means that every day in the workplace is unique; routine and boredom are not words to describe this career. Safety is incorporated into so many different areas in the industry in the workplace, including but not limited to environmental regulations, loss control, industrial hygiene, quality control, expansion planning, and more.

Because safety is such an expansive field, it means that safety professionals will always be continually learning throughout their careers; there will always be opportunities to explore and become enlightened in another field that one has not had exposure to before. This aligns well with my endless curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. One of the most crucial things I've learned in my major is the importance of building good relationships with workers. The safety department is not meant to be the police force: we are meant to be a resource and consultant to the supervisors and line



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workers that we serve. Safety does not have the authority or resources to force workers to comply, and forcing compliance is one of the worst ways to create change. No one wants to listen to a person they dislike or an outsider who comes in one day to take charge.

Instead, the most effective way to get through to a worker is to approach him or her and have a one-on-one conversation. Why did you do this unsafe act? Do you have the resources to get work done as described in our policy? Have you ever raised a concern before, only to be brushed off? These simple questions do wonders in building trust with workers, allowing everyone's job to be much easier. Too often, safety professionals assume a "blame the worker" attitude, and don't consider the barriers the worker faces in their environment. Relations with workers are the backbone of a good safety program and culture, and they should be prioritized by any competent safety professional.

What are some of your educational and professional goals, and how do you plan on achieving them?

My primary educational goals are to obtain my bachelor's degree in Occupational Safety and Health from Grand Valley in April, then obtain my Master's Degree in Industrial Hygiene. In my bachelor's program, I have been able to take both industrial hygiene, advanced industrial hygiene, and ergonomics, but I know there is still a great deal more I have to become competent in industrial hygiene. I wish to specifically become more knowledgeable in radiation and biochemical hazards in the workplace, especially in unconventional settings such as Research and Development where work is not standard or routine.

At this time, I have been accepted into five separate programs and schools: The Universities of Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Washington, and South Florida. At any one of these schools, I will expand my knowledge in the field of industrial hygiene to become more specialized in assessing these types of risks in the workplace. The potential funds from this ASSP scholarship will greatly lessen the financial strain it will take for me to both attend a Master's program and move to a new city. After graduating with a Master's degree in Industrial Hygiene, I plan to gain as much experience in as many industries as possible. Exposing myself to different environments will sharpen my ability to analyze and assess an environment and accurately produce recommendations for controls and procedures in a hazardous situation.





At this time, I have worked in the construction, pharmaceutical, and food manufacturing industries. Having a larger well of experience expands the way I can approach situations and has made me a well-rounded safety professional. I also plan to obtain my Certified Industrial Hygienist certification as soon as I am able. This will open even more opportunities for me and allow me to further continue my education.

What leadership and/or volunteer roles have you taken within the safety profession, and what positions do you envision yourself taking in the future?

In the school year of 2022 to 2023, I have had the opportunity to serve as secretary of the American Society of Safety Professionals student chapter at Grand Valley. I was voted in by my peers and in this role, I have taken on many responsibilities. I, along with other board members, meet multiple times each month to plan various events and activities for ASSP members to attend, such as socials at local industries and informational meetings to educate on the opportunities within the profession. One of our most successful events was a panel of local professionals, where ASSP e-board members connected with local safety professionals to come in and do a panel discussion with students, giving them the opportunity for students to ask questions about their industry.

My role in that event was to coordinate the meeting time, date, and location of the event, market to ASSP members, and reach out to a local industrial hygienist at the well-established hospital CoreWell Health to serve as a panelist. Additionally, I volunteered my time in December of 2022 at Grand Valley's engineering project day. Project day is an event where engineering students present their projects within a venue to present to a variety of audiences, including university students and staff, friends and family, and students from local high schools. At this event, I helped run the Occupational Safety and Health table, demonstrating our device "Jolene" to attendees. Jolene is a mani queen head with the ability to, upon having headphones placed upon its ears, give real-time audiometric measurements in dB. The intention is to have a volunteer play a song from their phone at a volume they would normally listen to, and show how high the dBs are with that associated volume.

This demonstration creates an avenue for creating a conversation about the risks of noise-related hearing loss with those who may not be informed. Many people listen to music at levels extremely close or even exceeding 85 dB, the recognized critical value where hearing loss begins to become a concern. This volunteer event was a great





opportunity to promote safe practices regarding noise exposure and a wonderful exposure for our OSH program. I will take on many additional roles and responsibilities in my developing career. Within many industries, it is imperative to have a proper chemical response management plan and emergency response team. I can see myself being a part of one such role in my professional career. In my internship at Zoetis, a pharmaceutical company, I got to experience the roles EHS takes in emergency management. This involves a great deal of preemptive action to be better prepared for a situation when it arises. One of my largest projects at the said internship was to update all existing spill kit supplies.

What is your greatest takeaway from the current school year? How do you think this knowledge will impact yourself and others throughout your career?

In my last semester of the Occupational Safety and Health program, there has been a great emphasis not on polishing our technical skills as safety professionals, but on our mindsets. I have an entire class dedicated to discussion with my peers, challenging established safety paradigms, and drawing on my own experiences to either agree or disagree with the statements. Another capstone class is dedicated to the science of making a change with extremely limited resources and capital, as unfortunately, this is usually the reality of the EHS department: given momentous tasks to accomplish with minimal resources. I enjoyed this class the most out of any other course.

Throughout my time in the program, we are constantly bombarded with all the roles, responsibilities, and tasks that we must complete in our careers, but before this class, we were not told how to do them. How do you implement a new respiratory protection program when none of your workers want to participate? How do you get workers to pay attention in training that is crucial to preventing major incidents? These vital questions must be answered, yet I had literally never thought of them. In Program Development, all of these questions are addressed. To create change, you have to eliminate ambiguity, script your critical moves, and appeal to the emotions of your audience.

As I exit my undergraduate with my brand new OSH degree and enter the workforce, I know there will be tough times. There will be times when it seems I'm trying to empty an ocean with a teaspoon. When that happens, I will think back to the lessons I learned in Program Development, from our textbook "Switch", a text devoted to the craft of creating change. Often resistance is a lack of clarity. Many times "laziness" is pure





exhaustion. I need to remember these lessons in my career at times when I am frustrated with what seems to be a lack of progress.

What makes you stand out as an applicant?

The safety field is one that is male-dominated. As a female, upon entering this industry during my sophomore year of college, I was immediately forced to be put out of my comfort zone. In all my classes, all the site tours, and all the projects I worked on, I was in the small minority in my gender. Though naturally a confident self-assured individual by nature, I quickly realized that I would have to become even more so and learn to be comfortable being the only woman in the room. My experience as a woman in the industry has made me into an extremely self-assured, competent individual, and it is only one way in many that I stand out. In addition to my Occupational Safety and Health degree, I also have a chemistry minor. I have taken intense organic and analytical chemistry courses, in addition to biochemistry. My deeper background in these areas makes me much more equipped to consult in areas of chemical hazards. I am able to predict where a hydrogen gas might be produced, know the dangers of acidic and alkaline burns, and have a greater understanding of the reactivity of certain chemicals than the average EHS professional.

Do you plan to pursue a career in public health after you graduate?

In the pursuit of my undergraduate degree of Occupational Safety and Health, I have taken a plethora of relevant courses to my future career: industrial hygiene, advanced industrial hygiene, environmental regulations, and compliance, critical incident analysis, loss control, behavioral safety, and more. When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to serve several humanitarian efforts on 3 different levels: in a homeless shelter in Flint, MI, in one of the poorest zip codes in the country in West Virginia, and Guatemala - a country in Latin America. All of these endeavors made me realize that health disparities exist in every corner of our world. These experiences, among others, have motivated me to further my education in a selected Master's Program in Industrial Hygiene, where I will be able to use my skill set to advocate for a better health outcome for those who are unable to do so themselves, either due to a lack of knowledge, power, platform, etc. With the potential funds from this scholarship, I will be able to attend the highest possible quality of education in order to reach my stated goals.

