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Scholarships: A forever family at Furman

Furman University

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A forever family at Furman

When Fiona Hay Bloom ’12 talks about her dad, her eyes get a little misty. The same happens when she talks about how Furman United saved her college career. More than once. This is a young lady with an abundance of unabashed gratitude who has flourished despite her trials. And there were many.

2008 was a tough year for Bloom. Her dad lost his business, and with it, nearly all of his personal and professional assets. Including a way to pay for her tuition. “After my dad lost his business, I applied for a Furman United Scholarship,” Bloom says. “And I was blown away when I got it. I was able to complete my freshman year.”

But the financial struggles continued, and she applied again for her junior year. She also worried that she would face the same situation her senior year, but her dad said, “We’ll work it out.” But it didn’t really work out that way.

Near the end of Bloom’s junior year, her dad was diagnosed with stage-four brain cancer. She says, “He literally went from walking one day to not walking the next. I went home to Marietta to be with him and stayed with him in the hospital all of May and June. And then he died in July.”

And her situation changed again. She says, “There was now zero income and no way for me to continue at Furman. None.” Given her circumstances, the Furman Financial Aid Office helped her once again find the money she needed to complete her college experience at Furman. “It was the biggest blessing for me to be able to complete my education at Furman. The absolute biggest blessing. And Furman United made it happen.”

Now married and on her way to American University for a Masters in International Communication, Bloom is determined that the minute she can, she will give back to the Furman United Scholarship Fund. It saved her college experience and many others like hers. It’s also where she found a community of people, peers, and professors whose life lessons she’ll take with her wherever she goes.

#WhyFurmanMatters

Furman matters because it’s where I developed a passion for learning, but maybe more importantly, found my extended forever family.

—FIONA BLOOM ’12

FURMAN UNITED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Furman United Scholarship Fund, launched by the Board of Trustees, was created in response to the economic downturn in 2006. The ongoing mission is to ensure that every student who begins an academic career at Furman will have the opportunity to graduate. Supported by faculty, staff, and students alike (along with alumni and parents), Furman United received a boost in 2012 when the Daniel-Mickel Foundation committed $300,000 to establish a sustaining endowment for the fund. By 2014 Furman United had helped 165 students complete their Furman experience.

$600,000
the original goal set for Furman United funds

$2.2 million
given to Furman United since the campaign began

$190 million
endowed and annual scholarship funds raised through the campaign

85
percentage of students receiving financial aid