



Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada

## Student Spotlight

April 2019

**Patrick Vega**  
**AAA Scholarship Graduate**  
**Arizona**



The last time we heard from Patrick Vega he was in the 12th grade and on his way to completing high school. Today, we are excited to say that he will be graduating this May from Saint Louis University with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Criminology! "We did it with angels and organizations like you," says Gracie Vega, Patrick's mother.

Several years ago, when the untimely passing of Patrick's father, Gracie's husband, occurred, the Vega family was unsure of how they would be able to continue without him. Not only was Gracie grieving her husband's death, but she was also worried about how she would keep their family afloat financially. A big part of her concerns was how she would be able to afford for Patrick to continue at Bourgade Catholic High School – the private junior/senior high school his older brother had attended. Her reasoning went beyond having her youngest child follow in her oldest child's footsteps; the school had served as a major support system for her family during their loss, and she worried that disrupting Patrick's education and moving him away from this close-knit community would have devastating effects on his well-being and future.

After consulting with the financial aid department at Bourgade to tell them her concerns, Gracie learned about the AAA Scholarship Foundation and applied. Receiving the news that Patrick was approved for a scholarship provided her with a massive sense of relief and reassurance that her family was going to be alright.

Recognizing what a gift it was for him to be able to receive his education at Bourgade, Patrick put forth his best effort in school, achieving a 3.4-grade point average and taking advantage of extracurricular activities the school had to offer, including basketball, swimming, and theater. And even though his schoolwork and activities kept his schedule full, he always carved out time to do community service work – such as leading vacation bible school for younger children at his church, feeding the homeless and even going on mission trips to build houses for those in need.

As Patrick made it to his senior year of high school, the Vega family was faced with another trauma – Gracie's eldest son was diagnosed with leukemia. The family moved into the hospital where her son was being treated, and while Patrick was enduring even more emotional turmoil than before, he knew his family would want him to push through and complete high school. With support from both his mother and AAA, Patrick walked proudly across the stage to receive his high school diploma. Patrick's older brother was unable to attend his graduation, but now that he is in remission, he will be sitting in the front row alongside Gracie cheering Patrick on at his college graduation this spring.

"Your organization relieved me of the gorilla I was carrying on my back trying to make sense of what was happening to us," says Gracie. "Thank you so much for everything you did for us. I am forever grateful to your organization."

### **About AAA Scholarship Foundation**

The AAA Scholarship Foundation awards scholarships solely to qualifying low-income, disabled and displaced students. The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. More than 90.6 percent of AAA scholarships are distributed to children at or below 200 percent of poverty. Many children are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and are concerned about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their child and will reverse inadequate learning, social patterns, and the potential lifelong negative impact. They wish to change their child's learning environment, acquaintances and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.

AAA Scholarships are funded in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Nevada by corporations that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. The AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit scholarship organizations exclusively serving qualifying low-income, disabled and displaced students through these tax credit scholarship programs in multiple states. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single-solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information, or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit [www.AAAScholarships.org](http://www.AAAScholarships.org), or contact Kerri Vaughan at [kerri@aaascholarships.org](mailto:kerri@aaascholarships.org) or 888 707-2465 ext. 730.