



Empowering the Future of Nursing: Foundation Luncheon Honors 2025 Scholarship and Research Grant Recipients

By Jayne Willis DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CENP | Florida Nurses Foundation President

At this year's Florida Nurses Association (FNA) Membership Assembly, the Florida Nurses Foundation hosted a special luncheon honoring the 2025 scholarship and research grant recipients. The event, hosted by FNF Trustee Bill Pierce, celebrated Florida nurses and students whose academic and scientific contributions continue to advance the profession and enhance health outcomes in our communities.

Each year, the Foundation's scholarships and grants represent an investment in nursing's future by supporting students pursuing higher education and researchers generating evidence to guide practice and policy. As part of this year's luncheon, attendees had the opportunity to celebrate both new and past recipients whose work exemplifies the Foundation's mission of fostering innovation, leadership, and lifelong learning.

A highlight of the luncheon was a special presentation by Tina Mason, who received the Imogene King Research

Grant from the Foundation in 2024. Mason provided an engaging update on her ongoing study, "Nurse Leader Well-Being: Optimizing Sleep and Energy Levels." Her research underscores the vital connection between nurse leader wellness and sustainable organizational performance, which is an issue at the heart of professional well-being and patient care excellence.

We could not do the Foundation's work without the extraordinary generosity of our donors. Nearly 100% of the Foundation's funding comes from nurses' donations. For each gift of \$10,000 or more, a named fund is established, which allows the donor to create a legacy of ongoing impact. The Foundation now stewards more than 40 named funds, each dedicated to advancing nursing education, leadership, and research.

This generosity directly supports recipients like Christina Hersch, the 2025 Undine Sams and Friends Research Grant awardee, who shared:

"I am deeply honored to be a recipient of the Undine Sams and Friends Research Grant. This grant holds great significance to me. As an undergraduate nursing student, I found great joy in participating in the Florida Nurses Association. Now in my doctoral studies, receiving this grant is not only incredibly rewarding but also humbling as I continue to grow in my research career. I am deeply grateful for your generosity and support—it truly means more to me than words can fully express."

Stories like Christina's illustrate how the Foundation's commitment and donors' generosity create ripples of impact that extend far beyond a single award cycle.

Along with the Foundation Trustees, I sincerely congratulate all 2025 recipients and deeply thank every donor, trustee, and volunteer whose dedication drives our mission. With ongoing support, the Florida Nurses Foundation guarantees that nursing research, education, and leadership in Florida stay strong for years to come. ■



Research Grant Recipients Christina Hersch, Rebecca Koerner, and Erin Stearns with Trustee Bill Pierce



Scholarship recipients Cindy Sanchez, Samone Smith, Jennie Norton, and Lauren Bemont with Trustee Bill Pierce



Past grant recipient, Tina Mason, provides an update on her research on nurse leader well-being.