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My Name is Jillian Cunningham. I am a Hartford resident and I am also a senior at Connecticut College in New London. As a child, I was always told, "Know your P's: proper planning prevents poor performance." While in high school, my parents and I saved in preparation for what was to be my best performance yet, mastering the world of college. My family was just as driven as myself to make attending college a reality. So much so that I completed college preparation courses, while my parents took on additional jobs to save for tuition. Soon thereafter, my goal of attending college was in sight.

But, two weeks before leaving for college, my grandmother passed. This was an event that not even the best amount of planning could ready me for. All of my savings, along with that of my parents, were utilized to pay for expensive funeral fees. I felt as though I was left with few options to now fund what I had worked my entire life to achieve. Four year later and with my graduation date rapidly approaching, I am comforted by the fact that this grant has alleviated much of the pressure I have been overwhelmed with. This grant has kept my dream of graduating college alive in the midst of many economic hardships.