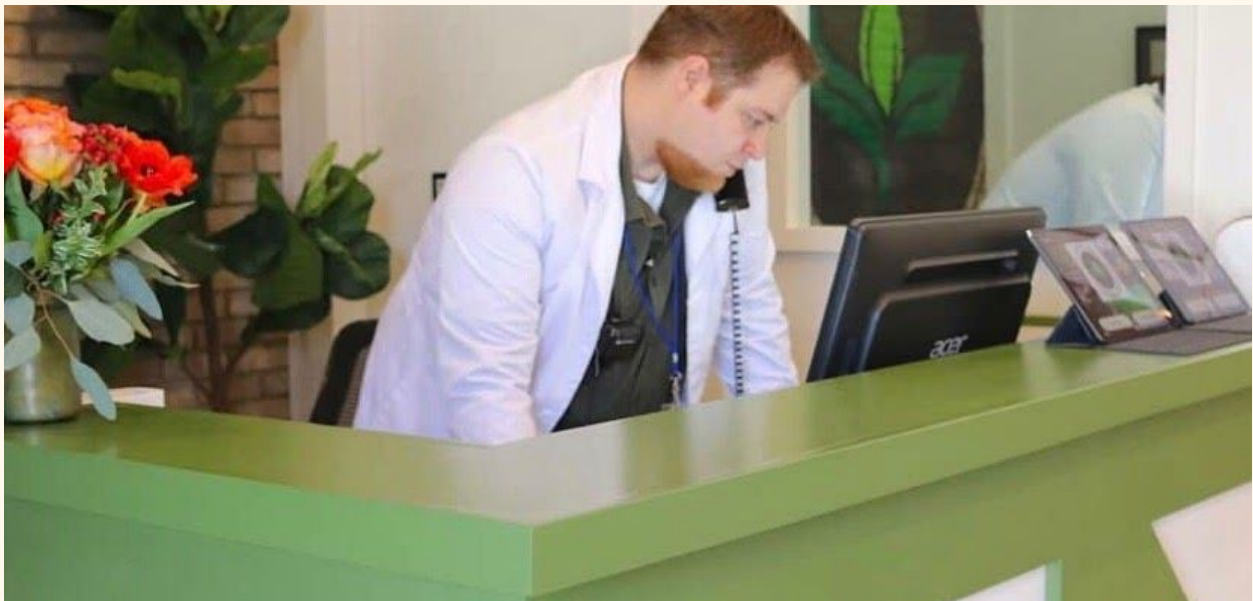


Cullen Vujosevic  
March 28, 2020

# Happy Valley Scholarship Program Application 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for reading my application essay for your 2020 Scholarship Program. I was amazed to find a cannabis based scholarship quite honestly. I've been struggling even as a nursing student to find some that could help someone with a professional cannabis background like myself. Most of the time I'm having to edit essays to not include my medical cannabis experience so I don't become disqualified for federal findings. But I appreciate your company wanting to know the real me, and the student/cause you would be supporting.

I will explain further below how I have been defying the perception people have about medical cannabis users, and what I have been doing to turn the stereotype on its head about responsible/ethical medical cannabis usage.

## Breaking the Stigma in the Medical Community

As someone who suffers from Epilepsy, medical cannabis has literally saved my life. It's prevented me from living in the constant nightmare of frequent seizures, or worrying about it one day they would eventually kill me (see Sudden Epilepsy Death Syndrome.) It's also allowed me to work in society like a normal functioning adult (without the need to be on some form of permanent disability.) It hasn't always been an easy path in regards to even choosing medical cannabis as my primary method of treatment for my epilepsy. I've had many neurologists and epileptologists often disagree with my consumption (mainly due to lack of understanding on their end.) It's taken me quite some time to be able to build the patience, compassion and fortitude to be able to educate other medical professionals about the benefits of medical cannabis at the drop of a hat for various conditions.

Too many in the medical community still have an old fashioned form of resistance to medical cannabis and the relief/quality of life it can bring to some patients battling various mental/physical medical conditions. They see it as a drug or something that is cause to pull patients off pain management medications, or a reason to deny someone an organ transplant - and that is all wrong, and that old way of thinking needs to die. Even in the face of COVID-19, medical cannabis dispensary employees have been deemed essential in our state of New Mexico. It's taken a lot of community education & outreach to spread the awareness/understanding of medical cannabis and its benefits. I've consulted & educated everyone in between teachers, politicians, police officers, and others in the medical community about our state's program and how that old idea of medical cannabis needs to be updated with a more valid, researched one. How it can help many different patients through various forms of treatment/applications.

I am a current board member of the New Mexico Medical Cannabis Patients Alliance for the Albuquerque region. I do a lot of networking, advocating, educating on my own time for the needs of medical cannabis patients in our state. Being one of the poorer medical cannabis states economy wise, and having a wide rural bound population we do have specific challenges to our program that require non-stop perseverance in order to make our state a better place for medical cannabis patients, and to those that can help someone join the medical cannabis program from the medical side.

## Non-Stop Education

Along with my medical background/commitments to changing the stigma surrounding medical cannabis usage, I take part in my community as a trainer with New Mexico Cannabis Staffing Services.

At Canna Staffing NM, we help those that want to get into the medical cannabis industry through training and education.

I myself have worked in hospitals, advanced nursing care facilities, and over 7 medical cannabis dispensaries in three different states: California, New Mexico, and Texas (Yes, Texas has medical cannabis dispensaries, and I helped open/launch the first one - see media clips below.)

I knew that as someone who came from healthcare into the cannabis industry, it would take people like me to be able to teach the necessary skills & education to those wanting to also chase their green dreams and help medical patients through cannabis.

I have worked training dispensary license holders on an admin/operational level, along with training every other member of staff on compliance/safety/regulation areas within our states medical cannabis program here in New Mexico. I also have dedicated a lot of my own personal time to teaching/course development/tutoring students because at the end of the day we have to help each other in the medical cannabis community - we are all here for our patients we serve. I want anyone who wants to work in this industry to be able to responsibly, and with the skills necessary to help educate and teach their patients how to use medical cannabis responsibly/ethically.

To break the stigmas surrounding medical cannabis usage, we must constantly be never ending in our quest to educate others on the benefits/responsible usage guidelines and make medical cannabis more culturally appropriate for anyone who needs it accross America. That's why I take part in my educational outreach/services as a trainer to those who truly seek it. I will even sometimes sponsor low income students who want to take online courses or certification because education cost shouldn't be a barrier to education (another reason why I'm glad your scholarship program exists for hopeful future cannabis nurses like myself.)

## Putting a Human Face to Medical Cannabis Users

Having a disability like mine, and using medical cannabis I feel I get different sympathies than some people with other conditions do. If you've ever seen someone have a grand mal seizure, it's pretty terrible and one would often empathize with medical cannabis usage for that condition. However say someone with PTSD that has little to no physical response systems but acts out due to their condition may not receive the same empathy towards their perceived medical cannabis usage.

We have to be able to put faces onto patients to show it's normal and acceptable for anyone that needs it. For example me treating my seizure disorder with it, or say your hypothetical Combat Vet Brother who can't calm down without it. It's showing that so many people that you know or are separated from use medical cannabis to live normal lives, and to sometimes also try and fight for the life they have left with our terminal patients suffering from cancer/HIV/AIDS.

I know a lot of people see cannabis users as people who smoke cannabis at socially inappropriate places/times. But we really have to drive into the education of what is ethical use, social adult use, and medical usage. It goes to the general medical cultural acceptance in society of say someone needs to use their asthma inhaler in public, they can do so with no judgement. Why? Because it's a socially accepted medical use we understand culturally. We need to get to that same point with medical cannabis patients in regards to certain social acceptance of treatment. I know working mainly with children in the Texas Medical Cannabis Program, it really changed a conservative lawmakers mind about medical cannabis - to see an emergency application applied to a child who couldn't stop having seizures, then that child suddenly stop seizing within an hour of that application of medical cannabis. It's all about what we do daily to often time change those minds, the regulators or people with power. All it takes is time, patience, education and compassion.

I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving many patients through dispensaries over the years across several states. Some are no longer with us, and some are - either way medical cannabis played a role in their own healing/quality of life. As a future cannabis nurse that's something I have to support - a patient's right to choose their own plan of health treatment. I want to support that for so many others that are forced on harsh pharmaceuticals before they are given a realistic talk about the possible benefits of medical cannabis. We need more healthcare providers like myself to see it with an open heart and mind, and really consider a patients quality of life when it comes to medical cannabis usage.

I have worked very hard putting a face to my name in regards to helping others and breaking the stigma through medical cannabis. I know if you type my name into the Google Search Bar, you actually get results tying me to what I have done publicly to help break the stigma surrounding medical cannabis.

Believe me, if I can be brave enough to open one of the first medical cannabis dispensaries in the state of Texas; I'd fight for a patient's right for safe access to medical cannabis anywhere.

### Summation

I truly feel like I am a worthy candidate for your sponsorship to help me continue my nursing education/training for my bachelors degree.

I plan on one day joining the American Cannabis Nurses Society and hopefully also becoming a Nurse Practitioner that can prescribe medical cannabis to patients in my state (New Mexico.) I have a lifelong career path of working to break the stigma surrounding medical cannabis usage and treatment.

I promise you couldn't put your sponsorship towards a better qualified candidate that wakes up daily to break the stigmas we face surrounding medical cannabis.

I do have a background working in medical cannabis dispensaries in New Mexico & Texas and adult-use out in California. Currently being enrolled in a nursing school program is not easy or cheap, and I am a low income student that could really use the assistance to help further my education/training to become the best future cannabis nurse in the Southwest United States.

I know we are often an area that is not thought about when it comes to medical cannabis in the United States. But I am here, breaking the stigma surrounding medical cannabis usage in this part of our country. I am showing and teaching the facts necessary to turn it all around on its head. While preaching about ethics/socially acceptable usage/tolerance towards medical cannabis usage in our community, and towards our own family members.

Thank you for taking the time to read my essay for your scholarship program. I hope you and your staff are staying safe during this COVID-19 pandemic. I have some generated videos towards keeping medical cannabis dispensary employees/patients safe during these times and if you would like I can send them to you free or charge. It's all about us helping eachother and keeping safe during these times.

## Resources

[Kurple Magazine](#) Essie Award Nominations 2019

(Our states main medical cannabis award group)

- 1) Main Essie award Category for serving the New Mexico Medical Cannabis community
- 2) Social Media Influencer New Mexico 2019
- 3) Top Advocacy Work in New Mexico 2019

## Linked In Profile

[Linked In Profile Click Here](#)

## [Hayes Press Media-Interview](#)

Newspaper article about some of my work

[K-Houston Press Interview with me on Opening Day – VIDEO Media Link](#)

News video coverage with my interview from launching one of the first legal medical cannabis dispensaries to open in the state of Texas - ***press play to watch video interview with me.***

Article below from New Mexico Medical Cannabis patient magazine from a couple of years ago, [Dank Magazine](#).



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**H**owdy my name is Cullen and I represent Shift New Mexico out of Santa Fe. I have been working in healthcare for over 10-years, with local bedside patient care experience. I have worked with patients from all over New Mexico. From my base home town of Las Vegas, New Mexico, as well as also having worked at Christus St. Vincent's Hospital here in Santa Fe. I have been helping people with their medical cannabis needs in Northern New Mexico for coming up to my 5th year.



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I have outreached to different groups in New Mexico to advocate and educate about our wonderful medicine and its great many benefits. From working an informational booth at Taos Pride, to simply handing out bottled water during our Santa Fe MS Run/Walk, or even the time I dedicate to the New Mexico Epilepsy Education & Support Services here in Santa Fe. As a patient with epilepsy in our program, I strive to help patients of all conditions, but specializing in my

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