

DDNA and IntellectAbility Announce New Karen Green McGowan Memorial Scholarship Fund

New Scholarship benefits current and future nurses specializing in the care of patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

CLEARWATER, FL, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (DDNA) recently announced the establishment of the Karen Green McGowan Memorial Scholarship. Honoring the former President of DDNA and Founder of IntellectAbility, the scholarship aims to support education for nurses and future nurses who specialize in the care of patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

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Dr. Craig Escudé, President of IntellectAbility

central to the establishment of the DDNA and instrumental in creating the initial certification process for the specialty of developmental disabilities nursing.

“This scholarship was created in recognition of Karen Green McGowan’s extraordinary impact on intellectual and developmental disabilities nursing,” said S. Diane Moore, Executive Director of DDNA. “We are honored to celebrate Karen’s memory through this scholarship. Her legacy will live on through the lives of the nurses and future nurses who benefit from this support.”

McGowan began her career as a nurse in 1962 at Mailstrom Air Force Base. After moving back to her home state of Iowa in 1965, she accepted a position at Glenwood State Hospital School, an institution for people with severe intellectual disabilities. Early on, McGowan saw an urgent need for better education and training. She authored numerous training manuals for clinicians on the physical and nutritional management of people with disabilities, filling a critical gap in available resources.

In 1992, while consulting on the transition of 240 people from institutions to community settings, McGowan was asked to develop a way to determine who required specialized care. She assembled a team of innovative nurses to create an effective solution using key health indicators such as eating ability and mobility. The result was the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST), a 22-item screening tool that evaluates risks in critical areas.

As demand for the HRST and educational resources grew, McGowan founded IntellectAbility, formerly known as Health Risk Screening, Inc., an organization dedicated to equipping supporters, clinicians, and administrators with tools and training to improve health outcomes for people with disabilities.



Central to the organization's approach was McGowan's commitment to Person-Centered Planning and Person-Centered Thinking, which emphasize the importance of tailoring support to each person's unique needs, preferences, and aspirations. Now an industry leader, IntellectAbility's HRST has transformed how health risks are identified and managed, ensuring people with IDD receive the care and support they need to thrive.

"We are honored to donate \$10,000 to the establishment of the Karen Green McGowan Memorial Scholarship," said Dr. Craig Escudé, President of IntellectAbility. "This scholarship will honor our founder's legacy by empowering future generations of nurses who want to dedicate their lives to improving the healthcare of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

The Karen Green McGowan Memorial Scholarship will become available in 2026 to student nurses with an interest in IDD nursing and for practicing nurses who are striving to further their education in the specialty. Donations to support this scholarship fund may be made directly [through the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association](#).

The Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (DDNA) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit nursing specialty organization that is committed to advocacy, education, and support for nurses who provide services to persons with developmental disabilities (DD). Established in 1992, DDNA's goal is to foster the growth of nursing knowledge and expertise about optimal care of persons

with DD, thereby improving their care, services, and quality of life. Through its efforts, DDNA offers members the opportunity to network with other DD nurses and explore common issues, helping to identify practical solutions to some of today's most challenging concerns. DDNA works tirelessly to advocate for DD nursing at every opportunity, collaborating with other professional organizations relating to the field of DD and representing its members among the greater nursing and healthcare communities.

IntellectAbility provides tools and training to agencies, governmental entities, and supporters of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to foster early recognition and mitigation of health risks, thereby improving health and wellness. One such tool is the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST), of which they are the sole developer, producer, and distributor. The web-based HRST is the most widely used and validated health risk screening instrument for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. IntellectAbility also provides numerous health-related and person-centered service training for supporters of people with IDD. With an unrelenting focus, IntellectAbility works to fulfill its mission of improving health and quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other at-risk populations. For more information, visit www.ReplacingRisk.com

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