GCC Health Science student Sisomphone Vongphakdy in the Chemistry Lab.

GCC Health Science student Sisomphone Vongphakdy’s story of becoming a nurse in a Boston hospital got big boosts in February when she attended the Biomedical Sciences Careers Program Conference at Harvard Medical School. Sisomphone was one of 300 students from across the United States chosen from over 1,200 applicants to attend the conference. Sisomphone will enter GCC’s Practical Nursing Program at Fall 2010. After the Practical Nursing program, she will study toward an Associate Degree in Nursing at GCC and a Bachelor’s in Nursing at a Boston area college. At the conference, Sisomphone and students from community college through graduate school heard speakers, attended workshops, and met many professionals, including heads of hospitals and directors of nursing. Sisomphone said, “I was very honored to attend such a wonderful conference. I spoke with the Director of Nursing Diversity at Children’s Hospital in Somerville, and the other speakers encouraged us to find a mentor and to get experience in medical settings. I already have four years experience working as a Certified Nursing Assistant in nursing homes and doctor’s offices.”

Sisomphone was born in Laos, but in Thailand, and moved with her family to Boston, eventually settling in Somerville. Sisomphone’s family came to the U.S. to give her more opportunities. As a child she decided she wanted to become a nurse and help people. Sisomphone attended a nursing course at a Vocational Technical High School and graduated with honors and a nursing assistant certificate. Sisomphone moved to South Dennis to live near friends and attend studying Health Science at GCC in 2007. She said, “I was nervous about returning to school. I decided to attend GCC because of the high academic passing rate for the nursing course, study classes, and the diversity in age. I knew the professors at GCC. They are very nice and willing to help you when needed.”

Sisomphone’s advisor, Lee Pough, encouraged Sisomphone to attend the conference because she is a strong student interested in going beyond the basics. Pough said, “Last summer, Sisomphone participated in the Pioneer Valley Health Careers Opportunity Program at Springfield College to learn about medical careers, observe professionals in clinical settings, and develop career plans. My hope is that students will come in contact with new ideas that can spark their imaginations to thinking big. Sisomphone is thinking big and her experience will encourage other students to take advantage of learning opportunities in the community.”

GCC Health Science student Musician Dan Babineau is inspired by someone, he wants to thank his teacher. He has given a $500 donation and letter to Matthew Shippee, Chair, GCC’s Music Department.

When GCC music student Dan Babineau is inspired by someone, he wants to thank his teacher. He has given a $500 donation and letter to Matthew Shippee, Chair, GCC’s Music Department. Babineau said, “I am grateful for being here and feel very fortunate. I now know that music will be more than just a hobby in my life, and I am determined to achieve the goal more so than ever. When I feel like I have been shown the truth about what I want in life, I feel great and it makes me believe even more in what I am doing.”

After receiving Dan’s letter, Babineau said, “It was a direct expression of appreciation for what the music faculty accomplishes collaboratively. As our department, we invite students to find and express their own voice. I’m grateful when students use that opportunity to take action, coming from a higher source of their self and their relationship to our community. Dan is exceptional and his donation is just one way for him to be back to our department and the broader college community. We also shared the letter with others on campus, especially Humanities Dean Lisa Hoyt-Carlos, because Dan’s positive experience is the result of what many people at GCC do for our students directly and indirectly every day.” Babineau also shared the letter with the GCC Foundation for the music department.

“Many people think they don’t have much to give, but I think giving your biggest amount can make you feel better and make a big difference for your self and others. Many people are amazed by money. By giving money to people and organizations that inspire me, I feel great and it makes me believe even more in what I am doing.”