



VAW/VRC Merit: Captain Caffrey Scholar

Vivian Schmidt

Grand Rapids, MI

Sponsor: AM1(AW/NAC) PO1 Joseph Schmidt

College: Kalamazoo College

2023-2024: Sophomore

Major: Biology/Psychology (Neuroscience concentration)

Academic & Extracurricular Highlights:

- KC Konstellation Club: Co-Founder, Secretary: 1st Year, 2nd Year
- KC Student Athletic Advisory Committee
- KC Varsity Women's Lacrosse
- High School Varsity Lacrosse Team: Captain (11th Grade, 12th Grade)
- KC First Year Mentor Volunteer
- KC Biology Department Teaching Assistant



I am greatly honored and appreciative to be receiving a scholarship from the VAW/VRC community. Because of this award, I will be able to continue my undergraduate education, which is a vital steppingstone on my journey to conducting research on neurodegenerative diseases. With the help of WOASF this past year, I was able to strengthen my academic background and research experience, which resulted in my acceptance to a REU program at the University of Michigan where I will research ALS at a molecular level (a condition that impacts veterans twice as often as civilians). It is my hope that this research (as well as my future research following the completion of my PhD) will in some way help veterans across the country continue to conquer their traumas and neurological injuries. With everything the veterans of this country have done for me, I strive to use my passion to help them and their families. Furthermore, this upcoming fall I have been granted the opportunity to study abroad in Budapest, Hungary. Unfortunately, this incredible opportunity results in a higher tuition rate, which would be unobtainable without the help of these scholarships. Again, I cannot thank the VAW/VRC Merit Scholarship program and everyone who has helped me on this journey enough. I could not have such big, obtainable dreams without my mentors, professors, family, friends, and community.