



# THANK YOU

## R. R. Smith Bursary in Education

2025-2026 Recipient

### Angela Chirico

Education, Fourth year

Major: Elementary Education

Hometown: North Vancouver, BC

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Dear Ms. Mikulec,

Thank you! Beyond financial relief, this bursary is important to me because it provides stability and reassurance, allowing me to fully focus on my upcoming 10-week practicum and personal growth. Easing the pressure of covering tuition and living expenses, it enables me to dedicate more time and energy to my students, lesson planning, and professional development rather than balancing excessive paid work alongside my coursework. This support directly impacts the quality of my student teaching, allowing me to engage more deeply with the students, take on meaningful extracurriculars within the school and pursue opportunities that enrich my student teaching experience.

I enrolled in UVic because their Bachelor of Education program would allow me to have years of experience and education in teaching. I have been so lucky to be able to participate in Link2Practice and two practicums. Through UVic, I am looking to better understand how the school districts work in BC and how I can best connect with future students. I look forward to learning in a hands-on environment with an experienced and compassionate mentor who can model effective teaching practices, support my professional growth, and help me develop into a reflective and inclusive educator.

One highlight from my education thus far is my six-week practicum experience. I put so much effort into planning and making meaningful connections with the students. During the last week of my teaching, I held a poetry cafe where the students would come to the front of the class and read a poem of their choice (they could choose one of the poems that they wrote, but if they really didn't want to share their work, they could choose their

favourite poet's poem). I knew that this would be an intimidating activity, since some students could feel nervous speaking to the whole group, so I brought in pretty lights, snacks, tea and decorations to shape it as a positive and memorable experience for the class. I was able to see students come out of their shells and fostered an environment where everyone encouraged one another to participate.

I am someone diagnosed with ADHD, and I've found that with it comes many passions and hobbies. I love creative arts, and I often write poetry and journal for fun. I read a lot of books, many of which are fantasy or have themes of mental health struggles. I also enjoy photography and have had the pleasure of taking a photography course at UVic where I could develop my own film photos for the first time. I don't have my own film camera, but I have my own digital one, which I brought to the UVic photography club a few times. I love to paint, especially for other people, so I often use the paints from my painting class when I make birthday cards. I also usually like to play volleyball intramurals at UVic, but this term we were advised to pause extracurriculars so that we could put our full attention on our practicum.

After my practicum, I see myself becoming a substitute teacher and possibly taking some teacher upgrading courses through UVic. From my experience in classrooms thus far, I may choose to specialize in ELL education or school counselling.

I really appreciate what your support has done for me.  
From my heart to yours, thank you.  
Sincerely, Angela

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## **ABOUT ME**

### **Favourite musician**

My favourite musician is Lil Peep. When I was having a difficult time with my home life and my school life, Lil Peep's lyrics reflected a lot of my feelings. I felt a personal connection to the songs he wrote, and sad music became a sort of therapy to me. Whenever I experienced challenges in my life, I could turn on his music, and it would bring my feelings to the surface.

### **On the bucket list**

An experience that I have always wanted to have is scuba diving. Although I fear the ocean, I am in love with it, and I find it very beautiful. I also have always been someone to make efforts to face my fears, so I would love to give it a try. When I think of scuba diving, I imagine colourful corals and pretty fish and water so vast I could explore it forever. I felt

that way when I snorkelled in Hawaii many years ago, and I have been wishing for it again ever since.

### **An influential person**

My dad has a lot of influence on my life. I look up to him in many ways and admire his hard work. His parents immigrated to Canada from Italy and were very poor and did not speak English. He worked extremely hard in school and earned numerous awards, which enabled him to attend BCIT and UBC's engineering programs. When I have a problem, I call him to ask for advice, and he makes efforts to help me when he can. I know that I am lucky to have a parent like that; some people don't have that.

### **Go-to study snack or meal**

I like to eat goldfish crackers when I study because they were a snack I used to eat a lot in my childhood. I also like eating homemade granola bars that my aunt mails to me during busy exam seasons.

## R. R. Smith Bursary in Education

2025-2026 Recipient

### Olivia Douglas

Education, Fourth year

Major: Elementary Education

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Dear Ms. Mikulec,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your generosity and support. It is a tremendous honour to be selected as a recipient and this affirms the path I have chosen and inspires me to continue to strive for excellence as I prepare to enter the teaching profession.

As a mother of two, your support has significantly eased the financial pressures of pursuing my education while caring for my family. This scholarship will allow me to focus more fully on my academic and professional goals, and it serves as a powerful source of motivation as I work toward my dream of becoming an educator who makes a lasting and meaningful impact in the lives of future students.

Thank you once again for your generosity.

Your support has made a profound impact on my life, and I am sincerely grateful.

With heartfelt appreciation,  
Olivia Douglas



Photo of myself, my husband and our two incredible children.