

‘It’s Been Life-Saving’

Help A Hero Scholarship ‘made an impact’ for Air Force vet

Sep 11, 2019

MarieAnn C. Raguso is a multi-time recipient of VFW’s Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship. The assistance she has received in order to pursue bachelor’s and master’s degrees in anthropology, she said, has been “life-saving.”

“It’s helped and has been a game changer in my life and made it possible for me to actually have a home and school life,” said Raguso, who was “couch-surfing” for a few months after getting off her active-duty orders.

She reached out to various veterans organizations, and one ultimately assisted her in securing housing and obtaining a part-time job. It was then that she was able to begin taking classes.

Raguso, whose career goal is to be a lecturer or college professor, said receiving the Help A Hero scholarship made her feel like her story has value.

“I feel like it’s an initiative to go on and continue to do great things because of this money being presented to me,” said Raguso, who studies at Manhattanville College in Harrison, N.Y.

She found out about the scholarship through information posted at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and decided to apply because of the amount of assistance offered.

“Most scholarships are around \$1,000 and this one is five grand,” she said. “So it definitely made an impact in my life and getting through my master’s degree.”

Though she receives 90 percent disability, she said that “does not pay the bills.” Living in Westchester County in New York, rent alone can be \$1,700 per month, according to Raguso.

“[The Help A Hero scholarship] helped me to achieve the goal in getting through my

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master's program," said Raguso, who served at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburg, N.Y., and deployed to Afghanistan in 2013 with 823rd Base Defense Squadron.

Raguso received \$5,000 for the fall 2019 semester and also has received the same amount in the past.

This article is featured in the September/October 2019 issue of VFW Checkpoint. If you're a Post, District or Department Commander and aren't receiving the Checkpoint e-newsletter, please contact the VFW magazine at magazine@vfw.org.