

'Don't Give Up on Your Goals'

Army National Guardsman learns of VFW Help A Hero scholarship from his fiancée who works at Sport Clips and is also in the military

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Jonathan Pivaral, 27, grew up between the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois, and Antigua, Guatemala. Right after high school, Pivaral enlisted in the Army National Guard, seeing it as a way forward.

"I joined at 17 with the goal to begin a career and figure out how to get to where I wanted to be," he said.

Pivaral took advantage of his military education benefits, which covered more than 90% of his undergraduate tuition at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. An aspiring architect, Pivaral needs a master's degree to advance in his field. In 2021, he reenlisted, in large part to receive additional financial assistance.

"Graduate school is beyond expensive," he said.

To help further offset costs, Pivaral applied for a VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" after learning about it from his fiancée, Yekaly, who is also in the military and works at Sport Clips.

"This scholarship has allowed me to clear our debt and avoid getting loans," he said. "With it, I can work calmly and take my time to finish my degree. I am beyond grateful for this opportunity."

Currently, Pivaral works as an architecture technician at Zimmerman Architectural Studios in Milwaukee. Once he graduates, he will be able to qualify for his architecture license. He encourages other veterans to take advantage of resources to follow their own dreams.

"Don't give up on your goals. Just because it might seem impossible — financially, mentally or otherwise — doesn't mean it's the end," he said. "Look for help and seek and apply for

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opportunities because you never know what God might put in front of you to help.”

[Learn more about the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."](#)