

**JANIE**  
**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA**  
**TEXAS (VOATX)**



**HOUSTON, TX**  
Volunteers of America Texas  
Health Professions Opportunity  
Grants (VOATX HPOG)

**“...new life starts in the dark.”**

**- Barbara Brown Taylor**

Janie grew up in a low-income neighborhood in Houston, Texas. The trailer park she lived in was constantly filled with yelling, anger, and alcohol-fueled bouts of rage from her parents. Her parents never had steady employment, nor did they provide Janie with the basic necessities she needed as a child.

School was not much of a break from the disarray. Janie was withdrawn and bullied by many of her classmates. This broke her spirit, confidence, and self-esteem tremendously. Her only escape was her grandmother who motivated Janie to keep pushing through life no matter what happened.

After graduating high school, Janie began working two minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet. She wanted to go to college and started to save money, but her dream of becoming a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) seemed distant.

Janie learned about [Volunteers of America Texas Health Professions Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\)](#) at a recruitment event at a local community college. She listened carefully to the presentation about HPOG but was apprehensive about applying. She figured she had nothing to lose and applied in the fall of 2016.

When Janie found out she was accepted into the scholarship program, she was overcome with excitement. This was the shift that changed Janie's life trajectory.

With HPOG providing financial assistance, Janie focused on academic excellence. She was determined to make the best of her

college experience since her previous encounter with school was so negative. The hard work paid off, and she successfully completed semester after semester at Houston Community College.

The wrap-around services offered through Volunteers of America Texas were much-needed support for her while she was in school. Janie also attended Lunch and Learn events with other HPOG students in the LVN program. The relationships she formed with the HPOG staff and other fellow students kept Janie motivated when she faced challenges in LVN training.

After a year of extensive coursework, it was time to face the final obstacles of her program. The clinical rotation schedule was grueling and the LVN certification exam would not be easy. Janie utilized every academic support and test preparation material she could in order to study for the exam. Janie passed her exam in the spring of 2019 and became a licensed vocational nurse.

In March 2019, Janie got a job at the University of Texas Medical Branch Systems as a certified licensed vocational nurse, earning \$20 an hour. She is also engaged and planning a wedding for the summer of 2020. Janie's life situation took a drastic change based on her participation in HPOG.

**HPOG helped me to achieve goals that I thought were impossible to accomplish. I now have a future as a licensed vocational nurse that can provide me with employment and financial stability. If I can do it, anyone can.**

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.