



# QUESTA

## EDUCATION FOUNDATION

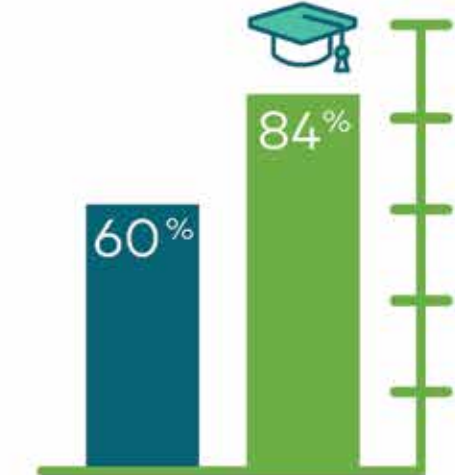
*85 years of making college dreams possible*

1937-2022



*When students succeed, Northeast Indiana succeeds.*





Questa Scholars maintain a graduation rate of 84%, compared to the national average of 60%.



Questa retained 73% of scholar graduates in Northeast Indiana.

**\$2M**

Awarded each year in forgivable loans.

**400**

Scholars served each year.

- ▶ **Innovative college funding program for local students**
- ▶ **Leader in reducing student debt**
- ▶ **Dedicated to the growth and success of Northeast Indiana**

Questa Education Foundation

6502 Constitution Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46804

☎ 260-407-6494

✉ info@questafoundation.org

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@QuestaFoundation



## Get to Know Questa Education Foundation

The mission of Questa Education Foundation is to help individuals access postsecondary education, graduate with less debt, and become contributing members of Northeast Indiana's workforce.

Questa Education Foundation provides forgivable loans and generous scholarships to help residents of northeast Indiana achieve education beyond high school. As a Questa Scholar, students receive up to \$20,000 over four years as a forgivable loan to support educational expenses. Scholars can earn between 50-100 percent debt forgiveness when they graduate and return to Northeast Indiana to live and work.

Questa offers several funding opportunities for students:

- **Traditional Scholars program:** Graduating high school seniors and first year college students can receive up to \$5,000 a year for four years (total of \$20,000). Applications are open December 1 – March 15.
- **Contemporary Scholars program:** Current college students, returning students, and adult learners can receive up to \$5,000 a year for the duration of their academic programs. Applications are open year-round.

Traditional and Contemporary Scholars receive 50% debt forgiveness when they live and work in Northeast Indiana for five years after graduation. Scholars receive an additional 25% forgiveness (total of 75% forgiven) if they attend and graduate from a partner school.

- **Career Scholars programs:** Career Scholars can receive college funding and a full-time job opportunity after graduation. Students in specific academic programs can receive between \$5,000-10,000 in loan funding that is 100% forgiven when the scholar graduates and works at the partnering employer.
- **Scholarships:** Questa awards multiple scholarships to students within Questa Scholar programs and students can apply for unique scholarships through our website. Scholarship opportunities include funding for nursing students and residents pursuing the skilled trades.

Questa is honored to support over 400 local students each year and connect graduates with career opportunities to help Northeast Indiana thrive.

Questa partners with the following colleges and universities: Anderson University, Grace College, Huntington University, Indiana Tech, Indiana Wesleyan University, Ivy Tech Community College, Manchester University, Purdue University Fort Wayne, Taylor University, Trine University, and University of Saint Francis.

Questa offers career scholar programs with the following organizations: AWS Foundation, Brotherhood Mutual, Cameron Memorial Hospital, Ortho Northeast, Parkview Health, and Stillwater Hospice.



# 85 Years of Making College Dreams Possible

Questa Education Foundation started 85 years ago when R. Nelson Snider saw a trend among his students.

Snider was the principal of South Side High School at the time. "As principal, he would meet every high school senior to talk about their plans for after graduation," said Elizabeth Bushnell, Questa's executive director. "He was concerned that he met so many students who had interest and ability to go to college but didn't have the money to do it."

The country was still in the grip of the Great Depression and only 15 percent of high school graduates went to college.

But Snider was a dedicated educator. When he saw an obstacle for his students, he figured out a way

to remove it. Snider started a college loan fund that he ran out of his office.

"He called it the South Side Loan Fund," Bushnell said. "He personally contributed money and he raised money from educators and businesspeople in the community."

In 1946, the fund incorporated as a nonprofit called the Fort Wayne Educational Foundation. Over the years, the program grew to serve students throughout the 11-county region of northeast Indiana. In 2007, the name was changed to the Questa Education Foundation and a new feature was added: Forgiveness of 50 percent of the loan if the student remained in northeast Indiana for five years after graduation.

The forgivable component of the loan program was added to address



R. Nelson Snider

brain drain concerns that were being expressed in Fort Wayne in the middle of the last decade.

"There was so much conversation in our community at the time about brain drain and how we were losing college graduates from the region, leaving a significant talent gap," Bushnell said.

Questa's board spent a year researching college aid programs.

"They created something unique, but also kind of risky," Bushnell said. "Up until that point, the loans we provided were fully repaid. The board knew they were creating a perpetual fundraising need by adding the forgiveness component, but they wanted to make a positive impact on talent retention in the region. They didn't know if it was going to work, but they were willing to take the risk to see if it would be a success. And, fortunately, it was."

Bushnell said Questa is retaining graduates at record rates.

"Since launching the forgivable loan program 15 years ago, nearly 75 percent of Questa graduates return to the region to live and work," she said.

Questa now partners with local employers to continue building the workforce needed for economic success. Through the Career Scholars program, local employers help fund students in fields where they want to hire graduates.

"I call it a triple win," said Mark Levy, a former director of Questa. "Students get the funding they need for education, employers get the talent they need, and our community gets engaged, productive citizens."

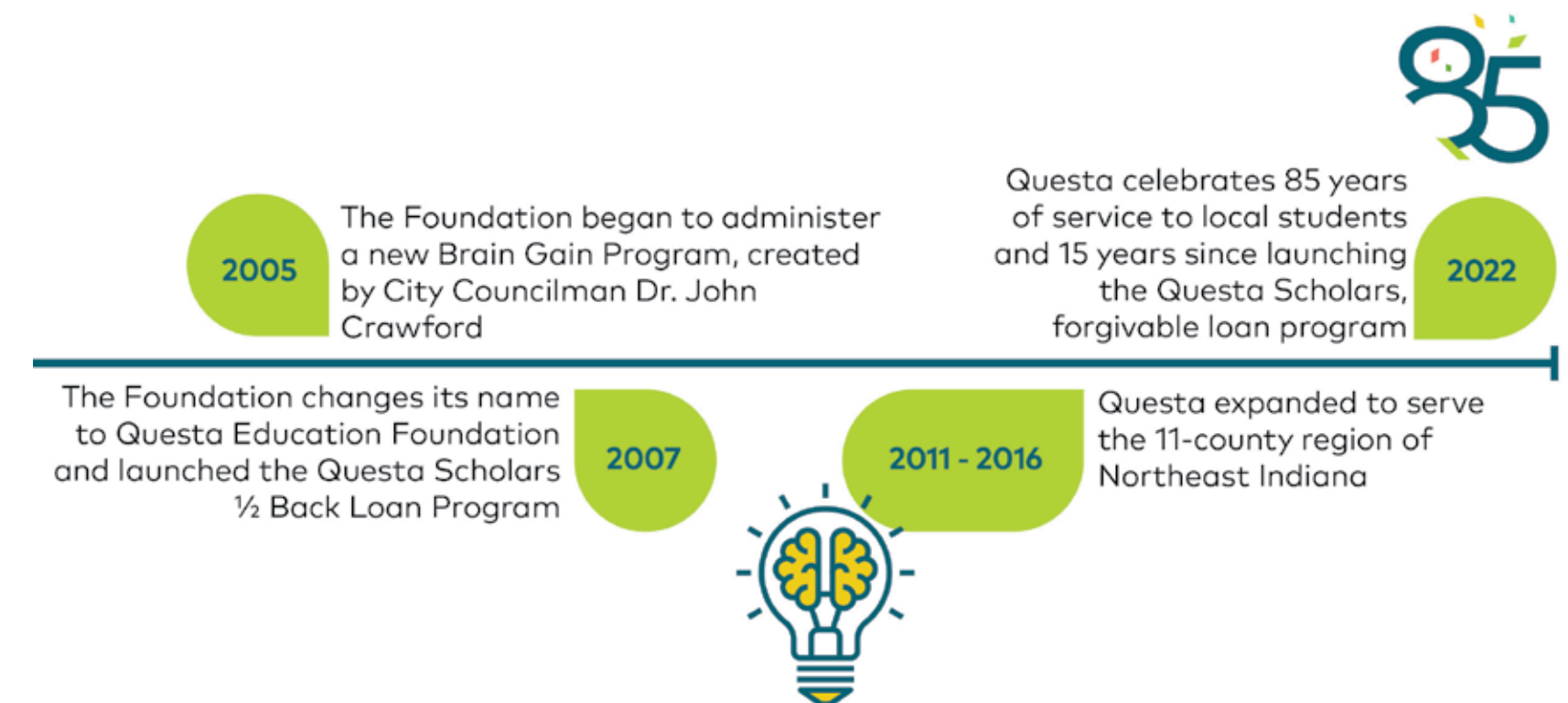
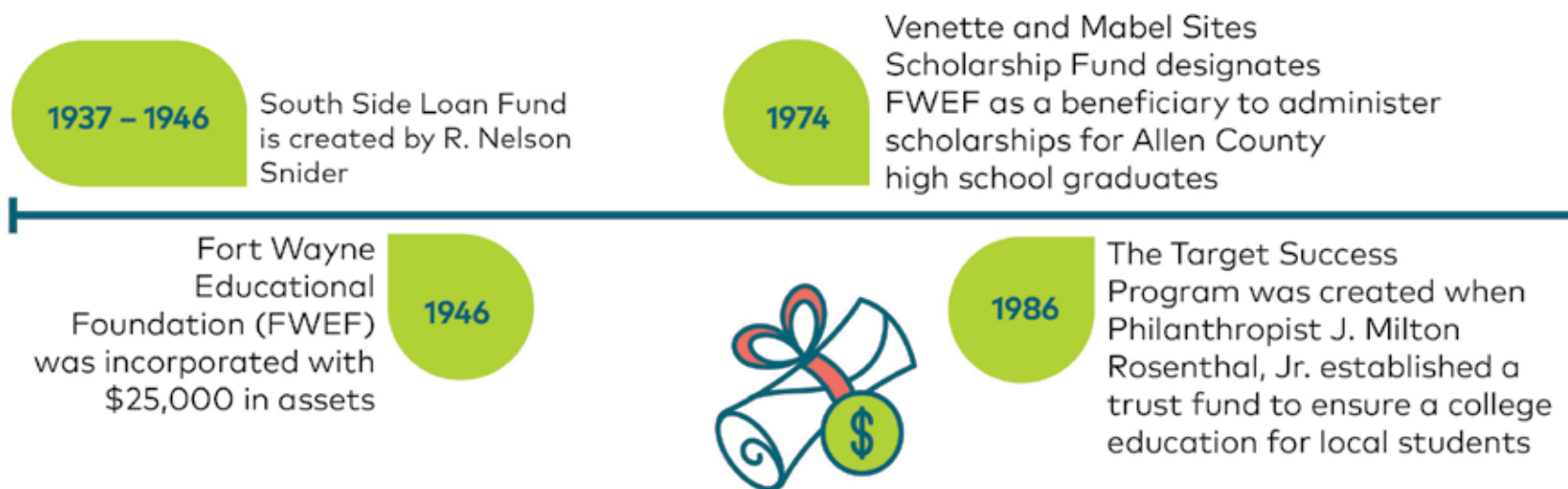
A lot has changed since Snider first started the South Side Loan Fund, Bushnell said, but some things haven't.

"I think the motivation is the same as it was in 1937," she said. "There are a lot of students with a financial need that puts college out of their reach. The core of Questa programs is making those college dreams possible for students."

Another thing that has stayed consistent since the beginning, Bushnell said, is community investment in the program.

"It's a local program," she said. "It's entirely unique to our region. Questa doesn't exist anywhere else, and our community makes it possible. Every dollar we raise is from our local community to invest in our local students."

## Questa History 1937 – 2022

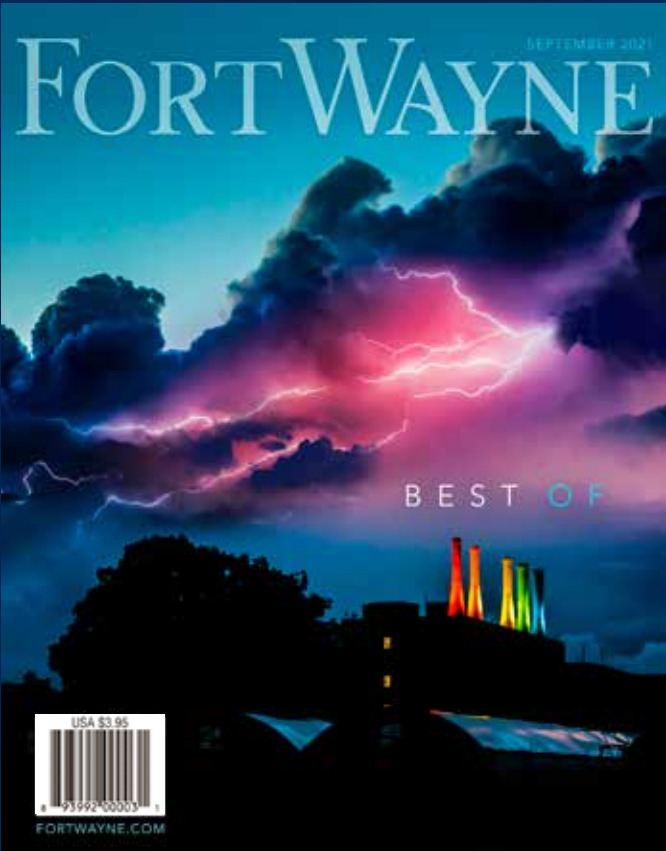






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**Education is the economic driver of our region.**

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 MAGAZINE

# Remembering Questa Champion, Dr. John Crawford

It was an effective visual. A poster depicting Fort Wayne with cartoon brains taking flight, leaving the city behind. City Councilman, Dr. John Crawford, captured the attention of business and community leaders.

In 2005, Fort Wayne and northeast Indiana were losing college graduates in droves. The "Brain Drain" phenomenon alarmed city leaders and spurred them into action.

"Demographics are destiny," Crawford explained. When we lose graduates, we lose the talent needed to drive economic growth.

Dr. Crawford did not just raise awareness of the issue, he tackled it head on. The councilman spearheaded an innovative program to attract college graduates back to the region by offering to pay off their college debt. The "brain gain" program targeted graduates in high demand talent fields.

With similar goals in mind, Questa's board of directors revised their long-

running college loan program to create the "half-back loan program" designed to bring college graduates back to the region. Local students who receive college funding through Questa earn 50% forgiveness on their Questa loan when they return to northeast Indiana to live and work after graduation. With Dr. Crawford's leadership, the City of Fort Wayne and Questa Education Foundation joined forces to combat brain drain.

Dr. Crawford championed ongoing support for local students and retention of graduates in the region. Crawford donated his entire city council salary to Questa and continued annual contributions after he left City Council, personally supporting dozens of local students through Questa programs.

During his tenure on City Council, Crawford also championed support for Questa through the Legacy Fund, providing Questa loans to hundreds of Fort Wayne students with little access to college without help from the program.

The cumulative impact of Crawford's efforts directly supported over 200 local



Dr. John Crawford

students, with nearly 75% of graduates remaining in the region to build our workforce and our community.

While just one of Dr. Crawford's notable accomplishments, his leadership and dedication to Fort Wayne students leaves a legacy that will benefit our region for decades to come.



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**Recruit a Talented Team**  
**Benefit Your Business and Northeast Indiana**

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# Solving Talent Needs through Partnerships

"Partnerships are the path to success," according to Elizabeth Bushnell, executive director of Questa Education Foundation.

"There are so many good organizations doing fantastic work in our region. The more we can align to work together, the

greater cumulative impact we're going to have," she said.

Questa has grown significantly in recent years through partnerships with local employers. Local companies work with Questa to fund current employees or students who are likely to be employed

at those companies in the future. These partnerships create an innovative talent pipeline for employers in a difficult labor market.

"Through employer partnerships, we can meet so many needs," said Stephanie Smith, Questa's assistant director for

data and marketing. "It's taking a holistic view: 'What are the needs of students? What are the talent needs of employers?' Questa offers a solution for both."

An exceptional example of partnering to meet needs is the collaboration

between Questa and Stillwater Hospice.

Stillwater partners with Questa to support current Stillwater employees with the funds they need to further their education.

Leslie Friedel, CEO at Stillwater Hospice, said the process of collaborating with Questa started in 2019 and the first money was awarded to a student in 2020.

Stillwater provides the funding, she said, and Questa manages the program. Questa staff maintain relationships with students throughout their educational journeys. They onboard students, support students' academic progress, and collaborate with the Stillwater team to promote student success.

Stillwater has helped fund the continuing education of five employees so far, Friedel said.

UNIVERSITY of SAINT FRANCIS

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The educational aims of these employees are diverse. Several students are LPNs studying to become RNs and one woman is going for her MBA.

One thing all employees at Stillwater have in common, regardless of position at the company or plans to advance, is a certain disposition.

"One of our biggest success stories," Friedel said, "is that we hire a very compassionate, unique type of individual that has the heart for the type of work we do."

Stillwater considers helping their employees to grow as an honor and a privilege, Friedel said.

"If they are interested in growing their skill set in their career with us," she said, "we are more than happy to support them."

There is a worldwide shortage

of health care workers happening right now, and no organization has shown immunity to it.

The Questa partnership helps Stillwater address this gap.

"Two of the recipients right now are LPNs who

are interested in becoming RNs," Friedel said. "We all know that the healthcare shortage is real. So, the fact that we have dedicated people who have been giving to the organization, who want to do this and who want to stay with us even longer... that's just a no-brainer for us."

In addition to Stillwater, Questa has partnerships with Parkview Health, AWS Foundation, Brotherhood Mutual Insurance, Ortho Northeast, Cameron Memorial Hospital, and Cardinal

Services. Each program is uniquely designed to support students while meeting the talent needs of employers.





**TAYLOR UNIVERSITY IS A PROUD QUESTA PARTNER!**

Taylor University is excited to partner with Questa Education Foundation to provide Northeast Indiana students opportunities to attend college and graduate with less debt.

Our partnership provides financial awards to students and allows us to invest in the future of Indiana.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**Congratulations and many thanks to Questa for**

**85 years**

**of dedicated service to students across Indiana!**

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ANDERSON UNIVERSITY



# Questa Scholars Across the Region

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## ABIGAIL PEQUIGNOT

Whitley County

Attending a private school can be expensive, so receiving college funding is so important. That big payment can create a lot of stress for college students but with the funding from Questa, college students can feel more relieved knowing they are getting a degree with less debt in the future. With college funding, students can confidently strive in college without the fear of owing as much money to the university and focus more on their studies.



Supported over **80** scholars from DeKalb County

”

Allen County

## COLIN HAHN

Thank you for your generosity and willingness to help fund students like me through their collegiate journey. This has made an immense impact on me, as it has allowed me to get the best educational experience possible. I have been able to dedicate more time towards my studies, rather than needing to work long hours to reduce college debt.

”

Questa Scholars from  
Huntington County  
maintained a

**90%** completion rate

# Serving Students in the 11 Northeast Indiana counties

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Adams County



## AJ DULL

I am a 2022 graduate of South Adams High School in Berne, Indiana and I am currently in my first semester this fall at Indiana Tech where I am majoring in Finance. I applied for the Questa Program when I was a Senior in High School and was so happy when I was selected for this program as I see it as a great opportunity for me to get support from the Questa organization and generous donors for my college education costs. I also see this as a chance for me to give back to the Northeast Indiana region after graduation as I use my Finance degree to start a career right here in an area that I have lived my whole life in.

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**JAZLYN COLLYEAR**

I felt honored and blessed being chosen as a Questa Scholar. It was an amazing accomplishment! With Questa's assistance, I was able to spend more time focusing on my transition from high school to college without the worry of how I would pay for it. Questa helped bridge that gap and provided me the opportunity to attend Indiana Tech where I now study one of my passions – Cybersecurity. Being a Questa Scholar has helped me take full advantage of my opportunity of having a college career by joining non-profit organizations on campus where I can give back to the community.

Allen County



The Olive B. Cole Foundation  
has funded over

**\$160,000**  
to scholars from  
Steuben County



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**AYN-MARGARET  
SCHAEKEL**

I knew from a young age that I would have to pay for college on my own so I started saving as much as I could. My junior and senior years of high school I started to investigate scholarships to help with the cost too. This is when I found the Questa Traditional Scholars program. I worked for weeks on my essays to make sure they were perfect. I was so excited when I received this award because it was going to be such a great help in paying for my college.



Whitley County

**75%** of Questa  
graduates from  
Wabash County  
are working  
in healthcare



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Allen County

**MICA ALLEN**

Funding for college is essential to me. Students can set their aspirations much higher and flourish when their shoulders are relieved from the weight of piling debt. Questa makes it possible for scholars to succeed and impact their local area. I am thankful for Questa and the many things I have been able to accomplish because of it!



“

Over **95%** of Questa graduates  
from Noble County live and work  
in Northeast Indiana



**70%** of current scholars  
from Kosciusko County are majoring  
in Health and Human Sciences

LaGrange County

**\$55,000**  
has been awarded in  
debt forgiveness  
to scholars from  
Wells County

**DEREK MILLER**

Questa made such a huge difference in the trajectory of my career. Getting aid from Questa through the forgivable loan program helped to solidify my decision to attend Trine University and study Civil Engineering. Since graduating in May of 2021, I have held two different Civil Engineering jobs in Fort Wayne. I have loved my time here and in Fort Wayne in general, as I love the feeling of it having many amenities, but still not feeling like a huge city. I am very grateful to Questa and any donors that make it possible for people like me to go to college and incur less debt while pursuing our dreams!

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# Questa Makes College Goals Possible

Grace Buhr grew up wanting to attend Indiana University.

"My family has a rich history with IU," she said. "I grew up with my dad screaming at the television from November to March because of IU basketball."

Now, she is a senior at IU studying operations management and business analytics. She said she couldn't have done it without Questa.

*"Questa has allowed me to come to IU."*

Buhr learned about Questa from her older sister, who also attended IU with Questa's help. "She loved her IU experience," Buhr said. "So, I knew that I would. Tuition here...it's not cheap. So Questa has allowed me to come to IU."

Buhr said her senior year is even more bittersweet than it might normally be because of COVID. COVID took some of the life out of campus life thanks to remote learning, public strictures and cancelled and curtailed events.

"Socially, I am sad this is my last year," she said. "This year is the most normal year since freshman year. It is crazy how COVID dictated my college experience."

After she graduates, Buhr will return to Fort

*"It's really exciting to see what's been happening in Fort Wayne."*



Wayne and work for five years so that she can get half of her Questa loan forgiven. She isn't sure what she will do after that, but there's a good chance that she will remain in Fort Wayne longer.

"I have family in Fort Wayne," she said. "It's really exciting to see what's been happening in Fort Wayne: everything that's been going on downtown and over at Electric Works. There's good industry in Fort Wayne. But five years ago, my life was so much different than it is now. It could be

completely different after the next five years."

Despite some of the challenges she faced at IU, Buhr said she wouldn't change a thing about her time there.

"I don't think I would ever trade this experience for the world," she said. "I have loved my time here. I'm really grateful. And if it hadn't been for Questa, I might not have even come here."



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# Questa Alumna Propels Community Development in Southeast Fort Wayne

Near Southtown Crossing, a complex is rising. When it is completed, it will consist of five buildings. One building will house LegacyOne Real Estate & Contracting Inc., and the others will provide space for entrepreneurs who might not be able

to afford to set up shop in other parts of the city.

Linda Golden, the co-owner of LegacyOne, envisions a vibrant commercial future for that area.

Golden has spent much of her adult life helping underserved

communities and people on the margins in Fort Wayne. She grew up on the southeast side of town and has always been devoted to that region.

Before she founded Legacy One, she ran a nonprofit called Genesis Outreach that provided several levels of assistance to homeless people.

A few years back, she decided to return to Ivy Tech and earn her business degree after a 25-year hiatus necessitated by child-raising. She accomplished that feat (the business degree not the child-raising) with the help of Questa.

"I think mine was the returning student program," she said. "That's the one that I applied for. At the time, I was just coming out of the nonprofit. I did not have a retirement package or anything so it really helped me financially, just with everyday living, to be able to go back to school comfortably."



Linda Golden

Being a sexagenarian undergraduate presents unique challenges, but Golden said she loved it.

*Questa offers the Contemporary Scholars program for adult learners.*

"I've always loved learning," she said. "I love being on campus. I love being around younger students. I love being in class. It was different. But it was a good difference."

Golden's mindset was different than it had been when she was a younger student. "The discipline to study," she said. "The discipline to go to class. I was just so much more mature about those things than I had been when I was younger."

While Golden was attending college, she had one grandchild at Trine and one at Ivy Tech. She also had two sisters who were taking continuing education classes at Ivy Tech. "One is a nurse and one is a retired teacher," she

said, referring to her sisters. "But they just wanted to take some additional classes in whatever interested them. So we were all at the school at the same time." The assistance Golden got from Questa not only lessened her stress during school, it lessened it after she'd earned her degree.

"There was never any thought of me leaving the city for work, of course," Golden said. "But being able to get that forgivable part of the loan really made it a lot easier to pay back."

Golden founded LegacyOne with a goal of increasing black home ownership and black wealth in Fort Wayne. "I look at a home as a piggy bank," she said.

Golden hopes that her Southtown complex will inspire others to establish businesses in that part of town.

"Ours is not the only one going up," she said. "There's actually three, including ours – three new construction projects going up. I believe there will be more."

## Graduate college with less debt.

College cost can be scary, but the Questa Foundation is here to help. A Questa Scholar could receive up to 75% forgiveness on their loan. Forgiveness = less debt! Apply to the Questa Traditional Scholars Program today. Application Open December 1 - March 15

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# Get Connected with Questa

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There are several ways you can help!

Subscribe to our quarterly eNewsletter and follow our social media channels, so you can help us promote Questa funding opportunities to students and families in our community.

Help us select future scholars. Each year, volunteers from the community help us review student applications to select the incoming class of Traditional Scholars.

Donate to support local students. You might assume that an individual donation does little to help a student facing big college bills. However, sometimes all it takes is an unplanned \$50-100

expense to be the difference between a student finishing college or leaving without a degree. Every donation makes a difference.

Connect with us to create a talent development strategy for your organization. Questa partners with local employers to fund students

in high-demand talent areas who can become future employees and to fund current employees who need further education to progress in their careers.

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