

Moraine Valley CNA Graduates Qualify For Tuition Reimbursement

Partnership with Smith Senior Living offers tuition reimbursement for certified nursing assistant program.

By [Lorraine Swanson, Patch Staff](#)
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Jacqueline (left) and Jocelyne Garcia (Glenn Carpenter, MVCC)

PALOS HILLS, IL—Two [Moraine Valley Community College](#) graduates are the first to qualify for tuition reimbursement thanks to an exclusive partnership between the college and [Smith Senior Living](#). Smith Senior Living, which operates the retirement facilities [Smith Village](#) in Chicago's Beverly community and [Smith Crossings](#) in Orland Park, will repay tuition costs for certified nursing assistant classes at Moraine Valley if the student remains employed with Smith Senior Living for one year.



Sisters Jocelyne and Jacqueline Garcia, of Merrionette Park, completed the CNA program at Moraine Valley and will be eligible for tuition reimbursement in February. Both are scheduled to begin Moraine Valley's Nursing Program in fall 2020.

"This is a pilot, and we chose Moraine Valley because it has an excellent CNA program," said Kevin McGee, chief executive officer at Smith Senior Living. "It's a win-win. We get highly-trained staff who will stay with us, and the students will have employment."

The program is open to Moraine Valley students conducting their clinicals at Smith Senior Living and to current employees who want to enroll in CNA classes at Moraine Valley. Michelle Harnell, director of Nursing at Smith Village, said the program helps them retain students who want to continue in the industry.

"If we're going to match up a program with students we believe will want to work here, Moraine Valley is a great choice. It's close and accessible, and the caliber of Moraine Valley students is high," she said. "They seem to be very skilled and very knowledgeable. They know what they're doing, and they really like it. It's not just a job to them."

Jacqueline said her training at Moraine Valley was great. "All of my instructors were amazing and did a good job preparing me for employment. Smith Village reimbursing the Moraine Valley tuition makes me very happy and shows hard work pays off."

Jocelyne agreed with the quality of training. "Everything taught—whether through lecture or lab—was exactly what I needed to know to feel fully prepared and confident to engage myself in a CNA position," she said. "As I approach my one-year anniversary at Smith Village, I feel extremely happy I got this opportunity to be reimbursed for the CNA program. It definitely motivates me to keep pushing forward."

Dr. Kelli Nickols, nursing department chair and assistant nursing professor, worked closely with Smith Senior Living to coordinate the creation of this opportunity.

"Students look for not only a school with a great reputation, but a school that can help them obtain a career when they finish their program of choice. Our students get experience taking care of a variety of patients when they visit Smith Senior Living and learn that serving the community is rewarding," Nickols said.

"We're always looking for opportunities to serve our student body," Nickols added. "Health care is an industry that continues to grow and evolve. Providing patients with exceptional care in our community is a top priority within the Nursing Department at Moraine Valley."