

Luck, sheer circumstance, random blessing or divine intervention. Call it what you will, but there's no denying that things are indeed looking up for Mary Ann Dolosa, the first recipient of the "Silverio F. Garcia, M.D. Student Loan Fund for Nursing Assistant Students." The fund was created by Dr. Sofia Garcia-Buder and her family to continue the legacy of public service of their grandfather, the late Dr. Silverio F. Garcia, a former governor of Sorsogon Province.

According to Dr. Garcia-Buder, "My brother, Thierry Garcia, Jr. met Loida Nicolas Lewis in Indianapolis in May 2008. Through him, I made the acquaintance with Ms. Lewis over the telephone, enabling a more lengthy follow-up telephone conversation a few days later after her return to New York."

Loida Nicolas Lewis is a founding member and Board Trustee of the [Ayala Foundation USA](#). "I was aware of Ms. Lewis' various charitable projects, including The Lewis College in Sorsogon," Dr. Garcia-Buder continues. "I was always a believer in charitable works geared towards self-empowerment of the recipients through education and through provision of livelihood. What particularly captured my interest was the new eight-month Nursing Assistant Program, which included an option for further overseas training and employment. What a wonderful opportunity for a poor student to better her life and her family's, after a mere high-school diploma requirement, for such a relatively small amount of money, and over such a short eight-month course!"

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Dr. Garcia-Buder's father and his eight siblings were born and raised in Sorsogon. Their grandfather, Dr. Silverio F. Garcia, was a physician, entrepreneur, and two-time governor of Sorsogon in the 1920s and 1930s.

"Because Sorsogon is very close to our families' hearts, I was interested in doing something to help Mrs. Lewis' school and the people of Sorsogon," Dr. Garcia-Buder says. When Mrs. Lewis suggested if Dr. Garcia-Buder can perhaps sponsor a scholarship for a student, Dr. Garcia-Buder replied that she would prefer to create a student loan fund, so that the donation will go a much longer way in helping one student after another in perpetuity as the loans get paid off.

Although Dr. Garcia-Buder provided the seed money, her family members contributed and pledged their financial support as well. That initiative snowballed into the Silverio F. Garcia, M.D. Student Loan Fund for Nursing Assistant Students. Guided by the principle "the greatest good for the greatest number," a principle that Dr. Silverio F. Garcia stood by all his life, the fund allows other qualified students to apply for a loan of up to Php 20,000 to pay for their tuition fees. Indeed, it was one portentous meeting after another that paved the way for the creation of the fund and the awarding of the loan to its first ever recipient, Ms. Mary Ann H. Dolosa, from Sorsogon.

Ms. Dolosa is 23-years old, a single mom with three kids aged 3 to 7. "I thank God for letting me come to The Lewis College. When I learned that there was a student loan for the Nursing Assistant Course, I took it at once. I chose this course because it is short-term and I would like to finish soon and look for a job for my children's sake," Mary Ann says. "Until now my kids

haven't been able to attend classes because I don't have the money to send them to school and the father of my children has left us, leaving me with all the responsibility. Through this nursing assistant course, I look forward to finishing soon and having a job abroad."

With the help of Dr. Sofia Garcia-Buder, Loida Nicolas Lewis and the partnership with Ayala Foundation USA through which the funds were channeled, Mary Ann has an actual chance at a bright future for her and her three children. Indeed, what once seemed like a bleak future now seems so bright.

To support a scholar or donate to The Lewis College like what the Garcia family did, email admin@thelewiscollege.com

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[The Lewis College website](#)

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www.af-usa.org

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