

# Mom of Quadruplets Makes the Grades in Nursing School

BY DAVID C. BUTTY



Meranda Sawabini will always remember the Spring of 2016. It was the year that she was selected to represent the 40 diverse students who walked across the stage to receive their nurse's pins during the Nursing and Allied Health Pinning Ceremony at the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center at the Wayne County Community College District's (WCCCD) Downriver Campus in Taylor. There were loud applauses when Sawabini approached the podium and it did not only come from her classmates; but from the audience; most especially, from her husband and their quadruplets; two daughters and two sons; Sophia, Gabriella, Nicholas and Noah.

"When I got the call that I was going to represent the graduating class of 2016, I was flabbergasted," Sawabini, said as she choked back tears. "I brought with me my napkins to wipe away my tears and I hope you also have napkins to do the same," she began. I am humbled at the opportunity and feel blessed to have been a part of such an amazing group of people. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all of you here. I'd like to give a special thanks to our Dean of Nursing, to our entire nursing faculty and the rest of the Wayne County Community College District faculty. Special thanks go to all of our families and friends who are celebrating along

with us. You have been our support throughout these two years. You are the ones who have made these crazy schedules, long nights and early mornings possible," she added. "Most importantly, I want to say congratulations to us, the class of 2016!"

During her speech, Sawabini shared with the audience her journey into her nursing career and the role her family played in helping her along the way. "I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself and my journey here at Wayne County Community College District. In 2011, I decided it was time for me to go back to school. I needed to get a degree and I wanted a career I would enjoy. I started out taking a couple of classes online. What made it a little different for me at the time was that I had four infants at home! In the fall of 2010, my husband and I became the proud parents of quadruplets. They are now 5 and here with me tonight. Some of you are single; some of us have families, husbands and wives, one child or eight. There are some who came to Wayne County Community College District right out of high school. For some, nursing is a second career while others knew this was the only thing they were ever meant to do. We are all on different paths, yet it is the same journey. It was an incredible challenge and I don't regret one minute of it! I could not have done it without my husband and without my parents!"

According to Sawabini, having four children and making the grades in nursing school was not an easy task. "Balancing enough time for my husband, children and school has been tough. I wanted to be able to give everyone the attention they deserved and have had to sacrifice some of that to be able to get assignments done. I usually do most of my studying after my children went to bed. My husband has been a tremendous support! Last year, my husband changed his shift to work midnights so we were able to juggle care for our children. I haven't worked outside of the home since my children were born."

She hopes that other moms with children, family and school realize that the road is not easy but there is always light at the end of the tunnel. "I hope that parents who go back to school realize that although it is never easy, it can be done. There will always be problems and everything that can go wrong will. But,

as you walk across that stage with your children watching you, you will know that they are the reason you spent all those long nights with a book in your hand and a prayer in your heart!"

The Nursing and Allied Health Pinning Ceremony usually precedes the WCCCD's graduation which will be held on Saturday, June 4, 2016 at Ford Field in Detroit, when more than 1,700 graduates will receive their degrees and certificates in various disciplines. The program will begin at 11:00 am, and this will be WCCCD's Forty-Seventh Annual Commencement Ceremony. The keynote speaker for this year's ceremony will be the President of the University of Michigan, Dr. Mark S. Schlissel.

This year's commencement ceremony will be historical; not only because Dr. Schlissel is going to deliver the keynote and encourage the Class of 2016 to move forward and achieve their dreams, but because WCCCD will be graduating its oldest student, Ruby Watson Parker, 87, who will receive her Associate of Arts degree. She started at WCCCD in the Fall of 1969.

The youngest person among this year's graduates will be Cortez Pittman, 19, who will be receiving his Associate of Arts degree.

WCCCD has established and maintained partnerships with over 40 high schools in nearly 15 school districts in the region. As a result of these partnerships, WCCCD is proud to announce that 10 students from Cass Technical High School and Chandler Park High School will be graduating with their associate's degrees coupled with their high school diplomas.

There will be loud applauses from families and friends to acknowledge the achievements of the Class of 2016. Among those cheering the loudest will be Sawabini's quadruplets; cheering for their mom for a job well done.

