Dara Dorman worked at the Baltimore Department of Public Works (BDPW) for more than 18 years before being promoted to a Water Operator Treatment Apprentice. During this time, she cared for her aging mother, who passed away three years ago. Her new position in the BDPW led to her application for a One AWWA Operator Scholarship through the Chesapeake AWWA Section. Dara wrote, “I never thought in a million years that I could be an Operator.”

Dara has a passion to protect the “health and safety of drinking water for millions of people,” and her goal is to receive her T4 certification.

Dara is just one of the 25 water and wastewater operators this year who received a One AWWA Operator Scholarship through the generosity of AWWA Sections and Water Equation donors. Recipients receive up to $1,000 from each entity for tuition, certification, webinars, and conference attendance. In just three years, the program has awarded more than $78,000 in continuing education and training funding.

Brad Ebinger is an Operations Technician for WaterOne and credits the One AWWA Operator Scholarship with his ability to take AWWA E-Learning courses to further supplement his education. This award from the Kansas AWWA Section will also fund his attendance at the “Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas.” The conference brings together scientists, water managers, state and federal officials and legislators, city and county administrators, environmental organizations, and citizens who share an interest in Kansas water resources. “I have attended our section’s annual conference and networked with other professionals there. I used my membership to receive discounted registration for my AWWA E-Learning courses.”

As a scholarship recipient, Brad receives free membership to AWWA and says that he has found several benefits as a member.

One AWWA Operator Scholarship applicants have many things in common. They have mentors who help them apply for the scholarship, they have a passion for public safety, and they come from utilities that appreciate their dedication to the industry.

As a Water Equipment Operator for the Kenosha Water Utility, Luke Haase applied to the Wisconsin Section AWWA for his scholarship. With 11 years of experience, Luke has decided it is time to pursue an associate’s degree in the Civil Engineering Technology-Fresh Waters Program at Gateway Technical College. Although he wanted to return to school, Luke wasn’t sure of his career path. Now that he has experienced the water industry, he says, “Experiencing the impact water as a resource has on our everyday life has given me the desire to learn more so I can be knowledgeable and in return more involved and useful in the field of water.”

The California-Nevada AWWA Section awarded two One AWWA Operator Scholarships in 2018, with one going to Davin Clark, a recent certified water operator. Having finished a water resources management program at Gavilan College, Davin is transferring to a university to pursue a bachelor of science degree in Business Management. He takes his Operator 2 license very seriously and says he is making a lifelong commitment to the industry, the environment, and the public. “I’ve been very blessed having worked with my mentors who have made a life-changing impact on me. Their level of commitment has manifested in me as I carry on the legacy that saves lives.”

One hundred percent of your donations to the One AWWA Operator Scholarship are distributed to water and wastewater operators in North America. These operators are on the front line in their utility and have also elected to continue their education to become the next generation of leaders in the water industry.