

Nurse Scholars Academy Expands to Fresno

Working nurses can now get advanced degrees in their field across the Northern California Region. Pictured, Denise Hippert, RN, will begin classes in Fresno next month.

Kaiser Permanente has expanded its [Northern California Nurse Scholars Academy](#) to the Fresno area, offering working registered nurses bachelor of science degrees to enhance their careers and the quality of care they provide.

Nurses can obtain the degree through Samuel Merritt University over 20 months of weekly classes, online coursework, and clinical rotations in community health agencies, said Jonalyn Wallace, Kaiser Permanente regional director for Academic Relations and Community Health.

Kaiser Permanente launched the academy in 2015 to inspire and promote transformational leadership, clinical excellence, evidence-informed practice, and nursing research. The academy enables working nurses to earn bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in nursing.

Nurses learn about public health issues, teamwork, and communication. They also learn self-care and stress reduction techniques. Kaiser Permanente nurses are eligible to apply for scholarships that cover up to 80% of tuition, Wallace said.

In addition to Fresno, the Nurse Scholars Academy offers bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degrees at Samuel Merritt University campuses in Oakland, Sacramento, and San Mateo. Masters and doctoral degrees are offered through the University of San Francisco. Since it opened, the academy has supported 657 Kaiser Permanente nurses in earning degrees. [The first graduating class was in 2017.](#)

Denise Hippert, RN, who works in the special care nursery at Kaiser Permanente Fresno, will start classes in January. She obtained her RN degree in 2005 and said she has always wanted to earn her BSN.

“When I first went to school to become a nurse, a BSN was ultimately what I wanted to complete, but then life happened, and I just didn’t do it,” she said.

Hippert has tried online nursing degree programs in the past, but said they were not for her. She likes that the Samuel Merritt University program is modeled after Watson Caring Science principles, which is the nursing theory that guides the care given by Kaiser Permanente nurses.

“I like the philosophy that health care is holistic, and I also like the focus on nurses caring for nurses — that was really huge for me,” she said. “I just knew this was something I had to do.”

The application deadline for the fall term is July 1, 2020. To apply, [visit](#)

Kaiser Permanente Look inside KP Northern California

<https://lookinside.kaiserpermanente.org>

www.samuelmerritt.edu/admission/apply-smu or contact SMU's Fresno-based admission counselor John Tiedemann at jtiedemann@samuelmerritt.edu.