AS THE OLDEST OF THE NINE Lang children, Natalie blazed the trail that led to UW Bothell for six of her siblings and her mother. Today, four years after Natalie passed away, her inspiration is paving the path for countless other students to realize their dreams as well.

Natalie’s compassion for the immigrants she met at UW Bothell touched her heart even after she earned her degree in American studies in 1997. She went to work for the university as an academic advisor to international students, determined to ease their transition into the American education that would change their lives forever.

“Natalie saw how much need there was among the international and intercultural students, and she wanted to help,” recalls her mother, Marleigh, who earned a master’s degree in nursing leadership at UW Bothell in 2006. “Whole families would save up to send one niece or nephew to college in the United States. Then, they couldn’t afford the next semester’s tuition or a mandatory program, and they’d have to drop out.”

When Natalie’s long struggle with kidney failure ended in her death at age 38, Marleigh and her husband, Harley, kept their daughter’s legacy alive. Through the years, as UW Bothell degrees have spurred their success, the family has become one of our most generous benefactors.

“We were just an ordinary family with kids to support,” explains Marleigh. “My husband had to borrow $70 to afford community college tuition when we were first starting out. We were still saving to send our kids to college when I started my master’s program at UW Bothell, and getting some small scholarships was a huge boost for me to continue.

With eight UW Bothell degrees among them, the Lang family gives back to ensure ‘access to excellence’ for students from across the globe.

GENEROSITY IS ALL IN THE FAMILY

By Teresa Moore
“It’s all about access to excellence. The quality of education is like being at a smaller institution. The classes are smaller and the professors are on a first-name basis with the students. It’s really a unique environment.”  

MARLEIGH LANG

“I knew how great that felt. I guess you could say my sense of giving started with other people, including UW Bothell, giving to me.”

Whether it’s supporting scholarships for international students or paying the travel expenses for a study-abroad trip to Togo, the Langs’ generosity often has a global focus.

Funding the trip to West Africa was particularly fulfilling. Marleigh’s brother, Tomm Stewart, runs a nonprofit that helps impoverished Togo with education, health and business development initiatives. Connecting Tomm with UW Bothell led to a 10-day trip where nursing and health studies students teamed up with Togolese health care providers to conduct critical health screenings and to care for people with malaria, respiratory infections and many other conditions.

Marleigh is also an active volunteer at UW Bothell – and one of its most enthusiastic cheerleaders. She says that she and six of her children had one thing in mind when they chose to earn graduate and undergraduate degrees from UW Bothell.

“It’s all about access to excellence. The quality of education is like being at a smaller institution. The classes are smaller, and the professors are on a first-name basis with the students. It’s really a unique environment,” Marleigh says.

“It’s been a good journey where we received help,” she concludes. “Now, it’s a pleasure to be able to help other people, especially the international community.”