How an Angel Helped Me Go To College
By Heather Parker – Gerontology Intern

I was 27 years old, working in the snack bar of a Myrtle Beach area golf course. Business was slow as I sat at the counter studying a college textbook, something I often did when time permitted.

An older member, but young at heart, noticed and said, “I didn’t know you were going to college, Heather, but it’s good to see someone who studies hard.”

“Actually I’m trying to help my boyfriend with his lessons” I replied.

“You mean you’ve already graduated?”

I explained that I attended college several years back but dropped out close to graduating because I could no longer afford it. He asked if I’d return to finish if given the chance and, if so, how much money would be needed. I said I’d gladly go back and since my previously accumulated credits should be accepted, I estimated the cost at $3,500.

The next day he came to the club and asked if I was serious when we talked the day before. Would I really go back if given the chance? When I said “yes” to my astonishment he handed me a $5,000 check. “Please finish college at my expense. I’m impressed with your drive and ambition and I really want to do this. But please tell me your last name so I can complete the check.” So here was a person, hardly more than a stranger, who didn’t even know my last name, offering to do this very exceptional thing for me.

After visiting Coastal Carolina’s office I was surprised to learn that the vast majority of my previously accumulated credits couldn’t be transferred. I learned that it would take several more years and many more thousands of dollars to complete my degree. So I went to the member and told him what had happened and said that the extra cost made it impossible for me to accept his generosity. I tried to give the check back.

“No, Heather, I won’t take it. If you’re willing to spend extra years of study, while continuing to work, I’ll pay your college bills. I’m with you right to graduation day. I know from your attitude and maturity that you are an exceptional person. Further it gives me great pleasure to help.”

My angel was good to his word. We set up a separate bank account to keep track. In addition to my tuition and books he’s also paid for all other college-related expenses including a needed computer and its Internet on-line service. I’ve been a serious student
majoring in sociology and am completing the gerontology certificate program. My cumulative GPA is 3.67. It’s been three years since I went back and should graduate in December 2007.

I am grateful to my angel, who has asked to remain anonymous. Because of his generosity and kind heart I have been inspired to seek a career in Aging where I too can help others along their life journey.