She is one of four recipients of the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation's Shahnaz and Zahid Shah Fund for the Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies certificate program.

CLEVELAND – When Darlene Outler-Myrick started college in 1972, she couldn't have imagined she would return 40 years later to finish. She also wouldn't have expected to be pursuing a Conflict Resolution & Peace Studies certificate along with her associate degree.

Today, Outler-Myrick is well on her way to earning that certificate and she even received a scholarship for her efforts. She is one of four recipients of the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation's Shahnaz and Zahid Shah Fund for the Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies certificate program.

“I am so very grateful to Tri-C for this scholarship, which will help me complete my final class in the program,” Outler-Myrick said.

After graduating from Garfield Heights High School in 1972, Outler-Myrick went to Hiram College to study Spanish, psychology and history. She dreamed of becoming an interpreter for the United Nations, but she was recruited for employment and didn’t complete college. She soon got married and from there life took her to Virginia.

Eight years ago, Outler-Myrick moved back to Garfield Heights to take care of her ailing mother. Needing an intellectual outlet and wishing to further her education, she took her niece’s advice and enrolled at Tri-C. Her niece, Luann Wagner, is a Tri-C employee.

“I have always had love in my heart for Tri-C,” Outler-Myrick explained, “When I was in junior high school, [the Eastern Campus] was just being created and I remember our counselors really stressing the message that this was a wonderful opportunity, affordably priced, and prepared students for their future.”

Outler-Myrick, who has a 4.0 grade point average, is still studying Spanish and psychology as she pursues her Associate of Arts degree.

She wants to use what she is learning to work with the local aging population and help people understand and deal with issues that develop from aging, specifically in the realm of becoming and/or needing a caregiver.

My mom used to say, ‘Once a man, twice a child.’ If we live long enough, we become like children all over again,” Outler-Myrick said, “While I am able – physically and mentally – it is my desire to utilize my education and personal experiences as a caregiver to make a difference in this world, by helping others.”

Outler-Myrick will graduate from Tri-C next summer. She plans to earn a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Hiram College and then pursue a master’s in psychology with a focus on geriatric and family counseling.

Outler-Myrick credits her Tri-C professors, the curriculum, which “leans toward understanding, awareness and student success,” and Timothy Dodds in counseling who “went above and beyond to help me” plan classes so she can make a smooth transition back to Hiram College.

She is especially grateful to her niece “for encouraging me to make Tri-C an important part of my life.”

The Tri-C Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies program is the first of its kind at an Ohio community college. The certificate provides a background in the core theory of conflict management and peace studies, the skills of conflict management, and an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge and skills in a community setting through service learning.

For more information about this program, contact Jennifer Batton, director of the Global Issues Resource Center, at (216) 987-2231 or Jennifer.Batton@tri-c.edu.