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From the desk of
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You might not realise it, but UniSA is home to over 1,000 PhD students; people who are making amazing progress in every field you can think of. I think I speak for all research students when I say that the best part about our work is when it helps others in the community - people just like you and me - to live a healthier, happier life.

I am working with families who have genetic disorders. My research helps them remove the risk of passing on conditions that can be fatal in children, enabling them to have healthy babies.

What I love most about my research is that there are real patients and real families at the heart of everything I do. I have already achieved some truly exciting results, and I'd like to tell you about just one that meant the most.

I recently worked with a family who, sadly, had experienced multiple stillbirths. As you can probably imagine, they were heartbroken and just didn't know what was causing this. By examining their entire DNA sequence my team and I were able to establish the genetic cause of the problem.

This meant their obstetrician could use a technique called 'pre-implantation genetic diagnosis' to screen their embryos before implantation, and select only those that didn't carry the specific gene mutation that was causing the miscarriage. It might sound complicated, but all you really need to know is that I was able to play a part in helping the family have a healthy baby boy, and it felt absolutely incredible.

Last year, during my PhD studies, I received a scholarship which has entirely changed the scope of what I can achieve in both my PhD and subsequent career. The financial support it's providing will benefit both the research I'm working on, as well as my own personal development – not to mention the countless families who would be touched by a breakthrough in genetics.

I hope that by telling you my story you'll be able to see what a wonderful difference scholarships make, and how your gift can play a part. You never know when your own life might be affected by research that is being undertaken by a UniSA student.

Without the support of the wonderful donors that created this scholarship, it would be so much harder for me to achieve my dream of giving every family the chance to have a healthy baby.

Thank you,

Alicia

PhD Genetics