



For Immediate Release

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Darby, Pennsylvania's Amber Clark Overcomes Health Challenges to Receive her Diploma from Salus University

Darby, P.a. - Darby native **Amber Clark '23TVI, MS '16**, has shown incredible resilience and strength to overcome serious health struggles while working to receive her diploma from Salus University.

One night after class, Clark found herself short of breath for no apparent reason. After a trip to the emergency room an examination revealed that at age 31, a month after she being married and right in the middle of getting her Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) certificate in the Blindness and Low Vision Studies (BLVS) program at Salus University, she had suffered a heart attack.

But that wasn't the only complication Clark would encounter. After her release from the hospital, doctors fitted her with a heart monitor that she was asked to wear for a month. Clark was born with a congenital heart defect — a heart murmur — but it had not created any issues to that point.

After a month of wearing the heart monitor, she returned to the doctor for the results, which indicated there were still some irregularities going on with her heart. Doctors ordered more tests and found out that Clark was pregnant with her second child. In fact, doctors believe Clark was already a few weeks pregnant when she had the heart attack. Her son was born in May 2022, just a few weeks before her summer classes started and stayed home with the children so she could complete her studies.

A year later — in fact on her son's first birthday May 25, 2023 — Clark graduated with her master's certificate in TVI.

The long and challenging road to graduation began years ago. Clark graduated in 2014 with a degree in psychology/mental health from Southern New Hampshire University. She then attended Salus and earned a master's degree in Orientation and Mobility (O&M) in 2016.

She worked in the field for several years and then decided she wanted to teach. She enrolled in the Salus TVI program in the fall of 2021, just a few months before she had the heart attack.

The last of eight children, Clark grew up in a challenging household in a difficult neighborhood. The family, she said, was very poor. But she had promised herself as a teenager that if she could find a profession that could help one child's life be better than the childhood she had, she would pursue that profession.

Clark calls the road to commencement "a wild ride." But is grateful for the support she's had through the difficult times. She started a job with the School District of Philadelphia before graduation and will continue to work there after she receives the diploma.

"I'm really happy that I have the support of the people at Salus and my family. They genuinely cared about me as a person and not just a number," said Clark. "Their expectations of me sort of pushed me and even when I thought my health wouldn't let me complete the degree, they encouraged me. I just hope that I'm able to use what happened to me to encourage my students that they can do anything."

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About Salus University

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized professional academic center of learning that offers a wide range of degree programs in the professions of Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, Biomedicine, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and Orthotics and Prosthetics. Salus operates four clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance, Speech-Language pathology and occupational therapy services. The University has over 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit www.salus.edu.