



Where Are They Now?

by Harriet Fagan, J. Valparaiso, Indiana

Counting professors among chapter members is not so unusual in a university town, but Chapter J in Valparaiso, Indiana, lays claim to not one but two young professors who are also former recipients of the P.E.O. Scholar Award.

Kelly Jabbusch and Lara Pudwell share the distinction of being Scholar Award recipients and having positions on Valparaiso University's mathematics and computer science faculty. A Valparaiso University (VU) graduate, Lara is in her fourth year as assistant professor. Kelly arrived at VU in the fall of 2011 to serve as a visiting assistant professor.

"I was on the math department search committee," Lara explains, "when Kelly's application came under review. I commented favorably to the other members, explaining what being a P.E.O. Scholar meant on Kelly's CV."

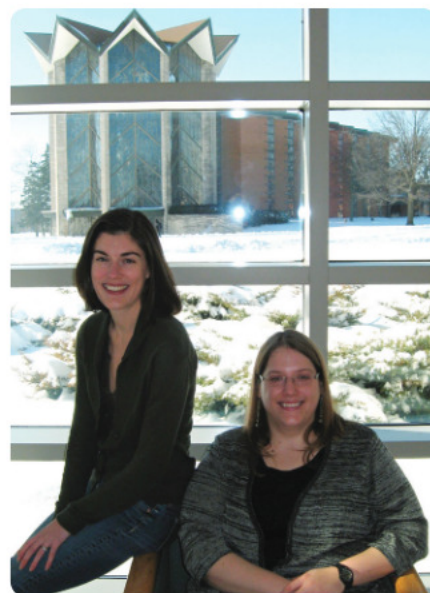
Lara, who became a P.E.O. in 2010, had never heard of P.E.O. until she met Ellen Crawford and her committee from Chapter AD, Ridgewood, New Jersey, in the fall of 2005 while she was studying at Rutgers University. Determined to find a Scholar Award winner in New Jersey, Ellen contacted numerous graduate school deans to find appropriate women Ph.D. students. As a result, Lara became the first of several successful Rutgers nominees and learned a good bit about P.E.O. as she presented programs to local chapters and spoke at the New Jersey state convention.

"I got a lot of encouragement from P.E.O.s during my time as a

Scholar in 2006-2007," says Lara. "At least one older relative of mine wasn't very excited about my earning a Ph.D. and spending so much time in school. It was affirming to meet women of her generation who did encourage me. And the surprise notes I received from various chapters seemed to appear just when I most needed an encouraging word. Sisters should never underestimate the good they do with kind words. The Scholar Award works differently from any other award I've received because of the added personal touch. That's something every sister can take pride in being a part of."

Having received numerous other awards, fellowships, and honors, Lara certainly knows this first-hand. She continues to receive recognition for her research in enumerative combinatorics and related areas, having already done presentations in Italy, Canada, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Scotland and Iceland.

Kelly was nominated for the award before her final year of graduate school at the University of Washington by her mother's chapter, FL, Bellevue, Washington; she became a sister in 2007. Kelly, too, has an established presence in international settings. After completing her Ph.D., she and her husband moved to Germany to begin her post-doctoral fellowship in algebraic geometry at the University of Cologne. The second year of the fellowship was spent in Berkeley, California, at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute and in Freiburg, Germany. A second



Math professors and former P.E.O. Scholar Award Winners Kelly Jabbusch and Lara Pudwell. The Valparaiso University Chapel of the Resurrection is in the background.

research position followed, taking her to the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. While in Europe, she remained active in P.E.O. through the P.E.O. Abroad Listserve.

"The thing about the Scholar Award that probably most affected my life was the incredible support I received from chapters all over the country," reflects Kelly. "Certainly the monetary value was great, but I was so encouraged by the cards and notes women sent me. The personal touch of the award was certainly something I'd never received from a scholarship."

Both women agree that the encouragement and support of women who value education as much as they do is what makes P.E.O. special. 🌸