



Marissa Bird, BA 2011, BScN 2014
Young Alumni Award 2018

As a nursing student at UBC, Marissa Bird already showed signs of excellence, contributing actively in class discussions, performing well in clinical placements, exhibiting strong public speaking skills, and engaging in ongoing research work. After graduating at the top of her class in 2014, Marissa returned to her hometown of Hamilton, Ontario. Soon she was practicing her skills in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at McMaster Children's Hospital. A developing interest in quality improvement led her to join the Pediatric Assessment of Critical Events team. Using real data from her hospital and combining evidence-based practice, clinical experience, and a passion for improving care, Marissa designed an early warning sign system for pediatrics that identifies hospitalized children who are in need of a higher level of care. Her process has no doubt saved lives and certainly leads to a safer hospital experience for children. Marissa is seen as a leader among her peers and consistently coaches and inspires others. Even now, having returned to school, she is co-mentoring two undergraduate students. Marissa's academic record at UBC was a prime consideration when she became one of the first students to be offered direct entry into McMaster's doctoral program. She quickly established her sustained commitment to academic excellence by obtaining A+ in both of her first semester doctoral courses last fall. With a goal of becoming an academic researcher, her full course load has not prevented Marissa from taking on research projects with her mentors at McMaster. Her own developing program of research focusses on improving outcomes for children with medical complexities and their families using telemedicine and digital health platforms.

