



Meritus College Fund 18th Annual Awards Reception



Welcoming the Class of 2014

PROGRAM

Host welcome: John Boland, CEO, KQED

Emcee: Diana Wolf, Executive Director

Speakers:

Raquel Gonzalez, 2003 Meritus Scholar,
Graduate of Ripon College

Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6

Visual toast to the Meritus Class of 2014

Monday, June 2, 2014

6-7:30pm

KQED // 2601 Mariposa Street

Sponsored by Zephyr Real Estate



Dear Friends,

We are exceptionally pleased to introduce our 18th class of Meritus Scholars, all of whom have demonstrated grit and ambition in their pursuit of a college education. Their unrelenting investment in their futures – in spite of often unimaginable hardship – will not only transform their lives, but the lives of their families, their neighborhoods, and our collective community. We are honored to join them on this meaningful journey and to be a part of their story.

Like those Scholars that came before them, these fifty-two graduates of San Francisco public high schools possess a special tenacity that sets them apart from their peers. While each of their stories is unique, they all possess the focus, drive, and hope to make a difference in the world. We applaud them in their aspirations as they take one step closer to realizing their dreams.

Our newest class – 96% of whom are the first in their families to attend college – can expect four transformational years in which they will expand academic skills and interests, build life-long friendships and networks, and lay the groundwork for future opportunities. They will discover new independence and responsibilities; be challenged by weaving the practical and theoretical together; and begin to think about how they can apply new skills and insights to endeavors beyond the undergraduate experience. This road will have many expected turns and Meritus will be there to support them every step of the way.

We, along with members of the Meritus community, believe that our students' path through college is best supported by a holistic four-year investment that marries scholarship aid, one-on-one coaching, and opportunities that make academic and future career aspirations a reality. This year alone our donors invested \$832,000 in direct aid to the class of 2014 Scholars. Meritus' community partners, the Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco and Minds Matter of San Francisco, are working to build a supportive pipeline from high school to through college. Our staff is eagerly working with this new class to demystify the road ahead and facilitate the transition to college through a series of one-to-one meetings and group workshops. Our mentors stand at the ready to offer insights, exposure, and guidance to support long-term aspirations. Together, we are building a vibrant community as we invest in the future – one student at a time.

Thank you to all who are joining us on this journey by making this meaningful partnership possible. Your continued engagement has resulted in 88% of our Scholars crossing the finish line to college graduation!

Congratulations to all!

Meritus College Fund

Anonymous

Mission High School

Will attend UC Santa Cruz

Donors: Kay & Abhay Parekh

More important than the degree or the economic status it may carry is the educational experience that college offers. For me, the material things a college degree can buy are less important than the concept that a college education will make me a more mature and compassionate person by exposing me to new ideas, people and points of view. I look at the college degree as a symbol of the type of person I am, a person with respect for others, a desire to help others and with a better and more complete understanding of my place in this world.

Naim Algaheim

Washington High School

Will attend San Francisco State University

Donors: Eva Auchincloss, Chris Gough, Patty & Paul Murphy, Molly & John Scully, Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco



Becoming a teacher is a goal I've set out to achieve, and I won't give up until I accomplish it. Becoming a teacher will allow me to have a great impact on children's lives at school and the decisions they make towards their education. As I prepare to start college, I am looking forward to starting a new journey that will allow me to get closer to my dreams and achieving them. I'm a little nervous, because it's a big challenge, but I know I can succeed because of the support and assistance I have received, which has made me determined to start and complete that chapter in my life.

Iva Alikaj

Galileo High School

Will attend UC Davis

Donors: Katherine & Duncan Kennedy



Being a first generation student with hopes of attending college, I carry with me the hopes and dreams of my parents' education that went unfulfilled. The difficult circumstances they faced under the Albanian communist regime, and then again as immigrants to the United States, have motivated me to do well in my studies. Although I believe my education has been strongly influenced by my background and highlighted by my parents' struggles, I recognize that I would like to gain a college education to satisfy my own curiosity in the world.

Ahmed Almahbashi

Mission High School

Will attend UC Davis

Donors: Helene & Charles Wright



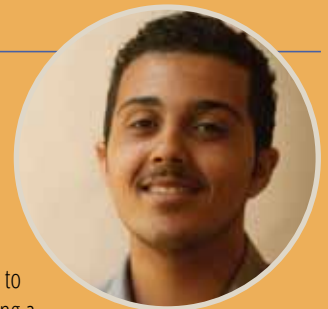
Since I can remember, my father has repeatedly recited an Arabic proverb to me: "Seek education from the cradle to the grave." Like my father, I believe in the Arabic proverb. It is now my turn to live my dream and ensure a successful future for my family and myself. I have a tremendous appreciation for education and the opportunities in the United States. I am grateful that I have the chance to pursue my education, and that my father has instilled in me a strong appreciation for learning. I am following my dreams to attend college and become a scientist.

Waleed Almakrai

Washington High School

Will attend San Francisco State University

Donor: Anonymous



Being that I am the first person in my whole family to overcome bleakness, it means a lot to me and my family that I attend college. Getting a college education does not only mean a degree, it means that I have the knowledge to do great things that can help other people and empower my community. In my community Mosque, many people are immigrants and hold very low paying jobs. I am a part of the first Yemeni-Muslim generation to break this cycle and set an example. I believe that education is not only power, but the key to opening many doors in life.

Theresa Atanoa

Thurgood Marshall High School

Will attend UC Santa Cruz

Donor: Julie Harkins



I have learned several lessons with the struggles I have had. First, trying to meet everyone's different expectations is a futile task. Negative comments and doubts have made me realize that every individual is different. Dwelling on negativity is not productive or helpful for me. I have learned how to focus my energy as motivation to strive to improve myself on my own terms. In the end, my life is my path and no one else. I'm creating my own motivation; I am striving to be an example for other Pacific Islander youth who are trying to look for a better life here in the United States.

Safia Belayadi

Galileo High School
Will attend UC Davis

Donor: Jane Borg – The Joseph Borg Scholarship

My experiences being Algerian American affect my thoughts on gender roles and opportunities. I question whether I would think the same way now if I had stayed in Algeria. I would miss many opportunities, making me wonder if I would realize life had more to offer than given to me by society. These experiences entice me to create a multicultural box holding tools I'll use always, like being bilingual and a minority in America. These tools will shape my major in International Relations. I'll be the positive change in the representation of Islamic faith, building bridges in both places where walls now stand.



My Phoi "Tiffany" Chau

Washington High School
Will attend University of San Diego

Donor: Kaiser Permanente Health Education Fund for Northern California

I believe that college not only aims to increase the knowledge of students, but also integrates social diversity and awareness into the students' experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. As an aspiring healthcare professional, I believe having this understanding will be important to better communicate with the diverse communities of which I will work with in the future. I am confident that a college experience will equip me with the tools to become a multifaceted student, a critical thinker, and a progressive citizen of the world.



Simon Berhe

Wallenberg High School
Will attend San Francisco State University

Donor: WCC Scholarship Foundation – The Lutrell Huddelston Award

People may see my story as one of hardship, but I like to look at the bright side. Throughout my continuous efforts and struggles, I could honestly say I have grown to become a stronger person, in and out of school. My journey taught me to be independent, have courage, and most of all, responsibility. I believe my experience in Eritrea and adapting to a life in a totally different country have prepared me for the challenges of transitioning to college life and success.



Zaria Clemmons

Thurgood Marshall High School
Will attend Agnes Scott College

Donors: Pam & Jamie Diwik

I am confident that college will be reached and successfully completed by me because of the sacrifices and investments made on my behalf. I have my cleats tied tight and I am ready to run the race because I know that I'm not just running for myself. I'm running for my sisters' lost college dreams, too, and as I have prepared for college, I have realized this. My hardships and struggle act solely as the prologue to what will be a story about a life of greatness and endless possibilities.



Azaian Irac Cagaligan

Lincoln High School
Will attend San Jose State University

Donor: Robert Meister

I have worked different jobs, as a vendor in SF Giants Stadium, a parking assistant in St. Emydius Church, and an ambassador for Bank of America. Through these jobs and internships, I have met people with different degrees of education that showed me the advantages of having a college degree. Not only is a college degree important, but the experiences with my peers are what I am looking forward to during my college experience. Hopefully, I can grow not only personally, but also intellectually during this experience.



Zenay Clemmons

Thurgood Marshall High School
Will attend Agnes Scott College

Donors: Tracy Sedlock & Barnaby Walsh

In the African American Community we are lacking female leaders but I know that I have the strength and determination to change this. Being a rising first-generation college student and coming from a low-income, single parent household created many hurdles along my road to success, but I am persevering. With a college education I will be able to advocate for children in predicaments similar to my own, as a role model who has worked hard to change her outcome and defy statistics. I will stand for underprivileged children like myself so they, too, can further their education.



Vincent Do

Galileo High School

Will attend Denison University

Donors: Maria & Andy Burtis, Annie Williams & Harry Schulman



By succeeding in college I will become a role model for others. I want to show people who may have given up hope that they, too, can break the cycle of poverty. I not only want to further myself in academics but to have personal growth and learn about other types of people and cultures. I want to be part of a community of learning and growing together. This will help me be stronger and have deeper understanding of others, and it will assist me in a career of working with people.

Gabriela Flores Ledezma

S.F. International High School

Will attend CSU Monterey Bay

Donor: Kaiser Permanente Health Education Fund for Northern California



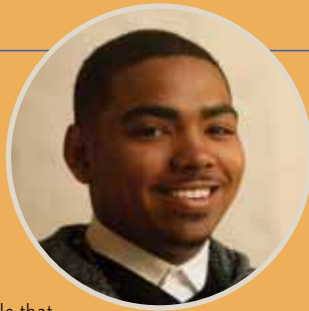
Once I moved to United States and overcame the challenges here, everything that I had gone through in El Salvador seemed to have a reason and helped me become the leader that I am today. I have been able to find time for extracurricular activities at my school. I have been able to take on leaderships roles in other clubs and organizations, and I have also gotten involved in college preparation programs. Being a resilient person and creating communities to support myself has allowed me to push past barriers and be successful in my achievements which I will continue to do in college and throughout my future.

Antonio Godoy

O'Connell High School

Will attend Pitzer College

Donor: William Hobi



Although I have moved from my home community and the hopelessness that place inspired, I can never forget my neighborhood and most importantly the extraordinary people that I have known since I was a toddler. I can still see the elderly man in a wheel chair from Alabama who I used to see every day sitting outside the building taught me how to tie my shoes. These people molded my perspective of the unending cycle of poverty that results from a lack of education and hope. I seek higher education for myself in order to give back to my community.

Valerie Greene

Mission High School

Will attend CSU Sacramento

Donors: Anonymous, Victoria Thorp & Jim Migdal



I want to eventually be able to see more unity between the communities of my peers. Violence is something that I think is keeping us all divided. If there were more voices encouraging a more propitious community of black young leaders, then violence would be without importance. But before we are able to obtain that, there must be enough youth stepping out to make that change, not just wanting to see one. If there is one thing that I have learned from myself, it is the fact that I definitely want to be one to make a positive change possible for myself, community and peers.

Bruno Haesbaert

Lowell High School

Will attend Cal Poly Pomona

Donor: Tom Chavez – The Chavez Family 10x10 Award



I want to go to college so I can work towards being who I want be. The personality I have formed from my experiences has helped me befriend a wide spectrum of people. Friends can find me for advice since I can think of several solutions, while participating in different clubs and being diverse in my interests, makes me relatable. Using my math and people skills, I want to go into the field of engineering to work with others on planning projects.

Martin Herrera-Pazmino

School of the Arts

Will attend Sonoma State University

Donors: Johanna & Thomas Baruch, Venetta & John Rohal, Tania Stepanian, Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco

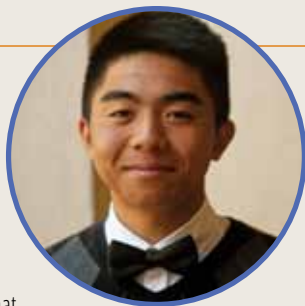


I have lived in the Mission District of San Francisco for the past 17 years. The Mission is home to me and has taught me all I know about the real world. It is the place where I fell in love with Hip-Hop, where I have worked with youth throughout high school, and where I continue to learn about myself. It is the reason I think about my future because I know that I can never leave the Mission for good. I want to be able to give to the community that has given me more than I can ask for.

Allen Huang

Balboa High School
Will attend UC Davis
Donors: Agents of Zephyr Real Estate

Through the social discrepancies between my family and school life, guidance of PULSE (Peers United for Leadership, Service and Equity), and the compassion of the dragon boat community in San Francisco, I have learned something about what success really means. I see mine being my ability to critically apply my knowledge to comprehend and challenge the adversity of the communities I belong to. While college is a gateway to prosperity in this capitalistic society, money becomes much less when you are able to make a difference in someone's life. In my eyes, that is the true measure of success.



Johnson Kam

Burton High School
Will attend UC Santa Barbara
Donor: Tim Ranzetta

It is painful to see my father deal with a terrible disease on a daily basis, unable to repair his health. I want to be directly involved in providing therapeutic services to help individuals like my father manage their medical conditions. After obtaining a higher level of education, I would like to work toward providing affordable healthcare to my community. I believe people should have adequate health care despite their financial disadvantages or background. I am excited to work in the health field and have the opportunity to study medicine, something I truly feel passionate for.



Zhaoyang "Alex" Huang

Lincoln High School
Will attend San Jose State University
Donor: Tim Ranzetta

In my dictionary, College is a chance for me to understand what I need for my future, and it is also a transition for me to go to the next step of my life. Since I am an immigrant to the United States, I want to enhance my knowledge of the society and improve myself throughout the college year. In the college year, I am mostly looking forward for good classes that help me to gain more academic knowledge and move on to the next level of learning.



Jiayao "Kevin" Lin

Lincoln High School
Will attend UC Santa Cruz
Donors: Orbis Investment Management, Dr. Richmond Prescott, Kurt Wessels, Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco

I remember the date of my cousin's graduation ceremony. Everyone in my family went to attend his graduation ceremony. My cousin was wearing a black cap and gown sitting on a chair near the front stage of the auditorium. When he walked up to the stage and held up his certificate, everyone in his family stood up and started crying. He was the first child in his family who finished college education. I know I can be the first child in my family to finish education and bring pride to my family.



Joshay Jones

Leadership High School
Will attend CSU Long Beach
Donors: Jen & Ryan Sweeney

When I first began to think about college, I wanted to attend so that I could get a good job and support my family, but then I started to think about the chance to make an impact on others as well. Attending college and getting a good job and being able to support my family is very important, but whose life would I have impacted? When I became a senior and I started applying to colleges, I began to realize that I wanted to go to college to show underrepresented youth that it is possible to advance and improve.



Diana Liu

Washington High School
Will attend UC Santa Cruz
Donors: Kay Black, Barbera Brooks & Henrik Jones, Mary Ann Mason, Jane & Richard Springwater, Lynn White, Cora Yang, Sara Zeff Geber, Troy Holtzinger Memorial Fund, Minds Matter of San Francisco

I've already broken the cycle of poverty by immigrating to America at age seven and working diligently to overcome the language barrier. I am graduating high school and applying to college to receive an education my parents and community does not have, to achieve a meaningful career. In 2012, when I visited my friends in Long Chuan, most of them had already dropped out of school to work in factories and help their families financially. If I can help young people, like my friends in Long Chuan, to obtain resources unavailable to them then they will also be able to break the cycle of poverty.



Hubert "Ryan" Juan

Balboa High School
Will attend Fresno State University
Donors: Camilla & George Smith

All in all, my mother is my motivation. I watched her suffer enough when I was a kid, and the only way I can repay her is through education. Getting a higher education would allow me to get out of poverty and change my mother's life. I want to show the world that I am capable of doing things on my own if I put in the hard work. I want my mom to be able to say to the world that she has a son who has a doctorate degree in forensic pathology.



Sheyla Lopez

City Arts & Technology
Will attend UC Merced
Donor: Anonymous

To me, college is a way to have a different and better life than my parents. My parents came to this country with no money but with big dreams and some of those dreams they have made true. To me college would be a way to give back to my parents for all their hard work. To do things that I could maybe never get the chance to do if I didn't get a college degree. To study abroad, meet people from other countries and make memories that I can look back on and say, "I'm glad I went to college."



Mariluz Maldonado

Lincoln High School
Will attend UC Davis
Donor: Tim Ranzetta

As the current Co-President of the Japanese Culture Club, I make it a priority to focus on maintaining the same bonds that I had experienced in Japan. Regardless of a student's background, I want them to have a second home. Although born into a Latin family, I have been shaped by many different cultures, including Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. I hope to continue to maintain cross-cultural bonds. I would like to become a melting pot, be open to the customs of the college, and transcend stereotypes and boundaries.



Maritza Ng Du

Galileo High School
Will attend UC Davis
Donor: Kaiser Permanente Health Education Fund of Northern California

Being in an environment where people want to be there rather than having to be there makes the experience more enriching. Students in high school are required to attend classes, but college is an option. I want to meet students who value their education, many who come from different parts of the world. Meeting more people with different backgrounds will expand my knowledge and global awareness. I will understand the patients and people I will be working with because I value and appreciate diversity.



Jessica Ngai

Thurgood Marshall High School
Will attend UC Davis
Donors: Stringbox Donors – Beate Boultinghouse & Michael Fury, Ardis & Alfred Breslau, Mimi Jensen & Jerry Elbaum, Ann & Karl Ludwig, Lucille Sutton; Minds Matter of San Francisco

Attending college is very important to me because my parents came to the United States to ensure me the "American Dream," a better education than they had in China. As a first generation child entering a university level education, from Chinese immigrant parents with only a high school diploma, I will become the most educated in my family. My parents are my main motivation. As their daughter, I want to bring honor to my family, and show them as a woman I can be successful in this new world.



Han O

Lowell High School
Will attend San Jose State University
Donor: St. Francis Hospital Foundation

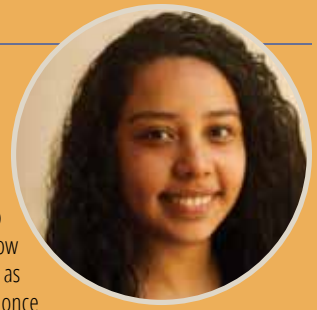
My experience taught me to dream, a lifetime skill. What I have been through and what I have learned made me the person I am today. I am capable of managing myself in stressful situations and in striving for what I want. My motivation is not something I conjured up; it is perseverance through the hardships I experienced that motivates me. I know that it is up to me to make my dream come true and to decide what I want to gain in college. I want to utilize my resources and take advantages of the opportunities given to me.



Erika Palomo

Academy of Arts & Sciences
Will attend Holy Names University
Donors: Susan Byrd and Mark Lampert

I can confidently say that I play the guitar. I play it with feeling and with passion. It helps me let go and take one step at a time and to not give up. Now I don't give up on things that are difficult as easily as I did in my past. I have learned to be persistent. I once heard, "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game." I didn't strike out when I was learning to play guitar. This experience taught me to never give up and to always challenge myself to think of what I can do and not what I can't do.



John Perkins

Mission High School
Will attend UC Santa Barbara
Donor: Tim Ranzetta

College is going to be my way of ensuring that my future is better than my past. Growing up, my family constantly battled to make it through each month with out running out of food, or money, and I believe a lack of a college education is partially to blame for that. My goal in college is to use whatever resources I have at hand to make sure I can do more than just graduate with a degree. I'm looking forward to making connections before I graduate from college. I want to be able to have job interviews the day after I walk on stage and receive my diploma.



Vanessa Pon Wong

Balboa High School
Will attend CSU Chico
Donor: WCC Scholarship Foundation – The Luttrell Huddleston Award

I fixated on this language, English, but I continue to speak others. At home, I speak Hakka. I speak Mandarin in AP Chinese class, Cantonese, and Spanish with my friends during lunch. I would like to use my abilities to study International Business and perhaps combine that with language studies. I wish to combine these particular subjects because nowadays, business around the world is expanding so that in my future, mastering languages and business might help solve many current global challenges.



Fernando Portillo

Gateway High School
Will attend UC Santa Cruz
Donor: WCC Scholarship Foundation – The Luttrell Huddleston Award

I want to attend college and graduate because I want to further expand my education and also build a road that can one day lead to a successful future. Emigrating from El Salvador and living in a low-income household has created many obstacles for my family as well as in my academic life. Often, these barriers have led me to have thoughts of giving up. The dedication that both of my parents have displayed throughout my life has served as motivation for me to continue pushing towards accomplishing my goals. I am intrigued by the medical field, and I seek to pursue a career in medicine.



Kateryn Raymundo

Washington High School
Will attend San Francisco State University
Donor: Tim Ranzetta



Having a college education will open doors for me that were closed to my parents, doors that allow me to go home and spend time with my family instead of working overtime. These doors will allow me the freedom to create a future in which I have control. A college education is the key to my success and ability to provide for my family. Most of my family lives in Guatemala. Education and college is a dream to them; they have to drop out of school because they can't afford it. To me, college education means breaking the cycle of poverty in my family.

Gisele Souza Amorin

Mission High School
Will attend CSU East Bay
Donor: WCC Scholarship Foundation – The Lutrell Huddleston Award



In college, I want to study psychology and youth counseling so that in the future I can work with immigrant kids who also face the hardships of separation and unification with their family. As a Brazilian who went to a mostly Latino high school, I also intend on becoming trilingual so that I can offer my services to many communities. I hope to tell my own story and teach kids that they should take pride in the struggles that their families face.

Saeeda Shawasheh

Gateway High School
Will attend Notre Dame de Nemur University
Donors: Mauree Jane & Mark Perry – The Perry Family 10x10 Award



In my culture, many young Muslim women, such as me, are deprived of an education. They are forced to leave school and become a wife at a young age, and this disrupts the education process. My mother had a marriage arranged for her when she was 17 years old, and she had no say in the decision. In Islamic culture, girls are the honor of the family, and we face heavy pressure to conform and not disobey our family in any way, especially our parents. Fortunately, I have the opportunity to get an education because I live in America, a country known for land of opportunities.

Jenny Tam

Lincoln High School
Will attend UC San Diego
Donor: Kaiser Permanente Health Education Fund for Northern California



College is important to me because this is the way I can learn more about my career. My parents only graduated from high school and have always told me that I can only be able to do what I want to do if I go to college and study hard. Also, I really want to help people, and my intended profession can allow me to follow my dream. The only way I can become a physical therapist or nurse is to do well in school and learn all I can, apply it, and hopefully help people in the end.

Nandi Silas

Burton High School
Will attend UC Santa Barbara
Donors: Tonia & Adam Karr, Miki & Martin Kobinger



I will be the first person in my family to graduate from a four year university. My completion of higher education will not only be a proud moment for myself, but also for my family and my community. It is rare for a minority from an urban area like mine to go to a university, let alone complete. This has caused several minority youth in my community to not pursue an education. However, I feel that if I am able to leave my area to gain knowledge, I can use that knowledge to give back to where I came from.

Briana Tran

Wallenberg High School
Will attend UC Los Angeles
Donors: Diane Foug & Tony Schneider



Although my parents do not believe that I can make a living from an art career, I want to prove them wrong. My parents want me to stay in the City and get a job while going to City College. However, I want to choose what I want to do. Furthering my education will allow me to have an advantage when I apply for jobs. College is important to me because it gives me the opportunity to learn more about my surroundings and myself. It is a chance for me to get out of my comfort zone and to challenge myself. I plan to educate others about the arts.

Monkhmergen "Monkhoo" Tsogtbayar

Galileo High School
Will attend UC Davis

Donor: Jane Borg – The Joseph Borg Scholarship



In college, I want to experience life outside my parents' home while also challenging myself as a student and as a up and coming adult. I love learning and in college I'll be able to experience a completely new and special learning experience. I will be able to expand my mind and body to become a new person. But most of all, I'm looking forward to the new kind of community I might find in college and how I grow and change from what I am now to what I will become.

Valery Vallin

Lincoln High School
Will attend St. Mary's College
Donor: Julie Harkins



I have been motivated to attend college ever since I was in elementary school. Sharing a studio apartment with four people, moving throughout the week between two divorced parents, and worrying about finances has taught me many life lessons, one being that nothing worthwhile ever comes easy. I believe that with a college education I can live a future that was not offered to me in my past. I am motivated to graduate in order to achieve my goals and live a happy fulfilling life. I want to explore new majors and expand my horizons to get on the track to pursuing a career that will make me happy.

Tamicia Wakefield

International Studies Academy
Will attend Mills College
Donor: The David and Maria Waitrovich Family Charitable Fund



I see the importance of focusing on school and going to college, not just for myself, but for everyone around me. I need to educate myself for my family, so they would never have to sleep on someone's living room floor again. I need to go to college for my younger brother who has autism and is looked down upon by his peers and teachers. I need to be someone with wisdom so I can do for students what my teachers, friends, and administrators did for me. They gave me hope to be the best student and person I could possibly be and to believe in myself and my abilities.

Jordan Wilson

Washington High School
Will attend Loyola University
Donor: The David and Maria Waitrovich Family Charitable Fund



Jackie Robinson once said "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." I have been living by the words of the man who helped create social justice throughout the United States. In order to have an impact on others I must let others impact me. Getting a college education will open doors to endless opportunity. Higher education will prepare me for obstacles that I may face in my later chapters of life and will give me a better understanding of the world.

Chiu Wa "Caspar" Wu

Mission High School
Will attend UC Berkeley
Donor: Dodge & Cox



Three years ago, going to college was an unreachable dream for me. I thought college is for rich people, and poor kid like me would never go to college. However, moving to the United States has made many changes in my life. The next change waiting for me is college. I am excited to think that this time next year, I will be a college student. While I am anxious about the courses I will take and people I will meet, I have faith in myself. I know that if I keep working hard in school and communicate well with others, I will be indestructible.

Jeffrey Wu

Balboa High School
Will attend UC Santa Cruz
Donors: Lisa Erdberg & Dennis Gibbons



I am determined to have a better future and be successful in life so my future family won't have to struggle like I have. Not only am I looking to have a better future myself but for others by helping those with mental illnesses. I want to be able to help those in need either by opening up a free therapy center or have a career that involves helping others and giving back to society. I want to educate people and let them know that help is available at all times.

Laura Wu

Galileo High School
Will attend UC Merced

**Donors: Elizabeth & Geoffrey Hazard,
Gee Gee Bland Platt, Jacqueline Young**



Obtaining a college degree is important for me because I want the chance to grow independently, aspire in the professional health and science field, build connections, and achieve something my parents never had the opportunity, but encouraged me to have. Being a first generation to graduate with a college degree will undoubtedly make myself and my family proud. I want to continue to help educate my community and family with the college experience and degree. What I am most looking forward to in college are meeting new people and exploring new hobbies or interests.

Zhixiang "Leon" Yuan

Washington High School
Will attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

**Donors: Anonymous,
Robert & Anna Fairbank,
Minds Matter of San Francisco**



The feeling of being lost as an immigrant in America before tutoring and joining church could not match how devoted I feel now. I discovered a deep passion to better my community despite my lack of a sense of family and my financial situation. This passion has changed me into a person I always wanted to be – sharp, outgoing, and enthusiastic. Now that I have broadened my perception about the community around me, I want to use this opportunity to expand my knowledge and bring my ambition to college in order to explore the ways where my contributions will make an even more effective difference in society.

Shirley Wu

Washington High School
Will attend UC Davis

**Donor: Kaiser Permanente Health
Education Fund for Northern California**



My parents always emphasized to me the importance of obtaining a higher education because when they were my age they did not have the opportunity. I have learned the importance of having a college education from my parents' struggles. I appreciate that they were willing to give up their life in China and come to America so I could receive a better education and have a better life. I will be the first person in my family to attend college. Therefore, having the opportunity to obtain a higher education motivates me to work harder to get there.

Thant Zaw

Balboa High School
Will attend UC Davis

**Donors: Susan & Jim Swartz – The Swartz
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My desire to make a difference in someone else's life led me to join the Chinese Progressive Association's youth program (Youth Mojo) to help this population fight for their rights. Every week, we had wage theft and human right workshops for everyone who was willing to learn and know their right to defend themselves at work. The process of helping other has opened my eyes and changed me as a person; all the life experiences and the tenacity that I have, I am going to achieve my goals, becoming a physician, no matter how difficult the journey will be.

Qinhao Xu

Thurgood Marshall High School
Will attend UC Los Angeles

Donors: Leslie & Buzz Burlock



Witnessing my father's hardship and the discrimination he experienced helped me to realize that our life in America is difficult. I acknowledged my parents' hard work. Their hardships, their determination, and their protectiveness demonstrated a way to be resilient in my personal life and persistent in both academic and work settings. The lesson my parents have taught me enable me to take advantage of academic opportunities like Stanford Medical Youth Science Program and job opportunities like Juma Ventures. I also decided to invest in my schoolwork and into finding jobs to support my family.

Lisha Zhang

Lincoln High School
Will attend UC Berkeley

**Donors: Brenda Bottum,
Elizabeth Burnham**



I am thankful that I had a chance to develop my expression skills. Having lived the life of an English learner, I befriend other English learners in school and try to make them feel less self-conscious about not knowing a dominant language. English learners, because of their language challenges, have been forced to learn creative ways to communicate. As a former English learner, I now view my experience positively, and feel fortunate to have had an opportunity that has made me a better person. My immigration experience has shaped me into a more flexible, a more understanding, and a stronger individual.

Our many thanks for your support in 2013-2014!

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