



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Bassett Unified School District

on the move

904 North Willow Avenue ■ La Puente, CA 91746 ■ (626) 931-3000 ■ (626) 931-3020 ■ www.bassettusd.org

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Bassett Unified Alumnus Gives Back to Community as Mentor to Olympian Peers

BASSETT, CA – Bassett High Class of 2007 graduate William Herrera returned to his alma mater to give back to his community, inspiring students that they can achieve anything despite the obstacles they may face in their lives.

Herrera was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at birth and spent his entire life confined to a wheelchair. However, he never allowed his disability to hinder his ability to succeed. With the support of the Orthopedically Impaired (OI) department at Bassett High, Herrera graduated and earned a Bachelor's degree in graphic design with a minor in business management at Cal Poly Pomona.

He has since returned to Bassett High to mentor and guide students in their studies through THINK Together, an organization helping students achieve their personal and academic goals.

"THINK Together opened up my eyes in helping and working with students, which is something I never thought I would be doing," Herrera said. "It's fun connecting with the students because it shows that everyone is basically the same. We all have our likes and dislikes and it doesn't matter if you have a disability or not.

Bassett High's OI department and teachers provide tools and resources for disabled students. Since Herrera was affected by muscular dystrophy, which is the weakening of muscles caused by defects in a person's genes that decreases mobility, he was provided a notetaking assistant in his classes since he had difficulty taking notes.

In addition to supporting students in the classroom, OI provides assistance for students with self-help needs, including during meal times and using the restroom.

"William had the determination and perseverance to meet the same expectations as any other student in class," Bassett High School social studies teacher Christopher Finch said. "His work habits and positive attitude were an inspiration to his classmates and myself."

Herrera works as an independent graphic designer and photographer in addition to being a community outreach provider for THINK Together. He plans to return to college to pursue a master's degree in counseling.

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“Thank you, William, for offering your experience and knowledge to mentor your Olympian peers – you exemplify how hard work and perseverance leads to success,” Bassett Unified Superintendent Debra French said. “Bassett Unified is proud to welcome back our alumni. The strong partnerships we’re forging with our students and graduates highlight what makes Bassett such a special community.”

PHOTO:

062618_BASSETT_HERRERA: Bassett High School Class of 2007 alumni William Herrera, diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at birth, mentors and guides students in their studies through THINK Together, an organization helping students achieve their personal and academic goals.

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Bassett Unified School District Mission – Working collaboratively with all stakeholders, the Bassett Unified School District will provide engaging and rigorous learning opportunities, using integrated technology in state-of-the-art learning environments, to graduate College and Career Ready students.

Bassett Unified School District Vision – We are a community committed to educating and empowering our students to think creatively, act responsibly, and communicate effectively in order to be successful members of society and make a positive impact on the lives of others.