



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Frontier High Student Earns Recognition for Academic Turnaround, Community Work

WHITTIER – When Janice Palapa enrolled at Frontier High School as a junior in August 2016, she was far behind in her school credits, in low spirits and planned to stay only for as long as it took her to get back on track to graduate.

Since then, Palapa has marched in the 2017 Rose Bowl Parade as a Gold Award Girl Scout, joined the school's Associated Student Body and Soroptimist student club, and serves as a student representative on Frontier's Site Council and LCAP Advisory Board, all the while earning a full school year's worth of credits in just one semester.

Instead of leaving Frontier, Palapa will proudly walk as an FHS class of 2018 graduate.

For her determination and hard work, Palapa was recognized by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees with an Award of Merit on April 11.

"Janice's leadership skills are evident in the classroom and in the way she demonstrates her commitment to her community through her continued work with the Girl Scouts, her church and Frontier," Principal Margie Moriarty said. "It is Janice's commitment to the Frontier community that has earned her this recognition."

Palapa's academic turnaround has been fueled by a combination of parental and school support, as well as the desire to give back to her community despite her hectic school schedule.

"I would like to thank the terrific teachers at Frontier for pushing me to achieve nothing but the best," Palapa said. "Frontier does not receive enough credit for its student successes. My counselor, Mr. Tamayo, is truly an extraordinary person, who has made it possible for me to achieve and prosper."

Palapa's main focus upon enrolling at Frontier was to remediate her math and science credits, then return to a comprehensive high school to continue playing softball. Once enrolled, Palapa completely immersed herself in schoolwork under the watchful eye of her mother, Reyna, who for the first few months of the school year went to Frontier every day to ensure Janice was in class and getting all of her work done.

Palapa persevered and earned 58 school credits – the equivalent of an entire academic year – in just one semester. At the same time, Palapa discovered a love for community work and leadership.

In December, Palapa successfully executed a Girl Scouts of America project in which she fundraised and collected donations to put together 50 backpacks for nonprofit Healing Hearts Across Borders. The organization provides free medical and dental care to impoverished residents of Tijuana, Mexico.

Palapa raised more than \$600 and collected donations from local stores, churches and the surrounding community. With the funds and donations, Palapa filled the backpacks with basic school supplies. She will be officially recognized with a Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn, in June.

Upon graduation, Palapa looks forward to a career in the United States Armed Forces, with a dream of becoming a drill sergeant for the Marine Corps.

“In such a short time, Janice has become a model student and leader at Frontier, serving as an example to her peers,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “I would like to commend the teachers and staff at Frontier High for providing Janice with the support she needed to regain control of her education and pursue her goals.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

051717_WUHSD_PALAPA: Initially behind in credits and in low spirits, Janice Palapa found a nurturing environment in Frontier High School, where she has joined student clubs and participates in community service activities. She Palapa was recognized by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees with an Award of Merit on April 11. She is pictured with Principal Margie Moriarty and counselor Roberto Tamayo.

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Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.*

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