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Baldwin Park Unified Junior Named NABE Essay Contest Winner

BALDWIN PARK – Sierra Vista High School junior Jinhui Liu was recognized as a first-place winner in the high school division of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) student essay contest.

Liu crafted a passionate essay about how being a bilingual student has helped him connect with others and be a source of good while he serves those around him. The honor comes along with a \$500 scholarship, trophy and certificate.

Liu will present his essay in English and Mandarin at the annual NABE conference in Portland, Ore. on Friday, Feb. 24, joined by his mother and Sierra Vista High School teacher Charlene Fried. This is the third year in a row that Fried has taught and mentored a NABE essay winner.

“First, I want to thank my mom for helping me get to America, and my aunt for her support and encouragement,” Liu said. “I want to thank everyone in BPUSD, and especially everyone at Sierra Vista High School for their support. I want to thank Charlene Fried because she encouraged me to do this and without her support, I would not have submitted this essay. I also want to thank my AP computer science principles teacher, Jimmy Salcedo, because he inspired my future studies in computers.”

Fried first started working with Liu during his freshman year, when school was online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Liu, who immigrated to the United States during seventh grade, reclassified this year into regular English classes and currently holds a 4.0 GPA.

“He is a giver, he wants to help others more than himself and he is always doing something for someone else,” Fried said. “In our English Language Development class, when we were online, he would always help other students. In-person, he continues to help students who are new arrivals to the U.S.”

Liu serves as president of the school’s IDEAS club, and is a member of the National Honor Society and the SVHS Leo Club. After high school, Liu said he plans to study computer science or programming at a university.

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In a culture of high expectations and academic rigor and an environment of support, understanding, and emotional safety, all Baldwin Park Unified School District students will graduate with a valued and highly respected diploma, prepared with the relevant skills, knowledge, and personal attributes necessary for success in a university or other institution of higher education and/or any post-secondary options of their choice.



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During the upcoming NABE conference, Fried will present a workshop and Liu will assist her with all technology needs. Liu, whose favorite course this year is AP computer science, said he is happy to help Fried during her presentation.

In his essay, Liu describes feeling disconnected from his mom and his new home in the United States because of language barriers. He writes that he learned about American history and immigration in middle school, but was taken back by the lack of acceptance for people like his mom, who work so hard to achieve the American dream.

However, through becoming a bilingual learner and helping serve as a translator for his mom, Liu said he increased his understanding of his mom's experiences and felt gratitude to her for the sacrifices that she made to ensure he received an education in a supportive environment.

In his essay, Liu writes: "By becoming bilingual and culturally aware, I am preparing myself for my future, a future that will enable me to love and serve all people."

When he first arrived in Southern California, Liu said another student helped him navigate the new surroundings, culture and language and his long-term goal is to continue giving back to others in the same kind and generous way.

PHOTO

BPUSD_SVHS Jinhui Liu: Sierra Vista High School junior Jinhui Liu was named a first-place winner in the high school division of the NABE student essay contest.

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