



Whittier Union

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 22, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

Whittier Union Seniors Will Pursue Dreams, Higher Education as Posse Foundation Scholars

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School seniors Zulema Gamboa and Nevaeh Esteves-Parker have much in common. Friends since middle school, they have both become top scholars at Santa Fe High and aspire to pursue their higher education in locations where their learning experiences will be embellished by seasonal weather and traditions not common in Southern California.

Gamboa and Esteves-Parker, who share identical 4.3 GPAs, will soon start packing their bags to travel to prestigious colleges across the country after being named 2024 Posse Foundation scholars, earning full-ride scholarships to attend Hobart and William Smith Colleges in upstate New York and Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, respectively.

“It was a surreal moment when I found out I won the Posse scholarship,” Gamboa said. “Being a Posse scholar feels like a blessing to me. In the beginning you think the odds are too great to be named a winner, so now that I have received this honor, I feel so proud and blessed to be able to live this experience. So far, the journey has been great, and the people are amazing.”

The unusual recruiting process of the Posse Foundation centers on a series of interviews with Posse-nominated students in more than 20 cities across the country, students who are looking to secure an admission at one of more than 60 Posse Foundation partner schools, many of which are private universities with small student populations. Posse’s mission is to recruit a small group of students with diverse backgrounds and train them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

As elementary school children, both Gamboa and Esteves-Parker found passions that helped shape their character and leadership skills and prepared them for the rigors of the Posse interview process.

Gamboa has been involved in the Associated Student Body (ASB) and leadership since the fourth grade, currently serving in Santa Fe’s ASB executive cabinet. Gamboa hopes to continue in student government roles at Hobart and William Smith. Likewise, Esteves-Parker discovered a love for softball in the fourth grade and has served as captain on Santa Fe’s junior varsity team for the last three years, though she said she has no plans to continue playing softball at the college level.

Esteves-Parker has her sights set on becoming a children’s clinical psychologist, a career path she learned about in her AP psychology class.

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Her interest in the subject expanded when she joined the school’s Psychology Club, where she participated in stress seminars, including one during finals week where students wrote down their fears on a piece of paper and put it in a shredder as a coping mechanism.

“I’m attracted to this field because I’ve always been a good listener. With my family and friends, I am usually the person they come to talk to,” Esteves-Parker said. “I really enjoy helping people. The reason I stayed on the J.V. team instead of moving to Varsity in my senior year is so I could continue to mentor the younger players. This is a tough sport, and you can really get down on yourself.”

Gamboa is looking to major in biology on her way to a career as a licensed physical therapist, a career choice inspired by a movie Gamboa saw about a woman who required extensive physical therapy. Her proudest moment at Santa Fe came when she was the lead planner for the school’s 2023 Top 100 student scholar celebration, an honor that she also received.

“It was my big solo project, organizing the Top 100, and there was so much to do. It’s a huge event, but it turned out really well,” Gamboa said. “It was a big step up for me, because I had never hosted an event of this magnitude before. It was super fulfilling for me and helped me so much with my confidence.”

Both Gamboa and Esteves-Parker said they are grateful for the support they have received from Santa Fe High faculty and staff, excited about their new schools and looking forward to experiencing the four seasons and being in new geographic locations that can lead them to new people, new passions and help shape their identities further.

“Having one Santa Fe Chieftain being named a Posse scholar is a great honor for the school. Having two students receive the scholarship is phenomenal,” Santa Fe Principal Craig Campbell said. “Congratulations to Zulema and Nevaeh, whose great character and passion have made them Santa Fe campus leaders. Best of luck to them as Posse scholars.”

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHSD_POSSE1: Santa Fe High School seniors Zulema Gamboa (right) and Nevaeh Esteves-Parker (left) have been named 2024 Posse Foundation Scholars, giving them full-ride scholarships to Hobart & William Smith Colleges in upstate New York and Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, respectively.

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