



Whittier Union

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 18, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Senior Receives Award of Merit for Academic, Personal Perseverance

WHITTIER – Whittier High School senior Fabiola Ramirez stands as a testament to resilience, facing and conquering challenges that few encounter in a lifetime. From the moment she was born with severe hearing loss in both ears, labeled medically hard of hearing, Ramirez has defied stereotypes and refused to let her unique journey be defined by her hearing loss.

Ramirez, a lifelong Whittier resident, has worn hearing aids since childhood, enduring the isolating experience of being the only student in her class with such devices. Amid instances of bullying, she transferred elementary schools twice. However, her journey took a positive turn when she enrolled at Katherine Edwards Middle School, where she began to find her stride.

For her ability to overcome challenges and excel in her academic and personal pursuits, Ramirez was recognized with an Award of Merit by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during a March 12 meeting.

“I am deeply honored and immensely grateful to stand before you today as the recipient of the 2024 Whittier High Award of Merit,” Ramirez said during the meeting. “I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Board and principal Liggett for recognizing my academic achievement, your belief in my ability means the world to me. I am profoundly grateful for this honor and to my family and friends whose love and encouragement have been my guiding light.”

As a middle school student, Ramirez discovered a love for running and was recognized as one of the top runners in her physical education classes. Her teacher connected her with Whittier High’s cross country team, helping set Ramirez up for success as she entered her freshman year in 2020. However, Ramirez, like all students that year, faced the challenge of navigating the shift to online learning due to the pandemic.

Online learning presented unique challenges for a student who depends on lip-reading and specialized hearing aids; in a traditional classroom setting, Ramirez relied on accommodations like a short-range microphone that connected directly to her hearing aids. Undeterred by this obstacle, Fabiola adapted by using a large speaker to enhance her virtual classroom experience.

Her high school journey, characterized by making the best of challenging situations, saw Ramirez overcome initial struggles with honors coursework and excel in Advanced Placement courses in her junior and senior years.

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While cross country had to wait until her sophomore year, Ramirez forged enduring memories with her teammates during the past three years. In both her athletic and academic pursuits, Ramirez said that she consistently emphasized the significance of perseverance and the resolve to never give up.

“Thank you also to my mentors and teachers who have inspired and challenged me to reach greater heights,” Ramirez said. “Your belief in my potential has given me the courage to chase my dreams, fearlessly, and to overcome any obstacle that may come my way. I pledge to continue to strive for excellence and to make a positive impact in the world around me.”

In her commitment to giving back, Ramirez has served as an Academic Mentor for one of Whittier High School’s Spanish classes, leveraging her biliteracy skills.

As a first-generation college student, Ramirez applied and was accepted into the highly selective Bovard Scholars program at the University of Southern California, experiencing residential life last summer and receiving support for the college admissions and financial aid process.

Ramirez has already been accepted to the University of Arizona with a scholarship and is awaiting decisions from other universities. She aspires to major in speech, language, and hearing sciences, with the goal of becoming an audiologist.

“Fabiola has been a tremendous student at Whittier High School, and she is clearly an inspiration to so many,” Principal Tim Liggett said. “We are thankful to Fabiola for allowing all of us at Whittier High to be a part of her educational journey. She is truly a Cardinal with CLASS and we cannot wait to see everything she will achieve after graduation.”

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHSD_AWARD1: Whittier High School senior Fabiola Ramirez was honored with an Award of Merit by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during a March 12 meeting for her ability to overcome challenges and excel in her academic and personal pursuits.

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OUR MISSION:

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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