



# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 23, 2017

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## Lynwood Unified's Firebaugh High Honors Women Through Empowerment Conference

**Lynwood** – One hundred Lady Falcons from Firebaugh High pledged March 17 to pursue their dreams no matter the obstacles at the school's first Girl Chat Empowerment Conference, where students learned confidence-boosting techniques from a panel of powerful women and Lynwood Unified alumni.

"All students should have confidence within themselves to pursue any avenue in life," Lynwood Unified Superintendent Paul Gothold said. "I want to commend Firebaugh High for holding such an important forum for students to hear from their peers and address issues they may be facing."

With a theme of "challenge yourself to change the narrative," the conference called upon young women to equip themselves with skills and knowledge of self-efficacy, self-actualization, conflict resolution and motivation for positive change and choices.

Before beginning the ceremony, Firebaugh senior Mia Alexandre received recognition for an excerpt she wrote that was published in the bicentennial edition of the autobiography "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave." In it, she wrote, "He continued to fight for the freedom of others, which makes it possible for me to be who I am: a young leader, gifted and free."

"It is important for all women to know how to empower themselves and attempt things they might have thought were impossible," Alexandre said. "Girls can do many things men can't, but I think some students need someone to reach out to them and give them the tools to be strong and independent."

The event featured panelists – including Lynwood Unified alumni, college students, an attorney, a sixth-grade math and science teacher from LUSD's Cesar Chavez Middle School and a family therapy counselor – who discussed their experiences with overcoming adversity and empowering themselves.

"When I was young, many people told me I couldn't be an attorney. But I knew I needed to be an attorney to help those who might not be able to help themselves," said Alicia Molina, owner of Law Offices of Molina & Molina. "You are perfect whichever way you are – don't let anything or anyone stop you."

This year's conference was hosted by Helping Hands, Grow Learn Affirm Motivate 360 (GLAM360), the Young Black Achievers Student Union (YBASU) and the LUSD Department of Equity and coordinated by Firebaugh High teachers Alike Chandler and Jeff Ballinger and Firebaugh alumna Vanessa Gonzalez-Diaz. Students took the GLAM self-love oath, listened to panelists and enjoyed lunch with their peers.

**MORE**

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The **Lynwood Unified School District** is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support system for students and staff. For more information, visit [www.lynwood.k12.ca.us](http://www.lynwood.k12.ca.us).

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“I am so impressed by all these young women and their desire to create a positive future for themselves and others,” said Lynwood Unified Board President Alma-Delia Renteria, who video conferenced into the event as a featured panelist. “It is so important for all students to overcome any obstacles that may be in their way, and united girl power will motivate all women to transcend boundaries and achieve their goals.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**032317\_LUSD\_EMPOWER1:** Lynwood Unified Firebaugh High School students listen to panelists discuss their experiences with overcoming diversity and empowering themselves as women during the school’s first Girl Chat Empowerment Conference on March 17.

**032317\_LUSD\_EMPOWER2:** Lynwood Unified Firebaugh High senior Firebaugh senior Mia Alexandre holds a copy of the autobiography “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,” where she had an excerpt of her own published on the inside cover. Alexandre was recognized for this accomplishment during the school’s first Girl Chat Empowerment Conference on March 17.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the cultivator of innovative thinkers, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves his or her highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to the greater society through a unique system distinguished by:

★ People of great character who inspire and lead by example   ★ The instilling of courage to be creative   ★ The transformative uses of