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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fontana Unified High School Seniors Earn Prestigious Scholarships to Attend Elite Universities

FONTANA, CA – A trio of Fontana High School scholars will pursue their goals of higher education at elite universities across the United States after earning prestigious scholarships that will allow them the freedom to work toward their dream jobs.

Jasmin Hurtado-Mendez will attend UC Berkeley after being named a 2023 UC Regents' and Chancellors' Scholar; Josue Arias-Ramirez will attend Boston College after being named a Questbridge National College Match scholar; and David Munoz-Padilla will attend Columbia University in New York after earning a Big Brothers Big Sisters scholarship.

Hurtado-Mendez was home alone, staring in disbelief at her computer, when she discovered that she had been accepted to UC Berkeley. After jumping for joy in celebration, she read a little further down the message and realized the news was even more momentous – she had also been named a UC Regents' and Chancellors' scholarship recipient.

Hurtado-Mendez will receive \$42,000 in financial aid, priority enrollment, guaranteed housing, faculty mentorship, research fellowship opportunities, healthcare and exclusive access to a network of former Regents' and Chancellors' alumni.

Hurtado-Mendez, who will study environmental science with the goal of becoming a conservation ecologist, is FOHI's Associated Student Body (ASB) president and is involved with Key Club, theater and choir – activities that allow her to see different perspectives of life and focus on school. Hurtado-Mendez is also a four-year member of the college-prep elective, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

"This is a great moment for my family," Hurtado-Mendez said. "My mother has been a big inspiration. She is always telling me not to limit myself and to do something that I'm passionate about. My sister helped me so much with the application process. I can't thank them enough for what they've done. Also, all of my wonderful teachers, my freshman AVID instructor, my theater teacher and my ASB adviser."

Munoz-Padilla joined the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program as a FOHI freshman, serving as a mentor to the younger students known as "Littles." As a junior, he established a BBBS club on campus and recruited more than a dozen more mentors into the program. For his passion and dedication to the BBBS program, Munoz-Padilla was named one of two 2023 Mentors of the Year, and received a \$2,500 scholarship.

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Munoz-Padilla, who served as Fontana Unified’s 2022-23 Board of Education Student Representative, will attend Columbia University with an eye toward majoring in political science, although he will keep his options open. Munoz-Padilla, who has a sister with special needs, is a passionate advocate of education reform. He also served as a member of City of Fontana’s Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council.

Munoz-Padilla is continually inspired by his family, who emigrated from Mexico. His mother read to him at a young age, even if she did not always understand what she was reading. His father, a truck driver, pushed him to dream big, and his sister is the prime motivator for a career in government.

“My experience with Big Brothers Big Sisters has been so rewarding,” Munoz-Padilla said. “I love working with the kids. My last day was very bittersweet. Thank you to Big Brothers Big Sisters for this experience and also to my family, who have pushed me to do my best.”

Arias-Ramirez is naturally curious and a quick learner. As a Questbridge National College Match scholar, he will attend Boston College and study computer science. The Questbridge scholarship is worth more than \$200,000 and covers the cost of tuition, room and board, books and supplies and travel expenses.

Arias-Ramirez is a member of the FOHI marching band and wind ensemble, where he plays trumpet, although last year he bought a used guitar and taught himself how to play within days. Arias-Ramirez said he will miss the camaraderie of the marching band, learning different musical styles, going to the competitions and meeting new people and musicians.

“I’ve always been interested in technology. When I was young I dreamed of working for NASA,” Arias-Ramirez said. “Winning the Questbridge has been super emotional for my family. I really wasn’t expecting to go to the East Coast, but I’m happy that all my hard work has paid off. I will miss going to FOHI and all of the great teachers here, especially my freshman AVID teacher, Ms. Harrod.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_SCHOLARS1: Fontana High School Class of 2023 Graduate Jasmin Hurtado-Mendez will attend UC Berkeley after being named a 2023 UC Regents’ and Chancellors’ Scholar. Hurtado-Mendez plans to study environmental science with the goal of becoming a conservation ecologist.

FUSD_SCHOLARS2: Fontana High School Class of 2023 Graduate David Munoz-Padilla will attend Columbia University in New York after earning a Big Brothers Big Sisters scholarship. Munoz-Padilla was named one of two Big Brothers Big Sisters 2023 Mentors of the Year.

FUSD_SCHOLARS3: Fontana High School Class of 2023 Graduate Josue Arias-Ramirez will attend Boston College after being named a Questbridge National College Match scholar. Arias-Ramirez plans to study computer science.

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