



## PRESS RELEASE

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## 5 Fontana Unified Graduates Named Dell Scholars, Awarded \$100,000 in Collective Scholarships

**FONTANA, CA** – Five Fontana Unified High School graduates who have juggled personal challenges with academic excellence were named 2018 Dell Scholars, earning a collective \$100,000 in scholarships for higher education costs.

Kaiser High School's Syeda Arif, Fontana High School's Victor Iribe and Summit High School's Mary Ambriz, Melissa Cruz and Maria Medina will each receive \$20,000. As part of the Dell Scholars program, an initiative of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the students will also receive laptops, textbook credit and ongoing support, including financial aid coaching and academic counseling, to address challenges that could prevent the scholars from completing college.

"College did not seem like a possibility for me until I joined AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) in eighth-grade at Sequoia Middle School," Cruz said. "Winning this scholarship means that I have the ability to overcome obstacles through hard work in academics, and being a Dell Scholar has inspired my family because now the idea of pursuing higher education does not seem impossible."

While the program emphasizes a student's determination to succeed in the classroom, the five Fontana Unified students also have demonstrated a longtime commitment to their education and ambition to thrive beyond high school. The Dell Scholars program recognized 500 scholars this year.

Cruz, who will attend UC Irvine to pursue a degree in biological sciences, hopes to create a program to prepare high schoolers for careers in the medical field. She has completed 10 Advanced Placement (AP) courses and has earned the California State Assembly Scholastic Achievement Award as well as a Seal of Biliteracy.

Arif completed 12 AP courses and founded Kaiser High School's Cancer Society, which was nationally recognized by the American Cancer Society this year. She will attend UC Berkeley to study nutrition and public health.

Iribe was on Fontana High School's varsity track and field team and served as an AVID and mathematics tutor. He will attend Cal State L.A. to major in mechanical engineering, in hopes of working for a motor company before starting his own business.

"When I received the email that recognized me as a Dell Scholar, I threw my hands in the air and shouted my achievement to my family," Iribe said.

Ambriz, a budding poet and spoken word artist, was vice president of Summit's writing club and a member of the Scripps College Academy Scholars pre-college program. She will double major in political science and women's studies at Occidental College.

"I burst into tears when I told my mom that I was named a Dell Scholar," Ambriz said. "She was proud of me and I was happy to have done something that will make my transition to college much easier on her."

Medina was the president of Summit's physics club, served as the chairperson for the City of Fontana's Mayor's Youth Advisory Council and helped organize the Students for Change Gun Control Rally. She will pursue her passion for community service and outreach by earning a degree in political science at UC Berkeley.

"This excellent group of students embodies the hard work and determination that we cultivate at Fontana Unified," Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. "We are so proud of our students for what they have accomplished and we are excited to see where their dreams take them."

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