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CONTACT: Lauren Creiman, (909) 833-9853

Bonita Unified Students Honored by Educational Foundation for Perseverance, Community Impact

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – More than 100 Bonita Unified students received a moment in the spotlight to honor actions that often go unseen – from launching an initiative to teach senior citizens digital literacy skills to providing shelter for a peer whose family experienced hardship and ensuring they graduated with their class – during the 2023-24 La Verne/San Dimas Educational Foundation (LVSDEF) Awards.

One of the foundation’s signature events, the awards ceremony was held April 29 at the Bonita Center for the Arts, which was filled to the brim with teachers, staff, and families cheering on students as they were recognized for their perseverance in the face of adversity and acts of kindness toward others.

“The La Verne-San Dimas Educational Foundation believes in supporting Bonita Unified students as they live their purpose, and uplifting those who succeed despite the obstacles they encounter,” LVSDEF President Anthony Porter said. “We are thankful for all of our sponsors and community partners who support us in this mission and are honored to celebrate these incredible students.”

Eleven students received the Act of Kindness Award, which honors the legacy of the late Ed Jones, who served on the Bonita Unified Board of Education for five terms and dedicated his life to making a difference in the community. Honorees were recommended by teachers, community members, and District staff for performing charitable acts that included driving fellow students to school each day to ensure their attendance; helping a new student who did not speak English acclimate to their campus and classes; and working to keep local parks trash-free and safe for animals.

This year’s Act of Kindness Award recipients are:

- Christopher Del Real, Elias Del Real, and Sophia A. Eifert from San Dimas and Bonita high schools
- Yesenia Camarena-Lopez from San Dimas High School
- Audrey Geller from Lone Hill Middle School
- Richie Gonzalez from Chaparral-Vista High School
- Sierra Hefner from Roynon Elementary School
- Lucas Menchaca from Ekstrand Elementary School
- Emily Moore from San Dimas High School
- Luis Padilla from San Dimas High School
- Sarah Selby from Lone Hill Middle School



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

More than 90 students across all educational levels were honored with the Perseverance Award, recognizing their tenacity in overcoming physical, emotional, or academic challenges. Nearly \$7,000 was also given to the high school-aged Perseverance Award recipients.

The event concluded with the presentation of the Career Technical Education Scholarships, established in 2022 to honor former BUSD employee Alta Skinner and former BUSD Board of Education Member Chuck Coyne, who both served as LVSDEF members, and their commitment to supporting Bonita Unified students.

This year, eight graduating seniors enrolled in CTE classes received scholarships to support their academic or professional goals:

- Kiana Conway, San Dimas High School
- Aaliyah Franco, San Dimas High School
- Rylie Rodriguez, San Dimas High School
- Bryan Gomez, Chaparral-Vista High School
- Rylie Koscielski, Chaparral-Vista High School
- Annabella Carlton, Bonita High School
- Manuel Franco-Hernandez, Bonita High School
- Margaret Lyons, Bonita High School

Founded in 1983, LVSDEF aims to enhance educational opportunities for Bonita Unified students. Through various fundraisers and sponsorships, the foundation also awards teacher mini-grants every year to support classroom projects, donates funds to each school's arts programs and more.

"Bonita Unified School District is full of students who are quietly working behind the scenes to better themselves and their community, and we are thankful to have partners in the La Verne/San Dimas Educational Foundation who help showcase the positive impact of these students' actions," Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. "We are deeply grateful to the foundation and its sponsors for their continued investment in the success of Bonita Unified students."

PHOTOS:

BUSD_LVSDEF1: Ekstrand Elementary students show off the Perseverance Awards they received during the La Verne/San Dimas Educational Foundation (LVSDEF) Awards ceremony in April.

BUSD_LVSDEF2: LVSDEF President Anthony Porter, right, recognizes the graduating seniors who received career technical education scholarships during the foundation's annual awards ceremony.

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