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## **Baldwin Park Unified Senior Wins Prestigious Gates Scholarship**

**Carlos Ortiz will study computer science and music at UC Berkeley**

**BALDWIN PARK** – Sierra Vista High School senior Carlos Ortiz, one of 300 U.S. high school students chosen for the inaugural Gates Scholarship, says his appreciation for his parents' sacrifices drives his desire to succeed.

"My parents didn't have a proper education in Mexico. They were very poor," Ortiz said. "They came to America and gave up so much for my brother and me."

Ortiz, who also attended Geddes Elementary and Santa Fe School in Baldwin Park, has tried to live up to that gift. At Sierra Vista, he earned a perfect 4.0 GPA (4.47 weighted). He has taken 10 Advanced Placement classes and four honors courses, passing six AP exams so far, including one in a topic he didn't take as a class.

Then, this year, he won acceptance to UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, the University of Rochester and USC. He chose UC Berkeley, but even with scholarships he wasn't sure his family could afford the cost.

Gaining confidence from the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Youth Leadership Institute, he applied for the all-expenses-paid Gates Scholarship, which is aimed at exceptional minority high school seniors from low-income homes. In addition to covering all costs of attendance, the scholarship program provides ongoing support and resources – including study abroad and internship/job opportunities – as students pursue their education.

Ortiz learned he'd won the scholarship during an April 20 visit to UC Berkeley.

"I was on the verge of bawling," he said. "The first thing I did was call my parents. My dad was at work, but he stopped everything he was doing to celebrate with me."

Ortiz said much of his love of education is motivated by his love of music. A lifelong student of music, he performed with Sierra Vista's marching band, indoor drum line, concert drum line, wind ensemble and jazz ensemble.

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In a culture of high expectations and academic rigor and an environment of support, understanding, and emotional safety, all Baldwin Park Unified School District students will graduate with a valued and highly respected diploma, prepared with the relevant skills, knowledge, and personal attributes necessary for success in a university or other institution of higher education and/or any post-secondary options of their choice.



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“I feel like music really fostered the idea of creativity in me,” he said. “Music communicates to people, music brings people together.”

His interest in computer science was sparked when he got an iPod at age 8 – he had to know how it worked.

With the scholarship, he will be able to major in computer science and minor in music at UC Berkeley. He also plans to return the benefit of his education to the community by creating an online network of teachers who can share curriculum for teaching in Third World countries – one that takes into consideration different standards and the need for cultural sensitivity.

He would also like to pursue a pathway focused on music or education software, possibly including his own startup company.

“Students like Carlos remind us that with the right inspiration, all our dreams are possible,” Baldwin Park Unified Superintendent Froilan N. Mendoza said. “Congratulations to Carlos and his family for this remarkable achievement.”

## **PHOTOS**

**BPUSD\_ORTIZ\_1:** Sierra Vista High School senior Carlos Ortiz, one of 300 U.S. high school students chosen for the inaugural Gates Scholarship, says his appreciation for his parents’ sacrifices drives his desire to succeed.