



# START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***Tesla START Program Will Graduate First Cohort of Rio Hondo College Students at 4 p.m. May 23***

**WHITTIER** – One of just two Tesla service technician training programs currently operating in the United States will graduate its first cohort of students from Rio Hondo College during a special ceremony from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 23.

The students – three women and seven men – have completed a 12-week [Tesla START](#) program that included more than 800 hours of training, providing them with the skills necessary to be hired as service technicians at Tesla service centers across North America.

The graduation and recognition ceremony will take place in the Rio Hondo College Automotive Shop. The event will feature remarks from Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, Board of Trustees President Madeline Shapiro, Tesla North American Service Senior Manager Michael Ojaghian and Tesla START graduate Natalie Dovalles-Flores. Representatives of local, state and federal officials are also expected to honor students.

“This is a historic moment for Rio Hondo College and Tesla,” Dreyfuss said. “Rio Hondo College is well known for the quality of our automotive and alternative fuels programs. Our students are educated with the most current transportation technology and are workforce ready when they complete the program. Our new partnership with Tesla deepens and strengthens this already prominent program.”

Rio Hondo College is the second program created in the entire nation and the first in California; its inaugural training session ends May 23, the same day as the ceremony. Tesla provides the curriculum, instructors, equipment and job opportunities so students can smoothly transition from the college program to full-time employment.

## MORE

*Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit [www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu).*

“Our partnership with Tesla expands on the promise we make to all of our students: A Rio Hondo College education will help you find the fulfilling career you desire,” Board of Trustees President Madeline Shapiro said. “These students will graduate immediately into jobs with Tesla that not only provide a substantial salary, but also offer Tesla stock options.”

The graduates are: Tanya Aili Castro, Jose Chavez, Dennis Davila, Natalie Dovalles-Flores, Steve Escobar, Ignacio Guzman, Alyssa Jimenez, David Mojica, Gabriel Rojas and Steven Vigil.

They have already been hired by Tesla service centers in Costa Mesa (three techs), Buena Park (two techs), Scottsdale (one), Torrance (one), West Los Angeles(one), Centinela (one), and Burbank (one). Starting salaries range from \$21 to \$27 an hour.

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