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Bonita Unified Student Surprised with \$40,000 College Board Scholarship

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Bonita High School rising junior Abigail Park had no idea what to expect when she and her father were summoned to the BUSD District Office on July 25. Park had been told she was nominated for an extracurricular award, but the details were vague.

Park and her father were led into the Board room, where she was greeted by the entire BUSD District Office staff, Board of Education vice president Chris Ann Horsley, Bonita High principal Kenny Ritchie and several representatives from the College Board – all there to surprise Park with a \$40,000 scholarship from the College Board, as part of its BigFuture college and career awareness campaign.

“I was super surprised, I had no idea what to expect,” Park said. “This is stunning to me. Receiving the College Board scholarship will make me more explorative and push me harder. It also takes a lot of pressure off my family, knowing that I will be able to afford to go to college and get into my dream university.”

BigFuture is a College Board campaign that encourages high school students to begin preparing for their post-secondary future by completing a series of qualifying steps on the College Board website. These steps include making lists of colleges, careers, and potential scholarships, as well as applying for FAFSA financial benefits and submitting college applications.

When students complete these steps, they are automatically entered into the BigFuture scholarship contest, where they are eligible to win \$500 and \$40,000 scholarships. Each month, two students across the United States receive a \$40,000 BigFuture scholarship. There are no other requirements for receiving the scholarships.

Park began compiling college and career lists as a sophomore, indicating an interest in majoring in subjects such as biology and education. Park would like to work with animals, either as a marine biologist or veterinarian. Park’s older sister Rachel is currently in veterinarian school.

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Abigail has all the tools to be a success in college and career, according to her father, Min Park.

“I am so proud of Abigail. She is doing a great job at school,” Min Park said. “She is very thoughtful and has a great, analytic mind. She has many interests. We never expected her to win a scholarship so soon. This is very exciting for us.”

Park completed several Advanced Placement classes in her sophomore year, including AP Biology, AP Human Geography and AP World History. She will be taking more AP classes in the upcoming 2024-25 school year.

Balancing her academic studies with extracurricular activities is a challenge for Park, who loves to dance to hip hop and is a member of Bonita High’s D Street Dance Team. Park also plays clarinet in the BHS band and is president and co-founder of the school’s new Eco Club.

Park will have to wait to receive her College Board scholarship money, which will not be distributed until after she graduates from high school.

“At Bonita High, we strongly encourage our students to start college and career planning as early as freshman year, as part of living their purpose,” Ritchie said. “We’re so proud of Abigail, who is demonstrating what can happen to someone who is diligent in their preparation and has a clear focus on what they want to do after graduating. Congratulations to the Park family.”

PHOTOS:

BUSD_BIGFUTURE1: Bonita High School rising junior Abigail Park is all smiles as she celebrates receiving a \$40,000 scholarship from the College Board with her father Min Park and principal Kenny Ritchie. The College Board presents two \$40,000 scholarships to two students each month as part of its BigFuture college and career awareness campaign.

BUSD_BIGFUTURE2: Bonita High School rising junior Abigail Park is surprised at the Bonita Unified District Office with a \$40,000 College Board scholarship as part of the organization’s BigFuture college and career awareness campaign. BUSD Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Anne Neal was among the BUSD District Office staff on hand to present the award to Park and congratulate her.

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