

# Montebello Unified School District



## Press Release

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## Eastmont Student Wins \$5,000 Scholarship Through Los Angeles Sparks Essay Writing Contest

**Montebello** – Rosario Meneses, a seventh-grader at Eastmont Intermediate School, was handed a huge \$5,000 check at center court during halftime of a Los Angeles Sparks game on July 10 for winning the team's 2016 #WeAreGirls essay writing contest.

This was the first year the LA Sparks held the #WeAreGirls essay writing contest, looking to empower young girls to write about their inspirations.

"I'm very proud that an extraordinary student like Rosario was recognized for her writing talents by an esteemed organization like the Los Angeles Sparks," Montebello Board President Ben Cardenas said. "The District is also fortunate to have teachers who encourage their students to pursue every opportunity that will help them get into college."

In her essay, Rosario shared that joining the school's cheerleading squad encouraged her to be more outgoing to support her team. She also said being in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college preparatory program helped her become more organized.

Rosario, who maintained a GPA above 3.5 last year, said she hopes to attend UCLA or Harvard University, keeping her grades up by always completing her homework before cheerleading practice.

"I think AVID is fun because it's like a game and a challenge for me," Rosario said. "My mom and teachers have shown me that going to college will help me get a better job, so I want to work as hard as I can now to get there some day."

In the fall, she plans to start a community service club with her friends.

Rosario's teacher, Monique Lopez, advised her to enter the contest because of how hard she works at school, cheerleading and helping her mother donate clothes and food to the poor.

Lopez developed a close relationship with the Meneses family through teaching Rosario and her brother.

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"They are truly a deserving family and I think this scholarship is the work of a higher power," Lopez said. "I think her dad was looking out for her."

Lopez drove Rosario and her family to the Staples Center on the night of the award ceremony and stood by while the seventh-grader received her award.

"I was almost in tears," Lopez said. "I was so proud. I had never seen her smile so big. She really was the center of attention in this big stadium, which was almost full. I just thought to myself this is just the beginning for her because she's going to go on to college."

Eastmont Intermediate School principal Cecilia Ramirez believes that promoting opportunities for students to communicate through writing is integral to ensuring college and career readiness.

"We are so proud that Rosario took the initiative to submit her essay and that the Los Angeles Sparks recognized her great effort," Ramirez said. "She has inspired our entire school community!"

Rosario plans to save most of the \$5,000 for college but may use some before then for school supplies and books.

"The District cares deeply about seeing every student succeed and it's wonderful to have organizations like the Los Angeles Sparks that take a special interest in supporting young girls," Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith said. "I join the entire Montebello Unified family in congratulating Rosario and her family on this achievement."

### PHOTO CAPTION

**080116\_MUSD\_SPARKS:** (left to right) Rosemary Parsons of Sparks' Sponsor Equitrust, WNBA President Lisa Borders, LA Sparks President Christine Simmons, Rosario Meneses, Rosario's mother Josefina Camacho, Rosario's brother Daniel Meneses, Eastmont teacher Monique Lopez, Eastmont principal Cecilia Ramirez, scholarship donor Lorraine Williams.

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**Montebello Unified School District** is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at [www.montebello.k12.ca.us](http://www.montebello.k12.ca.us).