



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## Paramount Unified Encourages Female Students at 2nd Annual Young Women's Empowerment Conference

**Paramount, CA** – Paramount High School senior Anita Okogbue took a stand against bullying alongside fellow students when she attended a workshop on the topic of self-worth and confidence at the second annual Paramount Unified Young Women's Empowerment Conference on Nov. 3.

Okogbue, the Black Student Union president at PHS, was among more than 200 female students who learned about self-worth, confidence and just how harmful bullying can be to a young woman's self-esteem from presentations given by guest speakers, such as Los Angeles Superior Court judge Connie R. Quinones. FBI Special Agent Evette Rivera and PHS language arts teacher Christine Barboza also presented.

The day's workshops explored topics like healthy relationships, money management, cyber bullying and first-generation challenges.

"During the confidence workshop with Christine Barboza, she asked girls to stand up if they had ever been bullied or cyber-bullied and, while I consider myself to be a very confident person, an energetic person, to see the girls all stand up one by one and say 'yes, I have been bullied,' it was a slap of reality because you just don't know those things are happening otherwise," Okogbue said.

Barboza, who has taught for 27 years, spoke about being the first in her family to graduate from college.

"Ms. Barboza's focus on self-confidence hit home with the girls, as did FBI Special Agent Rivera's discussion on the power of social media," said Paramount High School counselor Lourdes Talamantes, who helped organize the event. "There were so many great speakers who shared personal stories that all the girls could identify with."

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Jasmine Hubbard, a first-generation college graduate from UCLA, also shared words of wisdom to students. Hubbard, a cancer research assistant at Private Health Management, urged students to create healthy boundaries and to “love and accept yourself first.”

Okogbue said Hubbard took time after the conference to speak with her and has been helping her to connect with representatives from colleges like UCLA and Cal State Long Beach.

Okogbue said that she doesn’t have a dream college, but definitely plans on pursuing a degree in nursing wherever she ends up.

“I am so ambitious, I want to do everything, I want to be a business woman, a nurse, even a lawyer,” Okogbue said. “This conference definitely encouraged me to keep going, and it especially helped me to network with people already working in my fields of interest.”

“When our female students can see successful women tackling issues they deal with, it resonates in a special way,” Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez said. “Representation matters.”

The day’s event also included dance routines performed by the Pacific Islander Club, the Black Student Union and the PHS Cheer Squad. Breakfast and lunch were served.

“It is a fabulous event that continues to grow,” PUSD Board President Vivian Hansen said. “This conference will help our young women to set goals for themselves and to have the ambition and drive to achieve those goals.”

### PHOTO CAPTION:

**112018\_PARAMOUNT\_WOMENSCONFERENCE:** More than 200 Paramount High School female students learned about healthy relationships, money management and cyber bullying during the second annual Paramount Unified Young Women’s Empowerment Conference on Nov. 3

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