



NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Student Earns \$10,000 Scholarship Through Aviation Career Technical Education Pathway

FONTANA, CA – A.B. Miller High School senior Damien Herrera has always had an interest in flying – one that turned into a passion through the school’s aviation career technical education (CTE) pathway. Now, Herrera will have the opportunity to turn that passion into a career, aided by a \$10,000 scholarship from the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA).

Herrera, who was surprised with the scholarship on Nov. 11, is the second A.B. Miller aviation student to receive a scholarship this year. Fellow senior Nathan Aguilar also secured one in June 2022 from the EAA, a community of engaged aviation enthusiasts dedicated to growing participation in aviation.

“Damien’s and Nathan’s scholarships and successes exemplify how talented and hardworking A. B. Miller High School students are. We are immensely proud of their commitment and passion to become pilots,” A.B. Miller High School Assistant Principal Timothy Yelin said. “A. B. Miller High School’s administration is very thankful to the Experimental Aircraft Association for their generous support and scholarships and the opportunity it affords our students to pursue their dreams.”

A.B. Miller’s two-year aviation program serves as a flight training school and includes a pilot training class, an airline mechanic class, and a flight simulator lab. The pathway gives students access to aerospace professionals and other programs dedicated to fostering careers in aviation for interested students, including Shades of Blue and the EAA’s Young Eagles.

Upon completing the A.B. Miller aviation pathway, students are ready to take the Federal Aviation Administration’s Private Pilot Certificate written exam. This gives A.B. Miller students a head start on an in-demand, well-paying career in aviation, A.B. Miller pathway instructor Jeff McGlocklin said.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects there to be more than 18,000 openings for airline and commercial pilots each year, on average, until 2031. The median annual wage for airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers was \$202,180 in May 2021.

“We’re definitely trying to fill that need,” McGlocklin said. “Damien and Nathan’s success is huge to show all the other students that it’s possible. The more students see that, the harder they’re going to end up working because there’s a lot of aviation scholarships that go unfilled.”

After high school, Herrera plans to attend a four-year college to complete his degree, pilot certificates, and ratings. His goal is to move up the ladder from flight instructor to commercial airline pilot and one day, to be a captain at United Airlines. Herrera said the \$10,000 scholarship from the EAA will make that pathway much easier, as it will cover the cost of his private pilot certificate once he takes his written exam in December.

“This is going to help me a lot, not having to pay a super expensive first step,” Herrera said. “That was a big stress relief for my family, knowing I don’t have to stress my mom over having to pay for this. I was awarded this, it’s such a blessing.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_AVIATION: A.B. Miller High School senior Damien Herrera, third from right, received a \$10,000 scholarship from the Experimental Aircraft Association. He was awarded the scholarship during his aviation career technical education pathway course on Nov. 11. Also pictured from left to right are Experimental Aircraft Association members Kevin Elardo and Jim O’Brien, Herrera’s sister, mother and grandfather, and A.B. Miller aviation instructor Jeff McGlocklin.

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