



# El Monte Union High School District

*Community Committed to College and Career*

## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Juliette Funes, Maritza Fairfield

PHONE: (909) 445-1001

### **El Monte Union Educator Receives \$3,000 Scholarship for Community Outreach**

Foothill Credit Union gift will help complete doctoral work at UCLA

**EL MONTE** – Growing up as the daughter of immigrants, El Monte High School educator Elisa Perez was an English learner who dreamed of graduating from an elite university and returning to her community to help a new generation of students realize their potential and reach their goal of attaining higher education.

Perez has served El Monte and San Gabriel Valley families in many capacities since graduating from El Monte High in 2001: as a community liaison for the Migrant Education Program; as an instructor for the Harvey Mudd Upward Bound program; as a presenter for the Parent Involvement Academy and as an Inspire Women’s Conference Steering Committee member.

Foothill Credit Union recognized Perez’s commitment to community outreach with its inaugural Education Advancement Scholarship, a \$3,000 award designed for educators looking to further their careers in education. The gift, presented during Foothill’s Ambassador Breakfast on Nov. 30, will go to help Perez complete her doctoral degree at UCLA.

“Education is my passion and this gift is an investment in the El Monte community and for the students who look to educators for guidance and inspiration,” Perez said. “I will be there for you. We will succeed together.”

Perez attended Georgetown University and UCLA before beginning her teaching career at her alma mater in 2009. Transitioning to the position of instructional coach in 2014, Perez focuses on staff development, working with many of the same teachers who taught her when she was a student at El Monte High.

At UCLA, Perez is researching the academic relationship between first-generation college-going Latinas and their immigrant mothers. Her dissertation is titled “Like Mother, Like Daughter: A Study on the Intricate Relationship between Latina Mothers and Daughters.”

“My research is entirely focused on the El Monte community,” Perez said. “There were a lot of people who helped me succeed while I was a student at El Monte High School. I want to make sure I’m doing the same by letting students see that our demographics do not determine our destiny and if I can get a doctoral degree at UCLA, so can they.”

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The special bond between Perez and her mother – who came to the United States from Mexico unable to speak a word of English and spent most of her life working in the garment industry – inspired her doctoral thesis. Her dissertation subjects are Latinas who graduated from El Monte Union and are attending college.

“The tremendous work being done by Elisa Perez to establish and maintain high expectations among El Monte Union students and teachers is just one way she is giving back to her community,” El Monte High Principal Robin Torres said. “Elisa is a tireless worker who inspires us all.”

Perez is the first winner of the credit union’s scholarship. Up to \$3,000 will be awarded annually to one or more educators seeking to advance their career in the education field.

“As a former student coming home with the goal of empowering others to work hard and prepare themselves for the future, Elisa Perez personifies the El Monte Union spirit of community and diversity,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “I want to thank Foothill Credit Union for its generosity, support and recognition of one of the many talented educators we have in our schools working as a team to ensure our students succeed.”

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**121317\_EMUHS\_D\_PEREZ:** El Monte High School teacher Elisa Perez, center, is joined by Melissa Alcantar and Andrew Gomez, representatives for Foothill Credit Union, which awarded the educator its inaugural Education Advancement Scholarship for \$3,000 on Nov. 30.

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*The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.*