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NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified Student, Entrepreneur Earns Posse Scholarship to Northwestern University

COVINA, CA – South Hills High School senior Saniya Tillis will take her entrepreneurial mind and service-based leadership to Northwestern University in the fall after earning a full-tuition, merit-based scholarship through the Posse Foundation.

The mission of the Posse Foundation is rooted in the belief that a small, diverse group of talented students can serve as a catalyst for individual and community development. The Foundation identifies, recruits, and trains individuals with extraordinary leadership potential by granting scholarships from their partner colleges and universities to students who display great academic and leadership skills.

Tillis developed a passion for service and improving the world around her at an early age. She became president of Early Act, a school-wide community service club for elementary students at Anna Hause Elementary School in Beaumont, CA. Tillis also began volunteering at the City of Pomona’s Hope for Home Shelter, where she assembled beds, prepared care packages, helped clean the shelter for new residents, and more.

After many years of volunteering and helping at various homeless events in her community, Tillis created her own non-profit called Students Uplifting Students, which serves to advocate, encourage, and educate students experiencing homelessness. Through her non-profit, Tillis has secured donations including clothes, shoes, prom dresses, books, hygiene products, and more, to donate to at-risk families.

“The memories of the young kids who would jump at the sight of a new book, the tween girls who would tell me all about how amazing they’re going to look in the dress they picked out for homecoming, and the parents who would do anything to put a smile on their children’s faces will last me for the rest of my life,” Tillis said. “I find that I really receive more than I give from these experiences, and I want to inspire others to give back more.”

The Posse Los Angeles office received over 2,000 applications, and narrowed their selections for awardees by allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate their intrinsic leadership abilities, skills at working in a team setting, and motivation to succeed by participating in multiple rounds of interviews.

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“My final interview was a group interview with around 20 other Northwestern Posse finalists,” Tillis said. “After my three-hour group interview with Posse staff and representatives from the Northwestern admissions team, I went home to start my homework when I got a call saying I got the scholarship!”

Tillis was accepted into the Weinberg School of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University. She plans to major in economics with a minor in business institutions, and complete the Kellogg certificate in Managerial Analytics. Tillis also plans to participate in Northwestern’s Garage program, where students can explore entrepreneurship and develop a community that encourages knowledge, grit, and student development.

“One day, I see myself becoming the CEO of a Fortune 500 company,” Tillis said. “I want to innovate new business models in different industries to develop more equitable and sustainable companies that maximize profit while benefiting society and the environment.”

Tillis has maintained a 4.0 unweighted GPA throughout her time at South Hills High School. She is currently chief executive officer in the Virtual Enterprise program, president of the National Honor Society, vice president of the Business Club, president of the Women’s Empowerment Student Association. Tillis has also been on the girls varsity golf team all four years of high school.

“Saniya’s awe-inspiring achievements will not stop here at Covina-Valley Unified School District,” Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Eminhizer said. “I know she will continue making a difference in her communities and improving the world through her love of business and service. I can’t wait to hear what incredible idea she comes up with next!”

PHOTO CAPTION:

CVUSD_SANIYA1: South Hills High School senior Saniya Tillis has earned a full-tuition, merit-based scholarship through the Posse Foundation to attend Northwestern University in the fall. Tillis plans to major in economics with a minor in business institutions to achieve her dream of becoming the CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

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