



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 21, 2025

CONTACT: Andrew Shortall

(909) 204-6013

Fontana Unified Students Awarded Prestigious QuestBridge Scholarships, Solidifying College Dreams

FONTANA, CA – Jurupa Hills High School seniors Karla Louisa and Berlyn Sanchez are seeing their dreams of becoming the first in their families to attend college come to reality, with both earning the prestigious QuestBridge National College Match scholarship for their outstanding academic achievements.

Both Louisa and Sanchez said they sobbed when they logged into QuestBridge’s online portal and were greeted with confetti signifying they qualified for the QuestBridge National College Match four-year scholarship worth more than \$325,000. They are each headed to prestigious East Coast institutions, with Louisa set to attend Barnard College in New York and Sanchez enrolling at Boston University.

“It was the best day of my life, it was a moment where I felt like all my work had finally paid off,” said Louisa, whose parents immigrated from Syria. “It was a result of not only my work but all the work my parents put into getting me a good education. It is such a relief because we are low income and knowing college is all covered means so much to me and my family.”

Sanchez said she planned on discovering her QuestBridge status together with her family but was too nervous when the time came and excused herself to check privately before sharing the good news with her parents and younger sister through tears of joy.

“For me and my whole family, it’s just a sign you can do anything,” Sanchez said. “I’m first generation, my parents both barely finished high school, so me going to college is already a big step and a big change, and for me to go to a top school on a full ride is just so surreal. It’s such peace of mind, I don’t have to worry about planning out my future because with QuestBridge it’s already set—where I’ll be for the next four years, my living expenses, everything.”

Since 1994, QuestBridge has connected high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds with four-year scholarships to 52 of the nation’s top colleges. Match Scholarship Recipients are admitted early to QuestBridge college partners with full scholarships provided by the colleges and universities, ensuring for these students and their families that an education at a top college is affordable.

Both Sanchez and Louisa thanked Jurupa Hills High’s staff of teachers and counselors and programs, like International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), for opening their eyes to future postsecondary and career opportunities and helping them discover their passions.

Sanchez plans to study biomedical engineering in pursuit of a career as a cardiovascular surgeon at Boston University. She learned about QuestBridge through Jurupa Hills’ AVID program and discovered

her passion for biomedical engineering through the Pomona College Academy for Youth Success (PAYS), a summer research program recommended to her by a JHHS teacher where she engaged in hands-on experiments while researching Parkinson's disease.

Louisa, an IB Class of 2025 Diploma Candidate, plans to major in cellular and molecular biology and minor in Middle Eastern studies at Barnard College, with a goal of becoming a professor. Professionally, she hopes to one day serve as a mentor to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students while leading her own research alongside students in a lab setting.

It was in Jurupa Hills' honors biology class during her freshman year that Louisa discovered her passion for biology. She cultivated a desire to work in a lab through the California State Summer School for Mathematics and Science (COSMOS), a four-week residential program for high-achieving math and science students.

"Jurupa Hills has been a very big help for me preparing for college, all of the resources and teachers here are really, really supportive," Louisa said. "They are big on finding opportunities and sharing them with students, that's how I learned about QuestBridge and COSMOS. Without our school, I wouldn't have gained this experience or the aspirations I have now."

QuestBridge Scholars have access to a supportive community of peers in the QuestBridge Scholars Network and the QuestBridge Alumni Association after they graduate.

Several other Fontana Unified School District students have been named QuestBridge National College Match finalists and are still in the running for scholarships, with more matches being announced during regular decision and other admission rounds.

"Fontana Unified students, like Karla and Berlyn, continue to reach new heights; it is incredible to have two students from the same school earn the life-changing QuestBridge scholarship," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "Their success is a credit to their hard work and the unwavering support of their teachers, counselors, and the programming not only at Jurupa Hills High School but across our District."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_QUESTBRIDGE1: From left: Jurupa Hills High School seniors Berlyn Sanchez and Karla Louisa have both been awarded QuestBridge National College Match four-year scholarships worth more than \$325,000. Sanchez is enrolling at Boston University, while Louisa will attend Barnard College in New York.

###