



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 22, 2026 CONTACT: Amanda Nieto PHONE: 909-447-2407

## **La Serna High Student Overcomes Anxiety, Receives Award of Merit for Resilience**

**WHITTIER** – As La Serna High senior Brooke Chancellor enters her final semester of school, she is looking forward to joining her Lancer classmates for the upcoming whirlwind of graduation events celebrating the Class of 2026. Just two years ago, the odds of Chancellor participating in a commencement ceremony at La Serna seemed out of reach.

As a sophomore, Chancellor faced a daunting battle with generalized anxiety and depression. Struggling with a crippling inability to attend school, some days even stepping out of a car and walking to campus was more than Chancellor could bear. But instead of turning to independent study or dropping out of school, Chancellor availed herself of La Serna mental health and wellness services and took full ownership of her recovery.

Today, boasting a 4.13 GPA and a dream of attending college to study child development, Chancellor has not only shaken off her fears of attending a large school, but she has also emerged as an academic leader and Lancer role model. For her resilience and determination, the Whittier Union Board of Trustees presented Chancellor with an Award of Merit during its Jan. 13 Board meeting.

"If it weren't for so many people in my life, I would not have been able to push through these challenges," Chancellor said. "Most of all, I'd like to thank the La Serna teachers and staff. You are the reason I made it to school every day. It's because of you that I have decided to pursue a career in education. You have changed my world."

Working with La Serna Wellness Center social worker Dr. Alexandra Harris, Chancellor devised a gradual school re-entry plan, attending just a few periods at a time until she successfully transitioned back to full-time status. Once acclimated to her surroundings, Chancellor did not hesitate to fully envelop herself in academics and extracurricular activities, leading to her selection as a La Serna Honor Roll and Principal's List recipient.

Branching out into service and mentorship, Chancellor has served as a La Serna mathematics peer mentor and as secretary of the school's Expanded Horizons Club, where she helps exchange students and immigrants acclimate to school life. Chancellor is the founder and president of La Serna's Psychology Club, and co-founder of the Letters of Support Club, where she helps organize the delivery of letters to first responders and hospital patients.

Chancellor has contributed to La Serna's Human Services Honor class by sharing her experiences related to anxiety and depression and assisting in the development of a curriculum focused on promoting mental health awareness and wellness on campus.

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Chancellor has also served as a student intern for the Child Mind Institute's Youth Mental Health Academy, engaging in high-level research centered on youth mental health.

In addition to her rigorous academic schedule, Chancellor has been a member of the Lady Lancer's basketball team, taken four years of French, participated in the FBI Los Angeles Teen Academy – where she met with special agents and SWAT teams to process staged crime scenes – and volunteered at the Whittier Public Library, serving on the Teen Advisory Board.

Chancellor's transparency with her struggles and willingness to devote so much time to helping others has brought praise from her teachers, who describe her as an extraordinary student who is witty, empathetic, and possesses a big heart that consistently puts others' needs before her own.

"Brooke, your journey from the car door to this podium reflects the very best of the Lancer spirit," La Serna principal Griselda Castro said during the meeting. "Your strength in the face of hardship has not only cleared a path for your own success but has built a bridge for others to follow. Congratulations on your Award of Merit. We are incredibly proud of the leader you have become."

#### **PHOTO CAPTION**

**WUHSD\_Chancellor1:** La Serna High senior Brooke Chancellor was presented with an Award of Merit by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during its January board meeting for her resilience and determination as an academic leader and Lancer role model.

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#### **OUR MISSION**

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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