



# Fontana Unified School District

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Fontana Unified Musicians to Ring in New Year with Tournament of Roses Honor Band

**FONTANA, CA** – Thirteen student musicians from Fontana Unified School District will perform on one of the world's most iconic stages on New Year's Day, marching in the 137th Annual Tournament of Roses Parade as members of the Pasadena City College (PCC) High School Honor Band.

Eleven members of Kaiser High School's Catamount Pride Band & Color Guard and two members of Jurupa Hills High School's Spartan Regiment were selected for the Honor Band. Of the students selected, five will be making their second appearance with the Honor Band, and two musicians – Kaiser High senior euphonium player Liliana Lobo and Jurupa Hills High senior clarinetist Diego Muro – will be making their third appearance.

For the first time in Kaiser High band history, senior trumpeter Maximo Franco was selected to be a member of the prestigious Rose Parade PCC Herald Trumpets, an elite group of nine trumpeters and one snare drummer who announce the arrival of the Rose Queen and Court's float with pomp and pageantry throughout the parade route.

"I am so honored to be a part of this cherished tradition at the Rose Parade," Franco said. "Being the first Kaiser band member to play with the Herald Trumpets is something I will never forget. It will be a great moment for me, for Kaiser, the District, and the Fontana community."

The Honor Band selections hold special meaning for Kaiser High School band director Roberto Ronquillo and Jurupa Hills High School band director Bill Borjan, both of whom marched with the Pasadena City College Honor Band as Fontana Unified students. Ronquillo participated while attending A.B. Miller High School in 2007, while Borjan marched as a Fontana High School student in 1998 and 1999.

"Marching in the Rose Parade with the Honor Band was a life-changing event for me as a musician," Borjan said. "I am so proud to see a new generation of Fontana Unified students receive the opportunity to have this experience."

For Lobo, the most challenging aspects of marching in the Rose Parade have been adapting to a new Honor Band director every year and preparing for the grueling two-hour, six-mile parade route by hiking around Dodger Stadium in full gear, a workout that stretches nearly 12 miles around Chavez Ravine.

"There are so many things you have to get used to," Lobo said. "Marching with visuals, paying strict attention to the drum major – there are different marching sequences depending where you are on the parade route. But it's always a thrilling experience."

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Muro said he is looking forward to this year's Honor Band and is especially excited to see his classmate and fellow clarinetist, Jurupa Hills sophomore Eliam Rojas, receive his first invitation to join the Honor Band. Muro's advice for fellow musicians is to be confident and believe in their talent.

"I'm so happy for Eliam to be selected. It's great to have someone you know to share the experience with. It will make Honor Band even more fun," Muro said. "What I love about music is the freedom of expression. I feel that I can express myself best through playing the clarinet."

Rojas was inspired to study music by his older brother, a former member of the Spartan Regiment who now plays for the Riverside City College band. Rojas began playing the recorder in elementary school before developing a focus on the clarinet.

"I really like music and the arts," Rojas said. "I'm not the most outspoken person. I like to let my playing and writing speak for me and articulate how I feel. I prepared for the audition by trying to put myself in the shoes of those who have come before me. My brother helped me out a lot too."

The remaining Rose Parade PCC Honor Band members, all from Kaiser High, are: seniors Achilles Jauregui (trumpet), Anabelle Escobedo (flute), Andre Moreno (trombone), Amarissa Ronquillo (alto saxophone), Jhiana Magalang (bells/xylophone), and Marcos Perez (tuba); junior Andres Gallardo (snare drum); and sophomores Gabriella Luna (tenor saxophone) and Gisselle Salazar (alto saxophone).

"What excites me so much about our players is how seriously they take their music," Ronquillo said. "They practice on their own and they are right where they need to be. I am proud of all my musicians, but most proud of my daughter, Amarissa. It was an emotional moment when we found out she had been selected. The Rose Parade Honor Band is now a family tradition."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_ROSEPARADE1:** Eleven members of Kaiser High School's Catamount Pride Band & Color Guard have been selected for the Rose Parade Honor Band, marching together during the 137th Annual Tournament of Roses Parade on New Year's Day. The 2026 Rose Parade will be televised live on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026, starting at 8 a.m. PST on major networks.

**FUSD\_ROSEPARADE2:** Two members of Jurupa Hills High School's Spartan Regiment will join Kaiser High students as members of the Rose Parade Honor Band, during the 137th Annual Tournament of Roses Parade on New Year's Day.

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