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NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified Junior Among Nation's Top Youth Honored with Congressional Gold Medal Award

COVINA, CA – After dedicating more than two years to community service and personal growth, Covina High School rising junior Jolin Zeng has earned the 2026 Congressional Gold Medal Award, joining just 877 young Americans ages 14 to 24 to receive the prestigious honor this year.

To earn the Gold Medal Award, Zeng completed more than 1,300 hours across four areas, including nearly 570 hours of voluntary public service, 290 hours of personal development, 479 hours of physical fitness, and an eight-day cultural expedition. Her accomplishments far exceeded the required total of 800 hours.

"My sister also received a Congressional Medal and really inspired me to pursue Gold by saying it was a great opportunity to grow," Zeng said. "This experience has taught me so much about personal development and time management, which were things I struggled with before. I made a calendar and agenda for everything I needed to do to stay on track, and I got it done!"

Throughout the two-year journey, Zeng volunteered in a variety of service roles, including with Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America), where she has been a member since sixth grade. During the organization's six-day National Youth Leadership Training program, she taught nearly 100 Scouts about leadership, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork through presentations, activities, and games.

As part of her journey to earning the rank of Eagle Scout, Zeng led a service project to rebuild garden beds at the Tzu Chi Life Science Garden. She also volunteered with her community's Neighborhood Watch, translating between Mandarin and English to help first responders communicate with residents during emergencies.

For her personal development goals, Zeng strengthened her language skills by studying Mandarin and Spanish through tutoring and independent study, bringing her closer to becoming trilingual.

To fulfill the physical fitness component, Zeng trained in Wushu, a traditional Chinese martial art, at the Advanced Martial Arts Academy.

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For the expedition requirement, Zeng planned and participated in an eight-day cultural journey through Morocco with family and friends, immersing herself in the country's history and traditions.

"It was really a great experience," Zeng said. "I also attended the Gold Medal Summit in Washington, D.C. in June, where I got to speak with members of Congress and be recognized."

At Covina High, Zeng balances a rigorous schedule of Advanced Placement coursework with competing on the tennis team, serving as junior vice president of Associated Student Body, vice president of Key Club, and a board member of the Filipino Club.

"Congratulations to Jolin for this remarkable accomplishment," Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Blackmore said. "Her commitment to service, leadership, and personal growth reflects the very best of Covina-Valley Unified. She is an inspiring example of what students can achieve!"

South Hills High School rising senior [Denise Lee](#) also earned the 2026 Congressional Gold Medal Award, underscoring how Covina-Valley Unified students continue to excel both in the classroom and in their communities.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_ZENG1: After dedicating more than two years to community service and personal growth, Covina High School rising junior Jolin Zeng has earned the 2026 Congressional Gold Medal Award.

CVUSD_ZENG2: To earn the Congressional Gold Medal Award, Covina High School rising junior Jolin Zeng volunteered in a variety of service roles, including with Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America), where she has been a member since sixth grade.

CVUSD_ZENG3: For the expedition requirement of the Congressional Gold Medal Award, Covina High School rising junior Jolin Zeng planned and participated in an eight-day cultural journey through Morocco with family and friends, immersing herself in the country's history and traditions.

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