



WHITTIER UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 22, 2026 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier High Senior Champions Student Belonging, Earns Award of Merit

WHITTIER – When Whittier High School senior Marle Shafer first began her high school journey as a freshman, she felt isolated and overwhelmed, questioning whether Whittier High was the right school for her and even considering transferring.

With encouragement from her dad, a Whittier High graduate, Shafer poured her experiences into founding and leading the Future Cardinal Middle School Program, helping ensure middle school students feel a sense of belonging on campus. Over the past three years, the program has introduced 900 eighth-graders from Edwards Middle School, Shafer's alma mater, to campus life through visits showcasing the school's programs, opportunities, and people.

Now a senior boasting a 4.38 weighted GPA, Shafer serves as Associated Student Body (ASB) president and plays on the varsity basketball team. In celebration of her accomplishments, Shafer was recognized with an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during a meeting on Oct. 13.

"Deciding to stay [at Whittier High] has been one of the best decisions I've ever made," Shafer said. "What once felt like a place where I didn't belong became a place where I found my voice, discovered my potential, and built a community that will always mean so much to me. Thank you to my peers, my mentors, my family, and the Board for this incredible honor. Once a Cardinal, always a Cardinal!"

Shafer has served on the ASB Cabinet for four years, progressing from historian and vice president before becoming president this year. She also represents the student body in working with the WHS Alumni Association, contributes to school budgeting, coordinates campus activities, and spearheads fundraisers to support school events.

As a four-year member of the school's Puente program, Shafer has also gained opportunities to explore higher education as a first-generation college student.

"Marle is the embodiment of what it means to be a student leader as she doesn't just organize events; she builds ownership and accountability within herself and others," Whittier High ASB advisor Matt Lozano said. "She sees the big picture of what it means to leave a legacy of excellence and how to make Whittier High School better every day. I am beyond proud of her and excited to see how she closes this final chapter of her high school career."

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Shafer’s perseverance and resilience were further put on display during her junior year, when an ACL and meniscus injury required her to undergo reconstruction surgery. After going through rehabilitation while continuing to balance academics, leadership, and personal responsibilities at home, Shafer was able to rejoin her teammates on the varsity basketball court this school year.

“Marle, your leadership, perseverance, and dedication are an inspiration to all of us,” Whittier High principal Andres Favela said during the meeting. “You have proven that there is no barrier high enough to stop a student who has the heart to work for their dreams. Congratulations on receiving an Award of Merit. We are incredibly proud of you and look forward to seeing you continue our ‘Legacy of Excellence’ as you head off to college.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_MERIT1: Whittier High School senior Marle Shafer celebrates receiving an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during a meeting on Oct. 13.

WUHSD_MERIT2: The Whittier Union Board of Trustees presents Whittier High senior Marle Shafer with an Award of Merit during the Oct. 13 meeting, recognizing her for academic and personal accomplishments.

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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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