



# El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March. 29, 2018

CONTACT: Juliette Funes, Maritza Fairfield

PHONE: (909) 445-1001

## Two El Monte Union Seniors Surprised with \$40,000 Edison STEM Scholarships

**EL MONTE** – Two El Monte Union High School District seniors are among an elite group of 30 high school students from across the Southland to receive \$40,000 STEM college scholarships from Edison International during surprise announcements.

South El Monte High School senior Sandra Amezcua Rocha, who was surprised during her Spanish Literature class on March 26, and El Monte High School senior Connie Lee, who received the exciting news via Skype on March 19, were selected out of more than 2,000 applicants to the Edison Scholars program.

“I was very surprised and am very thankful for this investment in my future,” said Amezcua Rocha, who was presented with the check by Edison International President and CEO Pedro Pizarro to the wild applause of her family and friends.

“The Edison STEM Scholarship gives me security for my higher education and the hope that I can achieve something great,” she said. “My message to all students is to not give up and to always have a dream.”

Edison International, the parent company of Southern California Edison, annually awards \$1.2 million in scholarships to 30 high school seniors pursuing majors in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields at four-year universities. Each \$40,000 scholarship will be paid over four years.

Amezcua Rocha, who holds a 4.47 GPA, will choose between attending Stanford and Yale University in the fall. Lee, who is ranked fourth in her class with a 4.3 GPA, will attend UCLA or USC.

Both share a passion for pursuing career paths that will help create healthy environments for the communities of the future – Amezcua Rocha as an environmental scientist and Lee as a physician or scientist.

Lee is looking to pursue a career in medicine researching cures for frontotemporal degenerative diseases such as dementia and developing vaccines that will improve quality of life. Lee has years of experience acting as a caregiver for her grandmother, who has dementia, and her mother, who is a breast cancer survivor. She is also involved at the public library, where she sits on the Teen Advisory Council and coordinates interactive activities for children.

– MORE –

“These experiences have allowed me to recognize that there is a contemporary issue with American health care,” said Lee, who will be the first in her family to attend college. “I want to increase the accessibility of quality health care in all low-income communities. Thank you to Edison for helping me in my quest to provide a better quality of life through medical research.”

Amezcuca is president and founder of South El Monte High’s Emerald Jewel Club, which focuses on reducing the human impact to the environment. Emerald Jewel members work as volunteers at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, located across the street from campus. As a freshman, Amezcuca began the Meatless Monday pilot program at South El Monte High, which proved so successful that it has been implemented throughout the District.

“I am so proud of our high-achieving students whose dedication, hard work and potential for greatness is being recognized and nurtured by Edison with these exclusive STEM scholarships,” El Monte Union Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “Sandra and Connie are ambassadors for all El Monte Union students who are using education to effect positive change in the world.”

### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**032918\_EMUHSD\_EDISONSCHOLAR1:** Surrounded by family and friends, South El Monte High School senior Sandra Amezcuca Rocha was surprised with a \$40,000 scholarship from Edison International as part of the Edison Scholars program on March 26. Amezcuca Rocha, who is still deciding whether to attend Yale or Stanford University, will use the scholarship toward her college tuition.

**032918\_EMUHSD\_EDISONSCHOLAR2:** El Monte High School senior Connie Lee was surprised with a \$40,000 scholarship from Edison International during a Skype call on March 19. Lee, who wants to be a physician or scientist, will attend UCLA or USC.

###

*The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.*