



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April. 29, 2024 CONTACT: Maria Hernandez PHONE: (909) 447-2406

## El Monte Union Celebrates Successes of 2024 QuestBridge Scholars

**EL MONTE** – Five standout seniors from El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) secured coveted, full four-year scholarships exceeding \$200,000 through the QuestBridge National College Match program for their dedication to academic excellence and spirited involvement in their school communities.

South El Monte High's Mariana Ortega Ubeda and Karla Ixchop, Rosemead High's Wesley (Junaho) Huang, Arroyo High's Chris Tu, and Mountain View High School's Jason Flores were selected out of 18,000 applicants nationwide for QuestBridge Scholarships, propelling them toward elite colleges across the nation. Each EMUHSD senior met QuestBridge's rigorous selection criteria, which demanded exceptional academic performance, demonstrated leadership skills, and financial need.

"El Monte Union is incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication these scholars put into their academic journeys and we congratulate them on this well-deserved achievement," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "Their success not only reflects their outstanding efforts to be resilient, college-and-career ready lifelong learners – it is also a testament to the District's commitment to providing diverse programs and ample growth opportunities that empower our students to excel."

Ubeda became a QuestBridge College Prep Scholar during her junior year and has maintained a 4.35 GPA while undertaking rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Her passion for research and experimental psychology drove her ambition to attend Amherst College and pursue a meaningful career in psychology or neuroscience.

"I am so grateful to be a QuestBridge Match Scholarship recipient," Ubeda said. "It means the world to me that I can attend a QuestBridge partner school on a full-ride without the worry of burdening my parents financially. I never believed I would be able to afford to attend a top college, but after working hard and receiving my QuestBridge recognition I was filled with immense pride."

Ixchop, who matched with UPenn, will be the first in her family to attend college. As an active scholar within the South El Monte High community, she is a proud participant in several AP courses, including AP Psychology and Art History, and has been preparing for her college journey through the school's Early College Academy Program. This school year, she also joined the school's construction pathway, in partnership with Los Angeles Trade-Tech College, where she was selected to lead her team as captain during the 2024 Design Build Competition.

"I was in shock when I received the acceptance letter," Ixchop said. "I immediately went to go tell my teachers, family, and friends, who have all had a positive impact on my academic journey. As a first-generation college student, it makes me nervous to leave home, but I am looking forward to my bright future ahead of me."

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Huang, who matched with Washington University in St. Louis, is deeply committed to making a positive impact on the Asian American community and is an active member of Rosemead High's Chinese Culture and Ecology clubs. He plans to major in global affairs and political science in hopes of working with nonprofit organizations or continuing his academic endeavors in law school, in alignment with his aspirations to advocate for social change.

"It is a very exciting feeling for me and my family," Huang said. "Washington University is a beautiful campus full of kind people, and I'm looking forward to pursuing my interest and continuing my advocacy efforts upon attending college."

Tu has participated in several AP courses and Arroyo High's Dual Enrollment program with Río Hondo College and UCLA. He holds leadership roles in several clubs, including Science Olympiad, and has a distinct passion for animals and biology. He plans to attend Pomona College in Claremont and major in molecular biology or liberal arts.

"I could not believe it when I got that message on my screen, 'Congratulations, You Matched,'" Tu said. "It took a while for me to fully grasp the extent to which this will affect my future. I am thankful for all the amazing teachers, friends, faculty, and family who have helped me achieve my dreams."

Flores will attend USC in the fall, majoring in global health at USC's Keck School of Medicine. He aspires to become an anesthesiologist to continue his commitment to academic excellence and community service, exemplified by his involvement in Mountain View High's Associated Student Body, The Viking Regiment, and Key Club.

"I am very grateful to have been selected as a QuestBridge Scholar," Flores said. "Being a low-income student, it is truly a financial stress relief, especially with my goal of becoming a health professional. This scholarship ensures I can make my dreams a reality."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**EMUHSD QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS 1:** South El Monte High School Mariana Ortega Ubeda was one of five El Monte Union High School District seniors to be selected for the QuestBridge National Match Scholarship in 2024.

**EMUHSD QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS 2:** South El Monte High School senior Karla Ixchop receives a 2024 QuestBridge National Match Scholarship, a full four-year scholarship exceeding \$200,000. Ixchop plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.

**EMUHSD QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS 3:** Rosemead High School senior Wesley (Junaho) Huang celebrates his 2024 QuestBridge National Match Scholarship during a college visit to Western University in St. Louis. He is committed to making a positive impact on the Asian American community.

**EMUHSD QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS 4:** Arroyo High School (AHS) senior Chris Tu celebrates his 2024 QuestBridge National Match Scholarship acceptance with AHS Guidance Counselor Patricia Filimaua.

**EMUHSD QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS 5:** Mountain View High School's Jason Flores was one of five El Monte Union High School District seniors to qualify for the 2024 QuestBridge National Match Scholarship. He was one of 18,000 applicants nationwide to be selected for the full, four-year scholarship.

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*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.*