



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 15, 2024 CONTACT: Maria Hernandez PHONE: (909) 447-2406

El Monte Union Students Secure Top Award, Monetary Prizes at National Competition

EL MONTE – Five Mountain View High School (MVHS) juniors in the Viking Informational Systems Technology Academy (VISTA) clinched three awards, including the top honor, for their compelling public service announcement (PSA) at the National Streets Are Safe for Everyone Competition on May 4.

VISTA's award-winning PSA entitled "[Dose of Reality](#)" won not only the top spot in the Los Angeles County South region, but the entire National Streets Are Safe for Everyone competition. VISTA earned \$1,250 to use for future projects, and juniors Lindsay Vargas, Sarahi Retana, Giselle Ortiz, Jaquelin Flores, and Mariela Cruz each received \$250 for their contributions to the PSA.

VISTA students were recognized for their work in other categories on PSAs, including Script Originality and Creativity for "[Heavens Gate](#)" and Post Special Effects/Graphics for "[Drunk Driving Animation](#)."

"First and foremost, I am so grateful to be a part of VISTA. I have always had a passion for filmmaking and it was not until this competition that I realized I also had a love for scriptwriting," Retana said. "My classmates and I collaborated on the concept for 'Dose of Reality.' We really wanted to make sure our video evoked a striking message and impacted others to keep safety in mind when driving."

The National Streets Are Safe for Everyone Competition, organized by the non-profit organization Streets Are For Everyone (SAFE), tasks high school teams with producing compelling PSAs that emphasize safe driving practices. SAFE is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers by striving to eliminate traffic-related fatalities. The competition was initiated by SAFE to harness the influence of student voices in promoting road safety awareness among their peers.

MVHS VISTA students were part of a group of 29 schools, over 360 students, 112 individual Competition Registrations and 82 final PSA Submissions.

"The dedication and creativity shown by these young filmmakers are truly inspiring," MVHS VISTA teacher John Mann said. "This is the third year we have participated in this competition and each year my students never cease to amaze me. I am extremely proud of them and all their hard work. They've demonstrated how youth-driven initiatives can drive meaningful change in our communities."

The students' remarkable journey was further celebrated during a [live interview](#) on KCAL 9 Morning News on May 7, where they shared insights into their winning PSA and showcased their videos.

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"The success of Mountain View's VISTA students highlights the innovative spirit and commitment to community engagement that defines our District," El Monte Union High School District Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "Congratulations to each participant for their outstanding contributions and well-deserved recognition."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD MVHS VISTA 1: From left to right: Mountain View High School's Viking Informational Systems Technology Academy (VISTA) juniors Jaquelin Flores, Sarahi Retana, Giselle Ortiz, Mariela Cruz, and Lindsay Vargas won gold for their compelling public service announcement at the National Streets Are Safe for Everyone Competition on May 4.

EMUHSD MVHS VISTA 2: Mountain View High School's Viking Informational Systems Technology Academy (VISTA) juniors and VISTA teacher John Mann (right) celebrate their winning public service announcement during a live interview on KCAL 9 Morning News on May 7.

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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.