



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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Two El Monte Union Seniors Receive \$20,000 Dell Foundation Scholarships

EL MONTE – Two South El Monte High School seniors who helped create the school’s Freshman Mentoring Program have been selected as 2018 Dell Scholars by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, a prestigious honor that comes with a \$20,000 scholarship to help pay for their college education expenses.

As Dell Scholars, Sandra Amezcua Rocha – already a winner of a \$40,000 Edison Scholarship – and Miriam Benavides will each receive a \$20,000 scholarship over four years, a laptop and textbook credits. They will also have access to a support network of students, peer mentors and Dell staff, with services including confidential counseling, financial aid coaching and work-life solutions.

“Miriam and Sandra are close friends, outstanding students and campus leaders who are establishing a culture of high expectations through their work with the Freshman Mentoring Program,” South El Monte High Principal Amy Avina said. “They are demonstrating that hard work and determination pay dividends when preparing for a college education, and their accomplishments are resonating with the freshmen.”

“I am very happy for this opportunity,” said Benavides, who plans to study nursing and work in the medical profession. “I always feel that I’m not smart enough or I don’t have the right background, but this has proven me wrong. I am capable of more and there are opportunities out there waiting for me. It’s a possibility that I can achieve my dreams.”

Now its third year, the Freshman Mentoring Program is designed to acclimate incoming students to the increased rigor and responsibilities of high school life, while establishing a plan for higher education. Mentors and freshmen are paired at the beginning of the school year, exchanging contact information and meeting regularly throughout the year.

As mentors, Benavides and Amezcua Rocha counsel incoming freshmen who have been identified as college-bound, offering advice, recommending classes and making them aware of scholarship opportunities.

Benavides, who has a 4.0 GPA, is a caregiver for her mother and has volunteered at Beverly Hospital. Though she is not able to participate in many extracurricular activities due to her responsibilities at home, Benavides is active in California Scholarship Federation and South El Monte High’s Emerald Jewel environmental club.

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She is undecided on whether to attend Cal State University Los Angeles or Cal State Long Beach.

Amezcu Rocha credits attending the Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) summer internship at Princeton University in 2017 for her knowledge of available scholarships. It was Amezcu Rocha who advised Benavides to apply for the Dell Scholarship.

She plans to study environmental engineering and is still undecided on whether to attend Stanford or Yale.

“I want to thank my teachers at South El Monte for believing in me, they have been inspiring mentors,” Amezcu Rocha said. “I have been fortunate to have so many good friends at school and I hope they feel the same respect and affinity that I feel for them. I would like to take that with me to college.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

050218_EMUHS_DELLSCHOLARS: South El Monte High School seniors Sandra Amezcu Rocha and Miriam Benavides were selected as 2018 Dell Scholars by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and will receive \$20,000 scholarships to help pay for their college educations.

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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.