



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock

PHONE: (909) 445-1001

A Top El Monte Union Senior Receives Full-tuition Gates Scholarship

EL MONTE – Mountain View High School senior Cindy Lee, this year's top valedictorian for the Class of 2020, has been named a 2020 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Scholar, one of only 300 students across the nation to receive the full-tuition scholarship.

Lee will attend her dream university, UC Irvine, where she will major in data science and pursue a graduate degree.

"When I found out I won, I didn't believe it. Receiving the Gates scholarship and going to UC Irvine is incredible," said Lee, who is one of Mountain View's three valedictorians this year. "I could not have done this without my amazing teachers at Mountain View, who have always challenged me to do my very best. I'm very grateful for all they have done for me."

First awarded in 2018, the Gates Scholarship, which is given to 300 minority high school seniors a year, helping exceptional seniors attain their dream of attending four-year universities and earning an undergraduate degree.

The program will fund the full cost of college not already covered by other financial aid. Students are also provided with academic and social support, mentoring and leadership training opportunities.

Since freshman year, Lee has actively participated in Mountain View's Pacific Horizon Club, a college-going club that celebrates the diversity of Asian and Pacific Islander American cultures on campus. She has served as president over the last two years.

"It truly was a home away from home," she said. "Having a space and outside family like Pacific Horizon really helped me find my standing as a growing young woman."

Lee also spent three years as a volunteer tutor for Mountain View's award-winning Teacher Prep Academy. Among her duties, Lee tutored newly arrived Vietnamese and South American English learners and was energized by their determination. Lee also served as a math tutor.

With guidance from Academic Decathlon adviser Geoff Bolen, Lee also served as team captain for two years, during which the team earned two consecutive Top 20 finishes.

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Lee's best memory of school came as editor-in-chief of the Viking Scroll newspaper. Lee spent one long night editing an issue that wasn't up to the paper's standards, staying at school for hours, editing every story until the paper was ready for publication.

She is looking forward to the challenges of being a college student. Most of all, Lee will miss her teachers, whom she describes as mentors for life.

"I am proud of Cindy, whose natural intelligence and insightfulness, powerful work-ethic, dedicated leadership and self-confidence coupled with her humility will allow her to be successful and well-respected in her future academic and career endeavors," said Pacific Horizon Club adviser Monica Tomoyasu. "Cindy Lee is, indeed, No. 1 and I have no doubt that she will impact her community and the world. She embodies the hopefulness of the future."

PHOTO CAPTION:

060320_EMUHS_D_LEE: Mountain View High School senior Cindy Lee has been named a 2020 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Scholar. She will attend UC Irvine and major in data science.

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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.