



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Bassett Unified School District

on the move

904 North Willow Avenue ■ La Puente, CA 91746 ■ (626) 931-3000 ■ (626) 931-3020 ■ www.bassettusd.org

For Immediate Release

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Bassett High Senior Inspired to Pursue Career in the Arts after Completing Prestigious Scholarship Program

As Bassett High School senior Ailsa Thai wraps up a prestigious scholarship program at Ryman Arts, she has not only sharpened her skills – she has made a life-changing discovery: Artists don't have to suffer for their work.

"There's a view that artists have to starve to death, but that's just not true anymore," Thai, 18, said. "Something I have learned through Ryman Arts is that it's possible to have a successful career as an artist."

Thai is the second Bassett student to graduate from the Los Angeles-based arts program in the 25 years it has provided high school scholarships. This year, Ryman Arts chose more than 300 high school students for its three-semester program.

"Through art, I am able to express things that I find difficult to say in words and can't say aloud," Thai said. "Art is a way of communicating to a wide range of people. They can form their own perspective and have a relationship with art."

Thai plans to major in fine arts or architecture after she realized that her passion could lead to a rewarding career.

Bassett High art teacher Brian Prieto recognized Thai's natural talent in art and encouraged her to apply for the Ryman Arts program, where she would be taking college-level courses and gain more exposure in the art community. Prieto taught her to use her creativity and helped her become more confident in exposing her art, such as using social media as a visual platform.

"Ailsa's attention to detail in drawing from observation and from her imagination has significantly improved," Prieto said. "She's also matured as an artist in finding her own style, her own voice and her own opinion through these courses and interacting with the other students."

Ryman Arts, which accepts about half of all applicants, was founded by the family of Walt Disney Studios Imagineer Herbert D. Ryman. Professional artists teach the program every weekend at Otis College of Art and Design and California State University, Fullerton. All programs and materials are complimentary to Ryman Arts students.

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The first semester is devoted to foundation drawing, using graphite and charcoal mediums. The second semester focuses on intermediate drawing and painting, using watercolors. The third semester centers on acrylics and mixed media.

“It is so important that students are able to explore their skills and expand their abilities inside and outside of our classrooms,” Superintendent Dr. Alex Rojas said. “Our hardworking teachers and administrators keep our students motivated by providing them with opportunities where they can stay committed to their passions.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

AILSATHAI1: Bassett High School senior Ailsa Thai is finishing her final semester at Ryman Arts, a highly competitive and prestigious arts program for high school students. Fully funded by scholarships, students learn to hone their art skills in charcoal, watercolors, acrylics and mixed media.

AILSATHAI2: One of Bassett High Senior Ailsa Thai’s art pieces using color pencils. Thai is expanding her art skills at Ryman Arts, where she is finishing her final semester at the highly competitive arts program. She said that the idea that artists starve to death is a myth, and through the program she learned that it is possible to have a career as an artist.

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Bassett Unified School District Mission – Working collaboratively with all stakeholders, the Bassett Unified School District will provide engaging and rigorous learning opportunities, using integrated technology in state-of-the-art learning environments, to graduate College and Career Ready students.

Bassett Unified School District Vision – We are a community committed to educating and empowering our students to think creatively, act responsibly, and communicate effectively in order to be successful members of society and make a positive impact on the lives of others.