



Press Release

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Montebello High Senior to Attend UCLA on First Aerospace Corporation STEM Scholarship

Montebello Unified student Heydy Arias plans to become a math teacher

MONTEBELLO – Montebello High School senior Heydy Arias tapped her love of mathematics to win The Aerospace Corporation’s first-ever \$40,000 STEM Endowment Scholarship, a gift that will fuel her math studies at UCLA and a planned return to her alma mater as a teacher.

“This is great news for Heydy and the Montebello Unified School District,” Board of Education President Benjamin Cárdenas said. “Heydy exemplifies the best qualities of our students. Not only is she an outstanding student, but she is a thoughtful person who wants to make a difference.”

Arias impressed the non-profit corporation’s selection committee with her commitment to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, her involvement in campus programs and mentoring of other students in math.

“We believe strongly that her high standards, passion to pursue a STEM career, and love of solving problems makes her the ideal candidate to receive the scholarship,” Aerospace Corporation President and CEO Wanda Austin said. “Her goal of becoming a high school math teacher is certainly aligned with our commitment to inspiring future mathematicians, engineers and scientists.”

Aerospace officials said the competition for the scholarship was rigorous, with many outstanding candidates from Los Angeles high schools. The award provides \$10,000 annually for tuition, fees (including room and board) and books.

Arias, who has a 4.24 weighted grade-point average and who has pursued her math studies through AP calculus and statistics, said she wants to be true to her school after she graduates.

“There’s a lot of alumni teaching here at Montebello High and they’ve all been very supportive,” she said. “I want to return here to teach and help students the same way they have guided me through school.”

Arias credits her involvement in the Montebello High Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Club, along with extracurricular activities and playing on the tennis team for helping her become college ready. She is the AVID Club president.

“I’ve been taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes since my sophomore year, but being part of the AVID program really helped motivate me and grow as a person,” Arias said. “I was really shy when I arrived here as a ninth-grader, but now I’m not afraid to speak before an audience or mentor other students who need help with their math.”

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Aerospace will provide Arias with a mentor and information about summer internship opportunities with the corporation. She will also have the opportunity to participate in Aerospace’s annual summer STEM outreach program to local high schools and other outreach events at Aerospace expense. She will receive the award formally from Austin on June 9.

“On behalf of Montebello Unified, we congratulate Heydy on being the first high school student to receive The Aerospace Corporation STEM Endowment Scholarship. It’s quite an honor for her and Montebello Unified,” MUSD Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith said.

Arias, who will be the first in her family to attend college, said the scholarship will ease the burden of her college education costs on her family.

“My parents are overjoyed, and I’m really happy for them because now they won’t have to stress themselves out about how they were going to cover my college costs,” Arias said. “Since I won’t have to work a job to help support myself through school, I’ll be able to still help my little 8-year-old brother with his homework when I’m home.”

Photo Caption:

MUSDHARIAS: Montebello High School senior Heydy Arias tapped her love of mathematics to win The Aerospace Corporation’s first-ever \$40,000 STEM Endowment Scholarship, a gift that will fuel her math studies at UCLA and a planned return to her alma mater as a teacher.

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Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.