



## Press Release

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## Bell Gardens Graduating Seniors Honored at Annual Scholarship Banquet

**MONTEBELLO** – Fifty Bell Gardens High School seniors were honored at school’s annual ceremonial scholarship banquet on June 1. School and District officials, counselors and teachers presented a range of scholarships, including some that will cover all college costs.

“On behalf of the Montebello Unified School District, I extend heartfelt congratulations to each of our scholars at Bell Gardens and across the District for their stellar achievements,” Montebello Unified Board President Benjamin Cárdenas said. “Thank you to each of our teachers, school leaders, counselors, parents and students for making this year and this event such a success.”

Nearly 30 local and national sponsors contributed to the educational future of the students, who will attend 25 different colleges across the country. BGHS students have been accepted to California Institute of Technology, five University of California schools, five California State University schools, the University of Southern California, Rio Hondo College, East Los Angeles College, the University of Michigan, among others.

Also part of the banquet was the recognition of students who received the state Seal of Biliteracy. More than 60 BGHS seniors were honored for achieving proficiency in two or more languages.

The top seniors were named as follows:

- BGHS valedictorian **Erik Herrera**, attending Caltech on a near full-tuition scholarship is graduating with a 4.37 GPA
- Salutatorian **Alejandra Uribe** is graduating with a 4.33 GPA and is attending UCLA to major in mathematics
- **Angel Gutierrez** boasts a 4.28 GPA and will attend UCLA to major in computer engineering
- **Abigail Sanchez** is graduating with 4.27 GPA and will major in nursing at UC Irvine.
- **Brianna Pasillas** is headed to USC to major in English. She has a GPA of 4.27.
- **Omar Morales** is attending the University of Michigan to study engineering and is graduating with a 4.23 GPA.
- **Josselyne Yatco Vasquez** will major in engineering at UCSB and has a 4.23 GPA
- **Arturo Samaniego**, with a GPA of 4.22, is attending UCSB to major in English.
- **Melissa Cortez** will major in biology at Berkeley. She has a GPA of 4.18.
- **Carlos Hernandez-Gonzalez** is headed up to UC Davis to major in engineering. He has a GPA of 4.17.
- **Lizeth Rosales** is graduating with a 4.17 GPA and is attending UCLA to study neuroscience.

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On behalf of the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (CALSA), Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith presented Morales with a \$300,000 full-ride scholarship from PFMG Solar, who decided to commit to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor after his first visit to the campus in April. The District, Superintendent Contreras Smith, BGHS principal Juan Herrera and BGHS college counselor Tracy Brendzal teamed up to cover his travel expenses.

“It was quite the honor not only see all of our high achieving Bell Gardens seniors be recognized for their accomplishments as they pursue the next step in their academic careers, but to be able to gift Omar our prestigious scholarship,” Contreras Smith said. “Congratulations to Omar and each of our teachers, administrators, students and parents.”

Bell Gardens seniors are set to graduate at 6 p.m. this evening at East Los Angeles College.

### **Photo Captions**

MUSDBGBANQUET1: Bell Gardens High School seniors were honored at school’s annual ceremonial scholarship banquet on June 1. School and Montebello Unified School District officials, counselors and teachers presented a range of scholarships, including some that will cover all college costs.

MUSDBGBANQUET2: Fifty Bell Gardens High School seniors were honored at school’s annual ceremonial scholarship banquet on June 1. Pictured here, from left to right, BGHS Principal Juan Herrera, BGHS CALSA scholarship recipient Omar Morales, Montebello Unified School District Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith and BGHS College Counselor Tracy Brendzal.

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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](http://www.montebello.k12.ca.us).