



## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Santa Fe High Senior Surprised with \$40,000 Scholarship** First-Generation Teen to Pursue Chemical Engineering at UC Santa Barbara

**WHITTIER, CA** – Stunned, Aylin Arreola’s eyes filled with tears early April 15 as the Santa Fe High School senior was surprised with the news she had won a coveted \$40,000 Southern California Edison scholarship that will make her dream of attending UC Santa Barbara a reality.

A group of SCE representatives paid an unannounced visit to the 17-year-old’s school to break the news, bringing with them her mother and father, Lourdes and Audon Arreola, to share in the good news. Just 30 students were chosen from 2,768 applicants for the 2015 Southern California Edison Scholars program, which directs funds to first-generation college students with financial need who plan to major in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

“I was completely shocked and surprised,” Aylin said. “This scholarship means I can attend the school of my dreams.”

Aylin, who holds a 4.3 GPA and plans to major in chemical engineering, had been accepted by UC Santa Barbara, but her family couldn’t afford the cost. Her father encouraged her to explore scholarship opportunities.

The scholar turned to her Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) cohort for advice. The school’s highly successful AVID program serves to provide students with access to four-year college programs. Aylin has participated in AVID since sixth grade. She is now co-president Santa Fe’s AVID club.

Spending much of her free time applying for different awards, Aylin found the SCE Scholars program FaceBook link and submitted an application.

“I knew I would be competing against a lot of other students, but I knew if I had a chance at getting this scholarship, I’d be able to afford a four-year college,” Aylin said.

Santa Fe Principal Kevin Jamero praised Aylin for doggedly pursuing her dream.

“We are very proud of Aylin and her accomplishments while attending Santa Fe, and we’re grateful for the scholarship that SCE has provided her,” Jamero said. “It’s a true testament to our AVID program for providing our students access and resources to reach their academic and personal goals.”

Aylin credits Santa Fe’s AVID program – one of only 140 schools in the nation to bear National Demonstration School status – for helping her make it to college.

“I’ve been involved with AVID for seven years and I’ve learned so much: how to stay organized, how to manage my time and maintain my academics with sports and other extra-curricular activities going on,” Aylin said. “AVID has greatly impacted my life. Without it, I don’t think I’d be headed to UC Santa Barbara.”

Santa Fe High School’s AVID program was established in 1990 and has been recognized as a National Demonstration School since 2001. It is geared toward students who wish to pursue a college preparatory path and supports Whittier Union High School District’s “Whatever It Takes” approach to each student’s academic success.

“Our District is committed to ensuring all students receive the preparation and support necessary to remove obstacles that prevent their access to higher education,” Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson said. “Santa Fe’s excellent AVID program serves as a prime example of how our dedicated staff and faculty continue to encourage students to forge their own paths to success.”

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**ARREOLA:** Santa Fe High School senior Aylin Arreola celebrates a \$40,000 scholarship she was awarded by Southern California Edison. Aylin plans to use the funds toward pursuing a degree in chemical engineering at UC Santa Barbara.

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*The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement.  
Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.*

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