



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Whittier High Freshman Organizes School's First Mud Run Promoting Healthy, Active Living

WHITTIER, CA – Whittier High School freshman Analaura Amezcua is the top ranked student in her class and is the only ninth-grader taking two Advanced Placement classes and honors courses, maintaining an impressive 4.5 GPA while participating in numerous campus clubs.

But when she isn't busy tackling the challenges of academic rigor, Analaura, 15, devotes her time to one of her other passions: spearheading health and wellness advocacy projects throughout her community.

In an effort to promote wellness and family fun, Analaura and the school's Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), of which she is the health chair, are organizing Whittier High School's first mud run – the Cardinal Survival Mud Run – at 10 a.m. **Saturday, May 16.**

"My idea is that I want to create a change in the world. I don't know how. Maybe it's already started," Analaura said.

Funds raised will support school organizations and clubs such as ASB, football, band, cheer and Academic Mentors, among others.

"Analaura is doing her part to make the world a healthier place and it's so encouraging to see her bring her grassroots movement for healthy eating and active living to the Whittier High community," Principal Lori Eshilian said. "Despite her busy school and home life, Analaura is committed to giving back to the community, and we couldn't be more supportive of her efforts at our school."

Analaura's outlook on healthy eating changed two years ago when she and her mother, Rosalia Calam, enrolled in "Change Begins with Me," a class focused on developing long-term, healthy living habits. The course is sponsored by Activate Whittier, a collaborative with Kaiser Permanente Southern California's Healthy Eating, Active Living initiative.

As part of Activate Whittier, the avid volunteer works with Healthy Picks, a program that helps families identify healthy food and beverages at local food stores. Analaura designed the logo and has already gotten Whittier Farms and Uptown Market to carry it.

Whittier High School is in the process of adopting the program.

"To be a change in the community is empowering to me," Analaura said. "I've considered pursuing a career as a lawyer, architect, psychologist or senator. I don't know what I want to do yet, but I really want to help others be the best they can."

In addition to her work with Activate Whittier, Analaura – who wants to be the class valedictorian and attend Stanford University – founded Project W at Whittier High. The student-run club promotes a healthier environment for youth. Analaura also participates in nonprofit program Families of Whittier Seeking Success in which she organized a program encouraging Latinos to pursue higher education.

“So many times voices aren’t heard, and I’m fortunate enough to say that I am heard,” said Analaura, who has already received state recognition for her efforts.

In March, Analaura was named a Distinguished Woman of the Year by Assemblyman Ian Calderon (D-57) for her volunteer work with Activate Whittier and for being an ambassador for healthy living within her community.

“It’s impressive and motivating to see our Whittier Union students be a voice for change on their campuses and surrounding communities,” said Whittier Union High School District Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson. “I’m proud of students like Analaura who want to help their peers and strive to make a positive difference in the world.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

ANALAURA: Whittier High School freshman Analaura Amezcuita, 15, is doing her part to make the world a healthier place, starting with her community. She has spearheaded the school’s first mud run taking place May 16. Funds raised will support campus programs and organizations.

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