

**Sandra Estrada Speech to the UCLA Faculty Women's Club
Honoring Dr. Glenn Langer**

UCLA Faculty Center
February 2, 2016

Good evening, my name is Sandra Estrada and I am a Partnership Scholars Alumni. Six years ago, I was standing in a room somewhat like this yet I was a lot shorter, had a mouth full of braces and I was absolutely freaking out. Well the freaking out part hasn't changed too much, but six years ago I gave a speech about how happy and lucky I was to have been selected to be one of the 15 students who would be crowned a Partnership Scholar.

My speech was a full page of thank yous and hoorahs, words that at the moment were understatement of what I feel today. As a 7th grader, I knew Dr. Langer saw something in us but did not really know what it was. As a 7th grader, I did not know much about what Dr. Langer and the Partnership Scholars program had in store for us, but as a first year UCLA student, I can testify that it was one heck of a ride.

A ride that I will forever be grateful for. One that this speech would not be able to account for the numerous friendships and memories I've made throughout the years. Now that I have a chance to look back, I realize that the Partnership Scholars Program is much more than granting underprivileged students from Lennox Middle School the opportunity to see a world we would have never seen without the generous donations of our benefactors. It was about showing us that we had as much potential to get into college as anyone else. It was about building a strong bond with our mentors, such as I did with my

lovely mentor Meg Sanchez. It was also about ensuring that we had the sufficient tools and skills to secure our success in the future.

Partnership Scholars provided us with opportunities such as workshops over the summer to get a head start on personal statements and college applications, paid in full for SAT and ACT prep and best of all even added some fun to the mix! I was able to visit Alcatraz in San Francisco and hear the enticing stories of notorious inmates that escaped the island. I also was lucky enough see the Lion King musical from the second row! Now that was amazing. Like my mother would say “Estas bendecida”, and she was right. I was blessed to be able to have the amazing opportunities to try different types of foods, visit different museums, watch various shows, and travel, all thanks to the generosity of Dr. Langer.

If I were to tell you all we did throughout the years, you’d wake up here tomorrow ... but I won’t do that to you. Instead I’ll finish off by redeeming my 7th grade self by saying to you Dr. Langer, that your generosity and goodwill implemented 20 years ago has not only changed my life but hundreds of other students’ lives. We would not have had the chance to see the world in a different light if it weren’t for you. Your program taught me that it did not matter what my parents’ income was or that I lived in a community where only 2% of its population graduate from college. Thanks to you, the program, and my lovely mentor Meg Sanchez, I am where I stand today, and where I will stand tomorrow.

From a fellow Bruin to another, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. The world would definitely be a lovelier place if there were more people just like you.