

Jonas Anderson

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



When I was accepted into the Partnership Scholars in the 7th grade, it was “ooh free money! I'm going all over the world! Mom how many plane tickets will ten grand buy?” As I progressed through this program, my intentions didn't change much, but my appreciation for this great program has. I have grown up with my fellow scholars, and with the help of my mentors I have made it this far. Whether shopping for that ridiculously expensive graphing calculator I'll only use for that one stats class, or traveling half way across the country to Chicago (which I highly suggest; the hot dogs are absolutely wonderful) this program has helped me along my way from little middle school brat to high school graduate and Rotary International Youth Exchange Ambassador. Another of the greatest experiences of my life was only possible because of PSP. During the summer of 2014, I spent a month in Valencia, California at the California State Summer School for the Arts to study guitar at the California Art Institute. I learned so much, and made many lifelong friends that summer, all thanks to the help and support of PSP.

After my year abroad in Paraguay and Argentina, I am hoping to attend Columbia College Chicago in order to major in contemporary music with a focus in guitar. After that I am not sure what I'll do with my life. My hopes are to travel the world and play music. I don't care if I'm traveling 1st class playing in stadiums, or scraping together change for an extra gallon of gas to get to the next town for a show at a coffee shop or pub, or anywhere in between. Through the Partnership scholars I have learned to be prepared for anything, and so I won't have nearly as many surprises to hinder my progress towards success.

Received Rotary Scholarship to Study Abroad, fall 2016

Sponsor: Malcolm and Sylvia Boyce

Mentor: Penny Walker



Cristina Ayala

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



When you don't have someone believe in you, what do you do? Prove them wrong? Ignore the matter? Personally I didn't care about anything; I just lived life as it came. The messages I usually got weren't positive. I was surrounded by negative people and negative ideas. So I was becoming a negative person, just not taking into consideration my future and living for the moment regardless of consequences. But when I got into the Partnership Scholars Program that changed. For once, I had someone actually tell me I had the potential to do something more than what I was used to seeing academically, which influenced me on a personal level because I started expanding my influences to positive ones. I wanted to do the minimum to pass school and move on. I was enrolled in honors classes because my sixth grade teacher signed me up for them, not because I aspired to take them. I wanted to quit the challenge: why do more unnecessary work? But Penny, my mentor, came on the scene before I made any real decisions and encouraged me to stay there because I had the ability to take the classes regardless of all the work-load. I was becoming lazy along the way, downgrading myself by saying I wasn't able to deal with the courses, but really I simply I didn't want to be there.

As a freshman, college wasn't my dream. I may have said "Oh yes, I'm going" but really I was unsure about it all. There was always that positive magnet trying to pull me out of my old ways. My grades were decent, but I know they could have been better. Sophomore year I still was questioning the whole "going to college" plan. Visiting universities motivated me to at least give it a shot, even though I didn't believe in myself. My mentor did, and I didn't understand why. Then there was junior year the program still pushing me to maintain grades. Now it was me not wanting to disappoint those who believed in me. It wasn't much about myself. Even though I didn't perform my best I still maintained myself above the standards I had for myself. My mentor motivated me to not give up in school and quit the progress I had made all these years. I'm glad my mentor was there motivating me even through my perspective was not what she hoped for throughout the years. This program had invested time in me and I didn't want to fail.

While in the program I was able to see colleges, I felt motivated once I went on a campus tours, but as days went by, I was just back to 'maybe I won't'. It was always a dilemma. Nobody close to me had gone to college, so why would I? It was just the hopes of it happening and people telling me I could when at times I mentioned college and some folks shut me down because there was no meaning attached to the word. This last year I really have come to understand what I wasn't clearly able to grasp throughout the years. Applying for college and getting the acceptance letters made it real and not just something I thought could happen. Going on campus tours really made me start to attach a meaning to its significance, it was in the back of my mind and that made a change. Being able to visit places I wouldn't have otherwise, like planetariums, museums and aquariums, and experiencing other cultures through restaurants. It just opened my mind to all there is out in the world, like the trip to D.C. it was a totally different experience. I owe my future to this program without it I really don't know how far I would have made it. Now I am more than motivated to attend college and get a degree. I want to make the best of it and go to graduate school. I know what I want to do, but for now it's my little secret. I want to prove that I can excel and accomplish my goals. Now I believe I can do this.

Entering UC Merced, fall 2016

Sponsor: Malcolm and Sylvia Boyce

Mentor: Penny Walker



Jimena Castañeda

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



Having entered the Partnership Scholars Program late, I did not know anyone that was in the program. My first outing through the program was to the ropes course in Leggitt. Through that experience I revealed my biggest fears to complete strangers, who the only thing we knew about each other was that we were all scholars. Yet, as we all went through the ropes course and I looked around, I could see what we had in common. The students around me were determined intellectuals that strived for nothing less than success. Now being in my final year of high school I see that nothing has changed in us. Those characteristics have only enhanced through time.

Being a Partnership Scholar, I have learned to reach for the unattainable because even that is attainable. The program has showed me to never settle for what is expected because even a girl like me, daughter of immigrant parents, can make it into the impossible. Without this program I would have never seen myself taking trips around the country, let alone the world or even to different parts of California. They have shown me the appreciation and importance of keeping my grades up and the benefits of taking the advance placement courses offered at my high school,

Before PSP, I never thought about college. College to me was just something overdramatized in movies and TV shows. Having parents who never attended college, the topic of where I wanted to go after graduation never come up. As a repercussion, I never thought about what I wanted to be when I grew up. I had ideas but none that I would see as an actual reality. As I prepare to be a future Hornet at California State University, Sacramento I have continued to think of my future: seeing myself as a kinesiology major, studying to become a physical therapist. I am really looking forward to accomplishing my goals.

Entering CSU Sacramento, fall 2016

Sponsor: S.H. Cowell Foundation

Mentor: Liz Black



Adriana Franco

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



Looking back these past six years, I have been exposed to many life changing experiences through the Partnership Scholar Program. From visiting museums, such as the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., to traveling to southern California; I have been impacted by almost every trip I have taken with PSP. I cherish not only the incredible connection I have built with my mentor, but the different perspective I now have on the world.

Coming from a small town has always seemed like a disadvantage to me. PSP has opened my eyes to see that regardless of where a person comes from, they are still capable of accomplishing anything they set their mind to. PSP has motivated me to attend a four-year college, and to pursue what my heart desires. I plan to graduate from CSU Sacramento with a major in Sociology. I want to help the children in my community become something spectacular.

In all honesty, without PSP I would know little to nothing about college, and the real potential I obtain of attending a four-year school, would be oblivious to me. Thus, I learned the importance of interacting with new people and establishing relationships that can never be broken. I would like to thank my wonderful mentor Vera Leach, all of the committed people of PSP and all of the scholars for their support throughout the six years of our journey.

Entering CSU Sacramento, fall 2016

Sponsor: Malcolm and Sylvia Boyce

Mentor: Vera Leach



Tracy Gordon

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Fort Bragg High School



If I was asked what this program meant to me during my first year of being part of it, I would have simply said, “fun”. If asked just a few years later I would have said that it meant being able to see amazing things, and by the next I would describe the program as something that had allowed me to meet incredible people. Each year, this program has lead me to acquire a new meaning of what it stood for and aimed to achieve. Now, as I finish my last year and look back on all the past the one word that I would use is success, with of course various pages used to explain it. So I thank you Dr. Langer for giving me the opportunity to experience firsthand what success is. I also thank you for changing the lives of so many. I’m going to college! A good one at that.

Not only did I succeed in having fun, or experiencing new things, and meeting new people but I also learned that having fun and being open to new things IS success. Through many life changing moments I found who I wanted to become and I thank the program for that. My dreams have never been more supported than in the years with this program. As a soon-to-be first generation college student I could never have asked for a better way to grow up then with the support of my family along with the support of the people I have grown to love and value as an extension of that family.

My mentor Rachel Binah has always been a rock for me. Her confidence in me, although she may not know this, has always made me *feel* confident and secure, something I would not be otherwise, whether it involved finding myself in a large crowd, in a new city (D.C.), with no phone or deciding which college to attend she has always had mine and Carla’s backs 100% of the time and I don’t know how I could ever give back what she gave to me.

The indescribable mixture of gratitude and love applies to all the mentors and donors as well. Mina for being so wise, Harriet and Larry for being my teachers, Dawn for being so caring and so many others for just simply being there if ever I needed them. And the donors I would like to thank you because every year, as I’ve attended these events for graduates, I’ve seen the flame you along with the mentors have ignited in those young adults, me included, and as the years have flown by, I’ve come to see that you are not only allowing these kids to meet powerful figures you are allowing for them to become powerful and confident individuals, whether they know it or not, YOU are doing that.

I know that while my time has run out as a scholar, my memories never will and the connections I’ve made could never be broken. And If I could ever be stuck in a moment in time I could only wish for it to be one in which I was surrounded with all of you.

Entering UC Davis, fall 2016

Sponsor: Glenn Langer

Mentor: Rachel Binah



Robert Kelly

Partnership Scholar

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Ukiah High School



Over the past six years Partnership Scholars Program has affected my life in many ways. It has helped me sort out what I want to go to college for as well as helped me get a better grasp of the whole college process. However, when I first started the program six years ago, I could not have begun to imagine what this program has allowed me to do. It helped me realize that I wanted to go into medicine rather than marine biology and has let me visit places I most likely would have never been able to visit unless I had gotten into the program.

One of the best trips I have been on is due to this program. I went to Washington D.C., got to see the monuments, and visited Georgetown. While this was a fun trip, which I enjoyed very much, it opened my eyes to just how perfect California is. This was the trip that made me finally make the decision that I would remain in California while going to college. I also went to two college workshops while with the program and each one helped me better understand what I was actually looking for in a college. After my second trip to the workshops I decided I would work on a path to become a Registered Nurse because it's still in medicine and shares many classes with a lot of other different medical fields.

This program has really helped me maintain a steady path to college and thoroughly plan out the steps I need to actually achieve my goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. I plan on doing more after this however and hopefully become a Physician's Assistant so that I can not only be more active in medicine, but return the favor and help this program even after I have done my time in college. If this program has left me with one idea it's that there is always some way to achieve your goals, you just have to be ready to work.

Entering Mendocino College, fall 2016

Sponsor: Malcolm and Sylvia Boyce

Mentor: Phil Gary



Victor Lopez

Partnership Scholar

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Ukiah High School



My life has never been easy, as the only boy in the family I have a lot of pressure of being the responsible one in the family. My dad always tells me it is my duty to take care of him and my mother when they grow old, which I have no problem with doing because that's the least I can do for them. Money may have been a problem at times in my life and thanks to the Partnership Scholars Program I was able to focus on my studies more in school and I got to visit amazing colleges like MIT, Harvard, most of the UC's, and plenty more. PSP has helped me by removing a lot of weight off my shoulders when it came to deciding on what college or university I wanted to go to after I graduate high school. Now I won't have to worry about spending so much money from my own pocket, thank to my financial aid. Through PSP I was able to see many different colleges and universities and I realize how important education is, regardless of what school you go to.

My goal in life is to be successful and to care for my parents as they begin to age. My parents have always been my number one reason to be successful in life. I will not be satisfied until the day my parents are proud of who I have become. My father once told me that money shouldn't drive anyone to do things other than work. As long as I have a decent job and I can support a family, that's all anyone needs in life to be happy. I will become an engineer one day and I will be successful, thank you PSP for helping through this very important stage in my life.

Entering CSU Sacramento, fall 2016

Sponsor: Malcolm and Sylvia Boyce

Mentor: Steven Burrell



Anakaren Nieves

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



It was my first time being away from home, the first trip I was going to take since being in the Partnership Scholars Program. As I left the house, my parents were more than delighted for me to have the opportunity of a lifetime, but at the same time they were a bit hesitant and fearful to be letting their oldest and only daughter leave the house. Going on a week-long trip to Washington D.C. exposed me to many of the wonders of this country, and it changed my views of the world and myself. From this experience and the many more that were to come as a student in the Partnership Scholars Program, I learned to be confident, respectful, responsible, and bold.

Thinking back on the reserved, timid girl that I was in that first interview I had as a seventh grader, I'm so proud of the confident person I have grown into. Through the program, I have been able to go outside my comfort zone, becoming aware of the world beyond my rural small town through activities I would have never imagined possible due to my financial instability. I still remember the first time I went to the San Francisco zoo. Although for others this may not seem like a huge deal, this simple trip made me hopeful and ecstatic about the future as joy flooded my heart, seeing a giraffe and an elephant for the first time. Through that experience, I learned to be grateful for the many opportunities I had already been afforded in my young life.

The program has given me a view to the outside world, but it has also helped me focus inward, teaching me about responsibility. I have had to maintain a high GPA to remain a Partnership Scholar, which I have made a high priority. I've also had to be responsible in my relationship with my mentor, ensuring I am always on time and keeping her up to date on everything going on in my academic life. Communication is vital to any relationship, and I have learned to be communicative with my mentor, a person who started out a total stranger six years ago and is now a key player in my life.

As part of the program, I have been exposed to college guidance and experienced a college atmosphere through multiple college visits and tours. These visits have made me bold in my resolution to go to a top university as I continue my education and my path through life. I have also had opportunities to travel to many places, such as the summer Science Camp of America in Hawaii, San Francisco, Washington D.C, and many other cultural trips. Through these experiences, I have been greatly impacted and changed my views of life.

Through all these and more experiences with the Partnership Scholars Program, I have been greatly impacted. I can proudly say that I am not the shy girl I once was, and I am empowered to work toward my best self. The Partnership Scholars Program has provided me with experiences and opportunities that have changed my life. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it weren't for this program and the many ways it has opened my eyes to the world. Overall, this program has helped spur that inner strength and determination that I have always had in always doing my best, working hard, helping others, achieving my dreams, continuing my education, and most of all by never giving up.

Entering Regis University, fall 2016

Sponsor: Donald and Lynda Coursey

Mentor: Geri Burrell



Ian Overturf

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mendocino High School



What does it take to empower a person? What can we as human beings do to help one another in a desperate time of dismay? Well, we reach out to one another and offer a hand. The world that we live in is chaotic, unforgiving, even dangerous. Our generation will experience an ever changing world that will either introduce positivity or lack authenticity. Isn't it marvelous that our generation's future will be a little less ominous?

Before being accepted into this extraordinary program I was a blind boy, in a metaphorical sense of course. My world scarcely reached further than my front gate. My upbringings were harsh and fatherless for my adolescence. My brother and I, who belonged to a lower class family throughout our formative years, never knew of a decorous lifestyle. Discarded by our temporarily unhinged mother, we were rejected from grandparents to distant cousins. Eventually, we landed in a foster care organization, where we spent the remainder of our adolescence.

With months of therapy I've come to understand that this was the time in my life where I lost confidence with all of my relatives apart from my brother. This time in my life I was helpless to do anything against my authorities. I knew that they lacked the legitimacy to establish power over me. My life needed stability, opportunity for growth, and a sense of accomplishment. All of which were denied to me during my childhood. However, how wondrous it is that I would one day be relieved of my sufferance.

Despite my upbringing, I still managed to follow instruction effectively. This resulted in high marks from my school, which led up to my seventh grade year. The culmination of my youth would begin with the short period of time that I was interviewed and admitted into the Partnership Scholars Program. Little did I know that talking freely about my goals and aspirations during an interview would not only lead me to be admitted into PSP, but would change the course of my life henceforth.

There are numerous examples of experiences that have changed my life for the better. Going through each and every example would be rather tedious due to the fact that I was presented with a multitude of learning experiences that were never previously offered to me. Each moment that was presented may have not been consciously recognized, although subconsciously the data was recorded and had a meaningful impact on my psyche. I gained the confidence needed to overcome my introverted personality that came from my adverse childhood. My speech impediment began to disappear, especially after participating in Toastmasters. My first mentor, Jeff Stanford had become a lifelong friend. Jeff even provided me with my first job and a place to live when I was running from the shadow that cursed my youth. These moments will forever have an impact on me. My professional, as well as social self have drastically changed.

Someone once asked me what PSP does to help scholars be successful. Sure, the program can be extraordinarily helpful in the economic department due to the kindness of our sponsors. Yet, that is in no way, the only way that PSP helps its scholars. This program can individually help each and every student with whatever need they could possibly have. Through the power of connections, PSP has helped each scholar in one way or another. Whether the scholar was exploring possible career opportunities, or they were exploring their interests, the Partnership Scholars Program had always been a step ahead of providing us with the help we needed. I've visited countless locations that specifically attracted me, such as the Computer Museum in Mountain View or colleges in Chicago.

Change is a part of life. Today I am glad I had the opportunity to partake in this community. I've been given the chance to become independent due to help of PSP. Before attending PSP I wouldn't have been able to attend college. My grades would have dropped as soon as I was met with resistance. Yet, through my strife I've been able to accomplish so much. I'm going to college to study a subject that I love. In a few years I will have a career that will challenge every aspect of my knowledge. If it wasn't for PSP I would not be in this position. I've never been happier.

Entering DePaul University, fall 2016

Sponsor: Stuart and Janine Schneider

Mentor: Larry Sawyer



Karina Perez

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



Opportunities. For the past 6 years as a Partnership Scholar, I have been introduced to many opportunities and am grateful for it. Things have changed from the time I received this scholarship until now, a graduating senior. I have been able to grow along with the rest of the scholars and we have created a strong type of friendship that would not have been possible without this program. I have so many things that I am thankful for this scholarship because it has helped me through home and educational struggles while keeping me motivated.

As a minority and “dreamer”, I would not have been given too many opportunities due to not being a citizen and my social class. Now, I am able to get more help from the state and am able to stay in the United States without the fear of deportation. I can now legally work and get my license in the United States as well. While I may still not be guaranteed citizenship, the other help is absolutely amazing for me and thousands of other “dreamers”. I used to be scared of not being able to go to college because of my status but the PSP encouraged me to continue with my A-G courses anyways. PSP was making sure I was doing everything so I could get ahead. After the deferred action passed, an act that allows me to work and get my driver’s license, I felt hopeful and I was so happy that I was pushed by PSP because I would have given up otherwise while doubting that I would get anywhere without a citizenship.

I fell behind in school due to hospitalizations. I have had five hospitalizations in the past two years. The teachers at the high school were not very cooperative with me so it was difficult for me to catch up. My mentor, Patty Moore, helped me get through the school work and made sure that I was doing everything that was required. After more confusion when I did home hospital schooling, my grades got worse and I was in danger of not graduating. I did everything that I could to be able to graduate. Patty helped me as I tried to catch up while also doing college applications because she believed in me and believed that I would be able to graduate and go onto a four year school. I was able to do it. During that time, PSP paid for my applications and anything else that was college related so I did not have to stress out over the money factor as I did my school work. PSP did not give up on me but instead helped me push myself into success. I was given opportunities that helped with testing and other things that kept me motivated. I want to be able to succeed so that I am able to enjoy things just as I did with this scholarship.

My six years with the scholarship were absolutely incredible. I am so lucky to have been part of a program that has benefited me and the rest of the scholars in so many ways. We were given opportunities and we took them. We have grown and learned together. I plan to go to San Francisco State University this fall. When I was in second grade, I wanted to be an astronomer. I am going to follow my second grade self’s dream and major in astrophysics and become an astronomer. I could be an astrophysicist which would make more sense with that major, but I have always wanted to be an astronomer and that is what I am going to be. I have gained so much experience, memories, hope, and motivation with the scholarships help. I will always be grateful for the past six years.

Entering CSU San Francisco, fall 2016

Sponsor: Sheldon and Cindy Stone

Mentor: Patty Moore



Sebastian Rico

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Ukiah High School



I have many accomplishments in both academics and sports, but the one I am most proud of is when I was accepted into the Partnership Scholars Program. This program is intended to help economically disadvantaged kids go to college and fulfill their dreams. Through this program I was able to tour colleges and cities I had only dreamed of visiting. I was able to go to the White House and swim in the warm ocean waters of Southern California.

I attended a meeting with my mother in seventh grade to get more information about the program. About halfway through the meeting my mother began to tear up because she realized how important this opportunity was. If I got this scholarship, my chance of getting into a good college increased dramatically. To potentially be the first in your family to finish college creates a lot of pressure and I wanted to make sure I could do everything in my power to be on the right track.

The application process was composed of two stages, the first required a personal statement. If you made it passed the first cut, the second step was a personal interview. The next Sunday I began working on my essay when I got a call from my friend asking to go skateboarding. Being so young my first instinct was to go off with him, but after a little thinking I realized how important this essay was to my future. I had to choose between spending time with my friend and investing in my future. Having made the right decision I turned in my essay and a week later I was notified that I had made it to the final stage. I was ecstatic, but at the same time extremely nervous because I had zero experience with interviews. Inevitably the day came, and I felt confident that I had exhibited my true personality. I received a final letter, and with great anticipation, I opened it and read the first word, "Congratulations!" I was in! My joy was indescribable.

I had never been so proud of myself, and to this day I am so glad I stayed in on that Sunday afternoon to finish my essay, because if I hadn't, I wouldn't be writing this one. My persistence and dream of a better life drove me to this accomplishment.

Entering Mendocino College, fall 2016

Sponsor: Sheldon and Cindy Stone

Mentor: Lynda Myers

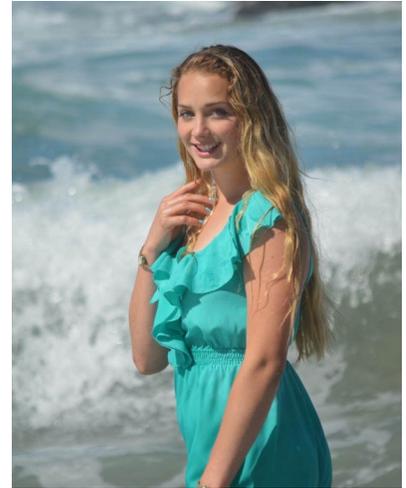


Sunny Scott

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mendocino High School



The Partnership Scholars Program has truly proved to not only be a great support system but an influence which has allowed me to realize my full potential and dream without constraint. The program has allowed me to participate in many enriching activities that have been culturing and intriguing. Whether these activities be relevant to my sphere of interest of careers, they have in some way helped form my individuality and guide me to the conclusions of what fields I gravitate toward. Some of opportunities that impacted me the most are: touring colleges, monuments and towns on the East coast, staying with a host family in Costa Rica for two weeks to service a village and immerse myself in the language and culture, and attending a college workshop at Loyola Marymount University with local scholars as well as ones from Southern California.

From a young age I have been intrigued by mathematics and throughout the years I have come to realize just how significant they are to the dynamics of the Universe. The intricate, complex calculations required for such precise designs of structures within the avenues of our everyday lives act as an apparatus that harnesses human ingenuity, innovation and allure. My attraction to the conceptual applications of mathematics to engineering, in tandem with my passion for design that emerged through my years of high school woodworking, have contributed to my fascination to create. As a Pre-Civil Engineering major at San Diego State University, I hope to achieve the experience and knowledge that is required to enter the world of architecture or discover another concentration of engineering that fascinates me. I also long to study abroad in Europe, Scandinavia in particular to appreciate and explore the Nordic architecture. Through Partnership Scholars, I have learned skills such as working cooperatively with others, public speaking, and simply becoming more open minded from all of the different trips and programs I attended. I am grateful for the attributes that PSP has helped me adopt that will allow me to prosper in my future college years.

Entering CSU San Diego, fall 2016

Sponsor: Chuck Greenberg & Claire Ellis

Mentor: Deena Zarlin



Carla Spaans

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Fort Bragg High School



Before the Partnership Scholars Program, I was a very sheltered child; the furthest place I had traveled was a couple hours away, the only activities I participated in were those offered by my school, and my communication skills were, let's just say, less than par. I relied on my parents for every aspect of my life and, while I am grateful for their support, I am extremely glad for my transition into self-sufficiency. My years in PSP have been filled with many firsts. Some have been difficult, but I would not trade them for the world.

It all started when I was prompted (more appropriately, forced) to take a public speaking class by my lovely mentor, Rachel. At the time, I was in seventh grade and not even comfortable speaking with a few people, let alone in public. My expertise consisted of immature humor shared with my equally as immature friends and avoiding eye contact with teachers I suspected might call on me during class. As you can imagine, I was a nervous wreck the days preceding my first speech. When the day finally arrived, I painfully stood at the pedestal and spouted as much information as I could fit into the three-minute time slot we were given. It was liberating. I had never realized how freeing it is to stand in front of an audience and be able to say whatever I wanted to say. In those moments, I realized that the ball was in my court. I had complete control of my audience's attention and the information I would give them. This was truly a confidence booster. I was not accustomed to having my thoughts and opinions heard and to have people commending me on how much they enjoyed my speech gave me the courage to speak up more. It would have been even better if... my audience were able to hear me. Yes, I did have a small problem with speaking loudly, BUT, this was something I could easily fix in my speeches to come.

As the years went by, I began to experience more and more of the world and what it has to offer. My first time out of state was a trip I took to the Ashland Shakespeare Festival with Rachel and several other scholars. As a soon-to-be eighth grader, it was about time I left California for a few days. I could not put into words how wonderful this trip was. The culture and vibrancy of Ashland paired with the phenomenal performances made for the best first-time-out-of-state trip I could have asked for. My next first was spring of my sophomore year when a large group of us went on a trip to Chicago. This was my first time on a plane and I was quite excited for it. Of course, my excitement faded after 20 minutes when I realized that I would be cramped with 200 other passengers for about five more hours. But, from the moment I stepped off the plane, I realized I was falling in love with adventure. It only took me years to recognize, but I have finally concluded that I am happiest when emerged in a journey I might not have taken otherwise. I might consider this another first, as it was my first self-realization of who I am striving to be.

Had I not had the Partnership Scholars, I know I would be nowhere near as ready for adulthood as I am today. Because of PSP, I have had opportunities to travel, try new things, meet people, experience different cultures...the list goes on. I want to especially thank my mentor Rachel for being not only my enabler for all the experiences I have had, but for being my family. She has been there for me in times of doubt, despair, and stupidity, and she has loved me all the same. I am so lucky I was paired with such a remarkable and extraordinary lady, and I am so lucky to be a part of the Partnership Scholars Program.

Entering Rogue Community College, fall 2016

Sponsor: Glenn Langer

Mentor: Rachel Binah



Taylor Stonebarger

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Fort Bragg High School



When I started the Partnership Scholars Program as a 7th grader, I do not think that I was fully aware of what a rewarding and irreplaceable program that I had been selected to be a part of. As my time in the program comes to an end, I can hardly believe how fast these six years have gone by. While the program and its mission statement are a very important part of a scholar's experience over the course of the six years, the most rewarding part of being a Partnership Scholar are the relationships that are established throughout the course of the program. I feel as though I have formed lifetime bonds with not only those directly involved with the program, but also a network of others. Unfortunately, we are located in such a rural area that often times scholars have to travel for cultural events and experiences. Throughout my time in the program I have traveled to several places, making memories and founding relationships as I go. Most of the trips that I attended, I stayed at the houses of friends of PSP, such as Edie and Ira in San Francisco, who graciously open their homes to scholars time and time again. I loved staying with them, sharing early morning breakfasts and coming home to them at night to share moments of our days. I feel especially thankful for this network as I continue to make arrangements for my move to Washington D.C. in the fall. When I visited with PSP in the winter of my freshmen year, I was lucky enough to stay with brothers and sisters of a couple mentors, who became a very important part of our trip. Two years later in the spring of my junior year, I returned to D.C to tour colleges and was again welcomed into the home of my original hosts, who made it clear to me that if I were to attend school there, I would always have a support system through them. This is as reassuring as the reality of moving sets in, and I can breathe easier knowing that I have a home away from home because of my connections with the Partnership Scholars Program. Aside from outside relationships that I am so thankful for, the Partnership Scholars also gifted me with lifelong family members by choice in the form of my mentor, Dawn, and her husband, Bob. I feel very fortunate to have been able to spend my time in the program making memories with my mentor and getting to be a part of her life. I was not always lucky enough to have stable adults in my life as a child, and to have been able to know Dawn was always there for me, cheering me on, and wanting the best for me as I navigated through my high school years is something I will always be grateful for. I must say that I also appreciate her always putting up with my busy schedule and sometimes stubbornness all while continuing to love me anyways.

Through my experiences, the relationships that I have formed, and the memories that I have made, the Partnership Scholars Program has made an impact on my life for the better and I will be forever indebted. I can't wait to be a PSP alumni and have a part in the lives of the next generations of scholars! Thank you Partnership Scholars Program!

Entering George Washington University, fall 2016

Sponsor: Glenn Langer

Mentor: Dawn Hofberg



Diana Acosta

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Animo Leadership

Charter High School



Timid, unsocial, and narrow minded; that was the person I was before being a Partnership Scholar. Six years ago, I was just beginning a marathon in my life.

Lennox Middle School was just a place I was forced to go to five days a week. Sixth grade is a blur, mainly because I was not involved in my school as much as I should have been. However, my perspective and character altered when I became a part of the PSP family. Lennox Middle School soon became a place filled with opportunities.

I have been extremely blessed with amazing mentors, Sandra Thorman and her spectacular husband, Tom Freeman. I am also grateful for my two fellow PSP companions, America Cantu and Elizabeth Quebedo. There is so much I can say about these phenomenal people. They have become my second family, they have greatly helped me grow and we have established a genuine friendship throughout these past years. They have taught me to live in the moment, to take risks, to dream big, and to fight for what I believe in.

I have spent the last few years piecing myself together and trying to accumulate my mistakes and rewards into valuable lessons. While in PSP I learned the importance of advocating for myself and going after what I want. It breaks my heart to know that in a couple of months I will no longer be a PSP scholar. Every day I would ask myself, “what’s next?” I can finally say that I am an alumni from Animo Leadership and in the fall I will attend the University of California, Los Angeles. I am also proud to announce that I am a Gates Millennium Scholar.

Determined, hard-working, goal oriented, and ambitious; that is the person who I am today, all thanks to the PSP. It is time to cross this finish line and start a brand new marathon.

Entering UCLA, fall 2016

Sponsor: Preston Johnson & Vicki Martin

Mentor: Sandra Thorman

Miriam Almaraz

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Lennox Mathematics, Science
and Technology Academy



My name is Miriam Almaraz and I'm in my final year at Lennox Math, Science, and Technology Academy. Here, I have prospered and grown with the help of my family, teachers, friends, and the Partnership Scholars Program. When I first heard of my acceptance into the program, I was in a state of great happiness - I honestly couldn't believe it. I was standing beside other students who greatly appreciated education and all the opportunities that could come through education. Back in 7th grade, I had no idea what I wanted to do in life, but one thing was for sure: I wanted to go to college.

Through the Partnership Scholars I gained confidence in what I have to offer the world, not only in academics, but also in character and heart. I learned what it means to be a true scholar, someone who's open to new experiences, to constant learning, and to working hard. With the program, I got an early exposure to the college lifestyle and diversity that Lennox, unfortunately, lacks.

I was also able to explore possible career paths, in primarily two ways. The first is through the ability to buy materials for my engineering class, like soldering irons and wire cutters. Through this class, I discovered that I enjoy engineering and the work associated with it. Because of the exposure to this class, I decided to declare that as my major for the upcoming fall. The second way I learned about my future after college was through the COSMOS at UCSC summer program. Here, I took college-like courses in mathematics, reminding me that I may not necessarily like pure math, but instead applied math or engineering. Once again, this came to mind when I applied to colleges.

Through all of my hard work and determination, I am nearing the end of my senior year. Now, I am heading off to UC Berkeley where I will be studying engineering physics. Here, I hope to further grow and explore possible hidden interests, while keeping in touch with my mentor and PSP. Whether I stick to engineering or switch to another major, I know I will be at a great university with tons of options and opportunities for me. I can't wait to see where my future takes me. Go Bears!

Entering UC Berkeley, fall 2016

Sponsor: Richard and Sue Masson

Mentor: Merari Aquino

Alexis Alvarez

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

International Polytechnic

High School



Right from the start, I knew that PSP would change my life for the better. I knew that my life would be open to so many possibilities that I wouldn't have had without the program. Over the past 6 years, I've experienced so many different things that have definitely shaped who I am to this day. First and foremost, I'd like to acknowledge my wonderful mentors, Rocio Centeno and Hugo Moreno, who were always there for me to reach whenever I needed them for assistance. This truly impacted my educational career. Whenever I was lost and needed some guidance, they were there to help me right through it. When it came to college applications, we would meet at their house so that they could help us with anything we needed. They truly devoted all their efforts to making our lives easier and I will never be able to repay them for all they've done for me.

One memory from being in this program that has really impacted me is traveling to the East Coast during eighth grade. That trip really taught me that there are many great sights and experiences that I would not get out of my neighborhood. One of my favorite memories from that was definitely spending time in Times Square in New York with some of my friends. It all felt so unreal and it's an opportunity I would not have had if it wasn't thanks to PSP and my sponsor, the Kissick Foundation.

In the future, I plan to travel to many new locations and widen my horizons. PSP has allowed me to gain new aspects of life and be a part of something very memorable and extraordinary. If there's one thing that PSP has taught me, it's that life is full of treasures. Although it may sound a little cliché, I know I wouldn't be as adventurous and curious about life if it wasn't for this extraordinary program. It's truly a blessing to all of our lives and I'm thankful for all it's done for me.

Entering UC Riverside, fall 2016

Sponsor: John Kissick, Kissick Foundation

Mentor: Hugo Moreno

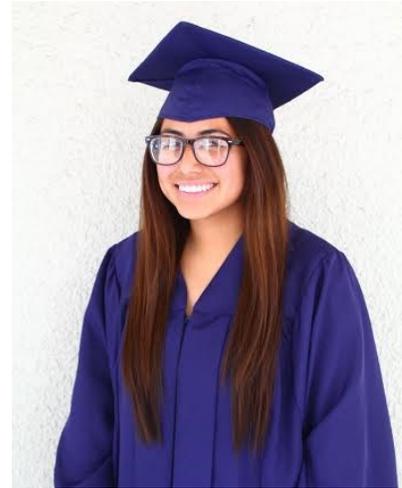


Francia Amaro

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

South El Monte High School



My journey in the Partnership Scholars Program has enabled me to become an independent, hardworking student. But more importantly, PSP has given me the opportunity to participate in the unthinkable, experiences that I would not otherwise been able to do without the help of the program. All the students in PSP, during my eighth grade year, tested to see whether or not we were eligible for the John Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth program. As one of the few that qualified for the program, I decided to take on the challenge of being the first generation to pioneer this epic journey! Although the John Hopkins University program has enabled me to encounter different cultures and have peculiar experiences from meeting new people, I ultimately have PSP to thank for all that. Furthermore, I want to thank the ones who put the idea together and created this chance, especially Maria.

Throughout my academic career, I have hit a few bumps in the road. In my freshman year, I was failing Accelerated Biology. I was in desperate need of help! Luckily, Mr. Morris, one of the mentors at my high school, arranged for me to meet up with a tutor. I strongly believe that if it were not for PSP being able to provide a one on one tutor, I would have failed Biology. I met up with my tutor once a week and we brought my D up to a B and eventually an A. I could not imagine my life without PSP. This program has enabled me to stay on the right path.

Next fall, I will be attending University of California, Santa Barbara. But before that, I must finish leaving my mark at South El Monte High School. As a graduating senior, I will leave South El Monte as ranked number seven in my class. To that I have PSP to thank because if it weren't for this program, I would have never built the stamina that has permitted me to take AP courses, receive good grades, and jump at any opportunity that will improve my academic ability. When I got accepted into the program during my seventh grade, I realized my life was about to take a turn for the better. This program has aided me throughout my four years of high school by encouraging me to maintain my grades above a 3.8 GPA. With after school tutoring and educational opportunities, I have managed to excel in all my classes. This program provided me with all resources necessary to make sure I did well in school.

Not only did PSP assist me financially, but it also allowed me to develop an open mind. As I started my journey in the program, I had no idea about what direction I should take in life. However, thanks to the program, I now have a sense of what I want to do. I am currently in Boy Scouts of America Venture Crew, and before that I had travelled out to Baltimore to volunteer in soup kitchens and homeless shelter; both of these experiences have showed me how crucial it is to give back to your community. Most importantly, it made me realize that I want to give back to my community. I want to help others with whatever career choice I choose along the way.

Entering UC Santa Barbara, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Rocio Centeno



Zinnia Arredondo

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Lennox Mathematics, Science
and Technology Academy



Over the past six years, I was fortunate enough to have been a scholar in the Partnership Scholars Program. This program has had a profound impact on my life, and I will forever be grateful and humbled to have received this scholarship. Before I received this scholarship I always knew that I wanted to become a doctor, but I was not sure of exactly what I wanted to do. Once I found out about Dr. Langer, I knew immediately that I wanted to become a cardiologist just like him. Everything about the profession, and knowing that I could possibly become a benefactor myself one day, is what narrowed down my goal to becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon.

My experience in PSP has been filled with nothing but great memories. The diverse activities have broadened my horizons, and have molded me to becoming a better citizen/member of my community. With PSP I was academically supported in the way that I had to maintain my high GPA, and pursue a higher education after high school. At the same time, I was being rewarded by being able to visit places outside my city and state!

I believe that without this scholarship, I wouldn't have seen the world from a new perspective, because I was used to Lennox and for me this was my world. Now that I have traveled out of state and to other cities, I know that there are better places for me to go, and that will only happen once I graduate college. There is no better feeling than working hard for something you really want, and getting it in the end. For me this feeling has happened two times. One was when I won the scholarship, and the second was when I was accepted by colleges that I applied to.

Entering UC Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: Donald and Pat Walter

Mentor: Patti Kent



Abigail Banuelos

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Lennox Mathematics, Science
and Technology Academy



For the past six years, I have been fortunate enough to have been a PSP scholar. I have learned and experienced many wonderful things that have shaped who I am now. The first time I realized how influential this program was going to be was at our induction. It was startling to see how many important people showed up to see 11 seventh graders deliver a speech, it was something that I never would have imagined. At that moment I discerned how many people believed that I could accomplish great things and since then I have become even more motivated to live up to those expectations.

Along with my mentor, I have gone to numerous amounts of theatre shows such as: Wicked, Matilda, The Lion King, and Mamma Mia. Although all of these shows have movies, experiencing it live was astounding. This developed my appreciation for theatrical shows and I hope that I can pass this liking along to my family. Another of the most influencing events was the spring and summer trips that I was a part of. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that I would have traveled to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Catalina Islands as a teenager. I love traveling because you are exposed to a different way of living and eating. Not only have I grown academically but culturally as well.

In the fall I will be attending UCLA as a Life Science Major. Choosing my college of attendance was a tough choice; I was accepted into 10 amazing universities. Finally though, I decided on UCLA because I want to pursue a career in the medical field. When I was receiving my acceptance letters I realized that all my life I have been blessed to have had such amazing people in my life guide me into the correct path. Without the guidance and help of PSP I wouldn't have been able to grow into the person I am now. I hope that one day I too can give back to PSP.

Entering UC Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: Richard and Sue Masson

Mentor: Merari Aquino



Jessica Bui

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 International Polytechnic High School



It is December, 2010. My hands tremble as they struggle to unseal a plain, white envelope. My older cousin, a veteran of this taxing scenario, rolls her eyes and mutters exasperatedly, "Oh, just give it!" In two seconds, she snatches it, tears it open, and reads the contents.

She explodes joyously. "You got in!"

Finally, I release that cry of tremendous relief that twelve other 7th graders do that day. And though I was aware of it at the time, it would not truly dawn on me what an impact my mentorship, a guaranteed guidance down the path to college, would leave on me for the rest of my life. I owe it all to the Partnership Scholars Program, the catalyst to my six-year journey of academic well-roundedness and unique, exploratory experiences -- treasured film strips of my cinematic life.

Being raised in El Monte, we've all been collectively told one thing: get out. That's not to say that we are unwanted, but being a close-knit community of little wealth, our city has an unspoken pact, which is to push the youth towards the best, even if it meant away. Giving disadvantaged students opportunities they could never have otherwise had has always been PSP's most generous, undeniably noble purpose.

I have been one of those blessed students. Like others in the program, I was able to visit cultural events, distinguished universities near and far, and metropolises in the East Coast never before dreamed. My mentors, Mr. Moreno and Mrs. Centeno, became my second family as we ventured to these destinations together throughout the years. With tough love or care, they encouraged me to strive towards infinity. Without them, I would have never been enrolled in International Polytechnic High School, where I discovered my passion for programming and game design. I would have never gained the courage to get a mentorship at the University of Southern California, where I have been accepted and will be going to in the fall. But most importantly, I would have never been pointed to doors I didn't know existed, to the right direction in my times of academic crises.

Thanks to PSP, many of us discovered a vast gamut of paths that we are now bound to. With the walls broken, the time where I must bid farewell to many to-be alumni in the program whom I may never see again is knocking at my doorstep. But, as the saying goes, our horizons have been expanded to the possibilities the world has in store for our generation. I welcome this time with open arms into my home, my life.

We are all eventually ushered to leave the nest, but fledglings hardly realize what a fortunate occasion it really is; to be entrusted of reaching unknown peaks is a true gift of faith. I hope to return the nest of my community one day, to give someone that same scenario I once had with a white envelope.

Entering University of Southern California, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Rocio Centeno



Jenny Cabello

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



I remember being incredibly nervous when Mrs. LeGaspe announced that decisions had been made and that the new class of PSP scholars had been chosen. Hearing this announcement, we all walked together to her classroom and saw that she had envelopes spread out, each belonging to a prospective scholar. My dear friend Jessica Bui reached over and grabbed our envelopes. When I opened mine, I was in a bit of shock. I realized that the next five and a half years of my life would be changed forever.

I have had two mentors during my time in PSP. The first, Mrs. Diana DeCamp, was unable to continue on with the program. Though she is no longer my mentor, I have not lost contact with her; she will always be a part of my life. My second mentor, Mrs. Anne Bazile, has made an even greater impact in my life; she has been both my mentor and my French teacher for the past four years. Anyone that knows Mrs. Bazile must be aware that she is one of the quirkiest people you will ever meet. When I found out that she knows eight languages and that she is a world traveler, I knew that I was in for an adventure.

During my time with Mrs. Bazile, I have tried various types of ethnic foods. The list is far too long to include now, but if I could attach a separate page of foods and activities that she has introduced us to, I would. During our first college trip, the very first type of cuisine that we tried was Burmese. Not many people my age could say that they have tried Burmese food, or that they have even heard of it. I knew that night, that I was in for not only an adventure, but a food adventure. I became accustomed to certain tastes that other teenagers my age might turn away.

The time, resources, and advice that the mentors, sponsors, and board members in PSP have invested towards us has certainly made a large impact on my educational career. Though I truly believe that our success is based on our own merit, I do feel like the encouragement and motivation from the adult figures in PSP have truly inspired not only myself, but other scholars to work past their previous boundaries. I personally worked to be the best scholar I could be; I was accepted to both UCLA and UC Berkeley, two top schools that had previously intimidated me. I am also currently a valedictorian for my graduating class.

I would like to give recognition to PSP for part of this success. With the help of PSP, I was able to visit various college campuses. I also had access to various resources that helped me along the way. The relationship that I formed with my mentor allowed me to go beyond any ideas and experiences that I previously held. Suddenly, I was no longer afraid to try strange smelling cheese or to go tubing down a hill. In other words, I became more open to trying new things. In this way, PSP has changed me for the better.

Entering UC Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Anne Bazile



Julissa Campos

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Animo Leadership Charter
High School



My name is Julissa Campos, and I am a first generation student who will be the first in her family to attend and graduate a post-secondary institution. As a small 7th grader, receiving a scholarship was super exciting not only for myself, but my family as well. How cool was it that I got to meet new places, have a mentor and receive school supplies all for free? I was always grateful for it all, but it was not until I grew a bit older that I realized the impact it had in my life.

Being a part of the Partnership Scholars Program literally changed my life, and I would not be who I am without the opportunity. As a scholar I gained confidence and motivation to push forward and reach for my goals. Because of PSP, I have become the ambitious individual that I am today. PSP allowed me to see the world through a much wider lens. From traveling across the country several times and meeting exceptional individuals, I have grown to aspire to becoming an entrepreneur. Many obstacles may come my way, but I am resilient enough to never give up. Like my mentor, donor and everyone who supports me, one day I want to become a role model and positively influence the younger generations. I am devoted to one day be able to come back to this program not only as a mentor but donor as well. I want to be able to provide to more students this life changing opportunity. It is an amazing feeling to know that despite all the negative statistics in a community like Lennox, there are individuals who believe in us and are willing to support us every step of the way in order to see us thrive. As senior year dwindles down, I am extremely sad that I no longer will be apart of the program, but I am thankful that I was able to become a better-prepared well-rounded individual throughout the six years with Partnership Scholars.

Entering CSU Long Beach fall 2016

Sponsor: Richard and Sue Masson

Mentor: Patti Kent



America Cantu

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Lennox Mathematics, Science
and Technology Academy



Being a member of the Partnership Scholars Program has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. I can honestly say that if it weren't for this wonderful foundation dedicated to raising hope, opportunity and motivating students from middle school throughout high school to pursue a career, I would not be attending college.

Throughout my six years enrolled in this program PSP has granted me opportunities I would have not likely been able to experience, due to financial circumstances. The Partnership Scholars Program helps students like me to not only pursue a successful career, but aid individuals like me to broaden their horizons and expand learning beyond class along with teaching us to be well rounded and outgoing. With the help of PSP I have achieved a goal I could have possibly not considered much without the support of this program, this being attending a four year university. I will be attending UC Riverside this fall and I am proud to say that I am grateful for PSP, which has encouraged me and helped me become a better individual.

Coming to the U.S. has been one of the most difficult decisions that has affected me tremendously. The transition from different cultures and learning a new language and adapting to the new environment made it likely impossible to learn and further my education. I recall when I was in the PSP interview, a requirement that would carefully select students that would acknowledge the privilege of attaining this scholarship. They asked "Who do you look up to?" This made me realize and question who I owe much of my accomplishments to. Thus this being I answered with tears in my eyes and replied "to my mother".

I recognize that without the help and support on certain occasions and especially from my parents I would greatly be in need of the support by my side all along. I know that now if someone were to ask me what has encouraged me and helped me accomplish my goals, I would not hesitate mention this astonishing program which stabilizes tranquility and assists student in their transition in to college. I will gracefully continue to thank the scholarship for helping an encouraging to so supersede our dreams and be able to sustain them.

Entering UC Riverside, fall 2016

Sponsor: Richard and Sue Masson

Mentor: Sandra Thorman



Freddy Cordon

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



The six years I have been a part of PSP have been so memorable that I dare not forget a single moment. I still think back to the days when I joined PSP and what type of person I was. I remember being timid, unsociable, and overall a loner. It was not until I joined PSP did I have to be in a situation where I had to talk to other people, and it all started when I met Ms. LeGaspe. When I met Ms. LeGaspe for the first time, which was during the PSP interview, my hands were sweaty and I was shaking out of fear due to her intimidating stature. So now whenever I see her nowadays I can not help but be a little scared and a little grateful to her for pairing me up with three amazing people, my mentor Mr. Andry and my fellow mentees David and Elvin. I have shared a lot of great memories with them, from my first airplane flight, to the first time I went out of state. To be able to share these experiences with people that I have gotten to know on a more personal level has made it all the better.

These six years have gone so fast that I just cannot put my head around it. I remember thinking that graduation was so far away and that I do not need to worry about going to college just yet. Now I am writing my senior essay for PSP because I am graduating, because I am going to college, and it just seems to be going by so fast. I can only imagine how fast the next six years will go by when I am writing a letter similar to this one asking how can I help out in the program.

Entering University of Dubuque , fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Raymond Andry



Jeovanny Dillon

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Lennox Mathematics, Science
and Technology Academy



“You choose to be a statistic” my fifth grade teacher once told me. Of which the accuracy cannot be overstated, it is important to note, that this quote would be a building block toward my perseverance and success in all my endeavors. We all choose to persevere. We choose to dream. We choose to aspire. But most importantly, we choose to succeed.

The Partnership Scholars Program has helped me affirm all these choices of mine and has helped me prepare for life beyond graduation. And in this case, life beyond graduation means attending the University of California, Berkeley. I will be majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology, focusing on research in the area of Immunology and Pathology.

I vividly remember when I was first told that I received the scholarship. I was ecstatic because I knew that this program would bring me the most memorable years of my life. I have been able to experience entertainment through the plays, musicals and circus's that I've been to. I've also been able to experience many culturally diverse foods and try new things. Because of this program I became a more intuitive and curious individual as I began to ask more questions because of the different trips we took to visit colleges and museums. I was able to visit New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Chicago. The East Coast trip was an amazing opportunity provided to me by the program and I was able to further experience life and new cultural diversity on this trip. I was also able to visit many colleges and universities on this trip, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia and Franklin and Marshall.

Not only have the trips been an amazing part of the program, but so have the unforgettable relationships I have formed with my mentor and other fellow mentors and scholars. The program helped provide guidance for me through my middle and high school career while exposing me to new enriching and diverse experiences and trips. I know that I wouldn't be the individual I am today without the guidance and help from my mentors, sponsors, partnership scholar staff and faculty, and my family.

Entering UC Berkeley, fall 2016

Sponsor: Oder Family Foundation

Mentor: John Ely



Jose Duarte

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



As the youngest of nine children, the concept of attending a college or a university seemed unreal for a majority of my childhood. This was the case until I came across the Partnership Scholars Program, that not only gave me the confidence needed to be a successful student, but be an accomplished young man in both the classroom and in life. From the moment I was selected to be a part of such a prestigious program, I knew the road for a bright future was only beginning. These past six years have been filled with a whirlwind of experiences, and emotions that no amount of words could ever explain. I am forever grateful, for the opportunities PSP has granted me, and cant wait to see what life has to offer as I prepare to take the world by storm.

My journey as a scholar began as a young 7th grade student at Kranz Intermediate School. A time where my curiosities became reality with the help of PSP. Activities and trips that I could only dream of as a kid, were soon becoming part of my everyday life. Traveling to east coast cities like New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C., was a major part of my PSP experience. Not to mention Chicago, and Boston which would come later on in my PSP career. These trips alone, will always hold a special place in my heart, because it was here that I learned the importance of working hard, and dreaming big. In other words, I realized that there is so much opportunity outside of El Monte, CA and it is easily accessible with a little dedication to excellence. A motivation that has maneuvered me through high school, and has kept me focused in reaching my greatest aspirations.

PSP has given me an outlook on the world like no other, and has opened up many doors that are essential for my future success. Confidence is the greatest quality that I have gained throughout my experience. PSP opened doors to the other programs that improved my academic performance, and made me a much better leader and communicator. Which would become the building blocks for networking that has progressed entirely since my days in middle school.

Now as a senior, planning to attend UC Riverside in the fall, as a political science major, I can gratefully say that PSP has prepared me for the rigorous road that lies ahead. I understand the commitment needed to be successful in my field of study, and I'm confident with the knowledge I have gained through my experiences with PSP. All in all, the memories I have gained these past six years will be held dearly in my heart, and I look forward to seeing how the program continues to flourish as the younger PSP generations begin their wild journey.

Entering UC Riverside, fall 2016

Sponsor: John Kissick, Kissick Foundation

Mentor: Hugo Moreno



Raul Estrella

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 California Academy of Math and Science



Partnership Scholars has been a part of my life since I was thirteen years old, and now that I am eighteen and going off to college I realized that I wouldn't be the person I am today without this wonderful program. At first when I heard of PSP I said to myself "why bother applying when there are so many others applying?" I was discouraged, but had nothing to lose either way, so I went for it. As you can see I ended up being selected to be a part of this program, the satisfaction I felt of working hard for something and later being rewarded for it motivated me to go out and achieve more. Because of the Partnership Scholars Program I ended up applying to the California Academy of Mathematics and Science (CAMS) where I am currently attending and will graduate from. I guess you can say I gained confidence from the program; there are many experiences I have had in my life that can be attributed to PSP whether directly or indirectly.

One of the most memorable experiences I had through PSP was being able to participate in Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY). In this program I was able to spend a summer at UC Santa Cruz and take actual college courses, while experiencing the college scene by dorming and participating in many different activities. I made many friends through this once in a lifetime experience, and I will actually be dorming with one of these friends that I made at CTY. This would have never been possible if it wasn't for PSP sponsorship. I gained so much from PSP; it is very difficult to condense it all into one page, but the one point I would like to get across is that I am thankful for their efforts. When I started the program I was just a boy from Lennox who had never seen or known people beyond the outskirts of the city, now through PSP I have seen what the world has to offer, its people and its adventures and as I go off to college this fall I cant wait to see what is in store for me next.

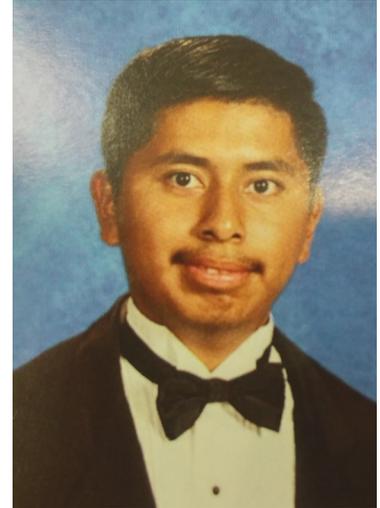
Entering CSU Long Beach, fall 2016

Sponsor: Chet Pipkin, Pipkin Charitable Foun-



David Garcia

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 Hawthorne High School



Throughout my years with Partnership Scholar Program, I was able to experience unforgettable and memorable trips that I had never dreamed of. I am honored and blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of this amazing program. This program helped me to conquer my fears of talking to new people, to be able to talk to an audience and even to experience new things.

One of my most memorable PSP experiences was going on a small voyage with my mentor on a hot-air-balloon. This trip was extremely memorable because I got to learn how a hot-air-balloon operates and I was able to see a view that I will never forget. This view encouraged me to try harder in school and to go visit different places. Another memorable trip was the college trip to Chicago. This gave me the experience of seeing how different another state can be. And I also got to see many very interesting universities. Thanks to this trip I applied to out of state schools like Colorado State University and Northern Arizona University. Having a mentor guide you and support you is the best and unforgettable part of PSP.

Now I will be attending UC Merced and will study to be a computer engineer. This is thanks to this program and my mentors. I gained so many experiences that helped me to become the person that I am today. I was not always a straight A student but I always work to my limit and applied everything I learned. Once again thank you P.S.P. for helping me throughout this journey. Now I am ready for the next chapter in my life to become the person I was destined to be.

Entering UC Merced, fall 2016

Sponsor: Michael Segal

Mentor: Mark Lurie

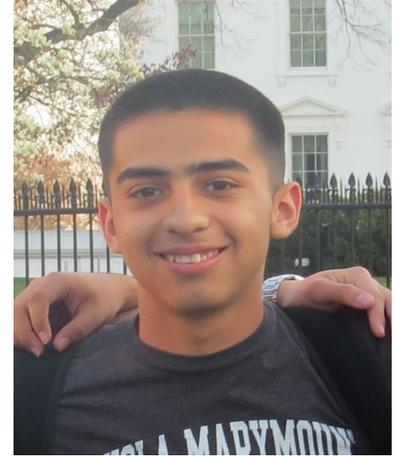


David Godinez

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



To this day I still remember my first PSP trip; it was a Jack in the Box lunch we had with my mentor, Raymond Andry, who at the time was the principal at my school, Kranz Intermediate. It definitely was not the best lunch we have had while in PSP but getting out of school for lunch was the best feeling ever. I was fortunate enough to have embarked on this journey with arguably one of the best mentors out there. Having a mentor has been one of the best experiences. I have learned a lot through my mentor the past 6 years. Not only has he always been there for me for educational purposes, but he has always given me the best advice. I have always wanted to have a career in sports, whether it would be in becoming a sports agent or working for ESPN in the future, he has always supported me. He has never questioned my capability of accomplishing my dream, more so he has encouraged me to make it happen.

When I finally decided what I wanted to major in, sports management, he gave me a list of the top schools in the nation with the program. I eventually went on to apply University of Connecticut fall of my senior year, one of the private universities that offered the program. Unfortunately, I was declined from attending. When I received the letter I was shocked and conflicted since that was the only school I applied to that offered the rare program. I took it with a grain of salt but eventually got over it. I began to receive acceptance letters from Cal States and UC's, numbing the rejection from UCONN. But it was not the same, my mind was set on UCONN. I certainly did not want to attend a school which did not offer the program of my choice. With that being said, through a lot of thinking I decided that it would be best to attend Rio Hondo College and transfer to UCONN or Univ of North Carolina, who had the top program in sports management. It was a hard decision, considering everything I had done to get into universities and turning them down. I did not want to settle for a major that was not sports management. Instead I plan to work twice as hard to assure I get in the program and fulfill my dream.

The partnership scholars program has been one of the best things that has happened to me. From visiting numerous college campuses in state and out of state, the best experience was seeing how different the campuses are. If there is anything that PSP has taught me, it has definitely been exploring out of my comfort zone. From the start, I was introduced to a mentor I knew nothing about, but now I see my mentor as family. PSP has prepared me for the real world: the different lifestyles I have seen, through traveling many places without my parents, and overall just getting out of my city of El Monte. Without PSP I would have never experienced these adventures. In addition, financially I would like to thank Mr. George Moss, who has sponsored me through the 6 years. I have been blessed and I am thankful to have an important person in my life who sincerely cares about my future and supports me with all the tools needed to experience these new things.

Entering Rio Hondo Community College, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Raymond Andry



Areli Gonzalez

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Da Vinci Science High School



In seventh grade I was inaugurated as a scholar in the Partnership Scholars program. Little did I know that my life would be changed and this program would help shape me as an individual. Throughout this scholarship, I was taught the importance of not only education, but the importance of culturally enriching activities. This program has allowed me to expand my horizons beyond what my financial status would have provided me. Getting nominated and chosen to be a scholar is what makes me much more grateful for life and motivates me to seek opportunities and open new doors for myself as this one ends. However, this journey has not ended but helped open new doors as I will be attending UCLA this fall.

What makes me love and be passionate about PSP lies in my background. Being first generation has made me value my opportunities and education. My dad has two jobs and works towards supporting a family of six. As a kid I would always run to hide as soon as I heard my dad approaching the front door. At a young age I started to see our financial reality and was discouraged that my passion for learning will only reach so far because my financial status would limit me.

However, PSP has helped me see beyond this. I have become a “go-getter,” an individual who doesn't wait for stuff to happen but instead goes out and opens doors for myself. Just like how early on I opened doors for myself through academic achievements by being inducted to PSP. I want to thank PSP and show them how they've made an impact on me through my pursuing my life time goals and making them proud.

I especially want to thank Lisa Ruben, Maria Hernandez, my sponsors Mr. and Mrs. Masson who made this journey possible for me. Also, special thanks to Ms. Kent who I have formed an amazing bond with her as my mentor. Lastly, to my parents who have believed in me and my potential since day one. Through my career I want to focus on building and helping a community by opening doors for them but also showing them that they have the power to open doors for themselves.

Entering UC Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: Richard and Sue Masson

Mentor: Patti Kent



Elvin Lin

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 El Monte High School



In the past six years that I've been in PSP, I've realized that plane rides are the most horrifying and dreadful things ever known to man. I've realized that there's all different types of foods from different cultures that are all unique. I've realized that I myself, have become a stronger person than I was six years ago. Six years ago, I was not a very sociable person. Being in a new environment, I was exposed to various individuals that I had never associated with before in my life. To top it off, I had breaks with people outside my age group, meaning I rarely saw any of my classmates at all. When I was first accepted into PSP, I didn't know who my mentor was. It was quite a shock when I found that the principal was my mentor. The first place we ever went to as a group was Jack in the Box, and that was the starting point for it all. Me and my mentees became closer to one another sooner or later and we get along quite well as compared to before. We eat, joke, laugh, and enjoy ourselves when we're together. One of the things that we joke about is that we're going to take our mentor out to Jack in the Box in the future. I myself have become more sociable and adaptable to situations, and find that the small quiet person that was formally me, has become a leader.

Something that I've learned over the years is that even a mosquito needs to eat. What I'm trying to say is that no matter who it is, we should try to the best of our ability to reach out and help other people, even if it means that we must sacrifice something of ourselves. Through PSP, I've been able to experience the differences in people and have really learned to not only acknowledge the people who need help, but also to lend a hand to them. Throughout the past six years, PSP has been the one that opened up and helped me fully grasp an idea of the world. With the many places that I've been, I've realized that life is not a confined sphere that surround only where we go, the world is not something that is restricted by only the places we go, but that the world is vast, in that it expands further than the area in which we reside in. It's helped me overcome the ignorance of different locations and also realize that not everybody calls El Monte home.

When you look back on it, six years actually passed by really fast. Before I know it, I'll be wearing a gown and walking up during a graduation ceremony. These past six years have been filled with all different sorts of emotions, both good and bad, and PSP has been there for me through it all. It's been a terrific six years PSP, and the only thing I can say is thank you for always being there. You've prepared me for it, so I'll tackle on the next four years with everything that I've got!

Entering UC Berkeley, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Raymond Andry



Elizabeth Quebedo

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 Lawndale High School



I can remember the walk from my class to the library, where I would find out if I made it into Partnership Scholars. The look in everyone's eyes, all filled with excitement, but just a hint of fear of not knowing what to expect. Then, all I can remember was the silenced library, was suddenly filled with cheers and claps of joy. We had made it in.

From then on, what I had imagined my experience was going to be like became reality. A lot of great things came from being part of PSP. I gained a family, with the other scholars, but most importantly the one with my own mentor. Without them, I wouldn't have been able to have the experience I had. In addition, with PSP, I've been given many great opportunities, many that I wouldn't have been able to get without PSP. Some of the amazing things I've been able to do are go to college trips to Chicago and New York/Philadelphia, go to museums, musicals, and plays, things I wouldn't imagine of doing.

Being a scholar is something that I have a lot of pride in. Yes, the outings are great, but I'm mostly thankful for being part of a program that pushes me to be successful. They gave me the push I needed to want to fulfill my dreams, to be able to say that it is possible. Before the program, I always dreamed of studying criminal justice, but I never really thought about it too much because I didn't want to get my hopes up. However, when I became a scholar something changed. I realized that I could make my dreams possible and PSP was the push that I needed. They gave me an amazing mentor that since the first day pushed me to do great and educated us at the same time. My mentors, Sandra Thorman, Tom Freeman, and Maria Hernandez have prepared me for what's to come. Without them, without Partnership Scholars, I wouldn't be attending Cal State Long Beach, with a major in Criminal Justice/Criminology. I wouldn't be making my dreams come true.

Entering CSU Long Beach, fall 2016

Sponsor: Jennifer Hinman

Mentor: Sandra Thorman



Ashley Rodriguez

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

International Polytechnic
High School



A twelve-year-old version of me stands before a crowd of proud parents and peers, being inducted into PSP. Flash-forward six years later and I find myself reflecting on the time that has so quickly gone by. I am now eighteen years old, about to graduate from high school, and accepted into college. Everything PSP has prepared me for has happened. I am now left with memories and experiences from the last six years that have helped develop into who I am, and will stay with me forever. 0

Throughout those six years, I have been able to explore and wander and ultimately find my interests. My mentor, Sandy Comer, allowed me to wander freely; always encouraging new and exciting things. Ms. Comer was always excited about new interests I wanted to explore, and got to know me well enough to suggest experiences I would end up loving. For example, going to the theater quickly become one of our favorite outings. I loved going to different plays, and she loved hearing my thoughts and opinions afterwards. I felt encouraged to explore new cultural experiences that I would not have had otherwise. Another common interest we have is traveling. We plan to do more, even after I become PSP alumni. One of my favorite PSP experiences was the trip we took driving up the coast all the way to San Francisco with my other partners, Alma and Anna. That trip was unforgettable. It definitely is a great experience to be able to explore your future with people who are so encouraging, supportive, and feel like family.

PSP has left with me with incredible bonds. I still keep in touch with other PSP students that I met on trips. My mentor and I have developed an incredible bond over pizookies at BJ's and it would be impossible for me to ever stop thinking of her as my mentor. My now alumni partners, Alma and Anna, are like my sisters. It was amazing to share such a wonderful opportunity with people I genuinely love. As well as for all of the people I have met through PSP and have gone through this journey with me.

The class of 2016 is like a family to me. I don't think I would have been as encouraged to go after my dreams if it wasn't for PSP, an enormous amount of supportive peers and staff rooting for me. I am now a pre-nursing major at Cal State LA with intentions of transferring to UC San Francisco for my graduate nursing program. I hope to be a nurse practitioner and I have never felt more encouraged and confident in my abilities to achieving my goals. I can never thank PSP and the wonderful people who run the program for giving me this oppor-

Entering CSU Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: Sheldon and Cindy Stone

Mentor: Sandy Comer



Marixie Santone

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



The Partnership Scholars Program has had a huge impact on my life. This program has provided financial support on my journey to a four year university, helped me grow in my social and academic life, and most importantly placed a mentor in my life to guide and support me throughout this process.

Growing up in a low income home makes the college process difficult. However, with the help of the program I have been able to travel to four different states and visit over twenty colleges. This has been extremely beneficial because without the program there is no way I would have been able to know and visit the distinct colleges apart from those in California. Being given the opportunity to not only visit colleges but also have overnight stays and class sit ins has allowed me to be more insightful on the college process as well as the type of environment I would be the most successful in during my upcoming college education. These experiences helped me come to the realization that a college out of state wasn't a suitable choice for me and helped me understand which distance from home I preferred.

Another asset this program has equipped me with is confidence and the ability to speak publicly and open doors for myself. The program has taught me the basic rules and tips of a profession interview as well as how to dress and carry myself during these professional interactions. Had it not been for the help of my PSP supporters I may not have received my first paid internship through Union Bank.

Having a mentor has been the most beneficial experience. My siblings as well as parents have not attended college so having a leader guide me as well as support me as been the most valuable thing I received through this program. My amazing mentor, Bridget Brotherton, has been more than a mentor to me. She has helped me academically, socially, and emotionally. She has taught me how to be a strong independent woman and how to measure success and that to me is priceless.

The Partnership Scholars Program has shaped me into the ambitious, persistent, hardworking young lady I am today. This program has lit a fire in my heart to set high goals for myself and know that it is attainable. It has taught me how to be different and has made me courageous enough to chase my dreams and stop at nothing to achieve my academic and personal goals. I am beyond grateful to the program for teaching me that I am the creator of my own success.

Entering UC Riverside, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Bridget Brotherton



Emily Tsan

Partnership Scholar
Class of 2016
El Monte High School



I want to thank the Partnership Scholars Program with the utmost sincerity for expanding my horizons and allowing me to be the well-rounded individual I am today. The program has helped me in more ways than one. It has opened up doors for me to have the cultural experiences as well as the best educational opportunities that I would have never even have dreamed of. It has provided me with a mentor that gave me not only academic and personal advice but also allowed me to be amongst other students that shared the same goals to pursue a higher education. Within six years, the program has given me the opportunity to visit places outside the state of California, such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Chicago, and New York. I was able to attend out of state choir festivals with my A Cappella Choir, all expenses paid for. Most people that hear something like that can't believe that it actually happened.

Without my mentor Mrs. Anne Bazile, the most extraordinary and culturally diverse individual, I would not have been able to try the most exotic and cultural foods that I have ever tasted my life. She took me in when I was a freshman, and the places that she has allowed me to explore, I was open to all of them. She made all the expenses worth it.

Throughout my time in this program, I have grown to not only build confidence in my own abilities, but to build a strong relationship between my school and my community. I learned to seek more opportunities and encouraged myself to become involved in clubs in my school that do community service. I began to take on leadership roles at my school and discovered the passion that I have to help others succeed. The Partnership Scholars Program made me realize of a greater purpose in life and I truly believe that change is not only made within oneself but with the support of those around you. As it is a support system that prepared me in life, I owe it to them for making me the most motivated and highly determined individual. This program has significantly impacted my life it and has allowed me to experience the things that I wouldn't even have the chance to experience. The donors, the mentors and staff are the people that have all made this possible.

Entering UC Riverside, fall 2016

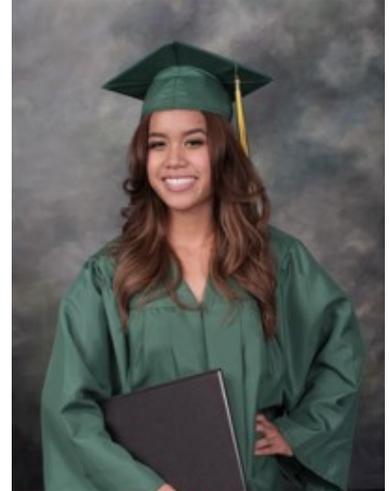
Sponsor: John Kissick, Kissick Foundation

Mentor: Anne Bazile



Valerie Uy

Partnership Scholar Class of 2016 International Polytechnic High School



Humans are naturally curious. Delving into the world creates a mind filled with knowledge that touches on areas that can depict the very future. Though, we can only successfully expand our horizons when we push the boundaries of our comfort zones.

For most of my life I grew up pleasantly in El Monte, yet I still learned to venture beyond its borders. Being my mother's child, I was born with an adventurous bone in my body, but despite my restlessness to explore the world, my family just couldn't afford to. However, my opportunity came when I applied to the Partnership Scholars Program in seventh grade.

During my first two years in PSP, I traveled to New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania. I remember leaving home for the first time without my mother; she cried and naturally, I cried too. We agreed, nevertheless, that going to these states would fulfill my desire to explore and engage in different types of settings. I remember being in Times Square, moving with its fast paced environment while grabbing pizza from a concessions stand and being in Philadelphia, gazing at the breathtaking historic monuments that filled its landscape. Moments like these world strike me about how different these cities were compared to my suburban hometown of El Monte. Little did I know I was going to embark on the adventure of my life in PSP.

Throughout my PSP journey, I have visited many local and out-of-state universities, attended a variety of academic retreats, and participated in a mix of cultural events. However, the trip that remains the most significant to me was a retreat held at the Claremont Colleges. There, I introduced myself to a married couple, two medical experts affiliated with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLS). I expressed my longing to work with children to them, and they graciously offered to connect me to their institution. With their help, I obtained a mentorship there. My time at CHLA has offered me a range of experiences that has guided me towards solidifying my passion in pediatrics.

Ever since my entrance into PSP, my life has revolved around such experiences. As I grow older, it has become apparent to me that these outings aided in shaping me into the person I am today, because naturally, the choices I made in my life have been dictated by them. I distinctly remember the retreat, and I will never forget the couple's response and what followed afterwards; taking part in a pediatric setting was inexplicable to say the least. Throughout the moments at CHLA, I created a new definition of myself.

Entering UC Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Rocio Centeno



Anaid Villa

Partnership Scholar

Class of 2016

Mountain View High School



I entered the Partnership Scholarship Program as a rather timid individual. I was not very fond of the idea of talking to someone else and avoided it when possible. I limited myself to only living within my personal bubble, but then, this program pulled me out of it. I was encouraged to socialize with my first mentor, Ms. DeCamp, and a fellow scholar, Jenny Cabello. These two people led the path for me to open up. Though I tried to avoid conversation when I could, Ms. DeCamp's bubbly personality and joyous vibe welcomed me into their inner circle. Our trips together made us feel like family that could count on each other.

Lamentably, our time together was cut short due to unfortunate circumstances. A few months into high school, I met my new mentors and had a new group of fellow scholars. This group was bigger than what I was used to and I had three mentors instead of one. At our first meeting together, I met Rute Miki Kalpins, George Ferenczi, and Jim Wern. We quickly got acquainted and I grew to love, admire, and respect each one of them. Before I knew it we were taking adventures together. We explored museums, musicals, colleges, sports games, hikes, and even rock climbing.

But dare I not forget the food. The elegant cuisine of French, Japanese, and Mediterranean food, as well as special etiquette lessons all served to open my mind to new experiences. I went to places I never thought in my wildest dreams I would visit. I was still in shock as I boarded the plane to New York and even more astonished when we landed and I realized I was on the opposite side of the country. Philadelphia was just a train ride away and Washington D.C. was just around the corner. It was astonishing to believe I was standing on the soil of the White House. Soon I found myself on another flight to Boston where we had the experience of a lifetime. We were three thousand miles away from home and quickly developed the important and necessary skills of responsibility and independence.

PSP has educated us into responsible young adults, opened so many doors, given us so many opportunities. It is hard to imagine we are each grabbing our own individual flight into the future. We have spent these last six years together and now we will all head our separate ways to discover new horizons. PSP prepared us all to take hold of our futures and fly.

Entering CSU Los Angeles, fall 2016

Sponsor: George Moss

Mentor: Miki Kalpins

