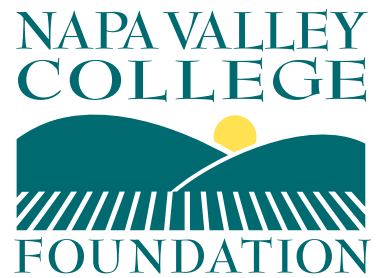


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\$213,000 in Scholarships Awarded

Students credit college services for their personal and academic achievements.

NAPA, May 8, 2007-- Napa Valley College students Rachel Salas, Monica Hurtado, and James Carter exemplify some of the 180 students receiving a portion of the \$213,000 in NVC Foundation scholarships given out at the NVC Scholarship Ceremony May 17 at 6:45 p.m.

Salas, a 27-year-old, first generation student was awarded six scholarships: the Napa Valley Retired Teachers Association, NVC Peer Advising Student Scholarship, Kiwanis, Club, Bess Mayfield Memorial, Ray Cleone Memorial, and the California Community College Student Financial Aid Association Scholarship. The \$4,725 will help her when transferring to St. Mary's College this fall.

Six years ago, Salas and her brother received custody of their 8-year-old cousin. "I knew that he was my priority in life and that I had to create a future for myself in order to create a future for him. My brother and I moved to Napa so that he could pursue his dream of attending cooking school to become a chef," said Salas who had attended Sacramento City College right after high school.

"It was a new beginning for us and a chance for me to overcome my fear that I wasn't smart enough to be college material."

She joined Puente, a program designed to increase the number of Chicano/Latino students transferring to four-year colleges and universities. "My Puente counselor introduced me to the world and to the opportunities ahead. She was one of the first persons to believe in me. I finally found what I was missing—support and faith in myself."

Salas started the Puente club to raise money for scholarships and educational field trips; she served as the VP of Publications for the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and also became a Peer Advisor. She was one of two recipients of the Napa Chamber Foundation Outstanding Napa Valley College Students of the Year.

"I've learned that in life, we come across speed bumps, but that doesn't mean that we have to stop completely. It only means that we must go over them slowly because eventually, we will roll right over them and move on," Salas quipped.

Monica Hurtado, 21, will pick up the Napa County Hispanic Network, the Napa Valley College Academic Senate, and the Clayton Long Memorial Scholarship. The \$1800 in scholarships will help her transfer to UC Davis to complete her goal of becoming a high school or college counselor with a minor in Spanish.

She will continue as an NVC student this summer in the international study-abroad program to Salamanca, Spain with NVC instructor Maria Villagomez. “It’s a graduation gift from my parents,” Hurtado said.

She wished she was still in high school during her first semester at NVC. “I wasn’t prepared me for the academic culture of higher education. Luckily, during the summer, I joined Student Support Services (SSS) and enrolled in the Puente Program,” she said.

Hurtado mistakenly thought she could just attend classes and work, forgetting she needed to allot study time. “My first college English paper was marked with a repugnant ‘D’,” she said. “I was frustrated, discouraged, and saddened when I no longer saw many of my friends. I realized that instructors weren’t babysitters like they were in high school. All I could think was, if this is college, I don’t want to do it.”

She became a part-time student and leaned on the guidance and direction of Puente and SSS. She soon became a motivated full-time “A” student and a part-time employee.

The NVC services had a tremendous impact on Hurtado. Puente kept her motivation alive, and pushed her to exceed her expectations. SSS increased her self-esteem and emphasized endless educational opportunities. The Transfer Center allowed her to explore different majors and universities. The EOPS/Financial Aid program provided work-study and scholarships. The Writing Center staff taught her that there was hope in a “hopeless” piece of work. And the health services helped her overcome “academic depression.”

“Napa Valley College helped me grow from a naïve immature child to a self-reliant and focused adult,” Hurtado said. “Today, I ask myself: do I ever wish I were still in high school? My response is never! My experience at Napa Valley College was more challenging than high school, but with greater challenges come greater rewards.”

James Carter, received four scholarships, the Peter & Vernice Gasser Foundation Scholarship, Chiarella Family Fund, Bebe and Judge David York Scholarship and the Ruth VonUhlit Memorial Fund for \$2,475, additionally he has been awarded the American Chemical Society Chemistry Scholars Program scholarship at \$5,000 per year until he completes his undergraduate degree.

“I never finished high school so when I started here in 1998 I had to start at the very bottom and work my way up to college level classes,” said the 26-year-old Carter. “I had worked in the construction industry and got hurt and through a series of circumstances got introduced to the community college.”

Today, Carter takes challenging science and math courses while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average, which is just one of the reasons he was selected as an Outstanding Napa Valley College Student of the Year by the Napa Chamber Foundation.

Carter is the president of the campus Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) club. He organized a Katrina fundraiser to benefit community college in New Orleans and helped Napa victims in last year’s floods.

He plans to study environmental toxicology at UC Davis to ultimately be able to use that knowledge

in the Peace Corps or teach at the community college level.

The mission of the Napa Valley College Foundation is to develop resources for Napa Valley College. Working with students, alumni, employees and the community at large, the Napa Valley College Foundation will identify and communicate the needs of Napa Valley College in order to promote and solicit funds from the community for scholarship, instructional equipment, employee development and campus improvement.

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