

Concord High School and the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation

With the help of a Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) stipend, 2023 Concord High School (CHS) graduate Lizeth De La Cruz was able to enroll at the higher education institution of her dreams--St. Mary's College. She's an accounting and finance major as a sophomore this year with a 3.7 grade point average. She's also a Resident Advisor helping St. Mary's first year students transition from high school to college. In addition, she serves as the marketing and recruiting chair for the campus's Hispanic students, and is Treasurer of the Gael Sisterhood, a campus philanthropic club. Since RSF began giving out stipends to local students in 1967 De La Cruz became one of many RSF scholarship winners to attend St. Mary's.

Like all schools that RSF serves, CHS has a diverse student body; 76% of CHS students identify as "minority." Although a recent study ranked 93 % of its students as college ready, only 23% subsequently enrolled in a community college or four-year institution of higher education. The main reasons interviewed students gave for not going to college were that students felt they could not afford a higher education and that their parents still needed them to help out with family finances. Many graduating CHS students come from families where English is a second language. Often these students have to babysit siblings and help them with their homework; most also hold part-time jobs in order to help support their families.

CHS's teachers and administrators go far above what is required to ensure that their students are given every opportunity to reach their full potential. Sheila Bergum, for eight years CHS's College and Career Advisor, says her students have big hearts and big dreams. "I love the meaningful work I get to do in helping them achieve their post-high school goals," she said. Julene MacKinnon came to CHS nine years ago as a teacher, then became Vice-President at Heritage High, and three years ago returned to CHS as Principal. It is obvious from her smile and warmth when talking about CHS students that she loves what she does. Students RSF trustees interviewed last year overwhelmingly showed appreciation for the inspiration they received from administrators like Bergum and MacKinnon.

Lizeth De La Cruz is not unlike the vast majority of students RSF interviews for its scholarships every year. All are academically gifted but financially hard-pressed students working hard to obtain a higher education. Every dollar donated goes into a scholarship that helps students like these reach their goals.

Submitted by: Carol Caputo, RSF Trustee