

## Deer Valley High School – A Report Card

On December 2 the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) opened its application process for the 57<sup>th</sup> time to students who want to apply for an RSF scholarship for fall of 2025.

Two years ago RSF decided to drop partner ships with several Contra Costa County schools from relatively wealthy communities and add schools serving students from lower income communities. Deer Valley High School (DVHS) was among them. For RSF it was an easy decision; 90.2% of DVHS students are minority enrollment, 71% are economically disadvantaged. Because of these circumstances RSF received multiple DVHS applications, and during the February, 2024, interviewing process, the RSF interview team was impressed to discover the strength and resiliency of applicants in overcoming personal, family and school challenges.

“Attending school while grappling with homelessness was a challenge. The fear and anxiety I felt about people finding out about my situation completely took over my mind, leaving no room to even think about school and my education,” wrote one applicant who dealt with homelessness and constant relocation. “I grew tired of these nerves controlling every aspect of my life, these emotions evoked a sense of motivation in me to overcome the academic hurdles and emotional challenges associated with my situation. I emerged from those trials with an unyielding commitment to my education and a passion for advocating for those who are less fortunate.”

“I don’t have the privilege to ‘be a kid’ if I want to accomplish the things I hope to achieve,” said another applicant who grew up in a toxic family situation. A third told the interview team of his struggle to overcome a severe speech impediment, amazingly not at all apparent during the interview. Not only did all three receive scholarships, but the third also received two Add-On awards--one for Social Justice, the other for Community Service.

All RSF scholarship winners were recognized for their achievement, first at DVHS’ Awards Night, at which the RSF Team presented the awards; and then, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, at RSF’s Awards Ceremony. Among this year’s scholarship winners many are enrolled at UC and CSU campuses (33% and 24% respectively), some are attending Diablo Valley and Los Medanos Colleges (combined 33%). RSF is pleased and honored to be a part of the ongoing success stories like these 2024 scholarship winners.

This year, RSF is privileged to work again with Career Counselor Tammy Douglas-Dodson. She fully recognizes that issues of family income, immigration status, health issues, and home conditions all stand in the way of achieving a higher education, and because she recognizes that DVHS students often feel that they don’t deserve or aren’t even qualified to go on to college, she works hard to counter these assumptions.

Together, RSF and Douglas-Dodson are working hard to guide and encourage all qualified DVHS students to submit RSF applications. For example, in October Douglas-Dodson invited RSF to participate in the Antioch districtwide College & Career Fair at Deer Valley; trustees Barbara Walker, Debbie Swearingen, and Bob Daines staffed the RSF booth. They were met by many enthusiastic students eager to start the application process for 2025 scholarships.

Submitted by: Bob Daines RSF Trustee