

The Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation Helps Concord High Grads Achieve College Dreams

This is the fifth in a series of articles on the eight schools with which the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation works.

Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) trustees Carol Caputo and Jane Emanuel recently took a trip down memory lane, past their neighborhood swim club where they met fifty years ago during endless summer swim meets, and on to Concord High School (CHS). When Emanuel recently joined RSF, the two trustees--neighbors once again--were excited to team up to interview prospective college applicants at CHS. On this day, however, they were not there to deliver a forgotten lunch bag, but to meet with College and Career Counselor Sheila Bergum and present a poster depicting CHS's ten 2025 RSF Scholarship recipients. Of the ten CHS, five are now attending University of California campuses. The day's visit concluded with Principal Julene McKinnon joining Bergum for their annual photo with RSF Trustees. Bergum linked arms with Caputo and Emanuel and remarked, "I hope the Rossmoor community knows how impactful their donations are."

Two Concord students had also earned "Add-on Awards" by writing an additional essay in their area of study, among them the Walsh/Ledin Instrumental Music Award. Rossmoor resident Suzanne Walsh established the award in honor of her late husband Philip, and her father, Roger Ledin. The latter, an electrical engineer and passionate musician, filled their home with music, playing the saxophone and clarinet in big bands. "Music is a gift and a dedication that brings joy to people and to life," said Walsh. Among the three winners she selected were CHS's Wilson Ng and Oriana Castro, both of whom exemplify the power of music to shape young lives. As an Add-on donor, Walsh took much pleasure in recognizing the awardees at the May 4 RSF Awards Ceremony.

Ng, who struggled with isolation during the pandemic, entered high school determined only to "study hard and get into some good college. There was no need for friends, no need for fun." Then he walked into third period String Orchestra and "quickly noticed everyone was happy, elated even." Through new friendships in Marching Band and his service in the Music Leadership Council, Ng discovered "the inherently altruistic nature of being a member." Helping his classmates grow as musicians has inspired him to pursue a career in counseling. He is currently attending UC-Berkeley.

Oriana Castro's essay, "How to Start Living," recounts her journey from Venezuela at age seven and discovering the trumpet a year later. "Music isn't just notes on a page," she wrote. "It is the ability to express how I feel without words." After years of adjusting to a new country and language, she found her voice through music. She ends her essay, "I really have no idea who I would be without music in my life. It allowed me to find a community and to find myself while also growing in my musicianship." She is currently attending Cal. State-Sacramento.

Counselor Bergum's words (quoted above) reflect the deep gratitude of CHS families and the ongoing importance of community support. RSF scholarships often help students who experience economic hardship and may be the first in their family to attend college. RSF Trustees hopes residents continue the tradition of helping students. Remember - "every dollar donated goes into a scholarship."

Submitted by: Jane Emanuel, RSF Trustee