

2026 Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation Recipients: Their Stories

In 2026 the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation presented awards ranging from \$4000 to \$11000 to 141 students from local high schools and community colleges. One quality that most display is resolve. Two resolute 2026 honorees are Aye Chan San from Diablo Valley College and Jose Cisneros from Los Medanos College.

San arrived with her family four years ago from Myanmar. As she wrote on her RSF application essay, “When I started college, I felt apprehensive about making new friends because I did not feel confident in my communication as a fresh immigrant. I was scared to make mistakes when I talked to people. To help myself overcome my fear of talking to new people, I made a challenge to myself. I intentionally put myself in situations where I had no choice but to communicate. I signed up for communication and debate classes. Then I eventually participated in a speech competition. I won a small prize; and small wins like these kept me motivated to push myself further. I also joined different student clubs even if I did not know anyone.”

Gradually, San’s improvement paid off. “One of the biggest impacts in my life from this experience is improving my mindset when I encounter obstacles,” she says. “Instead of giving up, I started looking for solutions. Once I stopped fearing making mistakes, I felt more comfortable. And I will continue to overcome challenges in my life that I fear most because of this experience.” The next challenge will come at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, which San—aided by a \$4,000 RSF General Scholarship and a \$2,500 Lorraine Mox Add-on award—will enter this fall and where she plans to major in architecture.

Cisneros had to get out of a hole—literally. “When I was about 20 years old, I worked at a company contracted by nearby refineries and plants to perform chemical cleaning. At the time, I was extremely depressed. I felt like I was wasting my life doing something that brought me no fulfillment.

“One month, we were assigned a job in San Jose at a landfill to clean out a septic tank. We had to wear chemical protective equipment because of the hazardous fumes. When I started to smell ammonia through my mask, I asked my coworker if we were supposed to be smelling anything, and he said no. I climbed out of the hole, removed my mask, and saw that it had a tear in it. I was given a new mask, but the situation shook me. That same week, I put in my two weeks’ notice and made the decision to go back to school.”

Cisneros’s life has remained grueling. “I have worked full-time at Amazon while going to school, and at one point I balanced college, full-time work, and an EMT course to improve my chances of getting into a nursing program,” he says. “The sacrifices have been overwhelming at times, but I believe they will all be worth it.” Aided by two awards from RSF—a \$4,000 General scholarship and a \$2,500 Linda Ledgerwood Employed Student Add-on —Cisneros will continue on his path this fall to a nursing degree at Sacramento State.

There are many others like San and Cisneros for whom a RSF award is vital to fulfilling their dreams. To support these students, Rossmoorians are strongly encouraged to contribute to RSF. Contributions can be mailed to Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation, P.O. Box 2056, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

Submitted by: **Dick Friedman** RSF Trustee