

Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation Newsletter

Trustees

Julie Allen

Walter Barr

Steve Batill

Carol Caputo

Lynda Caputo

Bob Daines

Janeen Ehrhart

Jane Emanuel

Natalee Fairbanks

Jean Fiske

Dick Friedman

Sherrie Hansen

Alice Lau

Judy Leckonby

Bob Miller

Gloria Reid

Bill Riess

James Schloss

Richard Schulman

Debbie Swearingen

Barb Walker

Al Webster

Bill Welch

Shirley Wiegand

Wayne Wiegand

Peter Yang

The **Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation** invests in the future by helping local students who otherwise might not be able to afford to go to college. This year we provided at least **\$3,500 to 119 students** for a total investment of **\$446,500**.

We serve **six high schools** and **two community colleges**: Antioch, Concord, Deer Valley, Mt. Diablo, Pittsburg, and Ygnacio Valley High Schools and both Diablo Valley and Los Medanos College. Students are chosen on the basis of both academic merit and financial need, after we review their applications, essays, and references, and conduct in-person interviews.

You can be assured that every dollar you donate goes directly into a scholarship; administrative costs are borne by the 27 dedicated Trustees. So please join us in investing in talented but needy students.



**2025 Leftovers
Thrift Shop Scholars**



**Pittsburg High School
2025 Scholars**

Where are they now?

Academic and Athletic Success at an HBCU

"I'm having a great experience at Grambling State University, where I'm majoring in Computer Science with a minor in Cybersecurity and currently on track to graduate early," writes **Kimora McLemore, 2023 graduate of Heritage High School** in Brentwood and winner of an RSF scholarships given to a Rossmoor Walnut Creek employee or their children. At Grambling she served as Miss



National Society of Black Engineers. She also participated in track and field, earning 3rd place at her conference championships in javelin. "I'm

excited for what the

future holds, both academically and athletically, and I'm deeply grateful for the support of the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation."

Marquita Shelton, Kimora's mother who is employed in RWC's Accounting Department, **won the Employee Award this year.**

Remembering a Mentor

In Fall, 1986, **Frank Nelson** enrolled in a Diablo Valley College entry-level engineering course with **Hal Skamser**, former dean of a California university engineering school who at the time was living in Rossmoor but also volunteering to teach courses. After observing Nelson's work ethic at DVC Skamser went over to Nelson, put his hand on Nelson's shoulder, and said, "If you keep this up, you will go far in your career." Skamser was right. **After he got a 1986 RSF Scholarship and graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 1991, Nelson went far in his career as a Silicon Valley electrical engineer.** So grateful was he for

that encouragement back in 1986 **Nelson decided to fund a Hal Skamser Scholarship through RSF for ten successive years.**

The photo shows **Nelson with its first recipient,**

Jonathan Carpio Arellano, who is now a junior at San Jose State University majoring in computer science.



Overcoming Challenges

Amber Peake got pregnant at 17, succumbed to alcoholism shortly thereafter, dropped out of high school, and lost custody of her daughter as she struggled with addiction.



Ultimately, she managed to kick the addiction, regain custody of her daughter and, after marrying, enrolled at Diablo Valley College. After graduating in 2022 she transferred to the **University of California, Berkeley where she received a BA with Honors in Public Health in 2024 and a Master Degree of Public Health in 2025.** "I have been pursuing my dream of medical school since the return to community college at DVC in 2019," she writes, "and am **now officially a medical student at the University of Nevada, Reno**

School of Medicine! I am forever grateful to the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation for believing in me and being a part of my academic journey."

THANK YOU SPECIAL DONORS!

At our 2025 Awards Ceremony, **twelve students received an additional \$2,500** from donors willing to offer these “add-on awards,” **bringing the scholarship amount to \$6,000**. Each student was required to write an additional essay directed to the award’s focus.

In 2025, RSF awarded its first **Ralph and Diane Hinds Single Parent Award**.



Diane Hind's daughter, Debbie, with award winner Tranisha Moore

Two students received **Walsh/Ledin Instrumental Music Award**, another received a **Walsh/Ledin Family Music Award**. The **Computer Club of Rossmoor (STEM focus)** and the **Sylvia Kaplan Community Service** each funded two awards.



Suzanne Walsh with Manuel Caro, left, and Wilson Ng, right, recipients of the Walsh/Ledin Music Awards

Donors of single add-on awards include: the **Frank Wang Chinese American Association of Rossmoor**; the **Miller Family Award for a Single Mother**; the **Linda Ledgerwood Award for an Employed Student**; and the **Social Justice Award**.

We appreciate the generosity of our fabulous donors who have chosen to fully fund one or more **\$3,500 named scholarships**.

The **Diablo Subaru Share-the-Love** event funded **five full scholarships**. The **Leftovers Thrift Shop** funded **six full scholarships**.



Bill and Judy Leckonby with scholarship winners Jhonathan Davila Escorsa and Umme Nuhath and their families

Generous donors also funded **sixteen named full scholarships**, including **two Ta-Hsia Kuo Memorial Scholarships**; **Gene Shaw Memorial Scholarships**; **Norton Leckonby Family Scholarships**; **Miller Family**, **Penny Ittner**, **Joe Anthony**, **Larry Cahn**, **Hal Skamser**, **Thomas Ruckman**, **Robert K. Boone**; **Li Family Intercultural Trust**, **Rossmoor Realty**, and **Alice Lau** (the Trustee Scholarship)

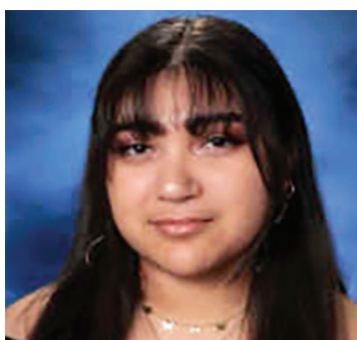


Theresa Kuo and scholarship winners, Halena Neyazi and Rohullah Mohammad

Meet Some of our Extraordinary 2025 Student Scholars. Here are their stories.

Overcoming Serious Health Issues

Diagnosed with an atrial septal defect and cleft lip and palate at birth, Pittsburg High School graduate Diana



Torres Arias always felt like a burden on her family. "My extensive medical conditions meant perpetual surgeries and follow-up cranial appointments that took up much of my family's time and exacerbated our financial issues." Because she

didn't understand medical jargon well enough to effectively translate for her family the gravity of her condition, she decided to become "an impassioned pediatric nurse practitioner" to help her community members negotiate challenges within the healthcare system. This fall she enrolled as a pre-nursing student at CSU Chico, with the goal of eventually entering the nursing program.

A New Life After Afghanistan

In the Fall semester, 2025, Shamim Taqdesi will become her family's first-generation college student. Fourteen when the Taliban came to power in 2021, her family decided to leave



Afghanistan so she could continue her education. As they walked to the border, however, officials let Taqdesi and her ten-year-old brother pass, but held her parents and sister back. It was the last time she saw them. After two years in Pakistan she made it to the United States and enrolled in Ygnacio Valley High School in 2024. "The challenges I have faced fighting for an education have made me a stronger person and more confident of my goals," she writes. She will be attending Diablo Valley College.

From Shackles to Scholarships

"For me," Benjamin Osborn wrote in his RSF application, "the most significant risk I ever took was choosing to believe that I could rise above my past." Osborne's early life was marked with struggle that led to 24 years in prison. While incarcerated, he earned his GED and completed college courses with a 3.75 GPA. Once released he enrolled at Los Medanos College. "Education has been my bridge to a new life. It has given me confidence, purpose, and a future I never thought possible." He hopes to become a certified drug counselor in California or Oregon.



www.rossmoorscholarship.org

**Thank You for Donating
Online or by
Mailing a Check!**

**P.O. Box 2056
Walnut Creek, CA 94595**