



## Westlands Water District

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Westlands Water District Announces Recipients of the West Side Scholarships**

**FRESNO** – Six outstanding high school seniors from communities on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley have been selected to receive scholarships offered by the Westlands Water District. The 2014 scholarships are offered by Westlands under a program to recognize and reward exceptional academic achievement and leadership by graduating seniors at area high schools.

The recipients of the 2014 scholarships are:

**Jose Arias**, a senior at Firebaugh High School. Mr. Arias is an honors student who plans on attending University of California, Davis to pursue a degree in biochemistry and molecular biology. He was involved in soccer, track and field, and cross country. Additionally, he has received a number of awards including a Certificate of AP Scholar Award, Student of the Month and Certificate of Academic Excellence.

**Jorge Santillan**, a senior at Mendota High School. Mr. Santillan plans to attend University of California, Santa Barbara to pursue a degree in psychology. He is an honors student and has been an active member of MESA, AVID, Leadership, was President of Lend-A-Hand and an ASB Treasurer. As President of Lend-A-Hand, he helped organize blood drives, food drives and toy drives.

**John Desfosses**, a senior at Coalinga High School. Mr. Desfosses plans to attend University of California, Berkeley to pursue a degree in history. He is an honors student who was a President and former Vice-President of Fellowship of Christian Athletes and former Vice President and Treasurer of the California Scholarship Federation.

**Emma Larson**, a senior at Lemoore High School. Ms. Larson plans to attend University of California to pursue a career in agricultural communications. She is an honors student and a member of the California Scholastic Federation. Additionally, she has been an active member of Future Farmers of America holding several leadership positions.

**Alexis Garcia**, a senior at Tranquillity High School. Mr. Garcia plans to attend University of California, Berkeley to pursue a degree in integrative biology. He is an honors student involved in Future Farmers of America, ASB Leadership and basketball.

**Rianne Banuelos**, a senior at Riverdale High School. Ms. Banuelos plans to attend Westmont College to pursue a degree in art and English. She is an honors student who was actively involved in Link Crew, Physics Club, Student Government and Leadership Class. Additionally, she has participated in a considerable amount of volunteer work.

Each scholarship recipient will receive \$1,000 to be used for community college or university expenses. Applicants were judged on their academic performance, school activities and community leadership. Each applicant submitted an essay on an agricultural-related topic.

“Westlands is honored to provide this assistance for these outstanding student leaders,” said Tom Birmingham, general manager of Westlands. “These scholarships represent a small gesture of thanks and support to the communities on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley that make our region such a productive and vibrant place.”

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