



Westlands Water District

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PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
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Westlands Water District Announces Recipients of the West Side Scholarships

FRESNO, June 6, 2017 – 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 2017 scholarships are offered by Westlands under a program to recognize and reward exceptional academic achievement and leadership by graduating seniors at area high schools. This is the twelfth year Westlands has provided scholarship awards.

The recipients of the 2017 scholarships are:

Katelyn Pedersen, a senior at Lemoore High School. Ms. Pedersen is an honors student who plans on attending California Polytechnic State University to pursue a degree in Agriculture Communications. She is actively involved in water polo and swimming and is a member of the Future Farmers of America where she holds the position of Secretary.

Yasmin Olvera, a senior at Riverdale High School. Ms. Olvera plans to attend University of California, Los Angeles to pursue degrees in Business Economics and Accounting. She is an honors student who has received awards for honor roll and Student of the Month, and is heavily involved in tennis and basketball. Additionally, she is a member of the California Scholarship Federation where she holds the position of President and Treasurer.

Nicole Quezada, a senior at Coalinga High School. Ms. Quezada plans to attend University of California, Davis to pursue a degree in Biomedical Engineering. She is a member of the California Scholarship Federation and received awards for the Principal's Honor Roll, Student of the Month and National Society of High School Scholars.

Jasmin Valdez, a senior at Tranquillity High School. Ms. Valdez plans to attend California State University, Fresno to pursue a degree in Computer Science. She is an honors student and has received awards for Student of the Month. Additionally, she is involved in the California Scholarship Federation and holds the position of Secretary for the Mecha Club.

Fatima Escobar, a senior at Mendota High School. Ms. Escobar is an honors student who plans on attending University of California, Berkeley to pursue a degree in Biological Sciences. Her ultimate goal is to become a doctor. She is involved in soccer and cross country and received awards for Superintendent Honor Roll and MESA. Ms. Escobar has achieved one of the highest academic GPAs ever evaluated by the Westlands Water District Scholarship Committee.

Paola Gonzalez, a senior at Firebaugh High School. Ms. Gonzalez plans to attend California Polytechnic State University to pursue a degree in Agronomy and Sociology. She has received several awards including Student of the Month and Superintendent's List. Additionally, she is involved in the softball and tennis.

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 assistance for these outstanding student leaders. These scholarships represent a 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," said Tom Birmingham, general manager of Westlands. "Our hope is that the students helped by these scholarships will return and remain in their communities and help make them even better for future generations," Birmingham said.

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