

# ALUMNI NEWS

BY GENOVEVA CORTES

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## Future History Makers Award Application - Latina History Day Conference 2023

LINK: [LATINA HISTORY DAY](#)**DEADLINE: February 14 2023**

### Future History Makers Award Application and Criteria

HOPE and The Estee Lauder Companies have partnered together to honor the accomplishments of future history-making Latinas in local communities. The honorees should foster a unique spirit of passion, possess a vision that brings communities together or charts a new path of discovery. As "Future History Makers," these Latinas strive for excellence and deliver their best efforts towards being positive role models and creating change.

### Who is a Future History Maker?

For the past seven years, HOPE has celebrated Future History Makers at the Latina History Day Conference, which is an annual conference established to recognize the historic and current achievements of Latinas, discuss community issues and embrace Latina culture. Future History Makers are the next generation of Latina women working to make an impact in their community by involvement in activities or projects, advancing in an academic field or pioneering groundbreaking research or inventions.

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## Bright Star Schools partners with Alder Graduate School of Education Residency Program

LINK: [Bright Star Schools' Alder Teacher Residency](#)**Attention Instructional Aides!! Earn while you learn!!!****Earn your Master's Degree and Teaching Credential in One Year**

Alder IA/Teacher Residents earn an Instructional Aide salary while they are working at their Bright Star School site as co-teacher. We will also offer a sign-on bonus for ELD/Science/Math/SPED new hires for the 2023/2024 school year!!

# SHCA & VAHS CLASS OF 2018-2022 CC & CTE PATHWAYS HIGHLIGHTING CTE PROGRAMS

Over the past few years many post-secondary institutions have experienced a significant drop in college enrollment. Students are pursuing other avenues that will help them reach their personal goals. While a portion of our graduates transition from high school to college, another percentage is seeking career opportunities that will enable them to be financially independent.

Similar to someone pursuing a degree, students who want to jump start their career right after graduation must be fully prepared for what's next. The process to get hired requires a time commitment which consists of; searching for employment opportunities, preparing required documents (resume, cover letter, references), mock interview practices, and be mentally ready to provide well thought-out responses.

To better support our students the city of Los Angeles offers support through their YouthSource programs. The network consists of 14 centers throughout the city which aim to support youth between the ages of 14-24. Some of the benefits of the program are paid internships, attainment of occupational skills, and job readiness programs.

 <p><b>Work Readiness</b> learn the skills needed to get the job you want</p>	 <p><b>Career Guidance</b> determine a career path and how to land that dream job</p>	 <p><b>College Prep and Financial Aid</b> find the college and degree that will help you fulfill your dreams</p>
 <p><b>Mentoring and Counseling</b> no judgement counseling and advice for your future</p>	 <p><b>Tutoring and Computer Access</b> life, education, and job preparation for the real world</p>	 <p><b>Job Skills Training</b> tools for success in a variety of industries</p>

## YouthSource - South Los Angeles Located in LA Southwest Archdiocesan Youth Employment



South Los Angeles  
@LA Southwest  
College

📍 1600 West Imperial Highway  
Los Angeles CA 90047

☎ 323-241-5016

📞 711 for TRS

✉ Maricela Herrera

🌐 Archdiocesan Youth  
Employment (AYE)

## YouthSource - Northeast Valley El Proyecto del Barrio, Inc.

El Proyecto del Barrio, Inc.  
YouthSource Center  
9030 Laurel Canyon Boulevard  
Sun Valley, California 91352

**Center Hours:**  
Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

**Program Information Session:**  
Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 am – 12 pm & 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Tel: (818) 771-0184  
Fax: (818) 504-0357  
TTY: (818) 252-6507

**Program Administrator:**  
Haimanot Fekadu, MBA

BY MIKE CARRERA

MCARRERA@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

## SHCA CLASS OF 2018-2022

# JASON BALTAZAR

SHCA ALUMNUS 2020  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Former SHCA alum Jason Baltazar is a Mechanical Engineering student from UC Merced. This past semester he decided to study abroad in Lund, Sweden. I had the opportunity to interview Jason and he gave me some insight into his European experience.

### What were things that surprised you about the culture in Sweden?

In Sweden, they have Fika time which is a break that you take midday to have coffee or a snack. Initially, I was a little surprised because they stopped classes to allow you to grab a coffee and chat with a friend. Another thing that I noticed was that people are always dressed presentable. You never see anyone going to school in their pj's or sweatpants.

### Did you have any doubts about studying abroad?

Yes and no. I've always wanted to study abroad. One thing that stressed me out was that I thought I was going to get lost at the airport. Prior to visiting Sweden, I had never been on a plane or traveled out of the country. I thought that I wasn't going to find my terminal because LAX is so big. When I arrived at the airport that changed and it was actually pretty easy navigating through LAX.

### What was the hardest part of studying abroad?

The first month was the hardest because I was homesick. It was the first time I had ever been out of the states and I took some time to get acclimated. But the great thing about the study abroad program was that I was paired up with other Mechanical Engineering students who were also from different parts of the world. In addition, they had events that allowed me to get out of my comfort zone which helped me make new friends. I joined a Nation that is similar to a fraternity and that also opened more doors and opportunities.



### What cities did you visit in Europe?

The great thing about Europe is that all the countries are close to each other and once you're there it's pretty economical to get around. Some of the places I visited were Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, and Barcelona. I was also fortunate enough to be in Europe during the world cup because people out there get amped for the games.

### Overall what did you enjoy most about your experience?

I enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. It was nice to see how others' perspectives and views differed depending on where they are from. For example, my friends from Netherlands and Spain said they don't get assignments every day and a lot of their work is group assignments. On the other hand, my friend from Australia said they have a similar workload as people from the United States.



LUND UNIVERSITY

### What advice would you give to other alums who are considering studying abroad?

Just do it. It can definitely be overwhelming and scary but I think it's an opportunity that everyone should take advantage of. When I arrived in Sweden I didn't know anyone but after a few months, I made friends from different countries like the Netherlands, Australia, Spain, and many more. I would also encourage going by yourself because that allows you to do things that you want to do. Lastly, apply for scholarships. I was lucky enough to be awarded a scholarship that helped cover some of my expenses.



## VAHS CLASS OF 2018-2022

### KAYLEN MELENDEZ

VAHS ALUMNA 2022  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT



**What skills/mindsets/attitudes did you learn while a student at Valor that have helped you during your first year in college?**

In Valor, I learned that by stepping up to take AP courses and college courses were beneficial as they build a sense of self responsibility. Here at CSUN, I learned that the work is there and by managing time to do the work, it is possible to finish the work with the best effort put into it.

**What do you wish you had known about college going in that could have helped you be even more successful?**

I really wished I knew that I would have the self ability to find what I liked. While there weren't many opportunities at Valor for me to figure out what I'm interested in, I had to take it on myself to take classes and look outside of the school and during my own free time to figure out what skills are strongest for me and what is a fit for me.

**What have you enjoyed most about your first semester being on a college campus?**

I have enjoyed meeting new people in my classes and making a schedule for myself. As an EOP student, I spent most of my summer in summer classes but I enjoyed it since I met so many new people. Along with

that, I feel that if I didn't go to CSUN, I wouldn't have been able to get my drivers license and have that flexibility.

**How has your world perspective grow or changed as a result of your time in college thus far?**

I have been able to learn more about the history of why the world is the way it is. There is so much history that we don't learn in high school that affects us today in how the world works and people's different perspectives. We don't get to learn about the other side of the story as much in high school but I am happy I got to hear the other side of the story.

**What is your major and what do you plan on doing with your degree in the future? This can be more schooling, OR career and/or family related.**

My major is Business Administration Management and with my degree, I would like to work with making a more comfortable workplace and being able to work with multiple departments in different companies.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share or advice you would give to current students/staff at Valor?**

My advice is to not lose hope when you see financial aid packages. For me, CSUN was not my first choice but because of financial reasons and for the programs that they offered me, there's definitely a reason why I came to CSUN. I didn't come here just because I couldn't afford another school, I came here for the programs that the school has to offer and while I am not living the college life like in the movies, I get to go home everyday and I am lucky enough to have parents that support me in my studies and sacrifice time and money for me to slowly grow in my independence.

## RKHS CLASS OF 2020-2022

# BIANCA HUEXOTL ARELLANO

**RKHS ALUMNA 2022**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA**  
**MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY**



What's not to like about living and learning right by the beach?! Bianca has the best of both worlds as a freshman at UCSB. She loves being surrounded by nature and appreciates her professors who capitalize on the environment by conducting classes and research on the beach, just steps away from some of her classrooms.

UCSB's campus was just far enough from Los Angeles where she could practice being independent and have her own space but not too far where it would require a flight on an airplane.

She also loves the diversity and getting to meet people from all over the world. One of her new friends is from India and she recently had the most exquisite Indian food while learning more about the culture. Being at such a diverse campus allows her to "learn about other people."

For the fall quarter she took 12 units, which is the minimum you should take in order to get full financial aid. "Take your time with classes. I took three classes. It feels like nothing but the homework does pile up on you. Don't take too many at a time. You'll be here for 4 years. You don't want to burn out in the beginning. You should be enjoying every step of the way."

Her fall quarter went really well academically and now that she has adjusted to the volume of work in college and living on her own, she plans on exploring a few clubs on campus to meet more people during this Winter quarter. She chose to live about 30 minutes away by car and is renting a room to save on money. It is a little harder to make friends when you don't live in the dorms but with some effort you'll start to find your people, whoever they are. "Just be open during your classes. Everyone is down to make friends but we are all shy. But if you just 'hi' and introduce yourself, that makes a difference."

Bianca has grown so much in just one quarter and values being able to take care of herself. "I knew I had to make my own meals" and manage several responsibilities. "It's not like in high schools where teachers email you if something is wrong or send you reminders. In college, it was a huge 'wow' to realize that you need to advocate for yourself." So what does this Guacho have to say about her UCSB experience? "I love it here!"

### STATS:

Ranking: #30 Nationally  
 Acceptance Rate: 33%  
 Tuition: \$14,472  
 Student-Teacher Ratio: 17:1  
 Population: 22,186  
 Retention Rate: 93%

### UCSB Facts

- Mascot: Gaucho
- Almost 50% of students bike from class to class
- Santa Barbara has 6 Nobel Prize winners on it's faculty
- UCSB has more registered voters than any other college in America



An aerial shot of UC Santa Barbara's beautiful campus, located right next to the Pacific ocean.

# BRIGHT STAR SCHOOLS ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS TEAM

All Bright Star Schools Alums, high school graduates, will be supported in graduating from college for up to 6 years. Our goal is for our Alumni to earn a Bachelor's, Associate's, Career Technical Education degree, or workforce development certificate from an accredited college or program. If you are a BSS Alumni from the class of 2016-2021, we will be there to help you navigate, thrive, and succeed in graduating from higher education.



## MIKE CARRERA

**BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE  
M.ED. AND PPS, UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE**

Mike Carrera has worked in education for over seven years, five of which have been at Bright Star Schools. Mike is a first-generation college graduate and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of California, Riverside in Latin American Studies and History. He also earned his Pupil Personnel Services credential and Master's in Education degree in 2019 in Education Counseling from the University of La Verne. Throughout the years, Mike has held various roles at BSSCA and has assisted students and families on multiple levels. He is passionate about supporting the student body at BSSCA and is a firm believer that higher education can positively shift a student's life and career choices. As the new ASCS Coordinator, Mike is determined to assist all SHCA Alums in navigating higher education and in contributing to students' success in college and career.

**SHCA ASCS COORDINATOR  
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## DAVID SOLIS

**BA, CSU, NORTHRIDGE**

David Solis is a graduate from California State University, Northridge where he majored in Chicana/o & Central American Studies. He is joining the ASCS team as the Community College & CTE Coordinator. He will focus on supporting students at SHCA and VAHS who are interested in pursuing a post-secondary education at community college or earning a certificate/vocational degree. As a first-generation graduate he uses the power of 'storytelling' to share relatable experiences with his students to promote higher education as an option for growth. He has spent the last ten years supporting first-generation students through college access programs that focus on college & financial aid applications, community college experience, workforce development, and financial literacy. He believes education is one powerful tool, of many, that can shape and/or change our lives.



## KYLE PETRIE

**BA, BOWDOIN COLLEGE**

**VAHS ASCS COORDINATOR  
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2018 - 2022  
KPETRIE@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG**

As the ASCS Coordinator at Valor Academy High School, Kyle's primary responsibilities revolve around ensuring that all Valor alumni receive adequate support with the financial, academic, and social-emotional concerns that they face while pursuing higher education. Kyle is primarily motivated by the belief that higher education is the foundation that will allow our students to be successful and happy in both their careers and personal lives. He has worked in urban public education for over 13 years. He initially entered the field as a high school history teacher in the Bronx, NY, as part of Teach For America. After his time in New York, Kyle spent seven years as an AP teacher, advisor, coach, and Director of Alumni Support at Gary Comer College Prep on Chicago's south side.

We have hired the new ASCS Coordinator for Rise Kohyang High School!!! her name is Kimberly Arteaga and she will start on February 6th. More details to come in a few weeks!!

## GENOVEVA CORTES

**BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
M.ED. HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Geno developed and launched Bright Star's ASCS Program to support the organization's alumni to persist in and graduate from higher education. ASCS tracks, supports, and coaches Bright Star Schools' alumni to get to and through higher education, with a goal of 55% of Bright Star Schools alumni graduating with a bachelor's or associate's degree, vocational certificate, or from a workplace development program within six years of high school graduation. She has over two decades of experience working as an elementary and middle school teacher, K-12 and college administrator, and program coordinator. She was Bright Star Schools' founding math teacher for Stella Middle Charter Academy in 2003, and currently serves as the Director of the Alumni Support and College Success (ASCs) Program for the organization.

**ASCs DIRECTOR  
SUPPORTING SHCA & VAHS CLASS OF 2017  
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