

Tribute to Excellence Awards - Compiled by Sandy Hansen June 2020

This document lists those who have received the Tribute to Excellence award in recent years. It includes a photo if available, and the text that appeared in the Grapevine at the time the honor was given. 2020 awards will be announced in September.

YEAR	NAME	PHOTO	TEXT
2005	Abby Hirashiki.	NONE	<p>Abby Hirashiki is the winner of the AAUW Tribute to Excellence award at Las Positas College for 2004-2005. She is a returning college student who is also a wife and mother. Two of her children now attend Las Positas College. What an excellent role model she is! Her grade point average is 3.84, and she has been accepted at Berkeley to work toward a degree in Psychology. Her ultimate goal is to be a Court Psychologist. She has been very active with the Associated Students and the honor society Alpha Gamma Sigma. In December she organized a toy drive which delivered over 400 toys to Children's Hospital in Oakland, and she hopes to inspire her children to community involvement. You can meet and congratulate her at our June luncheon.</p>
2012	Natasha Hrycaj	NONE	<p>Our Las Positas College winner of the 2012 Tribute to Excellence has overcome many obstacles to accomplish what she has. As an LPC 2012 graduate she had to overcome an abusive childhood, including sexual abuse. Because she had no support from her family, she felt she could never achieve anything in life. At 18 she moved out of her home and became self-supporting. She has attended LPC as a full-time student since 2010., simultaneously working part-time. Perhaps you have seen her. She is the hostess at Uncle Yu's.</p> <p>Natasha maintained a 3.62 grade average, even though she worked 25 hours a week and was very active in student body activities. She served as a student senator and organized LPC-ASC activities. She also found time to volunteer as a counselor in a pregnancy center. Her goal is to transfer to UC Santa Barbara and major in Accounting and Economics. We wish her great success. There is no doubt that Natasha will accomplish her goals in life, (from</p>

2013 Alaina Schofield



06/2012 Grapevine)

The 2013 winner for the Las Positas College Tribute to Excellence Award is ALAINA SCHOFIELD. In her own life she has experienced many tragedies, including the suicides of father, sister and mother. Eventually she moved to California to live with her half-sister and start a new life. She graduated from high school and entered Las Positas College. She is determined to achieve academic excellence and win a scholarship to U.C Berkeley. Her overall GPA is 3.85. In addition to her studies she has been involved with the Gay-Straight Alliance, the Middle Eastern Awareness Club and served as a senator in student government.

Because of her passion to help women in developing countries to become educated she traveled to Nepal to work in an orphanage. When she returned from Nepal, she continued to tutor in women's studies and political science, hoping to further the education of women around the world.

Her dream is to continue her studies at U.C Berkeley and eventually start an organization that helps women in developing countries to gain an education, even in the face of adversity, as she has done. (2013 Summer Grapevine)

2014 Rachel Crosby



Rachel Crosby is our 2014 Las Positas College Tribute to Excellence Award Winner. With an interest in economics and business she is planning to transfer to the U.C. Davis managerial economics program in the fall of 2015. Rachel has worked 20 hours a week as an online business developer for a local engineering firm, and still managed to keep a 3.63 GPA. In addition to working and studying, she has been active with several campus clubs. She also volunteers with the Wilderness Volunteers, and has helped with the habitat clean up for the Least Tern.

We wish her success as she completes her college and university (2014 Summer Grapevine)

2015 Jamie Atchinson



Jamie Atchinson is our award winner for 2015. She has a 3.68 GPA and is expecting to transfer to a four year university and ultimately receive her medical degree. She would like to work with Doctors Without Borders.

This goal indicates what kind of person she is. She has spent many hours volunteering both on the campus of Las Positas and also in the community. She has been involved in many activities for the Alpha Gamma Sigma Honors Society and was elected student trustee of North California. Jamie has spent 92 hours volunteering for Las Positas College, including participating as a volunteer on College Day.

In the Bay Area community she volunteered with Kaiser Permanente and the American Red Cross in the Military Supply Drive to supply items useful to our service people. Jamie was responsible for a drive to collect school supplies for under-privileged children and she was the chair of a drive to collect warm coats for Shepard's Gate. She does all this while keeping up her GPA. (2015 Summer Grapevine)

2016 Fatima Elgarguri NO PHOTO

Our Tribute to Excellence award winner this year is Fatima Elgarguri. She is a Muslim American, who in spite of her cultural differences, and the problems that caused, managed to earn a 4.0 GPA her entire time at Las Positas College.

Fatima's life was abruptly changed when her father was killed in a car accident 7 years ago. Subsequently her mother moved the family to California from Oregon to be near the grandmother. As a result, Fatima became depressed and started failing in classes. That shocked her, and she realized she needed to change her actions.

Even though the family was very poor, they supported one another. The siblings pooled their money to buy gas to get to school and work. They helped one another succeed.

After arriving at Las Positas Fatima realized that there was no student organization for Muslims on campus, so she decided to organize one. It has the goal of providing a platform for dialogue and unity. She wished to break common stereotypes about her faith and gender. The other goal is to help others, so they collected shoes for the Tri-Valley Haven this past year. She also tutored other Afghan-

American students in English, hoping to help them understand that self-improvement and altruism, not rituals and regulations, are the greatest form of religious expression.

When she transfers to a university her intended major is Human Development, with post-graduate work to become a medical doctor. With that goal in mind she volunteers at Sutter Community Hospital as a member of a patient support team.

As you can see, Fatima is an exceptional student and person, and well deserving of this year's AAUW Tribute to Excellence Award. (2016 Summer Grapevine)

2017 Jennifer Sarkany NO PHOTO

Jennifer Sarkany is our 2017 Las Positas College Tribute to Excellence Award Winner. Jennifer has a 3.68 G.P.A. and, according to one faculty member, is an excellent student. She plans to transfer to a four year college soon and work her way to ultimately becoming a doctor. She has been very active in student government and served as an officer of two honor societies. She even served as a student senator on the Chabot-Las Positas College Board. She admits that she has a disability and says that she decided to go to college even though that was not traditional in her family.

In order to further her education one summer, Jennifer raised nearly \$2000 to buy medications and volunteered her time at a clinic in Honduras. While there, she and other students from the University of Pacific and Chabot College helped fill prescriptions, assisted dentists, took patients vital signs and helped in the Gynecology Department. They served more than 700 patients. This convinced her that she wanted to be a doctor. So when she returned to Las Positas she started working toward earning two certificates – one as an EMT and one as a certified nursing assistant, so that she could earn a living while continuing with her education.

We congratulate Jennifer for coming this far and hope she will keep in touch with our branch as she works toward her goal. (2017 Summer Grapevine)

2018 Roujheen Sabayen



Roujheen Sabetan graduated from Amador High School in Pleasanton in 2016 as an AP Scholar with Distinction. She received an Outstanding Student in Cell and Molecular Biology award while attending Las Positas College. She will transfer to UC Berkeley in the fall of 2019. She hopes to obtain a Masters Degree in Public Health, focusing on community- based settings where the population have been underserved.

2019 Alisha Shaik



Alisha Shaik attended Amador High School in Pleasanton. While at Las Positas College she was the first ever Student Trustee for the Pleasanton Unified School District Board of Trustees representing Middle College. She is president of Interfaith for Youth. She will attend U C Berkeley in the fall of 2019 as a psychology major. She hopes to attend medical school one day.

Photo of Alisha with Susan Wacek of LPD scholarship committee from June/July/Aug 2019 Grapevine

2020