

Hathaway Resource Center Helps Makes Big College Dreams Come True

Two Eagle Rock High School seniors have won full rides—one to Stanford and one to Bucknell—thanks to intensive tutoring and other free support services

While the 900-sq.-ft. Learning Lab at Hathaway-Sycamores Highland Park Family Resource Center is small in size, it has a history of delivering big when it comes to making college dreams come true. The Family Resource Center—through its Learning Lab—offers free tutoring and other free afterschool enrichment programs for students ages 7 to 18. In recent years, the Center has established an impressive track record of helping area high-schoolers win acceptance—along with full-tuition scholarships—to top-tier universities nationwide. The most recent examples are Eagle Rock High School seniors Elisha Marquez and Donald Kaplan.

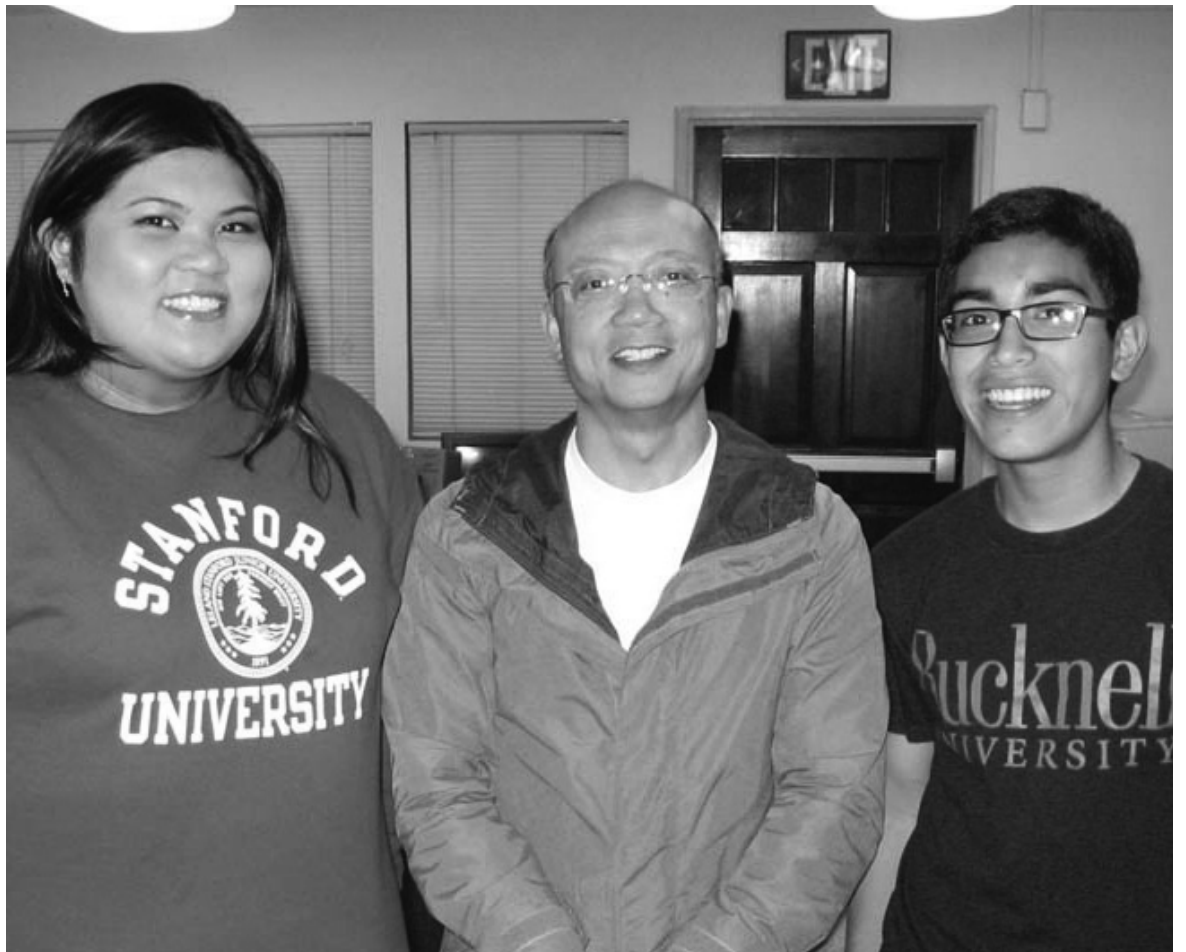
Marquez, understandably, can hardly contain her excitement. "I'm going to be a tree!" she exclaims. "I'm going to Stanford!" Adding, "A billion of my sincerest thanks to Hathaway-Sycamores; I couldn't have done it without you."

For the past two years, Marquez has spent much of her free time at the Family Resource Center (840 N. Avenue 66) being tutored in the Learning Lab by Center Director Simon Gee and tutor Chan Cao. Gee also nominated Marquez for a Gates Millennium Scholarship, which she recently was awarded; in so doing, Marquez became the first Eagle Rock High School student to win this extremely prestigious scholarship which totals \$250,000 and

covers graduate school as well. In addition to the scholarship recommendation, Gee—along with Cao—helped push Marquez's AP calculus grade from a C- to an A. Last summer, Gee also helped Marquez win a coveted paid (\$3,000) internship with the JPL SpaceSHIP program. When it came time to prep for her SATs, Marquez again turned to the Family Resource Center, and Learning Lab staff guided her through the daunting college-application process.

That guidance proved fruitful, as Marquez was accepted by several standout institutions. Stanford, however, won her over through a combination of its world-class reputation and its generous awarding of a full-tuition scholarship. Scholarship support is crucial to Marquez; not only has her family—who live in Eagle Rock—experienced tough financial times recently, but she and her father both suffer from polycystic kidney disease. In fact, her father will soon start dialysis and is currently on the waiting list for a kidney transplant. Marquez, who will major in international business, also wanted to stay within the state, given her own and her father's health issues.

Like Marquez, Donald Kaplan also was awarded a full-tuition scholarship. Specifically, the Hathaway-Sycamores Family Resource Center nominated Kaplan for a Posse Foundation scholarship. Competition for these scholarships is stringent and requires a series of interviews and leadership-skills demonstrations. Throughout the multi-month process, Kaplan was coached by Learning Lab tutor Chan Cao. Kaplan—who lives with his adoptive parents and younger brother in Highland Park—also turned to the Family Resource Center's Learning Lab to improve his C- in pre-calculus to an A and to boost his SAT score by 15 percent. Learning Lab staff additionally assisted Kaplan with navigating



Learning Lab tutor Chan Cao poses with Kaplan and Marquez, who are just the two most recent examples of the Family Resource Center's positive impact on area students with college aspirations

challenging college applications, including help with writing an effective personal-statement essay.

All of those afterschool hours paid off, as Kaplan—who's an Eagle Scout—was awarded a full-tuition Posse Foundation scholarship to attend Pennsylvania's highly respected Bucknell University, where he will study international relations. Kaplan's parents—who adopted him when he was 7—do not have the financial means to fund a four-year education, so this generous scholarship is making a profound difference in the young man's life.

Kaplan and Marquez are just the two most recent examples of the Family Resource Center's positive impact on area students with college aspirations. Last year, with the Resource Center's help, Eagle Rock High School student Emily Cardinas was awarded a Posse Foundation scholarship to attend Tulane University. Also in 2011, another Eagle Rock High student—Connor Dorothy—won acceptance and paid tuition to the extremely prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Starting back in middle school, Dorothy spent many of his afterschool hours receiving free tutoring and other educational services at the Family Resource Center's Learning Lab. As Dorothy progressed through high school, the Resource Center essentially became his second home as he prepped tirelessly—with the assistance of Gee—for his impending SATs, which he aced.

Just last month, Hathaway-Sycamores' Board of Directors received a letter from Dorothy with

an update of his life thus far at MIT. It read, in part: "The time that I've spent here has been the most stable period of my entire life. I was homeless when I submitted my MIT application, and my family was living in my aunt's garage when I got accepted. I had to explain to my mom where Massachusetts was, and she was sad that I had to go so far away. But she didn't need me to explain the full ride part. She understood that I had the opportunity to get out of the generational poverty that surrounded us, something she was never able to do. I just wanted you to know that—because of your support—you've been able to completely change a life."

Hathaway-Sycamores Family Resource Center continues to change the lives of many area students. In this current school year, for example, 76 percent of the high-school students who received Resource Center services will be attending college and 24% are enrolling in vocational programs. Equally impressive, these students earned more than \$408,000 in scholarship funding.

Students interested in utilizing services available through Hathaway-Sycamores Highland Park Family Resource Center should call (323) 257-9600 or e-mail contact@hathaway-sycamores.org

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