

# STUDENT STORIES

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## MEET THE CLASS OF 2019

Our 12 new scholarship recipients boast impressive statistics, with one valedictorian, two salutatorians, six who graduated in the Top 10 in their class, six who are first-generation college students and one varsity athlete. Their college fields of study are just as impressive, with majors ranging from psychology, biomedical engineering and nursing to education/ESL, accounting, and



radiology technician. We even have a future electrical lineman and a veterinarian. These 12 attend seven

different schools in Texas. Check inside for more on these remarkable students.

## JOIN THE FIESTA AT BRAZOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY OCT. 21

It's Party Time as we celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Brazos Education Foundation. Help our fabulous area students by supporting

the "Education 4 Everyone Golf Tournament" on Monday, Oct. 21, at Ridgewood Country Club. Become a sponsor at one of the most fun golf

tournaments in Central Texas. Contact David Horner, Director of Development, at (254) 744-2396 to learn about the many sponsorship opportunities.

### Raffle Tickets Now Available!

We have some awesome scholarship raffle items this year, thanks to the generosity of our Foundation Supporters.

- ◆ \$1,800 Benelli Super Black Eagle 3 - 12 Gauge Shotgun
- ◆ \$1,500 travel voucher
- ◆ \$1,200 Louis Vuitton Gift Card
- ◆ \$500 Visa Gift Card

Tickets are only \$10 or 6 tickets for the awesome price of \$50. Buy some tickets and help area kids pursue their higher education dreams. Visit [www.brazosfoundation.org/golf/2019-education-4-everyone-affle](http://www.brazosfoundation.org/golf/2019-education-4-everyone-affle) or call the Foundation to purchase.

## OUR 2019 SCHOLARS: UP CLOSE & PERSONAL



Waco High graduate **Amar Kaur** is a first-generation scholar who attends Texas A&M and dreams of becoming a doctor. At Waco High, Amar played varsity tennis, and took part in Mock Trial, NHS and Skills USA. Amar's family immigrated from India. "After moving, my family experienced struggles due to their lack of education. Because of this, education has become a major priority in my life and influences my decisions," she said.



**Canyon Hughes** is a Moody High School graduate, who played four sports during high school and was a cheerleader. She attends Howard Payne University. A varsity volleyball player, she plans to be a kindergarten teacher. "I want to make an impact on kids' lives, make them want to actually learn. By winning this scholarship, it gets me closer to my dream job," she said.



**Daniel Roush** attends TSTC, where he is training to become an electrical lineman. While in high school, the Gholson resident was captain of the football, basketball and cross country teams. In football he was named first-team All District. He also held down two jobs during his senior year. "If you work hard for stuff you want, the success will be so much better when you get your reward. I have been working hard my whole life," he said.



First-generation scholar **Gabriella Valdez** graduated from McGregor High School. In high school, she was a member of National Honor Society, yearbook editor, played golf and was a state archery qualifier. A nursing major, she attends Texas State University. "Like many nursing majors, I share the sincere desire to help others. I believe that what the people in this area do is awe-inspiring, and that motivates me to make an impact," she said.



**Gissel Guerrero** from La Vega High School earned her associate's degree before she graduated from high school. She attends the University of Texas at Austin with a major in psychology. During high school, Gissel was a member of student council and National Honor Society and volunteered with Special Olympics, HEB Feast of Sharing, Walk for the Homeless and Food for Families. "Every chance I have to help others is a complete blessing to me," she said.



**Marisol Ramirez** also received her associate's degree while in high school. A first-generation scholar, she graduated from University High School and attends Tarleton. She plans to major in accounting. Marisol held a job during high school but also was very involved with Ballet Folklorico. "I was hesitant to join because I had no dancing experience, but I knew that if I didn't take this opportunity then I would regret it later in life," she said.



**JaMesa Long** graduated from West High School and now attends Texas State and plans to major in education/ESL. While at West, JaMesa participated in track, volleyball, National Honor Society, FFA and Student Council. She also held down a part-time job. "This scholarship will set me on the path of paving a great future for the future kids I will teach. It will help me to change children's lives one classroom at a time and create a bright future for them as well," she said.



First-generation scholar **Martin Nunez** attends Texas A&M, where he is majoring in psychology. A graduate of Harmony School for Innovation, Martin participated in student government, Robotics team, and art club. He said he became a motivated student after a classmate made an unkind remark during his freshman year of high school. "I accomplished goals that I never thought I would. Without that comment, I wouldn't be in the position where I can consider medical school," he said.

# OUR 2019 SCHOLARS: UP CLOSE & PERSONAL



**Miguel Barboza** hopes to be a Radiology Technician and eventually a radiologist. The Connally graduate attends MCC, where he is a Presidential Scholar. A first-generation scholar, Miguel was captain of the varsity soccer team and participated in various charity events. "I discovered that we will always have another day, another story that will make life worthy. There will be a new opportunities that will change everything," he said.



Aggie and future veterinarian **Olivia Pankonien** was valedictorian of her Mart High School class. She served as class vice president all four years of high school, but most of her time was filled with FFA and 4H. She was part of the Texas 4-H Livestock Ambassador Program, the Texas 4-H Council and Texas FFA. "It is because of my 4-H career of raising and showing animals that I know I have chosen the right career path," she said.



Salutatorian **Victoria Williams** graduated from Rapoport Academy's Meyer High School. She also earned her associate's degree from MCC. Victoria was active in student council all four years of high school. She played basketball and ran track. She attends the University of Texas at Arlington, where she is majoring in nursing. "Pursuing the associates degree was such a confidence booster and taught me so many life skills," she said.



**McKenzie Sexton** of Valley Mills was salutatorian of her class and is majoring in nursing at Texas Tech. While in high school, she was captain of varsity cheerleading and treasurer of National Honor Society. Active in her church, she helped victims of Hurricane Harvey during a mission trip. "We helped rebuild Miss Bessie's wheelchair ramp. She reminded me to enjoy the simple things in life and always be kind to others," she said.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES

A number of scholars became Brazos Education Foundation Alumni in the last year. Since our founding 10 years ago, we have helped more than 100 students pursue higher education. Currently, we provide scholarships to 50 students attending 15 colleges and universities in Texas. To learn more about all our scholar alumni, visit [brazosfoundation.org/scholars/meet-our-graduates](http://brazosfoundation.org/scholars/meet-our-graduates).

**Holly Arriaga**,  
Tarleton State University,  
Bachelor's Degree in  
Criminal Justice

**Aman Meerza**,  
University of Texas at Austin,  
Bachelor's Degree in Civil  
Engineering, currently in  
graduate school

**Dylan Matthews**,  
University of Texas at San  
Antonio,  
Bachelor's Degree in  
Construction Science with a  
minor in business

**Melissa Rodriguez**,  
McLennan Community  
College,  
Associate's Degree in  
Nursing

**Vanessa Hernandez**,  
University of Texas at San  
Antonio,  
Bachelor's Degree in Public  
Health with a concentration  
in epidemiology

**Rebecca Rusu**,  
Texas A&M University,  
Bachelor's Degree in Political  
Science

**Adilen Fernandez**,  
McLennan Community  
College,  
Associate's Degree in  
Surgical Technology

**Orionnamir Rebollar**,  
Texas State Technical  
College,  
Associate's Degree in  
Information Technology with  
a minor in Security, pursuing  
a bachelor's degree



*Education 4 Everyone*

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## FOUNDATION TO MOVE TO NEW OFFICE

For several decades, the late Murray Watson Jr. could be found at his law office at 2600 Washington Ave. That address also is home to Brazos Higher Education Service Corporation.

Over the last few years BHESC has taken several meaningful steps to more efficiently utilize office space. This now will include consolidating Brazos Education Foundation staff into available office space at Brazos' headquarters on Washington. This step will not

only provide a meaningful reduction in on-going overhead, but will also facilitate greater synergy between Foundation and Brazos teams that often work closely together on many important projects. Additionally, this better use of resources will help BHESC to continue to underwrite all expenses associated with the Foundation so that every \$1 raised directly supports scholarships.

We hope you will come visit us at our new home.

### HOW YOUR DOLLARS HELP

- **Renewable Scholarships:** Scholars receive \$4,000 in scholarship funds for every year they are enrolled in college and maintain a satisfactory GPA to help pay for tuition, textbooks and supplies.
- **Runners up Scholarships:** The Foundation awards a one-time \$500 scholarship to the runners-up at each high school.
- **Success 4 College Workshops:** The Foundation conducts workshops for Scholars to provide information and "tips" to prepare for the next phase of their college experience.
- **Emergency Funds 4 You:** Scholars can receive financial assistance in case of an emergency that might prevent them from pursuing their education.