

Los Laureados Recipients Reflect on High School Successes

**XIMENA ARAUJO**

"Joining Speech and Debate contributed the most [to my success]. At first I was shy and felt uncomfortable talking in front of people. Through Expos, I've been able to discover more about myself and gain confidence. Plus, I've met people who have motivated me to always do my best and use my competitive nature for good."

**IMELDA CAMAJA**

"I feel as though my faith in Christ has contributed to the majority of my success in high school. Although I grew up in a Christian household, I did not begin my spiritual practice until entering high school. It influenced my decision to continue my theological studies in college. In order to achieve this, I pushed myself to excel academically."

**STEVEN CAO**

"Back when I was a freshman at AHS, I felt very afraid and uncomfortable in this new atmosphere. I was very fortunate to have met an [alumnus] friend who was willing to devote his efforts to help me become more successful by [inspiring] me to join clubs, take [interesting] classes and participate in events."

**OLIVIA CHEUNG**

"I entered high school thinking that I had to be better than my older sister to make my parents proud of me. Despite my accomplishments, I never felt successful until I realized that I didn't have to prove anything to anyone but myself. With this belief, I pursued my own interests and excelled in my own way."

**CECILIA COVARRUBIAS**

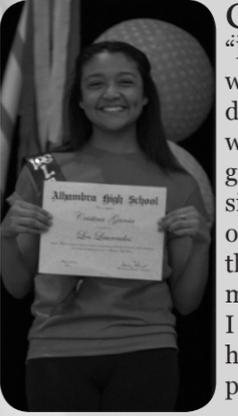
"During my sophomore year, I met a teacher who took a genuine interest in my high school career. He took time out of his already packed schedule to be concerned about my success at Alhambra and he motivated me to push myself to excel past his and my own academic expectations. Every year since then, this has been my motivation."

**VIVIAN DANG**

"Being in band taught me how to handle a lot of responsibilities. Also, a speaker at an art summer program inspired me to work hard for my dreams because he said that if we doubt ourselves, then what is the point of doing it?"

**MIKE DORADO**

"The most defining moment of my high school career was when I was choosing my classes for senior year. Having the choice to decide what classes to take made me realize that I should challenge myself rather than to take easy classes."

**CRISTINA GARCIA**

"I matured in freshmen year when I got in trouble in Ms. Padilla's class, and I think that's when I realized that I needed to get my priorities straight. Ever since then, I started getting honors and awards because feeling that my parents were proud of me made me want to work hard. I knew that at the end, all of my hard work and stress would really pay off."

**MARCELLINO KURNIAWAN**

"My four years in the volleyball team, being in a top position of a service club and having great teachers in all my classes contributed to much of my high school success."

**BONNIE LAM**

"The moment I joined Academic Decathlon, I was introduced to some of my greatest influences in high school. Learning and competing alongside my peers in past years has definitely encouraged my growth as a student, as a friend and as a person. Of course, I've also been lucky enough to be taught by several amazing teachers during my time here."

**DIANA LY**

"Joining the Alhambra Speech and Debate team is what really contributed the most to my high school success. Thanks to this amazing team, I was able to find my own voice and become more confident and take initiatives, which opened up so many opportunities for me in Key, ASB and my everyday life."

**OSCAR MENJIVAR**

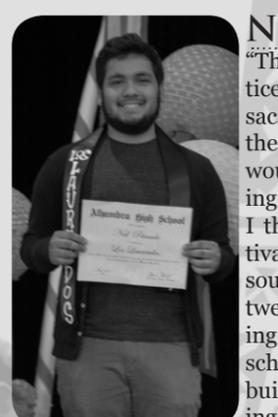
"Joining marching band and being part of that family really is what contributed to my success the most. It made me break out of my shell in freshman year and made me the person I am today."

**DANIEL OLMEDA**

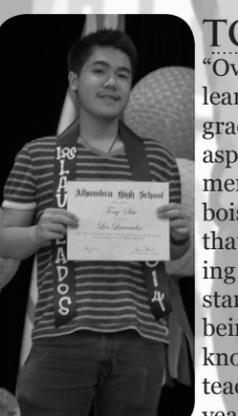
"In my junior year, I had two inspirational conversations with Mr. Yee and Ms. Padilla. I was having trouble balancing my schedule, and they both gave me encouraging words! With their assistance I was able to get through a very busy year; I'm grateful to have had them as my teachers."

**KAREN PAREDES**

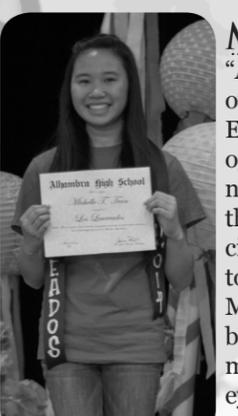
"I entered Alhambra High School as an immigrant, and it was tough since English is a second language for me. I met Mr. Gutierrez in my U.S. History class and he helped me improve my English. He also encouraged me to join more school activities. I am now part of ASB, where I have learned how to communicate and use my English efficiently. Even though I struggled and it was hard at first, I managed to pull through because giving up has never been an option."

**NEIL PEINADO**

"Throughout high school, I noticed that fellow students would sacrifice their teenage years for the sake of perfect grades but they would also miss the point of living, which is to experience things. I think that's what kept me motivated and altogether mentally sound; I found a good balance between school and actually building up those moments outside school that I feel contributed to building my character and making me well rounded."

**TONY SITU**

"Over the course of high school, I learned to abandon the notion that grades were the most important aspect of education. Stellar staff members like Mr. Tong, Mr. Bourbois and Mr. Chen have taught me that success comes from challenging oneself to learn more – to constantly strive for 'Moot' rather than being complacent with what you know. In a nutshell: meeting great teachers and taking hard classes year by year equals success."

**MICHELLE TRAN**

"As a BioMed student that shadowed a lab group's study on the Emotional Effect on Memory Recognition, I was given the opportunity to attend a presentation at the Western Psychological Association. I originally wasn't going to go, but I am very grateful that Ms. Castro encouraged me to go because I got to meet and talk to many professors who opened my eye to the different fields I could explore in my future career."

**CECILIA VONG**

"Throughout my high school career, I was involved in various extracurricular activities, which not only enriched my experiences but also taught me important lessons and skills such as time management and leadership qualities."

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Photos courtesy of TEVIN VOONG