



BRIGHTSTAR
SCHOOLS

ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM

BY GENOVEVA CORTES (310) 948-1733 GCORTES@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

BSSCA CLASS OF 2015-2016

JOSE CASTILLO BSSCA ALUMNUS 2016
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
MAJOR: ENGINEERING SCIENCES

Now that Jose has graduated from the Ivy League Dartmouth College, he is preparing to embark on a career as a middle school math teacher for Teach for America (TFA). In less than a year he moved from Hanover, New Hampshire, to Los Angeles, and now he's on his way to a border town in Texas where he will teach and live for at least two years while earning his teaching credential. He has always thought teaching would be a rewarding profession and is looking forward to working with students who come from similar backgrounds as his. He is also motivated to serve as a role model to Latino youth. While his parents wondered why he isn't going into the engineering field right out of college, they are very supportive of him. After several years of teaching, Jose can still embark on an engineering career if he chooses to. With his college degree, he'll have a lot of opportunities open to him no matter where he decides to go on his journey.



TYPICAL WINTER WEATHER ON THE EAST COAST. THE AVERAGE LOW TEMPERATURE IS AROUND 8°. HOW DID THIS CALI BOY SURVIVE THE WINTERS? A WARM JACKET, GLOVES, AND LOTS OF SWEATERS!



HOMECOMING BONFIRE (FIRST ON THE RIGHT)



ENJOYING A FAREWELL DINNER WITH HIS SOCCER TEAM FOR GRADUATING SENIORS. (FRONT LEFT)



JOSE WITH THE DARTMOUTH MEN'S SOCCER TEAM WHERE HE PLAYED FULL-BACK (BOTTOM ROW, SECOND FROM RIGHT)

"I am going to be doing what I find interesting and trying to make a difference in my students' lives. I'll understand what they are going through and their home situation."

His advice to Bright Star's future college students is to never "underestimate the amount of work you need to put in. I was a straight A student my whole life but in college, I had to work harder than ever." Moving away to college gives you a "new found independence" where no one is managing your time, money, or behavior. "You have to make sure you remember that you're a student first and you're not there to only have fun. A lot of people forget that when they go to college."

BSSCA CLASS OF 2017-2020

BY GRACIELA APARICIO (818) 398-2358 GAPARICIO@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

NISSY JIMENEZ

BSSCA ALUMNAE 2018
SMC - UC RIVERSIDE, EXPECTED GRAD 2022
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY

Nissy Jimenez is getting ready to transfer to the University of California, Riverside and is a Mentor for the ASCS Peer Mentoring Program that targets our community college students. Over the summer, she is mentoring BSS Alums from the class of 2020, and from earlier years. IN the ASCS Peer Mentoring program, Nissy is preparing our Alums to succeed in community college by coaching them on time management, using on-campus resources, and helping them overcome any anxiety about starting college in the fall. She is a great role model to all our students.

Nissy has been resourceful and dedicated to accomplishing her goals. She is a prime example of how it doesn't matter where you start but where you finish. She was a member of the Adelante program at SMC, which she says helped her transfer in 2-years. Mercury News reported that "in California, 60% of community college students who intended to transfer to four-year universities never meet their goal." This makes support programs like Adelante and the Alumni Support & College Success program crucial in providing resources to our community college students.

"I started off (my education) at SMC and I'm honestly very glad that I did. It gave me an opportunity to start over and really give it my all. I was able to be part of a program that helped guide me through college life and provided me with resources that resulted in my success. I'm happy to say that because of my effort, family motivation, and counselors, I was accepted to UC Riverside as a psychology major. I'm working hard to become a Child and Family social worker and also be able to give therapy." We are beyond excited to see the great things Nissy does in her future.



CHRISTOPHER MARTINEZ

BSSCA ALUMNUS 2019
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY, EXPECTED GRAD DATE 2022
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



Chris has adapted to being a college student at SJSU by getting involved in various campus activities, making great friends, and traveling the country to explore his different interests.

"College has been one big roller coaster and I wouldn't have it any other way. I am having a great time at work, learning new material in and outside of classroom, and traveling to new cities which has been a huge blessing. I have my fellowship with children where I teach coding. For my academics I balance my life evenly by taking as much responsibility as I can. In my downtime I read, hoop, and enjoy hiking in whatever city I may be in. I am studying Biological Sciences. My career goals are geared towards pursuing something in the medical field with the intent of saving lives. I may decide to work in a hospital, clinic, or doing some research in medicine."

"My advice to those just starting college would be to organize your study space, emails, and most importantly, use your time efficiently! Be aware of the decisions you make while in university as these are some of the most precious years of your life. Lastly, read as much as you can, so that when you need to deconstruct a problem you can do so with the order in which you think.

VAHS CLASS OF 2017-2020

BY KYLE PETRIE

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NATHAN HERRERA '17

COLLEGE: CSUN
MAJOR: EXPLORATORY



A member of Valor's founding class - Nathan Herrera has always been destined for greatness. A member of the fraternity Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) since his freshman year at CSUN, he's looked for leadership roles at Northridge since the very beginning. Nathan is interested in Kinesiology as a major, and has taken many courses to prepare him for working in an athletic field. This past spring Nathan made the Dean's List for the first time in his career, and is excited about his prospects going forward. Never one to shy away from a challenge, as an Exploratory Major he is excited about what lies ahead. Crediting Valor with his hard work and ability to remain focused on the task at hand, he's glad that his small school experience prepared him so well for the Big School environment he is a part of today.

CLAUDIA CHAVEZ '18

COLLEGE: CSUN
MAJOR: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As a member of Valor Academy's second graduating class, Claudia Chavez was always a bright spot around campus and in the classroom. Due to her experience at Valor, her affinity for children and teaching was allowed to flourish. This coming fall she will be a junior at California State University Northridge pursuing a major in early childhood education. Although she acknowledges the struggle of transitioning between small and large campuses, she thinks the challenge was a welcome one for her. Claudia mentions that physical activity - specifically going on hikes - has provided a respite through tough times while on campus at Northridge. Claudia credits her Valor teachers with equipping her with great reading and writing skills - in both English and Spanish. In her own words: "College is all about writing, developing that skill since high school has definitely made my life much easier."

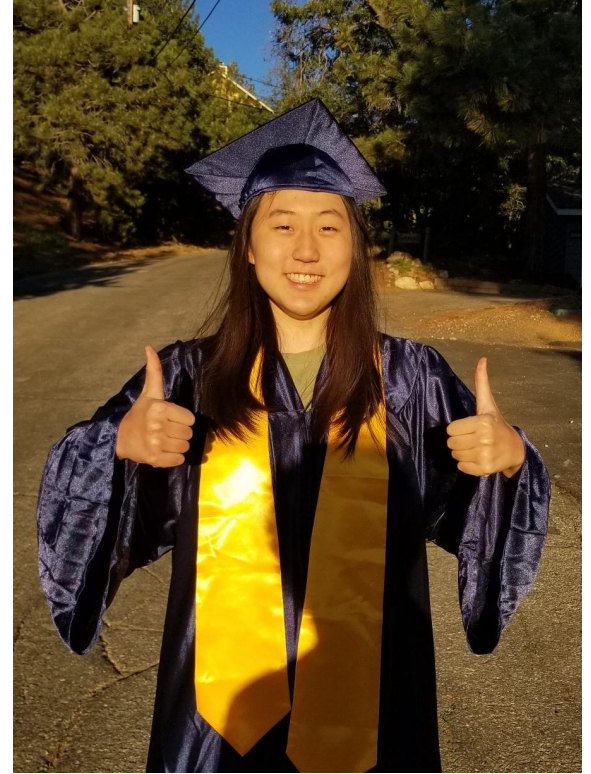


RKHS CLASS OF 2020

BY STEPHANIE CALDERON (310)876-4368 SCALDERON@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

AMY PARK '20**MAJOR: UNDECLARED (SOCIAL SCIENCES), EXPECTED GRAD DATE 2024 UC, IRVINE**

Amy is one of the founding students for RKHS. She is excited to start school at UC, Irvine this fall and meet new people, although this experience will be done remotely. Amy is an outgoing person so not being able to meet in person will not be a problem for her to make new friends and connections at UCI. She is currently an Undeclared major as she wants to learn about various topics before deciding on what to major in. She enjoys learning about the human mind and behaviors so she looks forward to taking classes psychology. She also enjoys writing and may explore classes in journalism. Amy is a little nervous about starting a quarter system school since she has been used to the semester system, but she know she will get the hang of it! She says she can't wait to be able to go out with friends and go out to eat when COVID is over.

**YOUNG-GYUN KIM '20****UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, EXPECTED GRAD DATE 2024 MAJOR: UNDECLARED**

Young-Gyun is really excited to attend USC this fall even though he will be attending remotely because of Covid-19. He originally went into USC as a Physics major, but after thinking about his options, he decided to switch to undeclared in the STEM field to see which field he is most interested in. He is considering majors like Chemistry or Biology. He is excited for the all the new opportunities USC has to offer him and will be getting involved in campus clubs and organizations as soon as it is safe to do so. Young-Gyun was also selected to be a recipient of the Kayne Scholarship, which is a prestigious award for students in STEM majors attending public universities. However, his scholarship was declined because USC is a private college. Nevertheless, USC has been very generous with Young-Gyun and he has all he needs to succeed at this prestigious and uber-competitive university.

BRIGHT STAR SCHOOLS ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS TEAM

All Bright Star Schools Alumni and Alumnae, 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 2014-2020, we will be there to help you navigate, thrive, and succeed in graduating from higher education. If you have paused your education or want to get started in a program tailored to your goals and circumstances, please reach out to us so we can help you before your membership in the program expires.

KYLE PETRIE

BA, BOWDOIN COLLEGE

VAHS ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020
KPETRIE@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG

Kyle Petrie has worked in urban public education for over 12 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.



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.

GRACIELA APARICIO

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA
MS. CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

BSSCA ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020
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Graciela Aparicio has been working with high school students of color since 2013. In her undergraduate career, she organized conferences for undocumented high school students in Ventura County. After graduating from UCSB in 2015, she started her career in education working in numerous high schools in the San Fernando Valley in various roles such as math tutor, college counselor, academic counselor, and academic case manager.



In 2018, she completed her Master's of Science in Counseling and P.P.S Credential at CSUN. Graciela understands the necessity of our students of color to get into higher education and meet their educational and/or career goals. She's excited to work with the Bright Star Secondary Charter School alumni and provide the support they need to navigate post-secondary education.

STEPHANIE CALDERON

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
M.ED. CSU, LONG BEACH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

RKHS ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2020
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Stephanie Calderon has over 6 years of experience supporting students and their families in college access and success programs. She currently serves as the Alumni Support and College Success Coordinator for Rise Kohyang High School. Her goal is to support all RKHS Alumni with their post-secondary plans to ensure they accomplish their goals and aspirations for the future.



Stephanie is a first-generation college graduate. She obtained her bachelors in 2014 from UCLA in Women Studies. Upon graduating college she decided she wanted to help facilitate the process for applying and earning a degree for youth in her community of Los Angeles.

GENOVEVA CORTES

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

ASCS DIRECTOR
SUPPORTING BSSCA CLASS OF 2015 - 2016
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Genoveva Garibay Cortes 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.



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 60% 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.