

RILEY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS

Let me introduce you to the best of the best, four young women who have what it takes to succeed--because they've already proved it. Riley Family Scholarships is not your typical scholarship, and for the past 22 years we have not been looking for your typical high school student. We seek out very special young people who have overcome tremendous obstacles to achieve personal success through sheer grit, perseverance, integrity, self-sacrifice, and a can-do attitude. This year we are presenting awards to four Las Lomas students who exhibit these attributes and much more.

EUGENIA DRUZHININA is a "girl who codes," who plans to use her computer science degree, along with artificial intelligence and the principles of psychology, to create breakthrough technologies to better society. She is generous with her time and her heart, whether tutoring, coaching, or helping her family. She works hard and volunteers hard. You might have also seen her on the courts as a varsity tennis player--one elected team captain. This intelligent, sincere and responsible young woman is well prepared to work her way into a stellar future. Genia will attend DVC for her first year and then transfer to the University of Southern California.

GIANNA LAZZARINI is committed to giving back and making this world a better place, and in her case those aren't just platitudes. She transformed her life by putting in the effort to make it better, and now she's working to make others' lives better. In fact, Gianna has put in so many volunteer hours in so many different arenas that she received the Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award and achieved her Girl Scout Gold Award. She believes her hardships made her stronger and continue to guide her in the right direction. This hard-working, conscientious and caring young woman will major in biochemistry at Chico State and aspires to be a pediatrician so she can continue to serve people.

ISABELLA MONTECILLO has faced personal struggles throughout most of her young life. However, rather than letting them pull her down into victimhood, she developed strengths she never knew she had: independence, self-reliance, coping skills, creativity, motivation. She sacrificed the fun of the moment for the goals of tomorrow, and it's paid off. In her application Isabella said, "I believe hard work pays off and that one day I'll be recognized." Well, Isabella, that day is now. We recognize you for all your accomplishments and the extraordinary future you are creating for yourself. This amazing, smart, kind, positive young woman will be attending Oregon State and majoring in human development and family sciences.

AYANA TURSUNALIEVA left sadness and hardship in Kyrgyzstan to then face more difficulties in America. Yet, like our other recipients, she turned adversity into personal success. She became her family's rock and a strong advocate for her own education. She refused to quit, just working harder when times got tough. Her belief that by focusing on the positive anything is possible has served her well. Her goal is "to be an amazing computer programmer and solve difficult problems that will change the way humans live for the better." Given the determination and hard work that has brought her to this moment, Ayana will achieve her dreams. She'll be attending San Francisco State and majoring in computer science.