



**Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association (FODARA) Scholarship
June 2024 Recipients – 4 @ \$1,250 (2 at each campus)**

Amanda – Foothill

Major: Economics

My Story:

My name is Amanda and I am majoring in Economics with a plan to transfer to a four-year university. My goal is to transfer to CSU East Bay and major in Accounting and Analytics. I have taken all three Accounting classes and received two A's and one A-. I have always had a passion for math, and I am currently taking Calculus 1B. My priority in my daily life is to study as much as I can and complete all my work to get exceptional grades. When I graduate from college, I plan on becoming a financial analyst. I am preparing for that now in college by networking with professionals on LinkedIn keeping up to date with the finance industry and showing my resume to ask for an internship. I practice bookkeeping regularly and have mastered Excel spreadsheets to record transactions and financial data for my parent's small business. What inspired me to pursue Accounting and Financial Advising is that I have a passion for helping people with economic choices that will affect them for the rest of their lives. I enjoy being communicative and informative with people and assisting them with business decisions that will help them succeed.

An obstacle I have had to overcome recently is being evicted from the house I have grown up in since I was born. My parent's landlord decided to sell the house we lived in. Therefore, my parents and I had to move out of the Bay Area due to the price of rent being out of our budget. I currently live in Clearlake, CA, and finding a job here has been far from easy. I have applied to at least one hundred minimum-wage jobs in my area, but no one wants to hire me. Due to my parents having fewer customers in their business due to moving to a rural area, I pay for 75% of the rent and the internet bill with savings I have accumulated from FAFSA disbursements, despite living with them and my brother. I have no other source of income. With a scholarship, I will be able to get through college easier and be able to pay bills with less worry. The scholarship will also provide me with the chance to enhance my skills in Financial Advising and Accounting. Despite the hardships I have gone through, I am determined to complete my education and develop my skills. I have worked since graduating high school to further my intellectual abilities and be as informed as possible. I am more determined to succeed now that I have more responsibilities and misfortunes happen to me. No matter what, I will never give up on getting a higher education and furthering my abilities to flourish.

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Thank you for offering me the Fall 2023 Foothill FHDA Retirees Association Scholarship. I deeply appreciate your kindness and generosity in providing me with the opportunity to further my education. This scholarship will greatly assist me in pursuing my academic and career goals. I am sincerely grateful

for this support. This is my third and final year at Foothill and I have had a rewarding experience at this school during both online and in-person classes. I plan on transferring to San Jose State this Fall to major in Economics. This award will greatly assist me in my educational goals of graduating with a bachelor's degree in Economics. A few months ago, I started working as a para-educator at a high school that contains predominantly disadvantaged students. I work mainly with children who have IEPs and 504 plans in the classroom with classwork and homework and help them succeed in their academic goals. Since working in the education field, my love for teaching and motivating students who have issues doing schoolwork alone has increased, and I figured out that is what I want my career to be after I graduate college. This scholarship will help me pay for classes at San Jose State and get me closer to graduating and succeeding in my teaching aspirations. Thank you again for this award.

Theresa – Foothill

Major: Photography

My Story:

I'd like to start by introducing myself. My name is Theresa, but everybody calls me Teri. I am 56 years old and have returned to school after taking a 35-year hiatus. I am currently in my 3rd quarter at Foothill and am proud of myself for maintaining a 3.85 g.p.a. After Foothill, I plan to go on to Chico State to earn a degree in Photojournalism.

During my 35-year hiatus, I raised my two amazing children and had a big part in raising my amazing stepson. I have also been blessed with eight amazing grandchildren.

I used to think about going back to school, but I had to work to support my family, and eventually, I quit thinking about school. I've had a variety of jobs ranging from driving taxis to managing apartments. In my 40's, I took an ROP course in Hospital Occupations, and upon completing the course, I was hired by a local hospital as a Unit Secretary. I really enjoyed working at the hospital, but shortly after I was hired, I started getting really sick with one illness after another until, eventually, I ended up going on disability leave. After many visits to different doctors and many different tests, I was diagnosed with Lupus and Rheumatoid Arthritis. With both diseases affecting the endocrine system, working at a hospital around sick people was no longer an option for me. After many years of medication, my Lupus has gone into remission. I still suffer from occasional flare-ups, but for the most part it remains inactive. Lupus is a chronic disease that could eventually kill me, but so could walking in front of a speeding bus. I strongly believe in the power of positive energies and living day by day, and so far, it's worked great for me. If, by chance, Lupus rears its ugly head and does get the best of me one day, I will find peace in knowing I didn't waste the time I did have by wallowing in self-pity. I suffered from depression for years after being diagnosed with lupus, but I have come to terms with it through therapy. I have also been diagnosed with "Sensory Input Disorder" which is considered to be on the autistic spectrum, but the way I look at it, I just have a different way of interpreting/perceiving the world around me and I don't consider it to be a disorder. I think that's one of the reasons I capture images that show a different perspective of the world. Sometimes I do get sensory overloads and when those occur, I have learned to seek out a calm quiet place in which I can disconnect and gather my thoughts instead of "spazzing out" which just makes it worse.

My daughter went back to college after a 7-year hiatus and convinced me to take just one class online in something I liked, so I took a photography class at Foothill and absolutely loved it. My photography professor, Kate Jordahl, suggested I should explore photojournalism because I had both the eye for

getting interesting photographs and the writing skills needed to be a photojournalist. I finally found my “Niche.” I believe with the knowledge and skills acquired through a college education, I can and will, make a difference by bringing awareness and change in a variety of issues through the articles and photographs I produce.

I am currently on disability and have an extremely limited income which makes it hard to get a good camera and the equipment needed to produce quality photographs. I am currently using a used 10-year-old camera and an old printer for my school assignments, (and I still managed to earn an A.) I do not have other accessories like lenses and lights needed to further improve my photography projects. I do all my work on my laptop/phone as I don’t have a home computer.

Getting a scholarship would help me stay in school, save to get a better camera and equipment, and buy a printer that produces quality prints so I can create a portfolio of my work and submit it for freelance work.

This next chapter in my life is doing something I’ve never done before; I’m doing this for me and daring to dream. I can and will do this.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and considering me for a scholarship.



Christal – De Anza

Major: Business Admin for Transfer

My Story:

It is said that parents spend an average six hours a week driving their children to school. Within my 10-15 minutes of being driven to school everyday, is a comfortable, tired silence shared between my parents and I. What is significant about this is that we both shared a mutual agreement that education is something that is worth investing my time in in order to have a better life as well as the experiences and people that come with it. Ever since realizing this, my goal was to be the first

person in my family to fully graduate with a bachelor’s degree.

I would say the beginning of my junior year in high school to my first year in college was considerably one of the most difficult years for me academically. I had a lot of burnout and was constantly trying to adapt to college life at the time. I fell behind on some of my classes but utilized a lot of the school’s facilities and programs in order to get myself back up on my feet academically.

It did not take long for me to realize that I had an interest and wanted to major in business. It developed at a very young age by selling handmade bracelets to my classmates in elementary school to thrift and repurpose clothes for a profit online in high school. Eventually, this passion allowed me to help my mom open her own nail shop this year using my skills and experience in the business scene. I am incredibly set on being involved in product and event marketing in regards to my career goals. I plan on taking up internships, building connections in school, and doing projects that will boost my reputation and portfolio well by the time I graduate and enter the workforce.

As I am approaching my last year in community college, the topic of money and affording the remaining two years of college in the family becomes hard to bring up. My dad is realistically the only main source of income in the household of seven people. There are times where this could get scary depending on one income. My dad's job throughout the years since 2020 has been unstable. There was even a point last summer where my family had to house four additional family members who immigrated to America. This had a significant impact on my family's financial stability that couldn't be reported in financial aid. Despite all of this, we never qualified for government aid and support because we were considered the lower-middle class.

It seems like a far out goal but I plan on being able to pay for college without taking any loans and debt free. I am currently working this year to save up for college and doing my best to appeal to my family's financial situations. Considering I am the oldest sister and cousin on both sides of my family, I want to set an example that despite all the financial and academic challenges, I will still be able to strive and achieve the education that I desire.

Thank you:

Dear Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association,

I would first off like to thank you from the bottom my heart for seeing value in me as a student and choosing to invest in my educational path. I will make sure this Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association Scholarship that was offered to me will be used to the best of my ability enhance and aid my education.

I am currently Business Administration major and the oldest sibling in my family who grew up in the lower middle class income bracket. I have always been anxious of how I can fund education as I am going to be the first in my family to ever attend a 4-year college but I have always hustled with jobs as well as side gigs to save up. I do a lot of volunteer work outdoors and teaching kids every weekend at my local church. My goals in my career during and after college is to be well involved in the entertainment and product industry. I want to aim towards making marketing within in businesses in the future to be more transparent, authentic, and fun towards consumers.

What I have planned for the future with my degree is to empower and bring more financial stability and power to minority families through business. I have realized over time that for a lot of minority families, there is this great community and strength around business regardless of informal or formal. I would like to further those businesses with my degree.

Once again, my gratitude goes out to everyone who contributed to this scholarship in the Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association as this will support me greatly in my future endeavors.

Daryel – De Anza

Major: Political Science for Transfer

My Story:

My name is Daryel, I grew up with divorced parents who were both immigrants from South America. In my youth, I was primarily raised by my mother, who was a single mother taking care of two children until she remarried. When I was little my grandmother suffered a major stroke so I never truly got to know who she was as she was hospitalized. My grandfather lost his business and our home while trying to keep up with the hospital bills. We struggled to live in my hometown of Patterson, and we lost our

second home during the financial crisis. For a while, we had to stay with family and friends until we were able to bounce back on our feet. Through all of this, my family and I have come out of it stronger.

Although I have faced my share of issues and problems in life, I have been able to deal with and overcome them, for the most part. As the son of immigrants, I was taught to keep rolling with the punches or *pontes las pilas* and always push forward to succeed. I am proud of my accomplishments, my background, and my heritage. As a child and throughout school, up until I completed high school, I dealt with a lot of bullying due to my weight and appearance. It grew to a point where, in the 8th grade, I was attacked by another student who saw me as an easy target. They tried to take my phone, and when I refused, they retaliated. I ended up being tackled to the ground and stomped on while my classmates watched everything happen, and no one helped until security arrived. This incident had a profound impact on my mental well-being and destroyed what little self-esteem I had left. In order to cope with the continued bullying and humiliation, I became very closed off, having very few friends and losing the little confidence I had up until that point. This mental toll extended into my academics impeding my ability to participate in class and inhibiting my overall performance. My physical and mental health continued to deteriorate as the years went by, until last year when I decided it was time to fully move on from my past. Here at De Anza, I found a fresh start. Although I still struggled to communicate with others, I was on the path toward improvement. Through my classes and volunteer work, I am confident that I have found new people whom I trust to call my friends. People who are there to help me whenever I'm feeling down or need someone to talk to.

My journey, marked by challenges and hardships, has molded me into a resilient individual. Despite the scars of my past, I have found strength within myself to move forward. The supportive community I discovered at De Anza, coupled with my academic pursuits, has paved the way for a fresh start. As I embark on my path toward degrees in Psychology and Political Science, I am driven by a passion to advocate for my Latino community. My goal is to contribute to mental health awareness and social support, ensuring that no one in my community feels alone or unheard. Through my experiences, I have gained the knowledge and skill to not only overcome obstacles but to thrive and make a positive impact on the lives of others