



2019 Scholarship Recipients (18 Awarded)



Diego Aragon-Roblero
Cesar Chavez Academy

“For everyone I love and who have influenced me, I am doing this for them and for myself,” wrote **Diego Aragon-Roblero** in an application essay.

As a graduating senior of **Cesar Chavez High School**, Diego plans to attend Eastern University after he graduates, where he would like to study Mechanical Engineering.

In addition to his studies at Cesar Chavez High School, Diego spends his time teaching youth classes at his church. Diego also holds a part time job and is a member of a wrestling team.

Diego’s teacher describes him as one of his brightest students and wrote that Diego is “one not to let get away,” in his recommendation.



Ivar Arias-Hernandez
Detroit Cristo-Rey
High School

Attending **Detroit Cristo Rey High School**, **Ivar Arias-Hernandez** cites being diagnosed at age 10 with Type 1 Diabetes as his biggest challenge. It took him years to overcome the trauma and get his disease under control but in the end, it helped him gain a perspective that he did not have before and inspired him to help others with the affliction. As a result, his goal is to attend Grand Valley State and study medicine, leading to a career in Pediatric Endocrinology.

Ivar works 20 hours per week during the school year and still maintains a 3.77 GPA. His recommender describes him as self-motivated, looking for challenges and always ready to help classmates. His experiences, he says have helped him “realize the need for people to help each other”. His father is his role model working long hours and taking Ivar to work with him at an early age. Making his father proud drives him to strive for good grades and higher education.



Isabela Caban
Western International
High School

With a GPA of 4.05, **Isabela Caban** is a graduating senior at **Western International High School**.

Enrolled in multiple AP and Honors courses, Isabela also tutors her peers and babysits in her spare time.

“I contribute to the community in the best way I can and know how to,” Isabela wrote in an application essay. “I help others using the talents and gifts I’ve been blessed with hopes of making my community stronger.”

“Numerous times she took a leadership role when no one else stood up and in doing so she pushed other to do better and encourages them constantly,” wrote one of Isabela’s professors in his applicant recommendation.

After graduation, Isabela plans on continuing her studies at the University of Detroit Mercy where she will study to become a nurse.



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Liset Diaz
Western International
High School

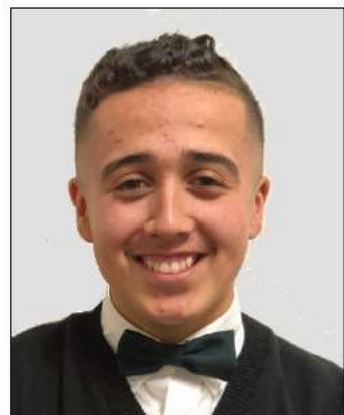
“**[Liset Diaz]** truly stood out as a remarkable young woman,” Liset’s Instructor wrote in his recommendation. “She is a kind, wise, old soul who seeks knowledge for its own reward.”

Liset has earned a 3.55 GPA at **Western International High School** while being enrolled in multiple advanced courses.

“My mother stressed the importance of reading, punctuality and politeness. My dad works very hard to allow my family of six to live a decent life, a life where he has taught me to value myself and understand that life moves forward for those that really seek to become better in life.” Liset wrote in an application essay.

Liset plans to attend Wayne State University where she will study criminal law and psychology in hopes of becoming an attorney.

“I aspire to continue my studies and better my life for myself and my future family, who I plan on educating the same way my parents have raised me,” wrote Liset



Huriel Gonzalez-Hernandez
Detroit Cristo-Rey
High School

Huriel Gonzalez-Hernandez aspires to major in finance at Michigan State next fall then obtain a master’s in business. He wants to pursue a career as a finance manager upon graduation.

He found his passion for business working in his aunt’s grocery store and the Mexican Village Restaurant from the age of 14. His community service resume includes volunteering at his church, helping his elderly neighbor, National Honor Society membership, VP of Dollars for Scholars, (a group dedicating to providing financial support for students to take practice SAT tests) and translating for Parent Teacher Conferences.

Huriel experienced his biggest challenge when he was diagnosed with Congenital Heart Disease and had to have three surgeries to repair the problem. The experience taught him that perseverance, dedication and strength will overcome all obstacles.

His college ambassador describes him as “very special” working very hard to balance work, extracurricular activities and school. Huriel maintains 3.9 GPA at **Detroit Cristo Rey** and credits his parents for inspiring his success.



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Emmanuel Hernandez
Cass Technical
High School

Ranked number one in his class at **Cass Tech**, **Emmanuel Hernandez** carries an amazing 4.28 GPA. His mathematics teacher describes him as a leader in both intellectual skill and the ability to impart his knowledge to his less gifted peers.

Emmanuel says he is very pleased to share his advice and knowledge tutoring freshmen at Cass Tech “like my sister does for me”.

In recommending Emmanuel as a “seek out” candidate for the Ric Gonzalez Memorial Foundation Scholarship his Spanish teacher describes him as “humble and confident a rare combination”.

Emmanuel cites his family as the biggest influence in his success saying his father’s inspiration, his mother’s support and his sister’s example have all driven him to be the “best version of me”.

As a member of the National Honors Society, youth organizer at Urban Neighborhood Initiatives and volunteer at his church, Emmanuel has an extensive community service resume.

His goal is to attend the University of Michigan to study Astronomy and Aerospace engineering then eventually work for NASA.



Erika Hernandez
Western International
High School

Erika Hernandez’s life changed when she was 11 years old. Her father experienced a stroke that would leave him physically impaired.

Although distraught, Erika didn’t allow this hardship to hold her back. During her summer vacations, she found work in an effort to pay for her father’s physical therapy. During the school year, when she couldn’t work, she continued her father’s physical therapy at home.

“I sometimes feel heartbroken, but I think of my future and what awaits me. I know one day I will be very successful, and I won’t be seeing my parents struggle. I can’t keep living in the past. I have to think about my future and that is what keeps me going,” wrote Erika in an application essay.

As a graduation senior at **Western International High School**, Erika has earned a 3.29 GPA. After graduation, Erika plans to attend the University of Detroit Mercy where she will major in Civil Engineering.



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Yasmin Hernandez
Western International
High School

“Today is a new day, conquer the impossible”.

These words from her father helped motivate **Yasmin Hernandez** to excel in her studies at **Western International High School**.

Her cumulative GPA is 4.13 with a course load heavy in honors classes. Her math teacher describes her as “one of the strongest and hardest working students in the school” recommending her as a “seek out” candidate for the RGMF scholarship.

Helping friends with schoolwork early on ignited a desire to give back that today manifests itself in her community service. She has volunteered to mentor at summer programs for elementary school children, worked in a senior center and helped with a project to call attention to illegal dumping in the city of Detroit.

“I have learned that anything can make a difference” she says, “no matter the size”.

Yasmin wants to attend the University of Michigan to pursue a career in medicine. She will be the first in her family to attend college and “conquer the impossible”.



Juan Martinez
Western International
High School

Juan Martinez carries a 3.9 GPA at **Western International High School** and aspires to attend the University of Michigan to study Biology. Eventually he would like to pursue a career in Zoology.

He credits his parents and grandparents for motivating him to succeed “academically, athletically and in life”.

Juan is an avid baseball player, a sport he learned from his father and uncle, who mentors young players in Detroit while pursuing the sport year-round.

The regional director of SER Metro describes him as a “role model for his siblings and young people in Detroit” giving him the highest possible recommendation. Juan understands the fact that his education can have an impact on his community by setting a positive example for others to follow.

“Education has and always will be the key to impacting Detroit” he says, “and volunteering has helped me better understand new ways to make positive change”. These are sentiments that Ric Gonzalez certainly would have appreciated.



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Gisell Mora
Notre Dame
Preparatory High School

Gisell Mora would like to attend Western Michigan University next fall to major in psychology. Excelling in middle school earned her a scholarship to attend **Notre Dame Prep** where she carries a 3.68 GPA.

Her English teacher points to the balance Gisell has struck between schoolwork and extra curricula activities as evidence of her motivation and long-term goal setting.

Gisell is the co-leader of the Notre Dame Polyglot Club, works with the elderly at American House and volunteers at the local homeless shelter. At the Grace Centers of Hope she organized an event for the women and children, getting donations from a thrift store and setting up a “shop” where they could come in and pick out new clothes. Through this work she “learned to be grateful for my life and appreciate everything that I have”.

She credits her parents for instilling in her a love for Hispanic culture and being her biggest motivators.

“My goal for a very long time has been to make my parents proud and repay them for all their sacrifices” she says.



Esmeralda Orozco
Detroit Cristo-Rey
High School

Growing up in a family of 10 **Esmeralda Orozco** cites her heritage and family upbringing for influencing her academic and personal goals. Her father is her role model, working hard to provide for his family, caring for his ill wife and giving her the life motto “if you are going to do something, do it right”.

As a student at **Detroit Cristo Rey** Esmeralda carries a 3.9 GPA and received the highest possible recommendation from her English teacher who states “Clearly, Esmeralda is not afraid of a challenge and constantly goes above and beyond expectations in all that she does”.

Esmeralda has an extensive community service record. She is the president of the National Honors Society, a student council representative, the founder of Girls Empowering Girls and a leader of the Holy Redeemer Youth Group. In the youth group she has met people that “build me up, challenge me, but also genuinely care for me. I found purpose here.” she says.

She would like to attend Lawrence Tech next fall and pursue a career in Architecture.



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Christina Patten
Detroit Cristo-Rey
High School

As part of the graduating senior class at **Detroit Cristo Rey High School**, **Christina Patten** has earned a 3.8 GPA.

One of Christina's teachers wrote that Christina was among her top three math students in her applicant recommendation.

"She was consistently organized, displayed excellent problem analysis and was persistent in reaching solutions," she wrote. "She approached difficult tasks with energy and self-confidence."

In addition to her studies, Christina is a peer tutor at her high school, volunteers at the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services and was a summer intern and volunteer at Southwest Detroit Environmental Visions. Christina also manages to work part time.

"I have never seen a more passionate and motivated student," wrote **Jennifer Penaloza**'s college advisor in her recommendation. "She really goes after what she wants, and it is inspiring. I know she will reach the goals she has set for herself."

A graduating senior at **Detroit Cristo Rey High School**, Jennifer has earned a 3.68 GPA.



Jennifer Penaloza
Detroit Cristo-Rey
High School

In addition to her studies, Jennifer is a member of the Congress of Communities Youth Council, an Ambassador for Dreams2Reality at the University of Michigan, and volunteered her time for the CNN Democratic Presidential Debates this year.

Jennifer also volunteers her time at Gleaners and mentors her peers at Detroit Cristo Rey.

After graduation, Jennifer plans to attend the University of Michigan where she will study Business and Political Science in order to become a Youth Advocacy Lawyer.

"In my 23 years of teaching, I have met and worked with some truly exceptional students," wrote **Stefania Ramirez**'s teacher in her recommendation, "but Stephania is one of a kind. She works hard, strives to be better in all she is involved with, and, beyond those qualities, she is the kindest human I have ever met."

A student at Western International High School, Stefania holds a 3.73 GPA. In addition to her studies, Stefania works part time, volunteers at the CHASS Center, BuildOn and the Detroit Medical Center, and is a member on the Latinx Youth Council.



Stefania Ramirez
Western International
High School

"These extracurriculars have grown to be a passion of mine and a big role in my life," Stefania wrote in an application essay. "Today's youth is the future, and collectively we make a big impact on our communities."

After graduation, Stefania plans to attend the University of Michigan where she will study medicine.



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Cecelia Salazar-Flores
Western International
High School

Cecilia Salazar-Flores was motivated to study nursing while spending long hours in hospitals with her Grandmother. “It shocked me to realize that there are so few Hispanics in the field of Nursing” she says.

She wants to attend Henry Ford Community College to pursue her degree.

A student at **Western International High School**, Cecilia pursues courses in ROTC as well as the normal course load. Her instructor rates her a “seek out” candidate for this scholarship.

Cecilia has been involved in community service initiatives since 2012 working with Barrios Unidos en Cristo a group that helps people with addictions and family problems. She has performed in plays that portray the problems of real-life showing attendees they are not alone in facing difficult issues.

Her biggest challenge has been the deportation of her father, the only breadwinner at the time. Her extended family helped by providing food, financial support and a place to live. Her mother inspired her by working two jobs to support the family and earning her GED showing her that “anything is possible if you really want it”.



Ana Sandoval
Western International
High School

Ana Sandoval, a graduating senior at **Western International High School**, plans on continuing her studies at the University of Michigan.

“I want to achieve all that my family has not been able to and become a better person who makes my family proud in the process,” Ana wrote in an application essay.

In addition to earning a 3.6 GPA, Ana works part time, volunteers as a member of the Holy Redeemer Youth Group and BuildOn, and is the captain of her high school swim team. Ana also attends a program at the Mike Illitch School of Business at Wayne State University.

“I look forward to what the future has in store for me,” Ana wrote. “The daily habits and self-awareness I have attained... continue to empower me to more confidently stride towards my goals.”



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Juliana Stavola
Gabriel Richard Catholic
High School

Juliana Stavola plans to study business at Western Michigan University, an area at which she has already proven to excel.

Juliana helped start a new school store as a student at **Gabriel Richard Catholic High School**, and she set a personal goal of opening a dance studio as well.

In addition to her entrepreneurial ventures, Juliana holds a 3.87 GPA, is the captain at her dance studio and a member of the National Honors Society, and volunteers her time at the Oakwood Commons Nursing Home.

“I always look back on these experiences when it comes to starting a new one,” Juliana wrote in an application essay, “I know at each service I will learn something new that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”



Dailany Velasquez-Perez
Cesar Chavez Academy

Dailany Velasquez-Perez attends **Cesar Chavez Academy** and maintains a 3.2 GPA. She would like to attend Henry Ford Community College and major in education with a goal of becoming an elementary school teacher. Her teacher/recommender describes her as a role model, responsible, respectful and friendly.

Dailany contributes to her community through helping elementary students with their homework and serving students breakfast in the morning. Through this she has learned that “service does not flow in only one direction”.

“My efforts may feed their body for the moment, but their words feed me forever” she says and as a result volunteering has become a top priority in her life.

Being of Guatemalan decent Dailany is proud of the culture and traditions that define her heritage. Her parents are role models for her and her siblings working long hours to provide for their family after coming to the United States.

Together her heritage and role models have shaped the her into an “independent, overachieving and resilient student trying my best to achieve my goals of attending college”.

Congratulations to all our Scholarship Recipients!