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**For Immediate Release**

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## **El Camino College Receives \$40,000 Grant from Pritzker Foster Care Initiative** *Second round of funding to support student success programs*

The El Camino College Foundation recently received a \$40,000 grant from the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative to continue programs that support foster care youth as they pursue higher education.

The Pritzker Foster Care Initiative grant will help fund El Camino College's Guardian Scholars program to assist with retention and academic persistence among students from foster care.

The ECC Guardian Scholars program currently supports 68 students. Foster care youth receive funds for tuition, books, supplies and campus resources such as the "LINK UP" program. This program provides foster youth students with informational sessions each month, covering topics such as job search strategies, money management, college transfer, and skills to achieve classroom success. LINK UP provides a community environment where students can come together, receive support from professionals, access additional information, and share a meal with others in the program.

"We work with our students to provide individualized support that connects them to the services they need," said Foster Care & Kinship Education Program Coordinator Alexis Estwick. "Our service delivery is personalized, with a friendly approach that also provides structure."

Research indicates that there are over 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system with over 100,000 waiting to be adopted. Every year, 23,000 of these youth will age out of the system, never having found a permanent home. Young people who age out of foster care face a tough road: they are more likely to experience significant challenges with completing their education, obtaining a job, homelessness, and maintaining financial security.

The Pritzker Foster Care Initiative, part of the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, made a previous \$40,000 grant in December 2015 to initiate the Guardian Scholars program at El Camino College to provide support services for foster care youth. In addition to their foundation, Jeanne Pritzker also launched the non-profit Foster Care Counts in 2012 to provide support to programs that help foster youth as they leave the system and work toward becoming successful young adults.

The ECC Guardian Scholars program is headquartered in the RISE Center in the Student Services Center. For more information, contact [fostercare55@elcamino.edu](mailto:fostercare55@elcamino.edu).

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