



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Camino College Foundation to Award New Scholarships

Thao Ngo has a unique gift – he is able to see the good in everyone. He plans to use this special vision when he becomes a high school teacher one day, a profession he chose because he wants to help students not only academically, but also in making positive life choices.

Ngo will have help to reach his goal – he is one of more than 100 outstanding students who will receive an award from the El Camino College Foundation Scholarship Program at a reception set for April 19.

The highlight of this first-ever event is the distribution of 140 scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.

“We are proud of the scope of this inaugural Foundation Scholarship program,” said Dr. Thomas M. Fallo, president of El Camino College. “The program allows deserving students to have most or all educational costs paid for while attending El Camino College. We are extremely grateful for our supporters who stepped up to make these scholarships possible.”

Ngo’s educational career got off to a rocky start due to major life changes. At the age of 3, he fled Vietnam with his father, leaving his mother and little sister behind because there was no more room in the boat. Ngo would not see his mother and sister for 11 years. After living in the Philippines for several years, he moved to the United States and attended Leuzinger High School where his grades were lackluster until his senior year which was full of straight A’s.

“When I started my senior year in high school I realized that I had to study really hard to be successful in this world,” said Ngo, one of two students to win the 2007 Paula Carabelli Memorial Scholarship which provides \$2,000 to outstanding students. “By the end of that year, my GPA was a 4.0. At that moment I knew I had started a new life.

“I grew up without a mother, so I didn’t really have anyone to tell me what to do and what not to do. This made me independent, now I want to help others and be not only a teacher, but a mentor. This scholarship is so important to me; it will help me reach my goals. And it tells my parents that I am doing well in school.”

Ngo's has since reunited with his mother and sister Pien, who also attends El Camino College.

Numerous donors made the inaugural El Camino College Foundation Scholarship Program a success. With a commitment to establish 80 new scholarships and distribute \$100,000 per year for the next 10 years, the scholarships will not only assist with, but in many cases, fully cover tuition, fees and textbooks. This year, these goals have been surpassed, with assistance from generous sponsors.

Founding donors pledged their support to create "named scholarships" which reward hard-working students with a drive to succeed. Named scholarships for this year include the: Paula Carabelli Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Robert Haag Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Olive Hall Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Nadine Hata Memorial Scholarship (in partnership with American Honda Motor Co.), Kinecta Federal Credit Union Scholarship, Dr. Stuart and Audrey Marsee Scholarship, Margaret and Phillip Pelland Scholarship, Chuck Turner Theater Scholarship, Verizon Scholarship, and the White Family Scholarship for Fine Arts Scholarship.

"It was a lovely experience counseling students at the college," said Dr. Hall, a dedicated El Camino College supporter who spent 20 years of her career at the college before her retirement in 1985. "It was a wonderful opportunity for me, and the students I worked with seem to be very much appreciative of any help they received."

Dr. Hall is one of several donors with a professional connection to El Camino College – Dr. Hata, Dr. Marsee, Dr. Haag, and Mr. Turner were administrators/faculty members whose many years dedication to the campus carry on through these scholarships. Other donors, such as the Pelland Family and the White Family, made major bequests to the college in their wills, demonstrating the value they place on education in our community.

Megan Polliard is the winner of the prestigious El Camino College Foundation Board of Directors Award of Excellence. A lifelong Torrance resident and graduate of Torrance High School, Polliard was involved in many leadership activities on campus and in the community. Her commitment to service continues at El Camino College where she is involved in the Honors Transfer Club, Alpha Gamma Sigma honor society, and the Teacher Education Program.

Polliard plans to become an elementary school teacher and currently interacts with children through work and volunteer activities.

El Camino College volleyball standout and top student Ryan Carter will receive the Pelland Scholarship for Academic Excellence. The Torrance resident is an Eagle Scout and has a career goal to return to El Camino College as a teacher.

Alba Lilliana Rosas is also a scholarship recipient, receiving one of the college's Foundation Scholarships. After taking general education courses, she is now ready to enter the nursing program at El Camino College in the fall.

"I have always wanted to do be a nurse – this is not only a job for me – it is a career that can improve my life," said Lilliana. "This scholarship will help me achieve my goal. It is a

struggle raising my 4-year-old daughter, but this will make it possible for me to go to school and work hard. The nursing books alone cost so much.

“I really want to thank all the donors who are helping people like me. I am pursuing the American Dream – I have to study a lot and it is hard, but when I study, I study with love. I really like what I am doing.”

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