



1398 Sperber Road, El Centro, CA 92243 • [foundation@icoe.org](mailto:foundation@icoe.org) • [foundation.icoe.org](http://foundation.icoe.org)

## ICOE's Foundation for Education Awards Over \$18,000 in Scholarships to Local Students

El Centro, CA – The Foundation for Education, an auxiliary organization of the Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE), is pleased to announce that it awarded \$18,350 in scholarships to 31 students in 2023. Each year, the Foundation for Education scholarship program helps increase college access and success for some of Imperial County's most vulnerable students, including at-risk youth and students with special needs.

This year, the Foundation for Education recognized the academic and personal achievements of 27 outstanding students enrolled in special education programs, alternative education schools, and Imperial Pathways Charter, ICOE's drop-out recovery program for individuals 17 and over. Scholarship recipients include graduates from Aurora High School, Desert Valley High School, Mount Signal Academy, Valley Academy, Southwest High School, and Imperial Pathways Charter School.

"Our scholarship recipients all shared compelling stories of overcoming adversity. Despite all the hardships they suffered, they are determined to succeed and pursue their dreams, and we wish each of them the very best as they pursue their post-secondary education and future careers," said Dr. Todd Finnell, Imperial County Superintendent of Schools and President of the Foundation for Education.

Four additional students from Brawley Union High School and Central Union High School were also awarded a scholarship through the Foundation's Higher Education Week Scholarship Program.

Each of these \$500 scholarships will help students offset the cost of tuition and other college expenses.

Finally, the Foundation for Education also sponsored Roberto Vasquez, a student from Valley Academy, to participate in UCSD's Academic Connections program. The Foundation contributed \$2,850 toward the cost of his participation in the three-week summer residential program—the other half was provided by UCSD.

"As I learned that I was an awardee of this scholarship, many emotions arose. I felt positivity, happiness, gratefulness, and warmth. This opportunity motivates me to move forward with my academic goals. It created a plan for me to expand my horizon to newer experiences while aligning them with my goals. This scholarship will help support me with my post-secondary education. This opportunity will help me reach my goals while I serve my community. I plan to honor this blessing by pursuing a career in graphic design and gain academic knowledge as I enroll at Imperial Valley College," said Roberto, who was able to overcome many challenges and is determined to use his personal experiences to achieve his goals and succeed in the next chapter of his life.

Since it established its scholarship program in 2020-2021, the Foundation for Education has been able to gradually increase the number of students and families it is able to serve. Over the past 3 years, the Foundation awarded close to \$35,000 in scholarships to local students. “On behalf of the Foundation for Education, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the support and generous contributions from our community. This generosity is making a difference in the lives of students and their families throughout Imperial County, and we look forward to continuing our important mission,” added Dr. Finnell.

This year’s scholarship recipients will be recognized during the Imperial County Office of Education Board Meeting on June 26, 2023, and at the Foundation for Education’s third Annual Autumn & the Arts Fundraiser on October 5, 2023 ([Autumn & the Arts Flyer](#)). Proceeds from the fundraiser will be used to support the Foundation’s Scholarship Program and other initiatives, such as the free summer orchestra camp offered at Southwest High School in July ([2023 Summer Orchestra Flyer](#)), the Annual Imperial County Arts Festival, and other initiatives.

Please visit [foundation.icoe.org](https://foundation.icoe.org) for more information about our scholarship program and fundraiser events.

**Link to Pictures:**

<https://bit.ly/Foundation-2023-Pictures>

**Caption:**

Foundation for Education Scholarship Recipients from Imperial Pathways Charter were recognized during their graduation ceremony on June 7, 2023.

**About Imperial County Office of Education:**

The Imperial County Office of Education supports local school districts and other agencies by providing services from early care to adult education. For more information, please visit [www.icoe.org](http://www.icoe.org) and follow the official ICOE news feeds on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

The mission of ICOE is to improve the quality of life in Imperial County by promoting strong families and students who are prepared for life, college, and career.

**Website:** [icoe.org](http://icoe.org)

**About Foundation for Education:**

The Foundation for Education is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization that supports students and educational programs throughout Imperial County. The Foundation is an auxiliary organization of the Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE). It provides funding for countywide student events, innovative projects, student scholarships, and other major initiatives.

The Foundation focuses on the development and support of the “whole child,” with an emphasis on at-risk youth and students with special needs.

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