



# IMPACT REPORT

2023/2024





2023

Allan Hancock College

AHC

EPS

ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE  
MESA/STEM

# SEEING YOUR NAME ON A DIPLOMA

*Hancock Promise is Expanding Opportunity*

Do you remember when you first saw your name on a diploma?

It was probably at your high school graduation. You felt a mix of satisfaction, relief, and pride. And if you were the first in your family to receive a college diploma, that carries a different level of accomplishment. Your name includes the work of those who came before you and others who laid the foundation for your success.

At Hancock, over 40 percent of students are first in their family to attend that foreign world called college. It has its own language, its own culture, and you have to pay for the privilege.

That's one reason the Hancock Promise has been so important to northern Santa Barbara County. As a community, we have given more than 8,300 local students a free and clear pathway into college close to home. That allows the next generation to start college without the burden of college debt. It offers the opportunity for young people to see new futures for themselves.

And the deal is about to get sweeter.

At the Hancock Honors in September, I was excited to announce that we have secured over \$9.3 million toward the \$10 million Hancock Promise campaign.

The following week, a donor who attended called to commit an additional \$400,000, bringing the campaign total to \$9.7 million.



Jon Hooten

When we reach \$10 million, we can expand the Hancock Promise to two years of free tuition. We're close, but we need one more push.

In my five years at Hancock, I've learned that our donors are loyal, they are passionate, and they are committed to the communities where we live. So I'm convinced that we will exceed the \$10 million goal by the end of 2023.

And when we do, even more of our local students will see their names on their college diplomas and make us all proud of their accomplishment.



Jon Hooten, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Allan Hancock College Foundation

**HANCOCK PROMISE CAMPAIGN**  
**\$9.7 Million**



## 2023-2024 ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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Judith Dale, Vice President  
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Dennis Curran  
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Samantha Martinez

### DIRECTORS EMERITI

Doris T. Lahr (in memoriam)  
Ronald L. Thatcher

### STAFF

Erinn Artrip  
Marisol Diaz  
Jon Hooten  
Tracy McKee  
Natalie Rucobo

# HANCOCK PROMISE

## Continues Post-Pandemic Comeback

*Enrollments up 7 percent for hallmark scholarship program*

The number of new students in the Hancock Promise program increased for the third year in a row, after experiencing enrollment declines during the pandemic. In fall 2023, the college welcomed 1,437 local high school graduates into the Hancock Promise program—a 7 percent increase over last fall.

“We’re encouraged to see Promise enrollments continuing to bounce back,” says Superintendent/President Kevin G. Walthers, Ph.D. “Enrollments across the college are still lower than they were before the pandemic, but increasing enrollments in the Promise program and in other areas is a great sign for the college and the community.”

Now in its sixth year, the Hancock Promise program has broken barriers to accessing higher education for more than 8,300 local students. More than 85 percent of Promise students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, 60

percent of whom identify as Latino/a. Half of all Promise students are the first in their family to attend college.

“When you see how many students are taking advantage of the Promise, and the backgrounds they’re coming from, you can see the real investment the community is making in the future of so many lives,” said AHC Foundation Executive Director Jon Hooten, Ph.D.

The Hancock Promise campaign, which will ensure the Promise is sustainable into perpetuity, has received more than \$9.7 million in gifts and pledges toward a \$10 million goal. Local businesses, social groups, foundations, and individuals have demonstrated their unwavering support, solidifying the program’s future impact.

“The Hancock Promise exemplifies the spirit of our community—one that believes in the power of education to transform lives,” Dr. Walthers added.

“We’re committed to changing the odds in our community, and the Promise is a testament to the ability to do just that.”



## TOTAL PROMISE STUDENTS: 8,388



**Year 1 (2018): 1,421**



**Year 2 (2019): 1,514**



**Year 3 (2020): 1,345**



**Year 4 (2021): 1,278**

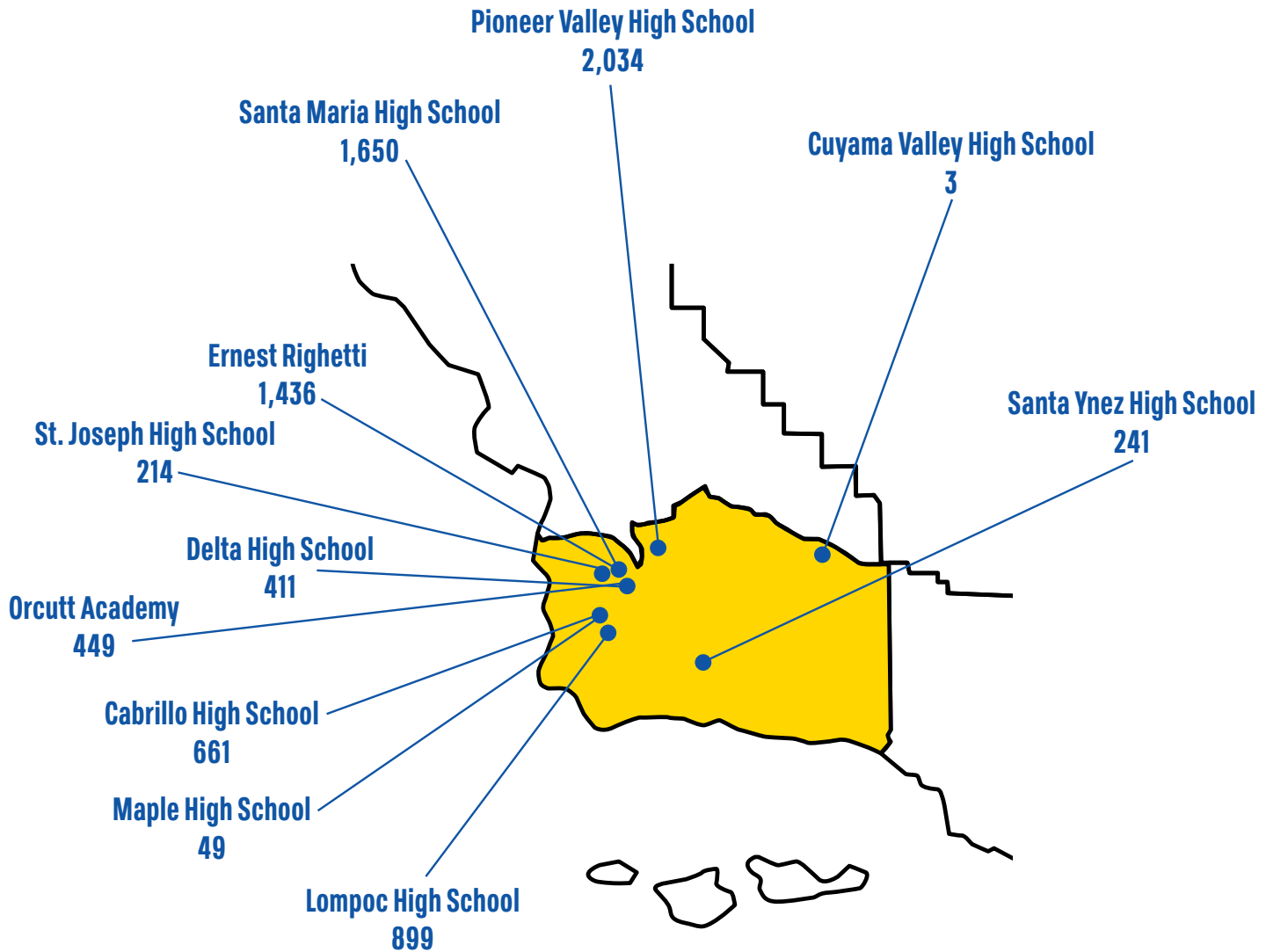


**Year 5 (2022): 1,418**



**Year 6 (2023): 1,458**

# PROMISE STUDENTS 2018-2023



Since the launch of the Hancock Promise in 2018, more than 8,300 students from local high schools have started their college career as full-time freshmen.

In most years, between 40 and 55 percent of local high school graduates continue to Hancock, thanks to the Promise.

**50%**

First in their family to attend college

**65%**

Latinx

**85%**

Economically disadvantaged

**\$9.7 Million**

Total gifts and pledges

**1,277**

Total number of gifts

# HANCOCK HONORS CELEBRATES THREE LUMINARIES

*Attendees experience surprises and delight at September celebration*



The inaugural Hancock Honors on September 9 was a night of exciting firsts that culminated with the celebration of three honorees who have changed the odds in their communities.

The sold-out evening began just before twilight in the new Fine Arts Complex Plaza. Guests were greeted with craft cocktails and passed appetizers as they explored interactive art installations and watched as local artist and Hancock staffer Robert Nourse produced six abstract paintings. The San Francisco collective Jazz Mafia played in the background as culinary food stations delighted guests with fun and fanciful Continental cuisine. As the sun began to set, the musicians led guests toward the red carpet, where they entered the performance hall for the evening's main program.

As the house lights faded, the stage brightened to welcome Dr. Nichole Dechaine, a vocal professor at Hancock, singing a Puccini aria *a capella*. Susan Appel, a member of the AHC Foundation Board of Directors, then took the stage as the evening's host, graciously thanking the performer and welcoming the audience to campus. She introduced the first two honorees—former AHC Superintendent/President **Ann Foxworthy Lewellen**, Ph.D., and GRAMMY Award-winning recording

artist and PCPA alumnus **Tommy Soulati Shepherd**—as Hancock's current Superintendent/President Kevin G. Walthers, Ph.D., presented each with a crystal award.

Dr. Walthers took center stage and spoke to the community impact Hancock faculty and staff have made during his decade-long tenure at the college—most notably, the importance of the Hancock Promise program in making college possible for thousands of local families. He then invited the AHC Foundation's Executive Director Jon Hooten, Ph.D. who announced the Hancock Promise Campaign had surpassed \$9.3 million toward its \$10 million goal—thanks in part to major gifts from two individuals in the audience as well as proceeds from the evening's sponsorships.

Hancock's student body president, Samantha Martinez, took the stage to share her journey from her life as a high school student during the pandemic to attending Hancock, which she described as "one of the best decisions I ever made."

Ms. Appel then announced the final honoree. The late **Patricia Jean "Patty" Boyd** was a longtime piano teacher in the Santa Maria Valley (including at Hancock) who left a significant estate gift to the college for the construction

of a performance hall. At the end of the program, Dr. Walthers announced the board of trustees had named the 350-seat space the "Patricia Jean (Patty) Boyd Concert Hall" in honor of her life's work and contribution to the college.

Hancock alum and current PCPA student Edella Westerfield closed the program with a swinging version of Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies," making her the first student to perform in the newly named Boyd Hall.

As the crowd moved outdoors following the program, the plaza was transformed with an illuminated bar, decadent dessert stations, and the funky sounds of Jazz Mafia filling the night air. Honoree Tommy Soulati Shepherd sat in with the band for several songs and rapped with his son, Tommy III, to the delight of the dancing crowd.

"Tonight could not have gone better," said Dr. Hooten. "We wanted to celebrate our honorees and have a little fun along the way."

"The event could not have been possible without the support of several major sponsors," he continued. "A big thank you to **CoastHills Credit Union** for being our presenting partner, as well as **Presqui'le Winery**, local **McDonald's** restaurants, and **SESLOC Federal Credit Union** who all provided major support."

# BOYD HALL: A NEW CULTURAL ASSET ON THE CENTRAL COAST

Many knew the educational impact that Patricia Jean “Patty” Boyd had on the Santa Maria Valley as a prolific music teacher who taught hundreds of students over six decades. But only a handful of family and friends knew of her plan to ensure that the music would play on after her death in 2012.

Upon her passing, Ms. Boyd’s estate provided \$13 million to Allan Hancock College and the PCPA Foundation, with \$10 million restricted to a singular vision: to construct a performance space on campus where students could perform in front of live audiences.

During the Hancock Honors, with several members of Boyd’s family in attendance, Hancock Superintendent/President Kevin G. Walthers, Ph.D., announced that the

board of trustees named the 350-seat performance space “Boyd Concert Hall.”

“Patty inspired generations of students, and her love of music and the arts lives on through her legacy and in this concert hall,” said Dr. Walthers. “This facility would not be here without her generosity.”

“Patty really loved teaching at Hancock,” says her goddaughter and namesake Patricia Rice. “And now [with Boyd Hall] her work goes on, which would have pleased her immensely.”

The Allan Hancock College Foundation received the estate gift in 2012. Of the gift, \$2 million was placed in a permanent endowment for the music program at Hancock, where Ms. Boyd taught advanced piano for more than a decade. Another \$1 million was given to the

PCPA Foundation to support the Pacific Conservatory Theatre students.

The AHC Foundation stewarded the remaining \$10 million until the district was able to construct the new Fine Arts Complex. By the time the district required the Boyd funds, the Foundation had increased the value of the fund to more than \$15 million, a 50 percent increase in value over ten years.

Boyd Concert Hall will provide more than a performance venue for students and faculty; plans are underway to offer musical and other programming to the community in the space.

“This will be a cultural gem on the Central Coast for decades to come,” said Dr. Walthers.

BELOVED MEMBER OF THE MUSIC FACULTY  
1973 – 1988

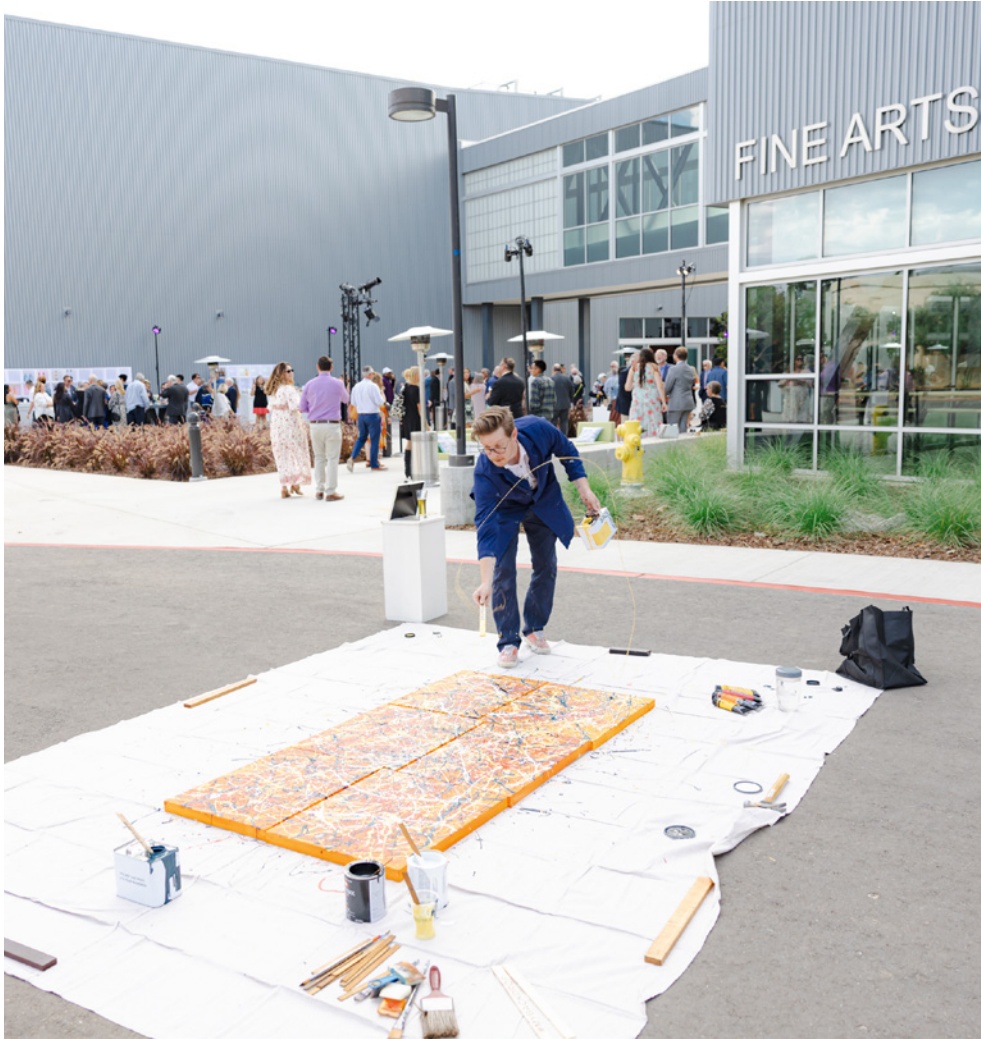
DEDICATED IN 2023



2023  
**HANCOCK**  
HONORS



*Scan the QR code above to view the event video.*







# STUDENT'S STORY WOWS THE CROWD AT HANCOCK HONORS

*Samantha Martinez shares emotional story of how the Hancock Promise changed her life*

**M**y name is Samantha, and I'm at Allan Hancock College because of the Hancock Promise."

That's how Hancock student Samantha Martinez began her presentation to more than 300 community members at the Hancock Honors in September.

Last spring, Samantha's peers elected her president of the Associated Student Body Government. But her road to student leadership and personal success wasn't an easy one, as she explained in her speech.

Her mother is a proud immigrant from Chihuahua, Mexico, who ensured that her daughter had the gift of speaking Spanish. Her father ran a small business on Main Street in Santa Maria, helping families with their immigration and financial paperwork.

"Helping out in his office, I saw firsthand the struggles that other immigrant families have every day—and still do today, right here in our hometown," she said as childhood family photos flashed across the screen behind her. Her family worked hard, she said, so she could attend Orcutt schools—Alice Shaw Elementary, Lakeview Junior High, and "I literally won the lottery to get into Orcutt Academy High School," she quipped.

But during high school, she struggled with the lack of cultural diversity in her classes.

"Hardly anyone I met spoke Spanish, had immigrant parents, or knew of an outlet for expressing their cultural value," she said. So, on the urging of a school counselor, she founded a local chapter of *Latinos Unidos* at the school to

provide a structure for cultural learning and Latino/a belonging on the campus.

"But then the pandemic hit," she said with a groan. Samantha was in eleventh grade when her school transitioned from classrooms to Zoom rooms.

The pandemic and its implications hit her and her family particularly hard.

"It brought on so many big emotions that were intensified by my own mental health journey," she said. On top of that, her father was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer during the pandemic, and he eventually had to shutter the family business to attend to his health.

Samantha saw the need for mental health resources at her school, for both her and her classmates. As a result, she launched a virtual campaign to bring emotional support to students and their families during the pandemic. She applied for and received a grant from a national mental health organization to support the effort.

Through it all, Samantha stayed focused on college. "During my senior year, many of my peers were dismissing the value of attending a community college," she said. But she had a hunch that Hancock was a good choice for her, so she enrolled fulltime to take advantage of the Hancock Promise tuition waiver.

Once at Hancock, her proclivity for leadership only grew. She became involved in student government, which culminated in her election as president

last year. She also continued her interest in supporting those with mental health challenges and launched a student club focused on mental wellness and encouraging sobriety on campus. Next spring, she is scheduled to graduate and hopes to continue her education in political science and pre-law at University of California, Santa Barbara.

"I knew this was the right place for me," she told the Hancock Honors audience. "And I can confidently say that coming to Allan Hancock College is one of the best decisions I've ever made."

"None of this would've been possible without the Hancock Promise," she continued. "It

allowed me to slow things down, to do it right—all without incurring any student debt. That is so huge. It's a head start. And it provided so much stability that first year."

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**"I can confidently say that coming to Allan Hancock College is one of the best decisions I've ever made."**

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She concluded her speech with a word of thanks—and a challenge—to the audience.

"If you've already made a donation to the Promise, I want to thank you for the support that you've given me in my journey," she said.

"And if you haven't yet made a gift, I hope you'll consider making a donation—because it's literally changing lives like mine."



# FOUNDATION AWARDS \$525,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2023

*Scholarship celebration expanded to two nights  
to accommodate students' families*

Every year in May, Allan Hancock College Foundation scholarship donors gather with students and their families on the Santa Maria campus for an evening in the Joe White Memorial Gymnasium to celebrate the Foundation's annual scholarship awards.

This year, the Foundation expanded the celebration to two nights, allowing students to bring two guests instead of just one.

"For many students, academic success is a family affair," says Jon Hooten, Ph.D., Executive Director of College Advancement and the Foundation. "But students could only pick one family member to celebrate with them at the banquet. Expanding it allows more family to share in the celebration."

Spanning the evenings of May 24 and 25, the Foundation awarded 446 scholarships totaling \$525,000 to 293 students. Nearly 900 people attended the celebration events.

Hancock class of 2023 graduate Katherine Goldstein received the prestigious Marian Hancock Scholarship. Named in honor of the late wife of Captain G. Allan Hancock, the \$10,000 scholarship is awarded to one outstanding student each year who exemplifies service to the school, scholastic achievement, and personal

conduct. Goldstein is the 59th student to be awarded the Marian Hancock Scholarship since 1967.

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*"I had no idea my  
experience at this school  
would be so transformative  
and expansive."*

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Goldstein is graduating from Hancock with an associate degree in agricultural plant science. A local student who returned to Hancock after several years to finish her degree, Goldstein said she was inspired by her love of gardening and agriculture to pursue a four-year degree.

"When I first started at Hancock my primary goal was to finish my degree after years of starting and stopping community college," said Goldstein. "I had no idea my experience at this school would be so transformative and expansive. It led me to where I am now."

Hancock alumnus and 2021 Marian Scholarship recipient Rafael Valdovinos, Jr., gave the keynote address at the awards. Valdovinos, who recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from

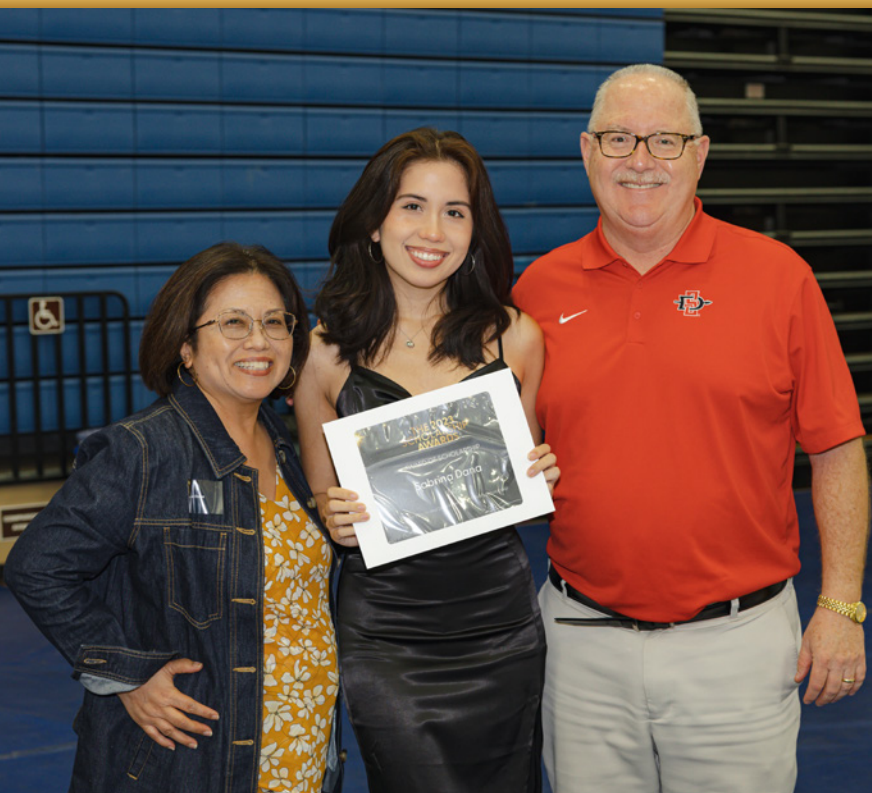
the University of Massachusetts, shared his inspiring story with attendees and offered advice to this year's scholarship recipients.

"When I received a scholarship, it affirmed that I am of value, and that I am enough. That I am worthy of someone else's investment," said Valdovinos. "For those of you who have received a scholarship, remember to pay that back by investing in your peers, investing in your community, and giving back what has been so freely given to you."

A scholarship committee comprised of 15 Hancock faculty, staff, and Foundation board members chose this year's recipients from nearly 600 applications. The Allan Hancock College Foundation has been a resource for thousands of Hancock students since 1977. The Foundation has raised funds over the years that have changed lives through education by touching every aspect of the college's life, including scholarships, programs, projects, and faculty and staff development.

To learn more about the AHC Foundation and how to create a scholarship for as little as \$500 per year, visit [www.hancockcollege.edu/foundation](http://www.hancockcollege.edu/foundation).

# THE 2023 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



# "FINAL FORE" GOLF TOURNAMENT A SLAM DUNK

*Annual fundraiser nets \$25,000  
for Hancock athletes*

Play golf. Watch basketball. Support student-athletes. That's the plan for Hancock's Final Fore Golf Tournament, held this year on April 1, 2023.

"This is a fundraising golf tournament with a twist," says Hancock's Athletic Director Kim Ensing. "It's held each year on the same Monday as the NCAA Men's Final Four Basketball Championship game, so we get to play golf all afternoon and watch the game at night. It's a fun day!"

This year, 31 teams with 124 players converged at noon for their tee time on Santa Maria Country Club's 18-hole course. After an afternoon on the links, players and other guests gathered in the clubhouse for drinks, dinner, and the championship game projected on big screens. The night concluded with the announcement of tournament winners and 26 raffle prizes.

The grand raffle prize is a pair of tickets to the following year's NCAA Championship Game. This year's randomly selected winner just happened to be Danah Smith, who was an assistant basketball coach for Hancock at the time and is now in her first season as Hancock's Head Women's Basketball Coach.

"This is becoming a great annual event in support of our student-athletes and

programs," says Ensing, who is also associate dean of kinesiology, recreation, and athletics programs. "We have more than 300 student-athletes participating in 14 athletic programs, so these dollars go a long way in supporting needs the college isn't allowed to meet."

The day could not be possible without the support of so many sponsoring businesses and organizations in our community. This year's most generous sponsors included the **Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians**, local **Honda/Toyota/KIA** dealerships, and **SLO Safe Ride**.

Other top supporters included **Marian Regional Medical Center**, **Santa Maria Ford**, **Santa Maria Physical Therapy**, **Sport & Cycle**, **New Life Kitchen & Bath**, **19six Architects**, **AFX Research**, **Aptitude Medical Systems**, **C&D Bonding**, and **Duplicated Business Solutions**.

Next year's Final Fore Golf Tournament is set for April 8, 2024. Those interested in sponsorship, donating raffle prizes, or entering teams can contact [shelby.scott@hancockcollege.edu](mailto:shelby.scott@hancockcollege.edu).







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