

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kern Community Foundation Awards Upwards of \$620,000 in Scholarships to 334 Kern Students

Bakersfield, Calif., August 14, 2017 – Thanks to generous contributions from a score of scholarship funds and a grant from the College Futures Foundation, Kern Community Foundation has awarded 334 Kern County students with scholarships for the 2017-18 academic year totaling \$620,620.

A breakdown of 2017-18 scholarship awards is as follows:

- 231 renewal awards to past-year scholarship recipients: \$423,320
- 103 new awards to college-bound high school graduates: \$197,300

“This represents a more than doubling of the 162 Foundation scholarship recipients in 2016-17, and an 85% increase over last year’s scholarship award total of \$334,600,” said Foundation President & CEO Kristen Beall Barnes. “We owe this growth to a generous grant from the College Futures Foundation, a statewide initiative whose vision is to produce more graduates for a thriving California, as well as to an amazing response from fund holders and organizations that see the value of investing in the future of Kern County students.”

Kern Community Foundation’s strategic initiative to increase educational attainment in Kern County is actually called “Kern Futures,” and the Foundation is one of seven community foundations to be partnering with College Futures Foundation to grow the number of need-based scholarships and related services for students who are low-income and have historically low rates of college success.

“In light of research from the Center on Education and the Workforce, which shows that by 2020, two out of three California jobs will require education beyond high school, Kern Futures is a tremendous resource for Kern students pursuing a postsecondary pathway,” Barnes said. “With just one application, which is available on the Foundation’s website each year from December through March, students have access to more than two-dozen different scholarship awards.”

Kern Future’s local impact is evident through the following statistics:

- 82% of last year’s scholarship recipients are staying in school full time and earning at least a 2.0 cumulative grade-point average;
- 74% of new awardees are first-generation college students whose parents either did not attend or complete college;
- 91% of scholarship recipients are enrolling in CSU or UC system universities or local community colleges, while only 9% are choosing private or out-of-state colleges or universities;
- 11 of the scholarship funds managed by Kern Community Foundation are endowed funds whose capital remains intact while scholarships are awarded from interest earned year after year. “These scholarship funds will support students and their postsecondary dreams forever,” Barnes said.

Some special interest scholarship funds managed by the Foundation target students with specific needs. For example, the David Moore and Nickel Family Scholarship Funds support students pursuing careers in agriculture, and the Links for Life Scholarship Fund assists students impacted by breast cancer. Additionally, 2017 saw the implementation of another new component of Kern Futures – “Scholarships Now” – a unique program that offers organizations and businesses the ability to participate in the Foundation’s scholarship program without establishing a fund. Both Downtown Bakersfield Rotary’s

Waterman Foundation and Maya Cinemas utilized “Scholarships Now” to impact the lives of 30 Kern students.

Kern Futures helps donors find students who meet their funds’ individual criteria; coordinates each individual award, ensuring that donor funds are remitted directly to an accredited trade school, college or university; and then, through its College Success Program component, provides each student with personalized academic advising, coordination with financial aid offices, transcript review, career counseling, and a host of other services.

The payoff for this high level of personalized support is an increase in the number of students not just entering college but also completing college and ultimately entering the workforce.

Barnes gave the example of Oscar and Libbie Rudnick Scholarship Fund award recipients. “This unique Fund has been awarding scholarships for the last four years. Out of the handful of students who originally received scholarship awards in 2014-15, three students are now entering their fourth year of college and solidly on the road to completing their undergraduate studies,” Barnes said.

“The message to donors and organizations is simple,” she continued. “Through Kern Futures, you provide more than money to students: Our highly-personalized College Success Program works to empower students with continued support to ensure their persistence leading toward college completion.”

About Kern Community Foundation

Kern Community Foundation is a vibrant nonprofit enterprise with the powerfully simple mission of growing community and growing philanthropy. The foundation is in business to serve as a charitable resource for local donors and corporations, and to generate capital that provides philanthropic solutions to help make Kern County a better place to live, to work and to visit. Since its establishment in 1999, the foundation has grown to hold more than 140 charitable funds with assets of approximately \$20 million, and has awarded almost \$15 million to improve Kern County’s quality of life. For more information about Kern Community Foundation visit www.kernfoundation.org.

Interview Opportunities: We will be glad to arrange for media interviews with scholarship recipients and Kern Community Foundation Staff.

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