

Grad-Time Herald

OUR SCHOLARS SURVIVE COV-ID19: THEIR STORIES

2020 will long be remembered as the year, while it began well, ended not so well for the world population. Here in the OC, citizens, families, workers, teachers, schools, universities, medical service centers, businesses, students, and children have all learned a different lifestyle. ALL of Tustin's non-profits have suffered the ill effects of being quarantined and isolated. ALL still need our help and support going forward. If you have a favorite non-profit, please remember that your financial support guarantees that they can continue to provide valuable services to local communities.

Tustin Dollars for Scholars enjoyed a successful January and February. In March, it hosted a fantastic Meet-n-Greet event at Zov's Tustin and began building its support base with the so many attendees. We were acknowledged by Chamber of Commerce President Lindbergh McPherson as being the origin of our organization who offered support going forward.

Then the brakes skidded due to COV-ID19! And we were not alone. We heard from our scholars of the many challenges that confronted them, locally and nationally. Some returned home to continue their studies; others were able to manage from afar. In any case, all of us can indeed be proud of their persistence and passion to continue their educational programs and endeavors. As you read each of their stories, please appreciate that these scholars are not yet 21 years old, and still they persist in pursuing academic goals.

All of us can indeed be proud of our financial investment in their future as well as secure in the knowledge that our selections are young men and women who know not to give up, spend their time wisely, and are focused on giving back to others while in this current pandemic. Go TDFS Scholars!! We are SO proud to claim you as our own!

It is also sad to report that TDFS must report the loss of a dear friend in Sal Ragazzo, father of Laura Valencia. Please read his story on page 4.

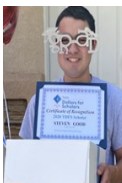
In the meantime, here are the latest reports from our scholars....



Izzy Yardumian What an unprecedented year we've found ourselves in! I am now taking online classes in the continuing pursuit of my biochemistry degree at CSULB and look forward to being able to come back in person for my lab classes eventually! I spent the summer working on research and cultivating skills that I didn't feel I had time for before quarantine (such as relearning piano). My job as a tutor and peer mentor has been transferred online so I have been able to continue working with my underclassmen, which is always so fulfilling and such a joy. In a few weeks my university will be publishing more information on our research teams and I hope to be one of the selected students to be allowed back into the lab once it's open and running again! In the meantime though I am enjoying spending more time with my family and pets since I'm now able to spend all my time at home! I hope you and your families and friends are all healthy and well.



Ella Cardoza I am planning on majoring in Integrated Biology @ Michigan State University as well as studying astronomy in the future. Lately, I have been doing school work, doing art, playing my ukulele, and spending time with a small circle of friends. I am not exactly sure of what my future plans will be, but I know for sure that I want to do research in a lab or do field work. I am currently interested in a career called astrobiology, which is a combination of biology and astronomy where scientists study signs of life outside Earth and our solar system. This scholarship and the TDFS means so much to me and my plans for the future. This scholarship is allowing me to pursue my interests throughout my college experience, as well as giving me a chance to solidify my future plans.



Steven Good I am majoring in Mechanical Engineering. I have been working on my School classes, gaming, music production, helping my parents. My plans are to start working at a local mechanical engineering firm, and hopefully get a job at Disney Imagineering. I have Around 500 hours of volunteer work with the Assistance League of Tustin and over 500 hours of volunteer work with Karate For All. This organization and scholarship really means a lot to me. It shows that even people with disabilities, such as myself, can be successful, and that all the hours of hard work that I put in with volunteering paid off. The organization also represents some of the work I've done in the Assistance League of Tustin through some of the events. Receiving the scholarship means that I am able to do great things, and it also means I can help my parents financially by paying for my own education, while they can focus on the expenses for my severely autistic brother's therapy.



Ethan Chung I am attending UC Berkeley, studying Bioengineering and Business. As school has begun, I have been exploring the world of entrepreneurship and looking to hone my skills in leadership. Furthermore, I have been working on areas of personal growth by developing my current skill sets such as improving my knowledge in computer science but also challenging myself with new adventures such as playing guitar and surfing. As the school year starts, I look to become involved in clubs, including potentially joining a consulting club assisting non-profits. As college has thrown me into a world of unknowns, I am increasingly understanding of the importance of forming strong networks. Likewise, I am evermore appreciative of the Tustin Dollars for Scholars Foundation for providing a scholarship for me and including me among a network of bright young scholars.

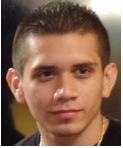
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TDFS FACTS TO KNOW...

- TDFS HAS AWARDED COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS SINCE 1987.
- THE 2020 SCHOLARSHIP WAS INCREASED TO \$6,000 (\$1,550 EACH YEAR).
- TDFS IS AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF SCHOLARSHIP AMERICA .
- TDFS IS AN ALL-VOLUNTEER NONPROFIT 501 c (3)
- ALL PROFITS FROM ALL EVENTS GO TO FUND OUR SCHOLARSHIPS.
- SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AWARDED TO GRADUATING SENIORS FROM TUSD HIGH SCHOOLS.

TDFS SCHOLARS BEGIN THEIR FALL PROGRAMS



Juan Avila I am now a fourth-year college student at Cal State University Fullerton and I was going into my last semester in Cal State Fullerton, but I made some change of plans. After this semester of Fall 2020, I will be done with my bachelor's in Criminal Justice; however, I decided that I want to pursue a minor for the next semester of Spring 2021. Since I have a semester free next semester, I decided to pursue a minor specifically in computer science. The reason why is that I want to graduate with my master's in Cyber Security. I do not know where I will attend graduate school, but will attend a workshop to get some advice and information. So far school has been going well this semester. I hope that we will have in-person classes for next semester because online classes are not the same as in-person classes. Also, I would like to finish my last semester at Cal State Fullerton by actually attending campus before I graduate from there, but only time will tell. Yet I have faith that everything will be going back to normal soon. TDFS has been amazing and really supportive and helpful in my life. I am really grateful to have such an organization like TDFS to encourage me and support me in my educational and personal goals. They really mean a lot to me and all the new recipients will absolutely be grateful as well to have this organization part of their life.



Emma Braden Hi TDFS family! I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe! Throughout the past couple weeks, I have been working hard to get ready and prepare to go back to school! This year is different than my past three years at school because I am living off campus in an apartment with some friends. I am learning some of the basic responsibilities of living on my own such as cooking for myself and keeping the house clean. This will be an amazing experience for me and will help to save money which is always a blessing! Since I attend a small, private university, we are in-person for some classes and are remotely online for the classes with more students. It is great to be back on campus in class and to see friends! I am a senior Kinesiology student with an emphasis in exercise and sports science. I am looking forward to taking cool classes this semester such as Nutrition, Kinesiology and New Testament. In addition to taking classes, I will be working at Stonefire Grill and potentially will be working in the Registrar's office at school to help my parents with tuition. I will also be partaking in my schools "engage week", which helps to provide food at shelters, and help out around the community of Santa Clarita. I am looking forward to getting involved in my community. Above all else, I would not be able to attend The Master's University these past couple years if it weren't for Tustin Dollars for Scholars. You all have helped my family tremendously and I cannot thank you all enough! I missed seeing you all at the concerts in the park this summer but hopefully we will all see each other soon. Stay safe and thanks again!



Darren Gerchick I am majoring in mathematics and economics and pursuing additional coursework in computer programming. During quarantine I spent a majority of my time investing and trading equities, learning about finance and consulting, preparing myself for upcoming interviews in the fall, and taking online summer classes. In my free time, I have been getting outdoors, going to the beach, hiking, running, and playing basketball wherever social distancing permits. In terms of volunteer work, I recently joined Heart in Hand Los Angeles, a nonprofit organization founded by UCLA students in response to covid-19. As the fundraising director, I have been tasked with raising funds and hygiene supplies for Heart in Hand to distribute amongst vulnerable populations in the LA area. As always, Dollars for Scholars' support, especially in these difficult times, is a constant reminder for me to work hard and make those who have invested in me proud. The scholarship also serves as a reminder that there is always a worthy cause to dedicate time and effort to, and that being in a fortunate position such as the one of health and circumstance that I am in allows me to be able to give back to those that might not have the same opportunities. I genuinely appreciate all the support from TDFS over the past few years, and I am excited to help pay it forward in the coming future! Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to help you out. I'm Looking forward to being able to see you once again after these hectic times.



Ayushi Sharma I'm a sophomore studying computer science at UC San Diego. I made use of the last few weeks of my summer to explore my interests in my major by doing more projects and attended "virtual" events to deepen my knowledge. This past summer I helped out a nonprofit organization in programming an online portal for their students. I finished my job as a tutor for one of the CS classes at my university. I also recently started volunteering with a student-led organization, which is working "to elevate the access, exposure, and inclusion of gender-marginalized students in the interdisciplinary fields of technology" through events like hackathons. I'm leading the team of operations to successfully plan out a virtual hackathon, which is not only beginner friendly but also welcoming to people of all gender (especially minorities in the STEM field). And, like always, I'm very grateful that the TDFS community is continuing to provide financial support regardless of the unexpected situation created due to COVID-19 this year. I'll be more than happy to help out the TDFS members in any way possible =)



William Ortmyer I am currently majoring in Finance and Accounting at the University of Alabama. Outside of class I have been very involved with our student run Investment Banking Academy and Culverhouse Investment Management Group. These groups have given me some great experience and professional development as I pursue a career in finance. Another group I have become very passionate about is Special Olympics. While we have been unable to meet given the current circumstances, I am excited to get back out on the field with our special needs students every Sunday. As always, TDFS has provided endless support for my endeavors and offered very helpful financial assistance during these difficult times. I am always thankful for such a great organization and its incredible members.



Austin Stark My Sophomore year at UC Berkeley, despite being cut short due to COVID-19, was an unforgettable year. I had the opportunity to take some super interesting (and extremely tough) classes including: Organic Chemistry, Thermodynamics and Fluid Mechanics. These three classes contained material that I had encountered before, making it quite the challenge at times. They made me excited about my major and my future within the field of Chemical Engineering. I still currently work as a Lab Assistant in the Chemistry Department, where I set-up undergraduate lab experiments. It's been a rewarding experience to work on the lab assistant side of the department, considering I had once been the student conducting the experiments. At the end of first semester, I was elected Philanthropy Chair of my fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega. As philanthropy chair, I'm in charge of developing fundraisers and other community service events aimed at giving back to the Bay Area community. In February, we hosted the first annual "Tie Dye with Taus", where UC Berkeley students were able to hang out with "Taus", a clever nickname for the brothers of the fraternity, and create their own tie-dye shirts. It was an incredible experience for everyone involved and we ended up raising \$450 for the Special Olympics. I was also tasked with planning our famous "AT Olympics", an all-day event where members of the Greek community compete in fun games, with all the proceeds benefiting the Special Olympics. However, COVID-19 forced us to cancel this event. We hope to postpone it until the fall.



Grace Norman I am starting my masters degree with the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. I will be getting my MS SLP degree with their accelerated program. The first trimester I will begin my Clinical Practicum, however, due to COVID I am not sure what that will look like. My department has set up teletherapy lessons so that students can get their clinical hours without delaying graduation. I would not be where I am today without your continued support and I am so thankful to be a part of this amazing organization.

SCHOLARS DOING WELL DURING PANDEMIC



Scott Leandro Currently, I am a sophomore studying in Tippie College of Business at the University of Iowa. As my time has progressed, my interest in management has increased because of how I like to lead and shape others. Most of my time spent at school is with my student ministry the Salt Co, where I lead and disciple other students on campus and invest in Christian living, which takes up a large portion of my thoughts and time. This summer I am seeking to intern with a company that appeals to my interest in health and management, or I will go on a mission trip abroad. TDFS is a hospitable and reliable organization that pushes me towards excelling well in school and treating others kindly. I find great value and appreciation for how much this organization cares for college education.



David Lujan I'm at UCI Mechanical/Aerospace Engineering. I have recently transferred to UC Irvine this fall quarter and I am very excited to start my official university career. I plan on joining a leadership team for the school of engineering which is yet to be announced, and I am excited in that some of my fellow peers from my Academy program will be joining me this quarter. I continue to volunteer for my church although it has been online for the most part and continue to serve in whatever area is needed. I spent this last summer working two jobs and taking a few classes during the summer to complete my IGETC and being able to receive a few Associates degrees. Since I am planning to double major I will most likely need to take a third year at UC Irvine, but I am open to the idea since I plan on working with internships and school projects with the school of engineering. I continue to be grateful with TDFS for their financial and moral support of my educational career.



Mia Hanson I am currently a freshman at California State University, Fullerton. I am undeclared at the moment but hope to graduate with a degree in nursing. Over the summer, I spent the majority of my time at home as a result of COVID-19, but I was able to enjoy the summer and plan ahead for college. More recently, I've officially started my online courses for the fall and am looking into local volunteer opportunities. I am blessed to not have to worry financially about my fall semester and hopefully my first year of college, but you never know when emergencies and unexpected situations will happen. I am excited to start this school year on such a good note and hope to embrace what comes next.



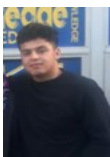
Macy Stark I am currently a sophomore at San Diego State University. I am studying Kinesiology, Pre-Physical Therapy in hopes to be an occupational therapist. It has been the greatest passion of mine to work with children with disabilities and I hope to find clubs and workplaces here in San Diego to keep living out those passions. During my last year at SDSU, I was able to make the Dean's List with a GPA of 3.76. Tustin Dollars for Scholars has allowed me to be in San Diego, studying at one of the best universities for my major. Thank you Tustin Dollars for Scholars for all that you have allowed me to achieve!



Mary Norman This school year I am attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to major in Environmental Engineering and play on the Division 1 soccer team. I moved onto campus September 4th where I will begin my classes and official team practices. All of my classes this quarter are virtual but since I am a student-athlete I have priority housing and am lucky to live on campus. I have already started optional trainings with the team and am having a great time getting to know my way around and my older teammates while staying 6 feet apart! This scholarship will not only allow me to begin my education as an Environmental Engineer, but help support my family as well. I am forever grateful for Tustin Dollars For Scholars for supporting me!



Alanah Calvillo I completed the best first year of college I could have imagined at San Diego State University. During my first year, I grew more independent, made a lot of new friends, extended my comfort zone, and genuinely enjoyed so many of my teachers and classes. I am a Public Health major, which feels super relevant due to current times, but mainly this COV-ID19 season has revealed to me that I am extremely passionate about my major. I joined the Students for Public Health Association on campus, and through this organization I was given the opportunity to participate in doing research for a grant that a Professor was conducting. My part included creating, distributing, and collecting results of a survey analyzing, "Where do College Students Receive Medical News From?" Not a huge surprise, but the most popular source was social media. In addition to the extracurriculars and fun at SDSU, my classes were enjoyable, and I excelled in my academics. I was on the "Dean's List" both semesters at state. I credit a lot of my flexibility in becoming involved on campus to the Tustin Dollars for Scholars Program; because of their support I spend less time working and more of my time taking advantage of the opportunities and experiences my college has to offer. Also, I appreciate when TDFS sends me a text message checking in every now and then, because it reminds me that the TDFS team is rooting for me to succeed.



Daniel Lopez I am back in school currently in my fifth semester still pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. I recently began volunteering at my church again. I help coordinate the sale of snacks and beverages after church is done. It is something that helps the church get some side money so they can invest in things for the new church location. Unfortunately, the place we held church at before was no longer accessible due to the pandemic so we had to relocate. I am just thankful that at the end of the day church is back up and running. I hope you all find yourselves in a healthy state and if you don't know that I am praying for you. I was excited to get more integrated into some diverse clubs this semester, but due to the pandemic, the state of our annual club rush was postponed to a virtual zoom setting. I'm glad it's still happening. I just am not completely adjusted to the virtual scene so trying to interact with strangers through a facetime call is not something I know how to do. As far as my classes this semester I am taking 5 classes which are equivalent to 15 units. Two of those classes are one hundred percent asynchronous which means that depending on your professor you don't necessarily meet up for the class on zoom. My other classes are held virtually every week at the same time. Doing school work from home because I commute can be a benefit, but at the same time, I miss the feeling of getting up and going outside. I feel like the past couple of months, especially I was more inclined to staying inside so I did and now that I have another semester of virtual school I have to be inside. I just want to thank everyone that is a part of the Tustin Dollars for Scholars Foundation. I know the pandemic changed the outcome of a lot of things like our fundraising events and things of that sort but we must look forward and just make the best of an unexpected event. Once again I would like to thank all of you for your support in my education. It means the world to me to know that I have such a supportive foundation that cares about me like family. I wish nothing but blessings for you all. Look forward to seeing you all in the near future.

Tips to remain connected while practicing social distancing or in quarantine:

- Use technology to stay in touch if available, especially video contact. Seeing someone's facial expressions can help increase connection.
- Check in with your friends, family, and neighbors regularly, using texts, phone calls, emails and other virtual tools.
- Wherever you can, help people in your life who may be more vulnerable (e.g. those with no access to the internet or need help grocery shopping)
- Connect with the people in your household. Use this time to improve your existing relationships!
- Manage your stress. Create a daily self-care routine. Exercise, meditate, and keep to a daily routine as much as possible.
- Show kindness to others in your community. Helping others increases your sense of purpose and value, improving your own well-being. It's not just family and friends

Current TDFS Scholars

- Juan Avila Jr.**
Tustin High
- Stone Bodini**
Foothill High
- Emma Braden**
Foothill High
- Alanah Calvillo**
Foothill High
- Ella Cardoza**
Foothill High
- Ethan Chung**
Beckman High
- Steven Good**
Foothill High
- Darren Gerchick**
Beckman High
- Mia Hanson**
Beckman High
- Scott Leandro**
Foothill High
- Daniel Lopez**
Tustin High
- Jose David Lujan**
Beckman High
- Grace Norman**
Foothill High
- Mary Norman**
Foothill High
- William Ortmyer**
Foothill High
- Riley Prendergast**
Beckman High
- Ayushi Sharma**
Tustin High
- Austin Stark**
Foothill High
- Macy Stark**
Foothill High
- Isabelle Yardumian**
Tustin High

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LINDA R. LADD



Dear Friends of Tustin Dollars for Scholars,

I am sure all of us will be happy to see 2020 in our rearview mirror. As I reflect on the past year, I feel it could have been much worse without the support of our Members and Friends of TDFS. Our TDFS family of supporters came through for us in a big way, and has my undying gratitude. Our Scholarship students also had a tough year, but hearing stories of their resilience and perseverance was a bright spot in a tough year. We are looking forward to a bright 2021 and we are already in the planning stages for great fundraisers and Meet-and-Greet events. We, along with our students, are excited by the prospects of our future growth and having increased community support. Again, I want to thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at our events in 2021! On behalf of our organization, all of us wish you and your families a very happy, safe, and blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Ladd, President, Tustin Dollars for Scholars

DEEP APPRECIATION TO OUR DONORS & SPONSORS

- | | | | |
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*given in memory of Sal Ragazzo

TDFS HONORS LONGTIME FRIEND & SUPPORTER— SAL RAGAZZO



In October 2020 TDFS lost a friend and two-decade supporter, Mr. Sal Ragazzo. Mr. and Mrs. Ragazzo, Sal and Diane to those who knew them, have not missed an event or fundraiser for almost 20 years. Their daughter, Laura Valencia, has been the Vice President of Scholarship and, in that capacity, can always be counted on to have the family present at each of our large events. Mr. Ragazzo, Sal, has been helping to set up and tear down at venues, oversee the bar, and serve up food at many of these events. Not only were he and Diane physical supporters, but they and family members have been financial supporters throughout the years. Their daughter, Christi White, was a TDFS Vera Crawford Awardee and a "Tustin Super Hero" for all of her dedication and volunteer hours all these many years. It runs in the family! If you have ever had the pleasure of attending one of Laura Valencia's Scholarship Dinners or an Italianfest, you get a good example of how hands-on, professional, and behind-the-scenes the Ragazzo Family has supported TDFS over the years. Mr. Ragazzo was their mentor and he will be missed at every event going forward. Sal Ragazzo never missed one, but TDFS will surely miss him. God bless you, Sal, and your wonderful family!

