



## SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

**CONTACT: Gail Pinsker**  
**310.450.8338, ext. 70230**  
[gpinsker@smmusd.org](mailto:gpinsker@smmusd.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 14, 2016**

### **Young Collegians Program Leads Students to College**

Santa Monica and Malibu High School freshman and parents turned out for the information session on the Young Collegians program last week held at Samohi to learn how they can make going to college a reality.

The program, established in 2008, is a partnership between the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District and Santa Monica College, available to students many of whom will be the first in their families to attend college. One hundred students have graduated through this program, with 62 more on track to make college graduation a reality.



*Young Collegians – Graduating Class '15*

Some 45 families attended the meeting as prospects for cohort 9, entering the program this summer following their freshman year. The goal of the program is that by the time they graduate high school they will have at least 14 college units that can be transferred to SMC or other four-year institution. And, that the students actually see themselves as college goers with a start to their path to college.

Samohi junior Luis Ramirez (Hernandez), who is part of Young Collegians cohort 7 spoke to the students about his journey through the program. “It was an honor to speak to students who are just like I was two years ago. Students who will be motivated by the guidance and support Young Collegians provides to follow their dreams and goals,” Ramirez said. “I saw reflections of myself in that room and know they will go on to be successful.”

Funded by the Santa Monica College Foundation and SMMUSD, and coordinated by Rosa Serratore from SMMUSD and Maral Hyeler of SMC, students in the program take a selection of courses during each summer with guidance and support by SMMUSD and SMC staff and professors.

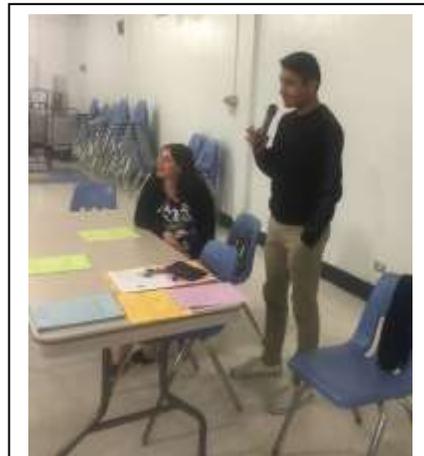
-more-

“This collaboration was conceived to open the world of college for students who may not have had the dream to attend college, nor the where-with-all to make this dream a reality,” Serratore said. “We are all so proud of our graduates and students now in the program, as they are ahead of their peers and have gained a great deal of confidence in the process.”

The 19 students who graduated last May from the Young Collegians program are now attending SMC, other community colleges, as well as four-year universities including: UC Berkeley, Emerson College, Cal State Northridge, UC Riverside, San Jose State and other colleges around the country.

Young Collegians cohort 7 graduate Emily Colon, now at UC Berkeley studying chemical engineering said, “The YC program has provided me with the resources and sparked the motivation that I needed in order to succeed. To have dreams means nothing without knowing how to get there or wanting to work to get there. YC gave me the extra push that I needed.”

Every July, the program celebrates the efforts of the students in the three cohorts taking classes over summer. The Young Collegians thank the supporters of the program and program coordinators, parents, administrators celebrate the students’ efforts and accomplishments towards their successful journey into college.



**Luis Ramirez, Samohi junior,  
YC Cohort 7.**

# # #