

Don Diego Scholarship Foundation

2021 Annual Report



Generosity

has been at the heart of Don Diego Scholarship Foundation (DDSF) since the 22nd District Agricultural Association (DAA) Board established a college scholarship program in the name of the San Diego County Fair's welcoming ambassador, Don Diego, in 1986. That spirit of generosity has prevailed throughout the years. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it

has been key in helping our organization survive and our scholarship recipients thrive.

To date, DDSF has awarded \$1,191,000 in scholarships to 298 students and in agriculture education grants. In 2021, 19 exceptional students shared \$74,500 in scholarships. Many of the scholarships were funded by Board members, their families and friends.

Mission Statement

The Don Diego Scholarship Foundation promotes education in a fair and fiscally sound manner by providing scholarships to deserving San Diego area graduating high school seniors and graduates who are associated with activities at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, including the San Diego County Fair. The Don Diego Scholarship Foundation also provides grants for agricultural education.

Scholarship Recipient Selection Process



DDSF Board member/Chair Emeritus Jon Liss has enjoyed playing an active role in the scholarship recipient selection process for several years. He says, "I am always impressed and inspired when I read the students' applications, then meet and speak with them. Many have overcome significant difficulties in their young lives. Seeing Edwin Vargas Navarro receive the \$20,000 Liss Family Scholarship and begin his productive college and career path at UC Berkeley made 2021 incredibly special. My family and I eagerly look forward to watching this amazing young man continue his run for success."

DDSF Class of 2021



Edwin Vargas Navarro — Vista
\$20,000 Liss Family Scholarship/Top FFA Scholar
\$1,000 Zable Foundation Junior Livestock
Auction Scholarship
University of California Berkeley
Math

My experience at the Fair has been a phenomenal growth experience. I am deeply appreciative of my immigrant parents' sacrifices raising nine children. This amazing scholarship will enable me to attend my dream school, become a math teacher, and show that the long hours my father worked in the strawberry fields were not in vain.



Kylie Konyn — Escondido
\$5,000 Zable Foundation 4-H Scholarship
\$5,000 Spanjian Family Scholarship
\$3,500 William & Betty Ann Tulloch
Junior Livestock Auction Scholarship
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Animal Science

I am a lifetime 4-H member and give my whole self to my club, community, country, and world. I feel privileged to know I will earn a B.S. in Animal Science, secure an advanced degree, and contribute to the growth and utilization of genetic and nutritional information in the agriculture industry. Thank you, DDSF!



Juancarlos Cigarrero — Solana Beach
\$5,000 George & Patricia Karetas Employee Scholarship
\$2,500 Special Award
San Diego State University
Business/Sociology

The Fair was my first job. My father and mother work tirelessly doing manual labor with selflessness and tenacity. Being raised in a low-income household to immigrant parents motivated me to develop a 'can-do' attitude that guides my life. I am proud to be a first-generation college student and help break my family's cycle of poverty.



Alexander Poroy — Encinitas
\$5,000 Gerry & Jeannie Ranglas
Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Business Administration/Economics

Winning first place in the Student Showcase for my architectural design taught me how it feels to be passionate about a project and made me well-rounded. This DDSF scholarship will help me immensely as I pursue an MBA and fulfill the potential that businesses have to change the world for the better.

Employee Scholarships



Jamie Uribe — San Diego
\$2,500
San Diego State University
Business Administration



Samantha Coleman — San Diego
\$1,500
Shewmaker Family Scholarship
Elon University
Psychology



Matthew Morse — Solana Beach
\$1,000
Mannen Family Scholarship
MiraCosta College
Liberal Arts

Exhibitor/Participant Scholarships



Elizabeth Hazard — Encinitas
\$2,500
Colorado State University
Fish/Wildlife/Conservation Biology



Aiko Lozar — Carlsbad
\$1,500
Chapman University
Film Production

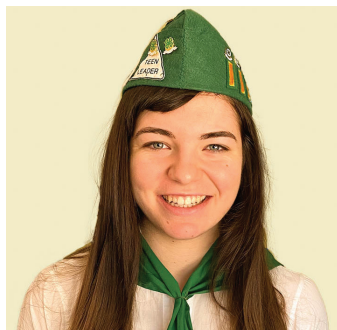


Adelle Priest — Valley Center
\$1,000
Brigham Young University
Environmental Science

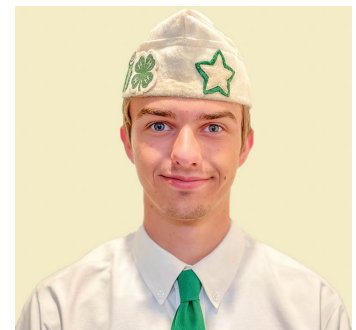
Zable Foundation 4-H Scholarships



Claire Fernandez — Carlsbad
\$2,500
Colorado State University
Science



Leila Perko — Vista
\$1,500
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Animal Science



Morgan Robinson — San Marcos
\$1,000
Cal State University San Marcos
Business Administration

FFA & Junior Livestock Scholarships



Rebecca Berquist — Poway
\$2,500 Juanita Hayes FFA and
\$2,500 Ecke Family Junior
Livestock Auction Scholarship
Montana State University
Agriculture Education



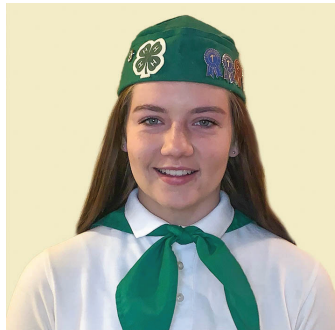
Adelaide Sorbo — Ramona
\$1,500 FFA and
\$1,000 Zable Foundation
Junior Livestock Auction
Texas A&M
Biomedical Engineering



Sydney Breese — Fallbrook
\$1,000 FFA and
\$1,000 Zable Foundation
Junior Livestock Auction
California State University Chico
Agriculture Education/Science



Areli De Casas — Escondido
\$1,000 Zable Foundation
Junior Livestock Auction
University of California Riverside
Psychology



Kellsey McCaffree — Valley Center
\$1,000 Zable Foundation
Junior Livestock Auction
Palomar College
Animal Science



Alyssa Partner — Escondido
\$1,000 Junior Livestock Auction
Modesto Junior College
Large Animal Veterinary Science



In 2021, Vice Chair John Hoeflich had an opportunity to meet the beneficiary of his family's CGW \$20,000 Scholarship while 2020 top Scholar Nikki Arias was home on break.

Generosity Runs in the DDSF Family

Board members stepped up to the plate in a major way during the pandemic. Individuals, families and friends have funded a number of scholarships, including Endowed Named Scholarships and individual year gifts.

In 2021, Board member/Chair Emeritus Jon Liss provided a total \$20,000 Liss Family Scholarship – \$5,000 per year for four years – which was awarded to Edwin Vargas Navarro. This follows in the footsteps of the \$20,000 scholarship provided by Vice Chair John Hoeflich's CGW Family Scholarship awarded in 2020 to Nikki Arias.

DDSF Has Continued to Pivot and Persevere

No one knew that the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020 would last throughout 2021, or that the

San Diego County Fair, for the second consecutive year, would not take place in its usual form. Nevertheless, our

organization and the students we support have energetically continued seizing every opportunity to flourish.

Among Notable 2021 Achievements:

- ❖ A revamped online application system streamlined the application process, making it smoother and easier for students to navigate, apply in the category of their choice, and submit all required information and documentation electronically.
- ❖ As with the regularly scheduled executive meetings, scholarship finalist interviews were conducted via Zoom.
- ❖ In addition to their excellent qualifications, the 19 winning recipients sharing \$74,500 in awards demonstrated admirable resiliency and ingenuity. Samantha Coleman, who captured the \$1,500 Shewmaker Family Scholarship, qualified to apply by working for Roxy Food Truck's "Food Fix" drive-through. Samantha nabbed the job going with her family to purchase dinner. She relates, "We were driving through the roundabout at the Fairgrounds and I had the sudden urge to work there. I got the job, in my pajamas, from the backseat of our family car."
- ❖ In the absence of the popular DDSF Dinner and Concert Gala at the now-shuttered Fair, we ramped up publicity and outreach, as detailed on page 6. These and related efforts, as well as the continuing largesse of Board members and other donors, have kept our stream of revenue flowing despite the lack of Fair-related revenue not only from the Gala but also from the guitar auction, petting farm and other sources.
- ❖ A virtual Junior Livestock Auction yielded \$5,000+ to support 2022 JLA scholarships.
- ❖ A \$15,000 Zable Foundation grant is funding all 2022 4-H and some Junior Livestock Auction scholarships.
- ❖ DDSF Board member Susan Farrior provided a \$4,000 Charity Fair Horse Show donation that will fund scholarships in 2022.
- ❖ After receiving a Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan for the maximum \$12,000 in 2020, the loan was forgiven in 2021.



*Samantha Coleman
enjoying the snow
in Elon, NC.*

Don Diego Scholarship Foundation
 APPLY FOR A 2021 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP!

\$73,500 in College Scholarships
 Ranging from \$1,000-\$20,000!

Deadline:
 Midnight, March 29, 2021

Apply Today!

www.donddiescholarship.org/scholarships

You can't win if you don't apply!

DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization
 EIN 33-0859020

Local youth win Don Diego scholarships

By Staff

DEL MAR — Don Diego Scholarship Foundation celebrated its 35th anniversary by awarding \$73,500 in college scholarships to 19 high-achieving students who the Don Diego Foundation believe represent the very best in the region and in humanity.

"The energy communicated in our finalist interviews was palpable, even on Zoom," Don Diego Chair Juanita Hayes said. "All of us on the Selection Committee and entire board are impressed with the resilience of our Class of 2021 Scholars."

Top winners included Edwin Vargas Navarro of Vista and Kylie Konyn of Escondido. Navarro was the unanimous choice to win the one-time \$20,000 Luis Family Scholarship, covering four years of college. FFA awarded a \$1,000 Junior Livestock Auction scholarship for a total of \$21,000, which he will use to major in mathematics at what he calls "my dream school," University of California Berkeley.

Edwin's accomplishments include major FFA accolades, leadership roles in volunteer organizations, active participation in 4-H (CFA), and Track & Field Scholar-Athlete award.

"I am deeply appreciative of my immigrant parents' sacrifices raising me. Now I can help bring up the next generation of ag students," he said.

Kylie Konyn of Escondido captured three competitive top scholarships: the \$5,000 Zabelle Family Scholarship, which she will use to major in Animal Science on her way to earning an advanced degree in the veterinary or dairy science field. "Dairy farming is in my blood, my desire, and my future. I am a third-generation dairy farmer on one of the two remaining dairy farms in San Diego," Konyn said. "I have developed my own herd and operate my own business, knowing that years ago my father needed to leave college when he was a few units short of a degree to raise Livestock Auction, return to the farm and Modern Junior College, we feel privileged to know Large Animal Veterinary Science."

More information is at donddiescholarship.org and facebook.com/DonDiegoScholarship.

Other top-tier North County recipients include: Alexander Poroy of Solana Beach, \$2,500 Gerry & Juanita Rangan Scholarship, Colorado State University, Film Production; Claire Fernandez, Carlsbad, \$2,500, Colorado State University, Sciences; Leila Perko, Vista, \$1,500, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Animal Science; Morgan Robinson, San Marcos, \$1,000, Cal State University, Business Administration; Arli De Casas, Escondido, \$1,000, Zabelle Foundation Junior Livestock Auction, University of California, Riverside; Alyssa Partner, Escondido, \$1,000, Junior Livestock Auction, University of California, Riverside; Kellsey McCaffree, Escondido, \$1,000, Junior Livestock Auction, University of California, Riverside.

Ratcheting Up Publicity to Energize DDSF's Expanding Audience

A second consecutive year without DDSF's annual Gala fundraiser meant not only loss of revenue but a lost opportunity for our Class of 2021 Scholars to meet and mingle with the donors who supported them and those who might support future recipients. To ameliorate these twin dilemmas, we intensified our pre- and post-selection publicity and outreach efforts. The results in terms of increased interactive exposure, growth of our online DDSF community, monetary donations, and wise investments, were positive.

Platforms accessed had the added benefit of "free ink," meaning there is no necessity to pay for communications

shared via Facebook, Instagram, the website, eBlasts and targeted releases to the media.

In addition to highlighting our 2021 recipients, we enhanced awareness of DDSF's significance by sharing frequent updates on recipients, including monthly Scholar Spotlights highlighting past recipients who have excelled in college and career, and are giving back to their community. These and other electronic vehicles feature easy, one-click links to donating.

As an added marketing bonus, Chair Juanita Hayes coordinated and appeared on KUSI TV's "Good Morning, San Diego" with top 2021 Scholar Edwin Vargas Navarro.

DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

April 2021 Scholar Spotlight
 From Blue Ribbons to Blue Angels,
 1999's Amber Lynn Scott Soars Beyond

Amber at the White House

Today, Amber Lynn Scott is a highly regarded media/public affairs professional pursuing a PhD in Organizational Communication at USC's prestigious Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. It all began in Ramona where this gregarious talent grew up with her parents, two brothers and a menagerie that included horses, dogs, pigs, lambs, steers, rabbits, chickens, and goats.

"I had a pet turkey in my bedroom," Amber chuckles. "FFA and 4-H helped form my character starting when I was ten, showing lambs at the Fair. I celebrated my 16th birthday in a barn," she recalls, saying community support helped propel her success.

So did Don Diego. "The \$5,000 scholarship was life-changing to me as a first-gen college student paying my own way. I graduated from Southern Oregon University with no student debt."

While in Oregon, Amber seized an opportunity to pivot into broadcast journalism, later earning an M.A. She has served as Public Affairs and Safety Officer for the world-renowned Blue Angels, worked as a journalist in the U.S. and Italy, served as Flag Aid to the Navy's top strategic communicator, and as White House Social Aide.

With her high-level military and civilian expertise plus deep desire to serve, it wouldn't be surprising to someday see Amber in the White House herself! For now, she and her fiancé frequently visit her family in Ramona, where she helps FFA students prepare for speech competitions.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to give back. Don Diego invested in me. Now I can help bring up the next generation of ag students."

DONATE TODAY!

When you support Don Diego Scholarship Foundation, you pay it forward to future leaders such as Amber Lynn Scott who give back to their community and make the world a better place.

donddiescholarship.org/donate

DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
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DON DIEGO AWARDS \$74,500 IN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS TO 19 EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

CELEBRATE OUR CLASS OF 2021!

Edwin Vargas Navarro · Kylie Konyn · Juan Carlos Cigarrero · Alexander Poroy · Rebecca Berquist · Jamie Uribe · Samantha Coleman · Matthew Morse · Elizabeth Hazard · Aiko Lozar · Adelle Priest · Claire Fernandez · Leila Perko · Morgan Robinson · Adelaide Sorbo · Sydney Breese · Arli De Casas · Kellsey McCaffree · Alyssa Partner

Sharing \$74,500 in College Scholarships

A Year of Strength and Transition

DDSF ended 2021 in a strong financial position, with total current assets of \$1,252,788 including more than \$576,600 in endowed scholarships. We received donations to support the Plant*Grow*Eat bus program (paused for two pandemic years) in memory of Jill Coughlin, the program's former Coordinator. The 2021 virtual junior livestock auction raised over \$5,000 to support 2022 junior livestock auction scholarships. Many friends of DDSF donated over \$162,600 in support of our mission.

As DDSF's 35th anniversary year approached its conclusion, 2021 became a year of transition.

At the end of 2021, Executive Director Chana Mannen finalized her plan to retire in 2022 and confirmed she would aid in passing the baton to a new ED. She formally shared her decision in a January 2022 letter to the Board in which she noted, "It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your executive director for thirty-five years, from the birth of our organization until

the present day." Expressing pride in having led the awarding of 298 scholarships, Chana said, "I am also proud that our organization is in sound financial shape."

As the organization looks forward to 2022 and beyond, it looks to the past to fuel the future. An Alumni Club will be established to offer past scholarship recipients an opportunity to join together and help DDSF propel the next generation of Scholars to college and career success.

As a challenging 2021 came to its end, DDSF buoyantly concluded, "During this pandemic-driven, tumultuous time in our 35-year history, we have met the moment. We are prepared and eager to continue building a better San Diego, one scholarship at a time."

2021 DDSF Success Stories in the Making



*Claire
Fernandez*



*Juancarlos
Cigarrero*



*Adelaide
Sorbo*



*Leila
Perko*



*Matthew
Morse*



*Elizabeth
Hazard*

Current Leadership Team

Executive Committee

Juanita Hayes, Chairman
John Hoeflich, Vice Chairman
D Prestininzi, Secretary
George Karetas, Treasurer

Board

Lisa Barkett, Alyson Connelly, Sandra DiCicco,
Glenn Drown, Susan Farrior, Joe Harper,
Kirby Morrison, Frederick Schenk,
Stephen Shewmaker, Alysha Stehly

Chairs Emeritus

Paul Ecke III, Roxana Foxx, Jon Liss

Executive Director

Chana Mannen

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facebook.com/dondiegoscholarship

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