



# 2024 DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT



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CULTIVATING  
FUTURES  
THROUGH  
EDUCATION

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**DON DIEGO**  
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

# ANNUAL GALA

This year's Gala was truly record-breaking, raising over \$200,000!

The live auction was an unforgettable Gala highlight, featuring incredible items such as luxury suite tickets to Angels and San Diego Padres games, a weeklong Croatian cruise, and exclusive private dinner parties for 10 at Pamplemousse Grille.

A special moment of the evening was honoring Carlene Moore, CEO of the Del Mar Fairgrounds, and Katie Mueller, COO, for their unwavering support and remarkable contributions to the Fairgrounds over the years.

Following a heartwarming presentation recognizing our talented scholars, guests were treated to an incredible concert by Old Dominion, rounding out a truly memorable evening of generosity and celebration.



[Click here to check out our Gala photos!](#)

## NEW SCHOLARSHIPS

We are thrilled to announce that CGW and The Liss Family have awarded new 4-year scholarships totaling \$20,000. Their continued generosity and commitment to supporting education provide our scholars with invaluable opportunities and a significant boost toward achieving their academic dreams. We are deeply grateful for their ongoing partnership and dedication to making a lasting impact!

## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, the Don Diego Scholarship Foundation continued to make a lasting impact by supporting students in their educational pursuits. **A record-breaking 89 scholarship applications highlighted the program's growing reach and reputation.** Key accomplishments included fully funding several of the endowed scholarships and having generous donations from board members and the community.

## JR. LIVESTOCK AUCTION

The auction raised an impressive \$23,000, paving the way for even more scholarships to be awarded in 2025. For the second consecutive year, the JLA Support the Exhibitors Fund received generous backing from Hollandia Dairy Milk Sales, enabling the committee to provide vital support to 4-H and FFA students participating in the auction. It was truly heartwarming to see Fair vendors come together, have fun, and rally behind such a meaningful cause.



# PLANT\*GROW\*EAT

This year, the program took on a fresh approach by kicking off before the Fair began.



Nearly three thousand San Diego elementary students participated in interactive stations, gaining hands-on knowledge about agriculture. The community's unwavering support for the Plant\*Grow\*Eat program was evident, with nearly \$30,000 raised to continue its impactful work.

The Del Mar Foundation generously contributed a \$10,000 grant to provide buses for Title One school

students, ensuring they could attend and experience the program. Additionally, the Chortek Weisman Jewish Foundation awarded another \$10,000 grant, further bolstering the program's reach.

We are excited to build on this year's success and continue making a difference in 2025!

[See our photos here.](#)

## CELEBRATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Foundation celebrates joyous milestones among its team. Board member **Alyson Connolly** welcomed a baby boy, as well as Executive Director **Ashley Colburn McCaughan**. Perhaps the two boys will be future scholars.

## TELEVISION SPOTLIGHT

**Don Diego Scholarship Foundation released two videos during the year.** One video is about Plant\*Grow\*Eat and another about the Foundation which can be viewed on the [Foundation's website home page here.](#)

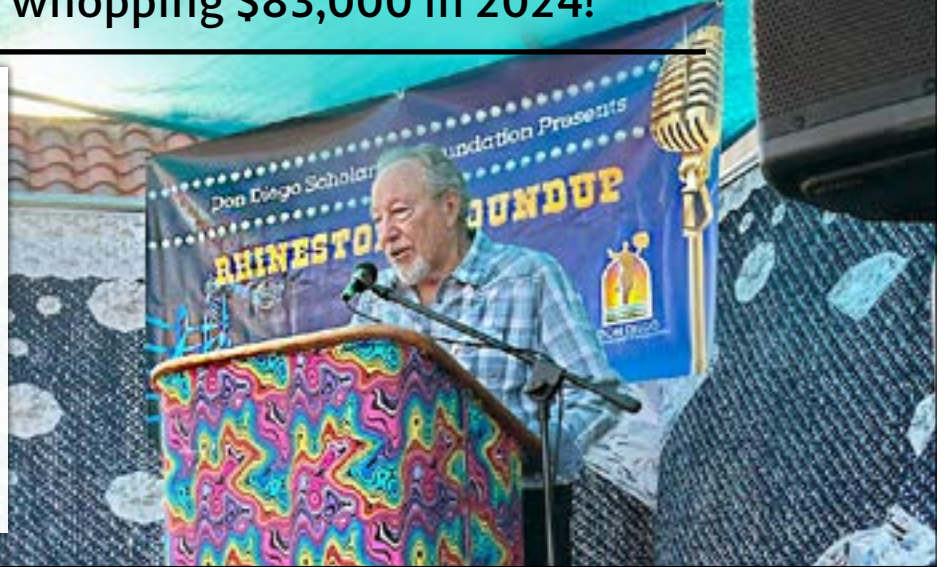


KUSI TV interviewed scholar, Ava Raugust and Executive Director McCaughan, raising awareness about scholarships and the annual Gala.

# MEET OUR CLASS OF 2024

26 exemplary students from across San Diego sharing a whopping \$83,000 in 2024!

Don Diego scholarships emanate from diverse backgrounds, possess an array of talents, and are eager to embark upon new horizons in their educations and careers. They are idealistic, altruistic, ambitious, academically accomplished, and highly motivated; in a word, exceptional, says Don Diego 2024 Chairman Stephen Shewmaker.



## Ruby Perez

\$5,000 Karetas Family Endowment Employee Scholarship  
\$5,000/year CGW Four-Year Scholarship  
Cal Poly SLO

*Ruby Perez will major in biological science and pursue a career in the medical field. "Students in this field need grit, ambition, and determination to persevere and achieve. Mine will not be an easy journey, but I'm confident that I will endure."*



## Nicholas Usher

\$5,000 Ranglas Family Endowment Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship  
\$5,000/year Liss Family Four-Year Scholarship  
MIT

*Nico Usher says, "Eight years ago, after learning that my elementary school didn't have the funds or teachers to start a robotics team, I created one in my garage. In 2024, as the team's lead mechanical engineer designing robots to solve difficult problems, we qualified for the World Championship and scored the World Record!"*



## Ava Raugust

\$5,000 22nd DAA Board of Directors FFA Scholarship  
\$5,000 Spanjian Family Endowment Scholarship  
UC Berkeley

*Crediting FFA with helping her make the leap from caring for a guppy fish to raising a hog, showing at the Fair, and participating in JLA, Ava Raugust says, "This year, a friend and I tackled an environmental topic that impacted us as both San Diegans and agri-scientists: oil spills." They used CAD and 3-D printing to design and build a drum skimmer, winning a high FFA prize for their groundbreaking research.*



**Zoe Prescott**  
\$5,000  
Chicken Charlie  
4-H Scholarship  
\$1,000  
Don Diego Alumni Club  
Scholarship  
UC Davis



**Kelsey Hoeffliger**  
\$2,500  
Tulloch Family  
Partners  
FFA Scholarship  
\$2,500  
JLA Scholarship  
Cal Poly SLO



**Salyn Meas**  
\$3,500  
William and Betty Ann  
Tulloch Endowed Scholarship  
\$1,500  
Roxana Foxx Endowment  
FFA Scholarship  
Grossmont College/  
Texas A&M



**Lily Anderson**  
\$2,500  
Zable Foundation  
4-H Scholarship  
\$1,500  
JLA Scholarship  
Grossmont College/  
Chico State



**Dacey Bender**  
\$1,000  
Kirby Morrison  
FFA Scholarship  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
UCSD



**Chase Jonas**  
\$1,500  
4-H Scholarship  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
SDSU



**Angela Martineau**  
\$1,000  
Edwards Family  
4-H Scholarship  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
Cal Poly SLO



**Isabella Locher**  
\$2,500  
Mark Arabo  
Vocational Education  
Scholarship  
Mesa College



**Julia Smiley**  
\$2,500 Karetas Family  
Endowment Vocational  
Education Scholarship  
Merced College



**Natalie Rocha**  
\$2,500  
Schenk Family  
Endowment Employee  
Scholarship  
Cal State LA



**Natalya Huys**  
\$2,500  
Shewmaker Family  
Endowment Exhibitor/  
Participant Scholarship  
UCSD



**Eryn Hoeffliger**  
\$1,000  
Edwards Family Employee  
Scholarship  
West Texas A&M



**Andrew Shyffer**  
\$1,500  
Howell Boys Employee  
Scholarship  
UC Berkeley



**Baxter Simpson**  
\$1,500  
Mannen Family  
Endowment Exhibitor/  
Participant Scholarship  
Chapman University



**Lucy Shen**  
\$1,000  
Ecke Family Exhibitor/  
Participant Scholarship  
Columbia University



**Adam Alegre**  
\$1,500  
Brother's Forever  
Scholarship  
Palomar College



**Emily Grosskreutz**  
\$2,000  
JLA Scholarship  
Cuyamaca College



**Landree Stewart**  
\$2,000  
JLA Scholarship  
UCSD



**Karlee Larzalere-Higuera**  
\$1,500  
JLA Scholarship  
University of Arizona



**Shayla Haggerty**  
\$1,500  
JLA Scholarship  
Cal Poly SLO



**Kimberly Cisneros-Zavela**  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
Cal State San Marcos



**Isabelle Schachner**  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
San Diego City College



**Avery Strang**  
\$1,000  
JLA Scholarship  
BYU Hawaii

# DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION PROUDLY WELCOMED THREE ESTEEMED NEW BOARD MEMBERS

A passion for community enrichment to support our mission!



Mark Arabo



Russ Penniman



Jim Dredge

Each brings a wealth of experience and passion for community enrichment to the foundation's mission of supporting education through scholarships. Their diverse expertise promises to enhance the organization's impact and further its legacy of empowering future generations.



*As we reflect on a year of remarkable achievements, the Don Diego Scholarship Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to our donors, board members, and community partners. Together, we are transforming lives through education and building a brighter future for generations to come.*

## CURRENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Executive Committee

Kirby Morrison, Chair  
Glenn Drown, Vice Chair  
Jim Edwards, Treasurer  
Chana Mannen, Secretary

### Board

Mark Arabo, Lisa Barkett, Alyson Connolly,  
Sandra DiCicco, Jim Dredge,  
Susan Farris, Joe Harper, John Hoeflich,  
George Karetas, Russ Penniman,  
D Prestininzi, Stephen Shewmaker,  
Frederick Schenk, Alysha Stehly

### Chairs Emeritus

Paul Ecke III, Roxana Foxx,  
Jon Liss, Stephen Shewmaker

### Executive Director

Ashley Colburn McCaughan

## MISSION

The Don Diego Scholarship Foundation promotes education in a fair and fiscally sound manner by providing scholarships to deserving San Diego County graduating high school seniors and graduates who have been 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.

### Don Diego Scholarship Foundation

PO Box 614, Del Mar, CA 92014

[DonDiegoScholarship.org](http://DonDiegoScholarship.org)

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