



2025 DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT



The Don Diego Scholarship Foundation proudly celebrates another year of tremendous growth, generosity, and success. Thanks to the continued support of our community, sponsors, and dedicated board, we have made significant strides in advancing our mission to empower students and promote agricultural education throughout San Diego County.



**DON DIEGO
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION**

REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Financial Highlights

\$93,500 in Scholarships Awarded. In 2025, the Foundation awarded an incredible \$93,500 in college scholarships to outstanding San Diego County students.

Two New Four-Year \$20,000 Scholarships. This year we proudly introduced two new four-year \$20,000 scholarships, generously funded by board members Jim Dredge and Jim Edwards. Their continued commitment ensures that students have the support they need to thrive academically and personally.

Three New \$5,000 JLA Scholarships. We also received a \$15,000 donation from the Tellam Foundation, allowing us to create three new \$5,000 JLA scholarships — awarded to two FFA members and one 4-H participant. We are deeply grateful to the Tellam Family for their generosity and their dedication to supporting youth in agriculture.



Winning 2025 Don Diego's \$5,000 Tellam Foundation JLA Scholarship "means the world to me, my family, and my future," declares Madyson Hayes, who will journey from Fallbrook to Cal Poly SLO to major in Animal Science. She says, "This scholarship enables me to enter the next chapter of my life, providing financial support to further my passion for animals and agriculture."

Annual Gala

Raised an Impressive \$111,000. Our Annual Gala, held on June 27, was a night to remember. Guests gathered to celebrate our scholars, enjoy the Jon Pardi concert, and raise funds for future scholarships. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and sponsors, the event raised an impressive \$111,000.



Among the articulate Scholars thanking Gala donors, first individually and later on stage, was effervescent Mariah Morris (shown here with Board member Jim Edwards and his wife Joan). She echoed her fellow students' sentiments as she told the crowd, "On behalf of all of us, we thank Don Diego donors for your support!"



This Don Diego scholarship has brought her one step closer to building a successful future in Commercial Real Estate and she couldn't be more grateful," Charlina Schmidt is excited to begin her Business Administration journey at SDSU.



Long-time DDSF supporters Frederick Schenk, Joanna & Jon Liss, and Paul Ecke.

First Annual Fall Hoedown

A Brand-New Tradition. In October, we launched a brand-new tradition — the First Annual Fall Hoedown, held on October 25 at the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club. Guests enjoyed a lively evening of BBQ, line dancing lessons, and live music — all in support of our scholarship programs. The Hoedown was a tremendous success, raising funds for additional scholarships to be awarded in 2026.



PLANT*GROW*EAT



Our Plant*Grow*Eat Initiative Continues to Flourish.
In 2025, the Foundation supported 32 buses bringing students to the Fair to learn about agriculture and sustainability — all made possible by raising \$12,500 for this beloved educational program.

On May 15, members of Del Mar-based organizations joined Don Diego to welcome children arriving at the Fair. A monumental \$10,000 of the total came from our long-time supporter, the Del Mar Foundation (DMF). The Del Mar Garden Club and the Master Gardener Association of San Diego County also contributed generously and volunteered their time.

DMF Grant Committee Chair Glenn Warren and his wife Randee from the Del Mar Garden Club made their first visit and reflected, "This is such a worthwhile project and we're happy to support it."



Valencia Park Elementary 2nd-grade teacher Mrs. Masters (right) personally thanked bus sponsors for making the Plant*Grow*Eat field trip possible. "The kids were so excited to come here. In preparation, we watched a time-lapse video of plants growing, and when they learned they would also see animals, they went wild. Thank you, Don Diego!" With her are Don Diego Executive Director Ashley Colburn McCaughan, Del Mar Garden Club's Randee Warren, and Del Mar Foundation's Glenn Warren and Sudeepo Roy. We thank everyone who made this year's PGE a blooming success!

Junior Livestock Auction (JLA)

Supporting the Next Generation of Leaders.
The JLA Committee had an outstanding year, raising more than \$30,000 at the auction. These funds will be awarded next year to 4-H and FFA participants, continuing our tradition of supporting the next generation of agricultural leaders.



Big ambition, big animals, and a big heart combine in Kiara Konyn, who will "milk" her \$1,500 Ecke Family 4-H and \$5,000 Tellam Foundation JLA scholarships to major in Dairy & Food Management/ Pre-Veterinary at the U of Wisconsin with the goal of becoming a large animal vet. She notes, "My parents operate the last remaining dairy farm in San Diego County, giving me hands-on experience with animal care and a deep appreciation for the science behind livestock health and productivity. Kiara will make a great vet!"

Charity Fair Horse Show

\$10,000 Supporter. We are truly greatful for the ongoing support of the Charity Fair Horse Show.



Susan Farrior of the Charity Fair Horse Show presents a \$10,000 check to DDSF Chair Kirby Morrison.

MEET OUR CLASS OF 2025

25 exemplary students from across San Diego sharing a whopping \$93,500 in 2025!



Madeline Davis

\$5,000/year Edwards Family Four-Year Scholarship

\$5,000 Karetas Family FFA Scholarship

\$5,000 Tellam Foundation JLA Scholarship

Cal State University Chico

What might you do with three 2025 DDSF scholarships totaling \$30,000? If you're the amazing Madeline Davis of Valley Center, you'll head to CSU Chico to study Agriculture Business. Madeline confidently declares, "I envision myself eventually in agricultural policy or law; advocating for the two percent of Americans who feed us all. Whether it's managing a large farm, lobbying for ag legislation, or walking the Capitol in my first-ever pantsuit, I'm committed to making a meaningful impact." Keep your eye on Madeline Davis!



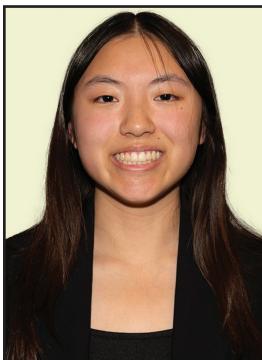
Anairis Canseco

\$5,000/year Dredge Family Four-Year Scholarship

\$5,000 Karetas Family Endowment Employee Scholarship

Brigham Young University

She stands up and speaks out for her community, reaches out and helps others, all while excelling in academics and leadership, so it's no surprise that first-gen Anairis Canseco of Solana Beach will major in Political Science at Brigham Young on her way to "my dream career of being an Immigration Attorney." Receiving the Dredge Family \$5,000/year, four-year scholarship plus \$5,000 Karetas Family Endowment Employee scholarship for a total of \$25,000 "is a blessing," she says. "I feel super grateful because I can attend college without a financial burden and make my and my parents' dreams come true."



Kate Xu

\$5,000 Ranglas Family Endowment Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship

\$5,000 Spanjian Family Endowment Scholarship

MIT

Acclaimed roboticist, researcher, pianist, and academic standout (4.65 GPA), Kate Xu is also now a 2025 Don Diego Scholar who will take her immense talents and two DDSF scholarships totaling \$10,000 to MIT, where she will double-major in Mechanical Engineering/Environmental Engineering. More on Kate and the other Class of 2025 stellar students to come!



Connor Nelson

\$5,000 22nd DAA/DMTC in honor of Joe Harper 4-H Scholarship

\$1,000 Alumni Scholarship

\$2,500 JLA Scholarship

Cal State University Chico

As a little kid winning Reserve Grand Champion with his chickens during his first season at the Fair, Connor Nelson was not chicken about facing his fear of bees. He overcame his trepidation to become an inspiring leader regarding bees and everything 4-H, as he rose to become President of the Ramona Stars 4-H Club. Connor is headed to CSU Chico to study Mechanical Engineering, supported by multiple Don Diego scholarships. He says, "This represents the culmination of all my summers as a kid and all the hard work I put in with my livestock at www.sdfair.com each year."



Tate Criqui
\$2,500 Schenk Family Endowment Employee Scholarship
Cal Poly SLO



Madyson Hayes
\$5,000 Tellam Foundation JLA Scholarship
Cal Poly SLO



Aubree Hoyt
\$2,500 Zable Foundation 4-H Scholarship
\$2,500 JLA Scholarship
Point Loma Nazarene



Anton Hester
\$3,500 William and Betty Ann Tulloch Endowed JLA Scholarship
University of Idaho



Kiara Kony
\$1,500 Ecke Family 4-H Scholarship
\$5,000 Tellam Foundation JLA Scholarship
University of Wisconsin



Clayton Critz
\$2,000 Royster Family Endowment Vocational Education Scholarship
Cuesta College



Kaitlyn Law
\$2,500 Chicken Charlie Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship
Cornell University



Weston Merriman
\$1,000 Kirby Morrison FFA Scholarship
\$2,000 JLA Scholarship
Modesto Junior College



Mariah Morris
\$2,500 Tulloch Family Partners FFA Scholarship
CSU Channel Islands



Kelsey Weller
\$2,500 Mark Arabo Vocational Education Scholarship
Tulsa Welding School



Gabby Anderson
\$1,500 Howell Boys Employee Scholarship
Northwestern University



Sage Bowles
\$1,500 JLA Scholarship
University of Arizona



Logan Brown
\$1,500 Mannen Family Endowment Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship
Caltech



Rhys Morey
\$1,500 JLA Scholarship
Palomar College
Cal Poly SLO



Jamie Newton
\$1,500 Brother's Forever Scholarship
Cal State San Marcos



Alice Powell
\$1,500 Roxana Foxx Endowment FFA Scholarship
Cal Poly SLO



Michael Sanchez
\$1,500 JLA Scholarship
CSU Chico



Charlina Schmidt
\$1,500 JLA Scholarship
SDSU



Elona Gevarges
\$1,000 Joe Harper Endowment Employee Scholarship
SDSU



Teo Kony
\$1,000 Shewmaker Family Endowment Exhibitor/Participant Scholarship
University of Idaho



Emerson Rockwell
\$1,000 Shewmaker Family Endowment 4-H Scholarship
Western Kentucky University

NEW LEADERSHIP AND BOARD UPDATES

Don Diego Scholarship Foundation Proudly Welcomes Two New Board Members



Sam Nejabat



Donna O'Leary

This year, we were thrilled to welcome two new board members, Donna O'Leary and Sam Nejabat, to the Don Diego Scholarship Foundation. Both bring extensive experience and deep connections to the Del Mar Fairgrounds and the 22nd District Agricultural Association (DAA). Their involvement and leadership will be monumental in continuing to strengthen the partnership between Don Diego and the Fair community, ensuring a bright and impactful future for the Foundation.



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 Farrior, Joe Harper, John Hoeflich

George Karetas, Sam Nejabat
Donna O'Leary, Russ Penniman

D Prestininzi, Frederick Schenk, Alysha Stehly

Chairs Emeritus

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

Executive Director

Ashley Colburn McCaughan

LOOKING AHEAD

With tremendous gratitude for our donors, sponsors, and community, the Don Diego Scholarship Foundation looks forward to another year of growth and giving. From scholarships to educational programs and community partnerships, every contribution makes an impact — and every student represents a brighter future for us all.

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

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