



# Perris Press Release

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## Perris Honors the 2013 Students of the Year

The five graduating high-school seniors honored May 21 by the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce share some common traits: hard work, inquisitiveness, selflessness, service to community, a desire to make a difference.

Those qualities were evident when the five took home student of the year honors from the Perris Union High School District, accolades that earned them more than \$1,700-in scholarships, medals, certificates and plaques from local, regional, state and national officials and the praise of elected office-holders.

"You represent the very best of the best," said Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough. "With you, anything is possible. The sky is the limit." Yarbrough was one of several business owners who presented the winners with individualized awards—I his case, engraved pens. Other awards included glass mugs, gift cards and a laundry basket as a reminder of all the clothes they will have to wash at college.

For 15 years, Perris Union high school students have received end-of-the-academic year honors from the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce and its Menifee counterpart. Winners are chosen based on academic excellence, service to their peers and community and triumphing over personal challenges. The 2103 winners include:

**Ashley Acosta**, 18, from the California Military Institute. Ashley became the first Cadet Command Major in the state of California for her outstanding work as a student leader. She plans to attend California State University, San Marcos, in the fall and will be studying to become a registered nurse and nurse anesthetist. She credits her time at CMI with helping develop self-confidence and assertiveness.

"I've always strived to improve myself," Ashley said. "I will always think of CMI as my family, my classmates and my peers. I also want to thank the City of Perris for its support in allowing people like me to pursue their passion and careers."

**Alejandro Contreras**, 18, of Perris High School. A track (1,600-meters) and cross-country (three miles) competitor, Alejandro will be enrolling at UCLA in the fall to major in mathematics and minor in physics or economics. He credits his coach, Troy Stenlake, with serving as a role model and helping him learn the value of motivation, determination and hard-work. Alejandro said he will remember his time as a Perris Panther with fondness because he could concentrate on his academics and athletics without the responsibilities of juggling finances and earning a living.

"I enjoyed the atmosphere and being with my friends," he said.

**Danielle Eileen Lemus**, 18, of Perris Lake High School. Danielle said she aspires to one day become a social worker or counselor because she loves children. Danielle said she enjoys listening to Christian rock music and spending time with her sisters. She remains undecided about where she will continue her education.

Danielle said she is grateful to the City of Perris for acknowledging the good works completed by the Students of the Year.

**JerynneRae Noble**, 17, of Heritage High School. JerynneRae will be entering UC San Diego to study bio-engineering and bio-medical engineering. In addition, JerynneRae took part in the Heritage High School academic decathlon, plays the flute, piccolo and piano for several jazz ensembles and has performed with the Mighty Patriot Regiment marching band in several parades hosted by the City of Perris. And she also is active in her church's youth group.

She said she is "humbled" to be named the campus' Student of the Year.

"There were many worthy applicants," she said. "I did not believe I was worthy of this award."

Her advice to peers as she leaves high school for university life: "To slow things down and appreciate everyone in your life while you have them."

**Coakley Rathbun**, 18, of Paloma Valley High School. Coakley will enter Arizona State University in the fall and plans to study computer science. He said his choice of college suits him fine because "it's far from home but not too far." In addition to his academic achievements at Paloma, he also played center and long-snapper on the Paloma Valley Wildcats football team. His extra-curricular activities included taking part in toy drives for underprivileged children.

Coakley said the teachers at Paloma made his high-school experience one he won't soon forget.

"There are a lot of great teachers who care a lot about their students and want them to succeed," Coakley said.

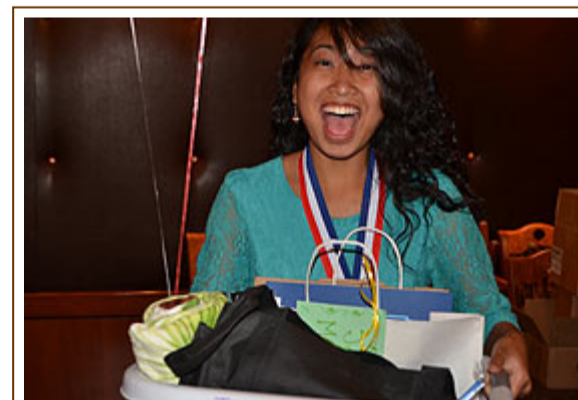
Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said the City is proud to celebrate the success and achievements of the five Students of the Year. "You hear a lot about it when teen-agers make poor choices," he said. "But these outstanding students have made great choices and followed through on them. It's a pleasure to recognize their talent and commitment."



The 2103 Students of the Year from the Perris Union High School District: JerynneRae Noble, from Heritage High School; Coakley Rathbun from Paloma Valley High School; Ashley Acosta from the California Military Institute; Danielle Lemus from Perris Lake High School and Alejandro Contreras from Perris High School.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough congratulates the 2013 Students of the Year during their award ceremonies on May 21.



JerynneRae Noble is all smiles as she carries a basket of goodies away from the awards ceremony.



Richard Wallis, principal of the California Military Institutes, presents the Student of the Year Medal to Ashley Acosta.