



Four Win "Student of the Year" Awards

Four Perris Valley high school seniors earned Student of the Year honors at their individual campuses this year, an award that punctuated years of study, athletics, volunteer work and extracurricular activities and set them apart as leaders and scholars of today and tomorrow.

The recipients—Cassandra M. Karjala, of Perris High School; Yamilett I. Medrano, of California Military Institute; Amanda Breann Carroll, of Heritage High School and Randi I. Martinez, of Paloma Valley High School—earned scholarship of \$2,750 each for their efforts. They also received plaques, medallions and other goodies, including a personalized laundry basket for use while in college.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch was among several dignitaries who presented awards to the quartet. Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Human Resources and Risk Manager Isabel Lugo represented Perris City staff. Vince Agnifili, president of the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, represented the City's business community.

"It's great to see what they have accomplished thus far but it will be even better to see what they will accomplish in the future," Busch said. "They are our future. And we look forward to see what they are going to bring to our community in the future."

The awards were presented at the Sizzler restaurant in Lake Elsinore.

Sally Myers, who owns the restaurant and began the Student-of-the-Year in 1998, said that while the winners come from divergent backgrounds and have varied interests, they share common traits—character, humility, passion, a willingness to share and selflessness.

"They are incredible kids," Myers said.

Here is a brief look at all the Student-of-the-Year recipients

CASSANDRA KARJALA

Cassandra, 17, credits her participation in student government at Perris High School with helping her develop public speaking skills and a more outgoing personality. A fan of "Law and Order" and "CSI," Cassandra will attend UC Riverside, where she is majoring in chemistry with a minor in forensics. She wants to become a forensics scientist.

She is a member of the Girl Scouts and the Venturing Scouts, where she takes part in teaching younger children the importance of treating the environment with respect.

Cassandra said she is glad to move on to college but will miss her high school colleagues.

"Everyone in my class is going in different directions," she said.

She said she enjoyed growing up in Perris.

"I really like the City of Perris," she said. "It's a nice town with a down-home feeling. This is a big honor for me, one I never expected."

YAMILETT MEDRANO

Yamilett's duties at the California Military Institute include serving as the ranking cadet—the top student at the school. She also played volleyball and basketball, served as president of her class and as editor of the school yearbook and teaches Sunday school at her church, *Maníntal en el desirto*.

Yamilett, 17, will attend UC Davis and plans to study biological sciences. Her ultimate goal is to become an obstetrician-gynecologist. She will spend this summer helping her mother clean homes and working with the uniform vendor to sell clothing to CMI students enrolling for next year.

In remarks to the assembled crowd, CMI Commandant Richard Wallis used three words to describe Yamilett: scholar, leader, athlete.

"I grew up in Perris and it is a real honor to know that a girl like me can grow up and succeed," she said. "I am very thankful to receive this award."

AMANDA BREANN CARROLL

Amanda, 17, will attend UC San Diego to study psychology and marine biology with an ultimate goal of becoming a dolphin trainer. She transferred Great Oak High School in Temecula to Heritage High School in her junior year. She quickly found a home at Heritage, becoming the acknowledged leader of the volleyball team and earning Most Valuable Player honors for volleyball in the Mountain-Pass League. She says her Student-of-the-Year award is the perfect complement to her athletic award.

This summer, Amanda will travel to Michigan with the group Young Life, a Christian outreach organization. She will be working with high-school students.

"It's an amazing opportunity to serve others, it fills you with humility," she said. Of her accolades presented by the City of Perris, Amanda said: "It's great to be honored by such a great City."

RANDI MARTINEZ

Randi's Student-of-the-Year Award at Paloma Valley High School is in keeping with a family tradition. Her brother, Josiah, received the award in 2009 and now attends the Air Force Academy in Colorado.

Randi, 17, who is an accomplished flutist, will attend Westmont College in Santa Barbara, where she will study pre-med. Her ultimate goal is to become either a pediatrician or general surgeon.

Away from school, Randi volunteers at Reliance Church, where she has made several trips to Mexico to work with younger children there.

This summer, she will travel to Colorado to visit her brother and take in the National Parks of that state.

"It has been such an honor to grow up in the City of Perris," Randi says. "I want to thank Mayor Busch and all the leaders for the help and support they have given me."



Perris Union High School District Students of the Year Cassandra Karjala, Yamilett Medrano, Amanda Carroll and Randi Martinez.



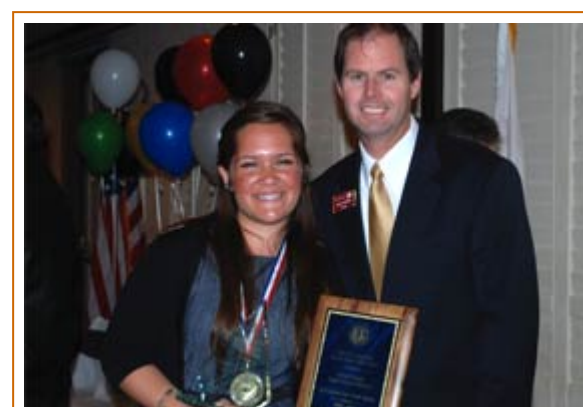
Perris Mayor Daryl Busch presents a plaque to Yamilett Medrano during the annual Student of the Year award ceremonies.



Cassandra Karjala's medallion.



The winners with medallions presented to them.



Randi Martinez with Paloma Valley High School Principal Brian Morris.