

event
program



2026

Scholars' Day Celebration

JUNE 13, 2026

LONG BEACH YACHT CLUB



OPERATION JUMP START
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562-988-2131



Welcome

Welcome to Scholars' Day 2026—truly our favorite day of the year!

Today, we celebrate the accomplishments of our scholars and the families, mentors, volunteers, staff, donors, and community partners who have supported them along the way. Scholars' Day reminds us what is possible when talent, opportunity, and unwavering support come together.

This year, we proudly honor twenty-nine high school graduates and six college graduates. Each scholar's journey is unique, but all reflect the resilience, promise, and potential at the heart of our mission.

Our Class of 2026 graduates will attend outstanding institutions, including Rice University, UC Berkeley, Harvard University, UCLA, USC, and many others. Several have earned full-ride scholarships, and many have received prestigious awards for academic excellence and leadership. We are especially proud that five OJS scholars were named Lions Scholarship recipients.

These achievements are the result of years of hard work, perseverance, and partnership. They are made possible by a community that believes every student deserves access to higher education and the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

To our scholars: we are incredibly proud of you. Your determination and grace inspire us every day. To our families, mentors, donors, volunteers, and community partners: thank you. Your encouragement, generosity, and belief in our students make these achievements possible.

Today, we celebrate how far our scholars have come and all that lies ahead. When we invest in young people, support one another, and dream boldly, there is no limit to what we can accomplish together.

With immense pride and gratitude,

Irene Quevedo
Chief Executive Officer
Operation Jump Start





OJS Leadership

Staff

Irene Quevedo – Chief Executive Officer
Maria Alvarez – Program Director
Rebecca Ridge – Community Outreach Manager
Emily Garcia – Program Manager
Kevin Melvin – Student Access Coordinator
Anahi Hernandez – Program Coordinator
Hailey Sevilla – Community Outreach Assistant

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Advisory Council

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Charles Russell – Attorney
Kathryn Chapman – Community Champion





Schedule of Events

9:30 AM – Continental Breakfast

10:00 AM – Program Begins

Class of 2026 Student Masters of Ceremonies

Michelle Calamaco & Sebastian Quintero Reyes

Legacy in Education Award

Dr. Jill Baker

Outgoing Superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District

Commitment to Youth Award

Laura Thron

Stanford Middle School, Wellness Center Social Worker

OJS Mission Moment

OJS Mentor, Carlos Ruiz, and Class of 2026 Graduate, Miguel Casas

Equity in Education Award

Dr. Lupe Pasillas

Interim Dean of Student Equity, Long Beach City College

Class of 2026 Highlight

See pages 6 - 7 for a full list of names and schools

Scholarship Awards

See page 8 for a full list of scholarships

Closing Remarks

Carlos M. Diez

OJS Board of Directors





Legacy in Education Award & Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jill Baker is Superintendent of Schools for the Long Beach Unified School District. Prior to her appointment as Superintendent, she worked for 28 years at LBUSD as a teacher, principal, and central office administrator. Dr. Baker maintains strong partnerships with local organizations, foundations, and universities that support educational opportunities for students throughout the district. In 2005, she completed her fellowship in the Broad Urban Superintendents Academy. She earned her doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Southern California in 2004, her master's degree in school administration from California State University, Long Beach in 1998, and her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of California, Irvine in 1991.

In recognition of her decades of service to Long Beach students, families, and schools, Operation Jump Start is proud to present Dr. Baker with the 2026 Legacy in Education Award. Throughout her career, Dr. Baker has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to educational excellence, equity, and student success, leaving a lasting impact on generations of young people in the Long Beach community.



Dr. Jill Baker
Superintendent of Schools,
Long Beach Unified School District.



Equity in Education Award & Spotlight Speaker

Dr. Lupe Pasillas is a higher education leader with more than ten years of experience in the California Community College System. As Interim Dean of Student Equity at Long Beach City College (LBCC), she advances equity, access, and success for historically underserved students.

Dr. Pasillas leads a cross-functional team within Entry Services that includes Upward Bound, Early College Initiatives and Dual Enrollment, High School Matriculation, the Welcome Center, First Year Experience, Justice Scholars, Phoenix Scholars, the Male Success Initiative, and the Social Justice Intercultural Center. She also drives institutional equity work, including the college's Student Equity Plan and its Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Student Achievement Program. Dr. Pasilla's impact extends beyond campus through two partnerships focused on advancing Latinx student success. Nationally, she represents LBCC in the Excelencia in Education action network, and regionally, she serves as LBCC's lead within the CSU Northridge HSI Equity Innovation Hub, strengthening collaboration among Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

Her commitment to this work is personal. The daughter of Mexican immigrants and a first-generation college graduate, Dr. Pasillas is a proud product of the community college system she now serves. She attended Rio Hondo College, transferred to the University of California, Los Angeles, and earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She holds a Master of Science in Counseling and a Doctor of Education in Community College Leadership, both from California State University, Long Beach.



Dr. Lupe Pasillas
Interim Dean of Student Equity,
Long Beach City College



Graduating Seniors and Selected Colleges

Ailyn Valladares Aguilar

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Allyson Nina

Cal. State Polytechnic Univ., Pomona

Araceli Hernandez-Cruz

University of California, Davis

Christopher Magana-Perez

University of California, Irvine

Christopher Ramirez

Harvard University

Destiny Zurita

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Delilah Streiker

Cal. State University, Chico

Donavyn Bell

Cal. State University, Dominguez Hills

Eliza Marie Soliman Maghari

Cal. State University, Dominguez Hills

Fernando Alvarado Jiménez

Long Beach City College

Sebastian Quintero

Kalamazoo College

Hy Le

Cal. State Polytechnic University,

San Luis Obispo

Isabel Reyes

Rice University

Isis Murray

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Jada Harris

University of California, Los Angeles

Jaiden Vital

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Joleen Ong

University of California, Los Angeles

Kingston K. Williams

University of California, Riverside

Lamar Rotan

Long Beach City College

Leslie Rosario Benítez Meza

Long Beach City College

Luis Perez

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Michelle Calamaco

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Michelle Morris

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Miguel Angel Casas

Long Beach City College

Myah Joslin

Long Beach City College

Natasha Salazar

Cal. State University, Long Beach

Nelly Vizcarra

Long Beach City College

Nicanor Haro

University of Southern California

Zyaire Aldonza

Cal. State Polytechnic Univ., Pomona



Class of 2026 College Graduates

Esmeralda Hernandez-Cruz - Bachelor of Arts in International Business

California State University, Long Beach

Natalie Iniguez - Bachelor of Science in Biology

University of California, Berkeley

Michael Kin - Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation

California State University, Long Beach

Yancy Monterola - Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology

California State University, Long Beach

Julienne Quides - Bachelor of Science in Biology

University of California, Irvine

Jessica Vallejo - Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Bachelor of Arts in

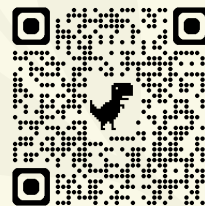
Chicano and Latino Studies

California State University, Long Beach

Invest in the Class of 2026 — and Beyond!

Join us in championing Operation Jump Start's mission to support low-income, first-generation students on their journey to college and career success. Your donation directly fuels the mentorship, guidance, and resources our scholars need to thrive. Every gift makes a difference — and we can't do it without you.

Donate Today





Scholarships

The Erik Fitzpatrick Memorial Scholarship: \$5,000

The Erik Fitzpatrick Scholarship honors the enduring memory of a man whose life goal was to help others. This award is given to a senior who values service above self, expanding on Erik's deep desire to better humankind. This scholarship was initiated by Erik's mother, Roberta Hamfeldt, who was inspired by her son's stalwart principles and selflessness. Roberta, whom everyone at OJS knows as Bobbie, is a long-time OJS mentor and a champion of transformative change among the most underserved communities.

The Henry J. Meyer Scholarship: \$1,000

Successful entrepreneur and owner of Hamburger Henry's, Henry J. Meyer was a former board member and long-time supporter of OJS. Henry's success cut through a support system and did not happen overnight. The Henry J. Meyer Endowment Scholarship is awarded to a student who found success through a helping hand despite the struggle.

The Mike Fry Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000

The Mike Fry Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior with demonstrated dedication to community service. Mike Fry believed in making his community a better place. He spent many years volunteering with Operation Jump Start. Every year, this scholarship honors the legacy of Mike Fry's incredible spirit of generosity and public service.

The White Eagle Scholarship: 1st Place - \$1,000, 2nd Place - \$500

The White Eagle Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior selected based on their response to the following prompt: Resiliency is a key tool for surviving and thriving in life. Confucius said something like: "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." In the next 4 years, the lessons will not only go into your brain, but into your heart and into your character. What are some examples of the lessons you learned by "trying" and not quite succeeding? How will these lessons carry into your higher education in your new college experience?



Scholarships

The White Eagle STEM Scholarship: \$1,000

In addition to the White Eagle Scholarship, this generous donor will be awarding another \$1,000 to a student who is pursuing a career in STEM. Students pursuing a career in STEM were encouraged to apply for this scholarship. Winners were selected based on their submissions to the following prompt: The minds of people drawn to STEM fields might be different in nature than the minds of those drawn to the arts, social sciences, or physical disciplines (like athletics). Creativity and inspiration come to all of us in different ways, too; from outside observations and from inside psychic nudges. How are you inspired, and how do you express your creativity?

The Cameron Howard Chapman Scholarship: \$2,000

Generously donated by the Chapman Family, this award, formerly known as The Kathryn Chapman Community Service Award, has been renamed to honor Cameron Howard Chapman and his legacy of community service and profound impact on others. This scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated exemplary dedication and commitment to making a positive difference in their community.

The 2026 Cameron Howard Chapman Award will be presented by Kathie Chapman and her long-time OJS mentee, Carina Samaniego.

The Alvarez-Guzman Scholarship:

1st Place - \$1,250, 2nd Place - \$1,000

The Alvarez-Guzman scholarship was created by an OJS alumna, Mayra Alvarez, and her family. Mayra Alvarez was an OJS student, OJS program assistant, and OJS MSW internship program field instructor. Mayra enjoys homeschooling her boys and traveling! Her family believes that traveling should be as much about learning and making a difference in the world as it is about seeing it. They strongly believe that travel experiences allow people to explore different interests, expand their horizons, gain inspiration, and elevate aspirations for future academic and life success, and allow them to learn and interact with others from diverse backgrounds. In this scholarship, students were asked where they would like to travel, with whom they would like to go, and why. In addition, they had to describe a specific problem that the community/location is facing (i.e., environmental, poverty, human rights, social justice) and a way that they could pay it forward and make a difference while traveling there.



Scholarships

The Rafael & Nelly Galindo Scholarship:

1st Place - \$1,000, 2nd Place - \$500

The Rafael & Nelly Galindo scholarship was created by an OJS mentor in honor of their parents. Rafael and Nelly immigrated from Cuba in 1960, escaping the Castro regime. With only an elementary education, they valued and understood the power of a higher education; they instilled that in their children. This scholarship honors not only students' academic achievements and career goals but also celebrates their creativity by asking the student to submit their response in the form of a video, original poem, original song, or traditional essay. The 2026 prompt asks the student to describe their educational goals and explain the inspiration for their choice of career.

The Rick Nolan Scholarship: \$1,500

The Rick Nolan Scholarship was established by a dedicated long-time board member and mentor. This scholarship recognizes a Class of 2026 student who demonstrated exceptional dedication to OJS programs through two years of active participation in the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), 100% attendance at senior Supper Club sessions, and consistent involvement in the Learning Resource Center (LRC). This award honors outstanding commitment, engagement, and leadership throughout the school year.

The Henry-Schwartz Scholarship: \$500

The Henry-Schwartz Scholarship was created and funded by a former mentor and her former mentee, who developed a lifelong bond and was empowered to use our story to help change the lives of youth and future generations. Based on our own experiences, we know that many students don't apply for scholarships because they believe there's too much competition and that their chances of winning are slim. We are also aware of the lack of scholarship opportunities in underserved communities. Today, we encourage you to live in life and not in fear. We hope that this scholarship opportunity will be a leap of faith that will inspire you to conquer your dreams and not defer them by placing limitations on your own life.





Change a student's future every month.

Operation Jump Start students work hard every day to gain acceptance to college, earn their degrees, and build a future filled with opportunity. But that journey does not happen in one moment. It takes consistent support, trusted mentors, college access resources, exposure to new experiences, and a community that believes in them... all year long.

OJS 365 is Operation Jump Start's monthly giving community – a group of generous donors who provide reliable, ongoing support so Long Beach students can thrive 365 days a year.

Monthly support has been proven to be one of the most effective methods to promote change. They allow us to rely on some consistency in individual contributions. As a monthly donor, you ultimately help OJS save time and money, which gets invested in direct student support instead of pursuing new donors each year.

Why Your Monthly Support Matters

- Only 9% of low-income students earn a bachelor's degree by 25, vs. 77% of high-income students
- A college degree increases upward mobility by 50%+
- Approximately 85% of OJS students graduate from college within 6 years

\$500/mo Helps send students on a life-changing college travel experience.

\$250/mo Funds a career exploration and networking event that connects students with professionals and opportunities.

\$100/mo Supports a cultural or community-building event for up to 50 students.

\$50/mo Provides local college visit opportunities for up to 50 students.

\$25/mo Helps fund semester scholarship support for college students.

\$15/mo Provides emergency assistance to students facing unexpected financial challenges.

Learn more and sign up today:





A Huge Thank You to our 2026 Sponsors!

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Kathryn and Howard Chapman

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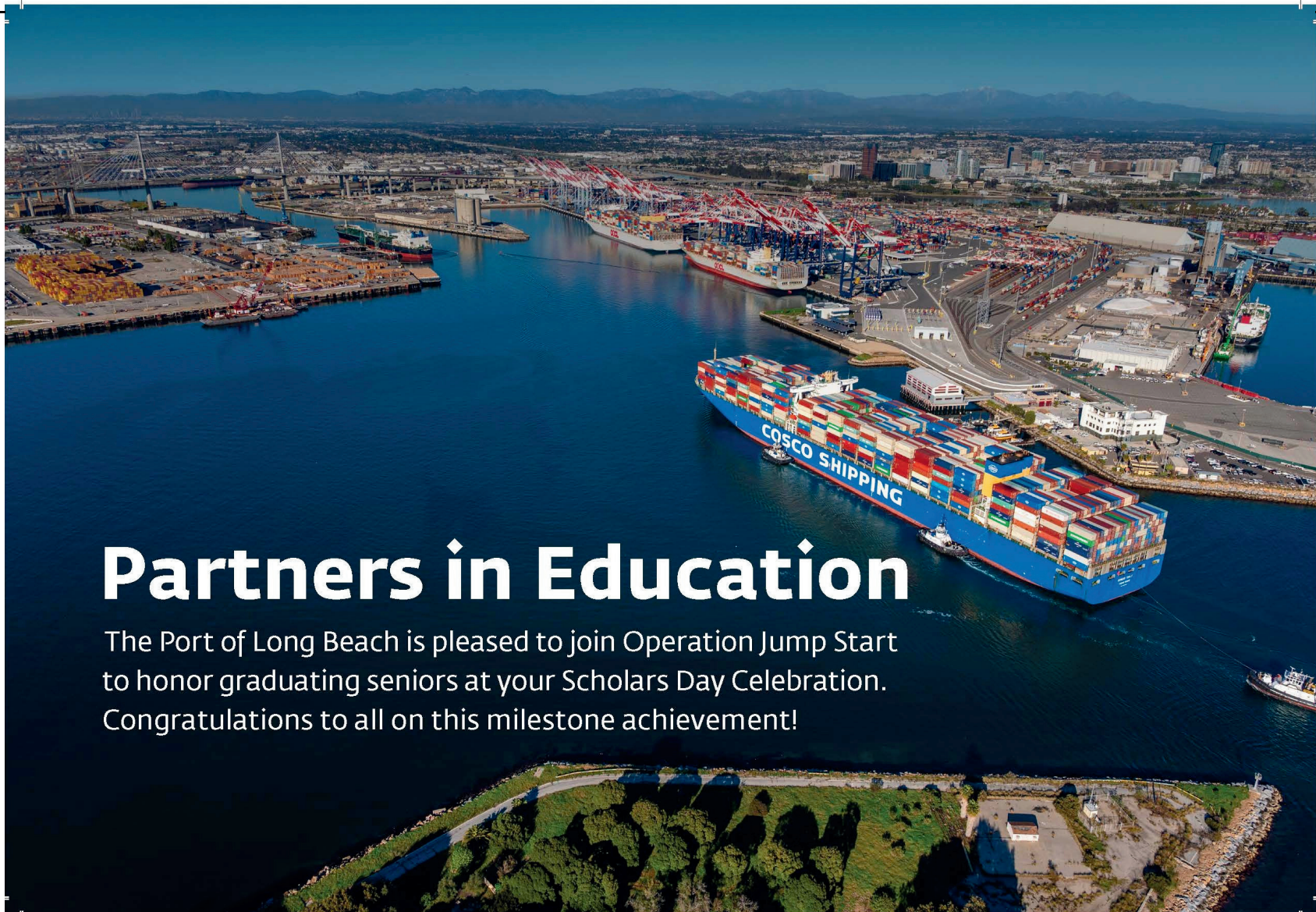


EMPOWERING SCHOLARS, UPLIFTING COMMUNITIES.

The Masons of California are proud to partner with Operation Jump Start to celebrate and support tomorrow's leaders.



**Masons
of California**



Partners in Education

The Port of Long Beach is pleased to join Operation Jump Start to honor graduating seniors at your Scholars Day Celebration. Congratulations to all on this milestone achievement!

Mentors Wanted!

For over 30 years, OJS mentors have made a considerable impact in the lives of Long Beach youth. If you've been thinking about getting involved and making a difference, now is the perfect time!

Scan the QR code below and learn more about becoming an OJS mentor.





Thank You!



2026
Scholars' Day
Celebration

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Operation Jump Start is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with the federal nonprofit ID# 33-0629895. Qualified donations are tax deductible.

