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Students honored for completing PUSD's college-career prep program

18 foster, kinship seniors graduated from high school program

by Erika Alvero / Pleasanton Weekly

School and community leaders gathered at Foothill High School last week to honor foster and kinship students who completed the district's college-career preparation and readiness program.

The program supports students in foster or kinship care in applying for college, work and financial aid. This is the second year of the program, with 18 students recognized at the Thursday luncheon.

"Though it has always been my dream to go to college and it has always been my intention, I wasn't certain that it was actually going to happen," said Aloe DeMichiel, a senior from Amador Valley High School who spoke at the ceremony. "I am very grateful the foster kinship youth program exists to turn my dreams into a reality."

The program also provides resources for families and guardians who may speak English as a second language, to assist them in navigating school and application systems.

At the ceremony, each student received a new laptop through a donation from Pleasanton Partnerships in Education Foundation and the parent-teacher-student associations from Amador Valley and Foothill high



Aloe DeMichiel, a senior from Amador Valley High School who completed the program, spoke at the ceremony Thursday. (Photo courtesy of PUSD)



schools.

"This year we had a 99% success rate with 18 seniors graduating," said Brenda Montgomery, a youth development specialist with the district and the program's coordinator. She cited statistics showing that two-thirds of youth who grow up in foster care never graduate high school, and said the students being recognized had "incredible resilience."

"To end their two years of arduous college preparation with a celebration luncheon and a plethora of college needs just added cream to the crop," she said. "I feel like a proud mama."

Local partners that provided funding and resources for the program and its students include the Pleasanton Youth Commission, Blue Oaks Church, Valley Community Church and Keller Williams Realty. Any organizations interested in participating can contact Montgomery at 519-3864.



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