



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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South El Monte High STEM Scholar Earns Early Acceptance to Stanford University

EL MONTE – South El Monte High School senior Santiago Alvillar has been fascinated with science, technology, engineering and math since he was a young child reading his older siblings' high school textbooks. Now he has the opportunity to study the disciplines in Silicon Valley, learning from some of the country's top educators at one of the most elite universities in the world.

Alvillar, a first-generation college student, has been accepted as a member of Stanford University's Class of 2024 through its Restrictive Early Action program. Stanford, which has an admission rate nearing or below 5%, will cover all expenses.

"I opened the email and I didn't believe it at first," said Alvillar, who plans to major in engineering physics with a specialty in quantum science and minor in environmental systems engineering. "It seemed imaginary and later at night when it finally hit me, I started jumping up and down."

Although he is still waiting to hear from Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Alvillar has his sights on Stanford, which will enable him to stay close to his parents, who are undocumented and are unable to travel.

"I want them to see me graduate," he said. "Providing me with a college education has always been important to them and to me as well. My accomplishments are a reflection of the support everyone has given me, including the teachers. They're driven to help students succeed."

Alvillar is an accomplished scholar with a 4.45 GPA who began taking advanced high school math classes while in middle school. He continued his upward trajectory once at South El Monte, where he took all advanced math and science courses available.

He enrolled in Rio Hondo College, where he took government and economics courses, and Pasadena City College, where he takes four-hour college-level math and physics night classes. He is currently enrolled in the most rigorous and demanding courses offered: linear algebra and differential equations.

"I really enjoy the classes I'm taking, so I don't see it as work," he said. "I'm doing it for myself and my own development."

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Alvillar is the recipient of a \$25,000 National Horatio Alger Association Scholarship and \$1,000 QuestBridge Quest for Excellence STEM Scholarship. He is also a Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America Scholar, which entitles him to comprehensive college counseling from senior year of high school until after college.

He has attended summer STEM programs at Yale and Stanford, learning about applied science and engineering and optical and electrical engineering.

“There’s an elegance in that field and beauty in that topic,” he said. “Everything is interconnected. I love the world and I love nature.”

Outside of class, Alvillar serves as the senior team manager for cross country and track and field, running 35-45 miles a week. He also works at a local restaurant, volunteers as a STEM tutor at Potrero Elementary School, is the program director for the Freshman Mentoring Club and is president of the Emerald Jewel Club, which works to clean local beaches and implement sustainable programs in school.

Alvillar plans to pursue a Ph.D. in physics or environmental engineering and become a college professor.

“South El Monte High is proud of Santiago’s ambitious and driven pursuit of knowledge,” Principal Jorge Morales said. “He has truly maximized the personal learning opportunities that our school and District have to offer. Getting into Stanford isn’t easy. I am proud to be part of his continued success and see nothing but a bright future for this incredible scholar.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

022520_EMUHSO_ALVILLAR: South El Monte High School senior Santiago Alvillar, a first-generation college student, has been accepted as a member of Stanford University’s Class of 2024 through its Restrictive Early Action program. Stanford, which has an admission rate nearing or below 5%, will cover all expenses.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.