Cerritos College Foundation Awards Three Auto Scholarships

Jeannie M.T. Yang and SMCDA Scholarships Honor Outstanding Students

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NORWALK, Calif. - December 2, 2010 - The Cerritos College Foundation awarded three automotive scholarships to six promising students at its board meeting Thursday, November 18.

The Jeannie M.T. Yang Scholarship, a $500 award was presented to Justin Nhieu of Cerritos and Taylor Lockridge of Hacienda Heights. The Jeannie M.T. Yang Automotive Scholarship awards a total of $2,000 each year to four promising students in the automotive department at Cerritos College. Established in memory of Dr. Jeannie M.T. Yang, a community college professor originally from mainland China, who had a great passion for education.

Nhieu plans on completing his associate degree and transferring to Northwood University to earn his business degree. He is currently working at an independent performance and repair shop where he has been described as an exceptional employee. Nhieu’s ultimate career goal is to open his own performance shop.

Lockridge is in his first semester of automotive classes and shows great promise for a career in the automotive industry. His goal is to earn his associate degree in automotive repair technology and transfer to Northwood University for his bachelor’s in automotive retail management. He would like to begin work for one of the “Big 3” and eventually open his own independent shop.

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The SMCDA Automotive Technology Scholarship, a $500 tool voucher toward the purchase of MATCO tools was received by Irwin Merida, Erasmo Lopez and Joseph Gonzalez. The scholarship assists the college’s automotive apprentice program students in purchasing tools to use in their classes. The tool voucher, combined with the 50% tool discount program which MATCO also provides for Cerritos College automotive students, is actually worth $1,000.

Irwin Merida, of Los Angeles, is currently enrolled in his second year of the Import Technician Training Program (ITTP) and is working toward his associate degree in automotive repair. Upon completing his associate degree, Irwin plans on enrolling in Northwood University to pursue his bachelor’s in automotive marketing and management. He is currently employed at Mercedes Benz in downtown L.A. and plans on working his way up the ladder to an executive management position.

Erasmo Lopez, of Costa Mesa, is working toward earning the general & electrical diagnosis technician certificate while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Lopez is described as a hard worker, determined, and always on time. He is currently employed at Crevier BMW and hopes to work his way to up to technician.

Joseph Gonzalez, of Santa Fe Springs, is a second year student in Chrysler’s College Automotive Program (CAP) and would like to earn his bachelor's degree in automotive technology. Gonzalez is described as helpful, friendly and dedicated and is currently employed at Thomas Holloway Champion Dodge.

SMCDA also presented the $750 SMCDA Northwood 3rd Year Scholarship to Yong Man Hong of Norwalk. The scholarship assists Cerritos College students who have completed their first two years in automotive technology training and are pursuing their bachelor’s degree through Northwood University.

Hong is currently enrolled in the ITTP and is amazed at the amount of information he has learned in just one -MORE-
year in the program. He is described by one of his instructors as enthusiastic with an excellent work ethic and has earned a GPA of 3.75. He is excited to complete the program and transfer to Northwood University to earn his bachelor’s degree in business.

"There is no doubt that these outstanding students will become great assets to the automotive industry," explained Todd Leutheuser, executive director of the Southland Motor Car Dealers Association (SMCDA) and Northwood University program center manager, as he presented certificates to the students.

"We wish them the very best in their pursuits and trust that these scholarships will assist them in reaching their dreams."

Cerritos College has offered automotive training technology since the college began in 1955. The offerings consist of certificates, degrees, and special programs in the disciplines of automotive repair, advanced transportation technology, auto collision repair, intelligent transportation systems, and alternative fuel and EV hybrid vehicles, making it one of the most comprehensive programs in the U.S. Students can also earn a bachelor’s degree in automotive management at Cerritos College through an agreement the college has with Northwood University.

Cerritos College’s Auto Technology Program provides students with hands-on, nationally authorized training for GM, Ford, Chrysler, and import vehicles. The College also hosts an Advanced Transportation Technology Center, one of nine Centers in the state of California, to encourage use and development of clean, renewable energies, and alternative fuel sources.

The Cerritos College Foundation, a non-profit organization, serves as a charitable vehicle for the community, individuals, and alumni, to assist with financial support of Cerritos College. Visit the Foundation online at www.cerritos.edu/ccf.

Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college’s district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs, and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies, and enrollment currently averages 23,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at http://www.cerritos.edu/.

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