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CONNECTION FAMILIES: BACK TO SCHOOL



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

At the June 6 ceremony to announce United Community Ministries' 2016 Lois Valencourt Scholarship Fund awardees are: (from left) Angela Gallegos (Bryant Alternative High School), Harry Wood, executor for Ms. Valencourt's estate, Shanae Witherspoon (Bryant Alternative High School), and Fernando Acosta (West Potomac High School). Not pictured: Tenesha Green (Bryant Alternative High School).

Valencourt Scholarships Presented

Thanks to a bequest from her estate in 2014, the Lois Valencourt Scholarship Fund at UCM enables students who have graduated from high schools in the Mount Vernon area to pursue training and career advancement after high school graduation.

Valencourt was interested in increasing access to post-graduate education for low- and moderate-income students in the Mount Vernon area. The scholarship program is for first-generation college students who are recent graduates of local public high schools and who plan to attend D.C. metro area schools for post-graduate education.

Each of the students received a \$1,500 scholarship that is renewable next year. Three of the four recipients are participants in UCM programs. The 2016 Valencourt Scholarship Fund awardees are:

- ❖ Fernando Acosta, West Potomac High School, has been accepted to George Mason University, where he will pursue a degree in civil engineering. His family came to UCM a few years ago for assistance, and have since become UCM volunteers who give back to the community. Fernando has been a UCM volunteer throughout high school. He was captain of the boys' soccer team as well as has mentored students at Belle View Elementary School. He graduated with

a 3.8 GPA.

- ❖ Angela Gallegos, Bryant Alternative High School, was dual-enrolled at Bryant Alternative High School and Northern Virginia Community College, pursuing a degree in early childhood development. She is a student in the Project Opportunity program for teen mothers. Angela is a single parent and full-time student. She served as the head of the Student Leadership Program at the high school, where she participated in the Project Opportunity program for teen mothers.

- ❖ Tenesha Green, West Potomac High School, plans to pursue a degree in mass communications at Marymount University, where she has also received a partial basketball scholarship. She was captain of the girls' varsity basketball team at West Potomac and graduates with a 3.8 GPA.

She volunteers to make sandwiches at her church for homeless people.

- ❖ Shanae Witherspoon, Bryant Alternative High School, has been accepted at Northern Virginia Community College to pursue a degree in nursing. Graduating with a 3.3 GPA, Shanae is a single-parent and full-time student. She has volunteered in the community by talking to youth about the harmful effects of drugs.

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