

REWARDING EXCELLENCE

Bluebonnet awards \$400,000 in scholarships to 160 area graduating high school seniors

Story by Connie Juarez

Consider it an investment in the future. Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative has awarded 160 scholarships to graduating high school seniors from across the cooperative's 14-county service area this year. The \$2,500 Scholarships of Excellence, totaling \$400,000, will help the students achieve their goals of earning college degrees or trade-and-technical school certificates.

"Congratulations to the students who earned a Bluebonnet scholarship this year, and thanks to all the outstanding, hardworking students who participated in the application process," General Manager Matt Bentke said. "One of Bluebonnet's values is supporting and investing in the communities in which we live and serve. Awarding these scholarships supports these students who will continue to give back to their communities."

The scholarships are funded by proceeds from Bluebonnet's Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament as well as former members' unclaimed capital credit payments that were returned by the state of Texas. Funds for the scholar-



Scholarship recipient Skarleth Lagos accepts her diploma from IDEA Bluff Springs College Preparatory High School. She will attend Austin College in North Texas this fall, where she plans to major in neuroscience.

Photo from Skarleth Lagos

ships do not come from Bluebonnet members' bill payments and do not affect electric rates.

Sherry Murphy, a Bluebonnet community and development representative, has been organizing the scholarship program for three years.

"It's one of the highlights of our year," Murphy said. "We have an opportunity to meet these students and celebrate their hard work. It's an honor to be part of that."

After the scholarship presentation at Smithville High School, Lindsey Saunders, the Smithville ISD communications officer, said, "We're so proud of our students who received this scholarship. It really shows

all the hard work they've put in."

Koy Macik, a graduate of Caldwell High School who plans to study animal science at Texas A&M University, is one of this year's recipients. "We started a cattle operation when my family moved to Caldwell, and I've been around animals my whole life," Macik said. "I feel like it's something I want to pursue. I want to become a veterinarian. I'm not sure where yet, but I'll see where the

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\$400,000

IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED THIS SPRING

32 TRADE AND
TECHNICAL
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

128 ACADEMIC
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

29 HIGH SCHOOLS
REPRESENTED
BY RECIPIENTS

27

YEARS BLUEBONNET HAS
AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS



Brenham High School students hold their Scholarship of Excellence certificates at a reception on May 14. Students from 29 schools across the service area were recognized. See a full list of recipients and photos from other events on **Pages 20-21**. *Kirsten Tyler photo*



Scholarship recipient Adalinda Ricardez displays her graduation mortarboard. She is the first in her immediate family to attend college. *Sara Abrego photo*

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path takes me.”

Others, like Karina Maldonado, are pursuing careers in the medical field. Maldonado, a Brenham High School graduate, will attend Tyler Junior College to study prediagnostic medical sonography. “Visiting with my teachers and taking Certified Medical Assistant courses through Blinn College inspired me to pursue a career in sonography,” Maldonado said. “Eventually, I’d like to focus on oncologic imaging and maybe even do travel sonography, going where I’m needed — especially since there’s a shortage of sonographers in some areas.”

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS PURSUE HIGH ASPIRATIONS

Among this year’s recipients, several dozen students said they were first-generation college students — the first in their families to pursue higher education.

Adalinda Ricardez, a 2025 graduate of McDade High School, is one of 32 recipients who received a trade-and-technical scholarship and will be the first in her family to attend college.

When Adalinda starts classes at Austin Community College’s Highland Campus this fall, she’ll already have some credits under her belt. “I took dual credit courses in high school, and I think taking those helped me prepare for college,” she said.

At ACC, she plans to complete prerequisite courses, then move into the dental hygiene program and earn an associate degree. From there, she wants to earn a degree from Texas A&M University or The University of Texas at San Antonio, then go to dental school.

Adalinda’s high school years were filled with achievement, both inside and outside the classroom. The clarinetist played in the marching and concert bands all four years and earned MVP honors in concert band. She served as secretary of the student council during her junior and senior years and participated in Pathfinders and Master Guides, programs focused on leadership, service and personal growth. She also volunteered with the Teen Leadership Training program in her junior and senior years.

On top of her academic commitments, Adalinda worked on her school campus as part of McDade ISD’s summer staff, assisted at a local food bank and volunteered time with nursing home residents.

“My family has taught me to persevere and always do my best,” she said. “And now, my younger siblings are watching. Being the first to go to college sets the bar higher for all of us.”

BUILDING STRONG FUTURES

For Bastrop High School graduate Payton Moore, the future looks a lot like the past with new purpose. Payton grew up around construction projects, and she plans to



Payton Moore

“The business was passed down through the men in my family — first my great-grandfather, Robert Moore, then my grandfather, David Moore,” Payton said. “My father, David Moore II, wasn’t able to take over the business, and I’d like to make that happen for him.”

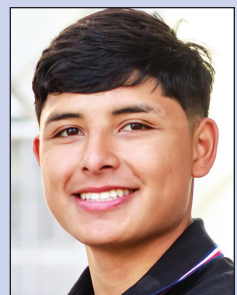
Payton’s father died in 2022 at 48 after a two-year illness. “I loved helping out alongside my dad with construction jobs for family members for as long as I can remember,” she said. “I got my first tool set when I was 6.”

Payton’s high school extracurricular work shows her dedication to service, leadership and learning. She was a two-year member of Peer Assistance and Leadership, mentoring younger students and volunteering in the community. She helped organize one of Bastrop’s largest events as part of the Bastrop Homecoming and Rodeo Committee and was a varsity student trainer for the school’s sports medicine team.

She hopes to honor her father and family by learning the ins and outs of the construction business.

“I want to combine my passion for building with interior design and eventually provide people with homes that truly reflect who they are,” Payton said.

Like Payton, Kevin Nava is laying the foundation for a future in construction. Kevin will attend Sam Houston State University this fall



Kevin Nava

He was a member of the National Honor Society and a standout athlete. He served as a cross country team captain, earning four-time MVP Runner of the Year honors. Kevin also competed in football and was active in Future Farmers of America.

In recognition of his achievements in academics and sports, Kevin received the Mirabeau B. Lamar Award, presented through local Masonic lodges to honor students who demon-

keep it that way. This fall, she will attend Tarleton State University to study construction management, with a goal of continuing the legacy of Moore Construction, a homebuilding business founded in 1900 by her great-great-grandfather.

TOP 10 SCHOOLS RECIPIENTS PLAN TO ATTEND

- Texas A&M University
- Blinn College
- The University of Texas at Austin
- Texas State University
- Austin Community College
- Texas State Technical College
- Tarleton State University
- Sam Houston State University
- Angelo State University
- Universal Technical Institute

142 RECIPIENTS WITH WORK EXPERIENCE

TOP 5 ACADEMIC AREAS OF STUDY RECIPIENTS PLAN TO PURSUE

1. Health sciences/pre-med
2. Agriculture and agribusiness
3. Engineering
4. Business, finance and accounting
5. Animal and veterinary sciences

160 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS IN 2025

304 LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

742 AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS RECEIVED

1,934 ORGANIZATIONS APPLICANTS WERE INVOLVED IN THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

TOP 5 TRADES RECIPIENTS PLAN TO PURSUE

1. Nursing
2. Welding
3. HVAC and electrical
4. Diagnostics and imaging
5. Real estate

strate outstanding achievement in academics, citizenship, community service and athletics.

Outside the classroom, Kevin volunteered at church events and gained job experience installing window frames for a local glass and mirror company.

“I want to do what I love while leading teams and managing projects,” Kevin said.

COMMITTED TO CARE

Adriana Parra Jaramillo, a graduate of Luling High School, has always had an interest in health care. She plans to attend Texas State University this fall to pursue a nursing degree.

“I was always interested in the medical field and all aspects of it,” Adriana said. “I love what it means to be a nurse and help people.”

In high school, Adriana was co-captain of the dance team, where she earned the Crowd Pleasers Highest GPA

Award two years in a row. She participated in the Health Science Yearlong Academy through Dell Medical School and holds certifications in first aid, CPR and bleeding control.

Adriana was also active in Health Occupations Students of America, photography club, book club, and various safety and leadership programs.

In addition to schoolwork, Adriana gained work experience as: junior manager at McDonald’s, sales associate at Best Buy and Boot Barn, and crew member at Whataburger, often working 30 to 40 hours a week.

Adriana is fluent in English and Spanish and hopes to use those skills as a traveling nurse, providing care in locations with limited resources. “I want to learn from different environments and give back wherever I can,” she said.

Skarleth Lagos, a graduate of IDEA Bluff Springs College Preparatory in Austin, is also planning a career in health care, but her focus is on the brain. This fall, she will attend Austin College in Sherman, where she plans to major in neuroscience.

Her interest was sparked during a ninth-grade experience through the Dell Medical Health Sciences program at The University of Texas at Austin. “They let us hold real human brains,” Skarleth said. “It made me realize how powerful the brain is. One organ



Adriana Parra Jaramillo



Skarleth Lagos

controls everything. That amazed me.”

Skarleth challenged herself academically with multiple advanced placement courses, including chemistry, biology and statistics.

While in high school, Skarleth was a member of UT’s Yearlong Health Sciences Academy, earning certificates in CPR and bleeding control.

Skarleth hopes to eventually attend Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin. Her goal is to become a doctor and return to the Dale area, where she grew up, bringing specialty medical care to regions that lack it.

Her parents are her biggest inspirations, she said. “They’ve always supported me in the best way they could,” Skarleth said.

FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER

The impact of Bluebonnet’s investment in students may be best illustrated by those who have gone before this year’s recipients over the scholarship’s 27-year history.

Philip Meuth, a 2009 graduate of Bastrop High School, was a first-generation college student who received a Bluebonnet scholarship to attend Texas State Technical College in Waco. He studied plumbing and pipe fitting, building a foundation for a lasting career.

“I knew I wanted to go into a trade,” Philip said. “Plumbing stood out because it’s a solid, good-paying career.”

Today, he lives in Cedar Creek and works for Brewster Services, a commercial plumbing contractor in San Antonio. “The Bluebonnet scholarship was money I didn’t have to pay back,” Philip said. “It gave me a leg up. I was humbled to get it.”

“These scholarships are about more than just financial support,” said Bluebonnet’s Sherry Murphy. “They’re about believing in our local students, and seeing many of them come back to work, live and lead in the communities where they started. That’s something we’re deeply proud of.”

Applications for Scholarships of Excellence for 2026 high school graduates will be available in November at bluebonnet.coop/scholarships. ■

— Sara Abrego and Kirsten Tyler contributed to this story

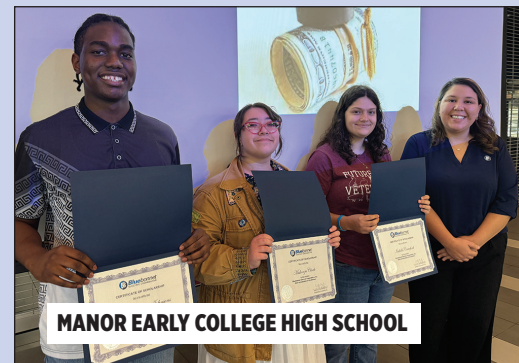
See more photos and a complete list of scholarship recipients on Pages 20-21.



CEDAR CREEK HIGH SCHOOL



CALDWELL HIGH SCHOOL



MANOR EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL



BELLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



GIDDINGS HIGH SCHOOL



LULING HIGH SCHOOL



COLORADO RIVER COLLEGIATE ACADEMY



HOMESCHOOL



SMITHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Bluebonnet staff photos

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

**BASTROP
HIGH SCHOOL**

Claire Adams
Joseline Albiter
Ella Davis
Kayla Frank
Anthony Gonzalez
Emma Griesenbeck
Yesliann Matos Cirino
Mark McCarus
Lindsey McFarland
Payton Moore
Zoe Moreno
Adrian Paniagua
Sarah Salazar Hernandez
Jaxon Williams

**BELLVILLE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Fallon Chovanec
Lydia Huebner
Tegan Peschel
Chase Richardson
Jaylen Tesch

**BRENHAM
HIGH SCHOOL**

Zora Austin
Blaine Bartlett
Leyton Blankenburg
Brett Campbell
Denise Carrillo
Samuel Clepper
Garrison Covin
Landon Flisowski
Cullen Halfmann
Brody Hemann
Corbin Janner
Barrett Kohring
Alex Lawhorn
Samantha Mahlmann
Karina Maldonado
Logan Mason
Austin Maurer
Avery Maurer
Hayden Mika
Kord Mikolajchak
Haylie Niemeyer
Luis Ramos
Brandon Schultz
Addison Smith
Bailey Stegint

**BURTON
HIGH SCHOOL**

Bailey Glaesmann
Isabelle Means
Reagan Roemer
Peyton Sigsbee

**CALDWELL
HIGH SCHOOL**

Landon Barnes
Hays Beavers
Dylan Chapman
Cooper Ellis
Brook Fry
Alison Krueger
Brenden Lee
Koy Macik
Dulce Carolina Medina
Kyler Roskey
Madilyn Schneider
Kate Smith
Brycen Suehs
Mia Witherwax

**CEDAR CREEK
HIGH SCHOOL**

Mia Benavides
Margaux Bonneau
Anabel Bordelon
Caleb Farr
Kaylee Fitzhugh
Faith Frank
Jazlene Gomez
Daeylin Gonzalez
Devon James
Nicole Kadura
Brooklyn McCool
Shayla Mendez-Ramirez
Tyler Morgan
Serenity Rivera
Peyton Smith

**COLORADO RIVER
COLLEGIATE
ACADEMY**

Jayton Nelson

**DEL VALLE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Ginny Benitez-Perez
Nazariah Cedillo
Azucena Esqueda
Rodriguez

**DIME BOX
HIGH SCHOOL**

Leslie Guajardo
Adley Markert

ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL

Montserrat Espinoza-Guzman
Isadora Estrada
Jocelyn Howard
Cayli Johns
Alexander Rico Cuellar
Garrison Vragel

**FAYETTEVILLE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Lawson Fritsch
Rylee Fritsch

**GIDDINGS
HIGH SCHOOL**
Carlos Amaro
Kelby Cowen
Kyler Giles
Samantha Matthijetz
Ruby Meachen
Bayley Pitts
Daylin Pitts
Paige Schreckengost
Shay Siegmund
Abigail Snyder
Reese Weiser
Jazmin Zachary

**GRACE LUTHERAN
SCHOOL**

Avila Colanter

HOMESCHOOL
Ellen Carroll
Paloma Dineen
Ryan Holmes
Mateo Martinez
Brady Masur
Emma Roth
Trey Schumpert

**IDEA BLUFF
SPRINGS COLLEGE
PREPARATORY**

Skarleth Lagos

**IDEA RUNDBURG
COLLEGE
PREPARATORY**

Melanie Ramirez
Mendoza

**KIPP AUSTIN
COLLEGIATE**
Samantha Hoyos
Nancy Perez

**LEXINGTON
HIGH SCHOOL**

Ellie Brockenbush
Kaylin Cotton
Kinley Cotton
Owen Harris
Montserrat Hernandez
Pena
Caleb Huddleston
Addyson Koester
Sydney Kubicek
Preslie Milburn
Kevin Nava
Braden Rodgers

**LOCKHART
HIGH SCHOOL**

Roman Moreno
Ricardo Rios

LULING HIGH SCHOOL

Kase Conley
Jaelynn Moses
Adriana Parra
Joselyn Reyna
Joshua Samuelson

**MANOR EARLY
COLLEGE HIGH
SCHOOL**

Jordan Brown-Johnson
Makenzie Clark
Isabella Crawford
Mia Esqueda

**MANOR NEW TECH
HIGH SCHOOL**

Kayla Frederick
Chidinma Nwankwo

**MANOR SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL**

Jordan Clark

**MCCALLUM
HIGH SCHOOL**

Nahomy Rivera

**MCDADE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Joshua Dube
Kelsey Dube
Sheila Lugo Lopez
Lisethe
Adalinda Ricardez
Areli Velazquez

**PRAIRIE LEA
HIGH SCHOOL**

Gabriel Garcia

**ROUND ROCK
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

Peyton Turner

**SMITHVILLE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Carina Berryann
Daucie Davis
Kaydence Kimball
Jacob Moore
Darcy Mullen
Kaycee Nutt
Samuel Praditbatuga
Addison Waneck
Ashlyn Wilhelm
Devin Young

SNOOK HIGH SCHOOL

Savannah Davidson

**SOMERVILLE
HIGH SCHOOL**

Savannah Eschete

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