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Bonita Unified Celebrates Accomplished Class of 2024 with Dynamic Commencement Ceremonies

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Celebratory music swelled and streamers cascaded through the evening skies as nearly 800 graduates tossed their caps and shared tearful hugs during Bonita Unified School District’s commencement ceremonies on June 4 and 6, concluding an award-winning year for the Class of 2024.

Each school recognized graduates for their academic, artistic, and athletic excellence, highlighting CIF champions, regional and state honors for arts and music, and nationally recognized career technical education programs. Bonita Unified’s Class of 2024 will continue their education at institutions that include Harvard University, UC Berkeley, Johns Hopkins University, and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech); many others will enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces or enter the workforce.

“Each Bonita Unified graduating class seems to raise the bar for excellence, and the Class of 2024 is no different,” Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. “We wish our graduates the best as they embark on new journeys to live their purpose.”

The festivities began with Chaparral-Vista High School’s ceremony on June 4 at the Bonita Center for the Arts, which honored 44 graduates who overcame adversity to earn their diplomas. The continuation school graduates fought back tears as they hugged teachers and staff and earned thunderous applause as they received scholarships and awards for their resilience, outstanding citizenship, and academic improvement.

Chaparral-Vista graduates Henry Manrique, Rylie Koscielski, Joshua Hashimoto, and Ashley Risley delivered emotional and rousing speeches that reflected on the challenges they overcame, their gratitude for the support they received from Chaparral-Vista teachers and staff, and words of encouragement for their peers.

“After being here at Chaparral and Vista for almost three years, my life has changed for the better,” said Manrique, who plans to pursue a career in law enforcement. “At my last school, I wasn’t who I wanted to be. Now I stay true to myself and others. The key to this was connecting to my school. I feel like I took advantage of every opportunity that came my way. Since my first day at Chap, I have met so many people...real, genuine people who cared for not just me, but the person I was striving to become.”

San Dimas High School honored 318 graduates on June 4 at Saints Stadium during an energetic ceremony that saw students dance across the stage and share heartfelt embraces as they concluded their educational journeys in the



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District. The ceremony featured a stirring performance of “The Throne Room and Finale” from “Star Wars: A New Hope,” by the wind ensemble, conducted by a graduate.

San Dimas High School’s accomplished senior class – which collectively earned approximately \$2 million in scholarships to further their education – was led by valedictorian Milana Mattson, who boasts a 4.72 GPA, and salutatorian Joshua Ma, with a 4.7 GPA. Mattson will study industrial and systems engineering at USC, and Ma plans to major in molecular and cellular biology on a pre-med track at Johns Hopkins University.

“I’ve realized that, while we don’t really know what’s coming, when have we ever? We’ve evolved and adapted before,” Mattson said in an introspective address to her peers. “Change doesn’t have to be painful. It doesn’t have to be scary. The only thing that will ever be constant in life is change, so let’s embrace it.”

Bonita High School celebrated its 120th graduating class on June 6, recognizing 434 students with fanfare and fireworks during the sunset ceremony. The Class of 2024 invited honorary teachers from their elementary and middle schools to join the ceremony alongside Bonita High teachers, recognizing the impact they made on their lives. The ceremony also highlighted 70 graduates who maintained weighted 4.0 GPAs during high school, as well as valedictorian Junze “Jenny” Zhang and salutatorian Nathan Kwan.

Zhang, who earned a \$50,000 Edison STEM scholarship this spring and maintained a 4.51 GPA, will further her education at the California Institute of Technology, where she plans to major in computer engineering and minor in aerospace engineering. Kwan, who was recognized earlier this year for earning a perfect score on the Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles exam and sustained a 4.42 GPA, will attend Johns Hopkins University to double major in public health and biology.

“We focus so much on getting what we want in the moment that we fail to see the bigger picture, we forget how to have fun,” said Zhang, who delivered a humorous address filled with Disney references. “Let go of that constant fear of disappointment, and just take a moment to look around you, be content with who you are, and be grateful for everything that you have. Believe me, you all have so much good in your life and a legendary future.”

PHOTOS:

BUSD_CLASSOF2024_1: Bonita High School graduates make the most of props and photo opportunities in the school’s gym as they wait for the commencement ceremony to begin on June 6.

BUSD_CLASSOF2024_2: A Chaparral-Vista High School graduate crosses the stage to accept his diploma on June 4 at the Bonita Center for the Arts.

BUSD_CLASSOF2024_3: A San Dimas High School graduate is hoisted up by his family members following the school’s commencement ceremony on June 4.

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