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30 alumni apply for Hanna Boys Center scholarships



SLIDE 1 OF 7

Hanna Boys Center on Arnold Drive in Sonoma. (Robbi Pengelly/Index-Tribune)



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Nearly 30 Hanna Boys Center alumni have applied to participate in the organization's annual scholarship program.

Established in 1952, the Sisters of St. Francis Scholarship Program, named in honor of the sisters who served the center for more than 50 years, helps to ensure that qualified graduates are able to receive financial assistance as they continue their education at a community college, four-year university or trade school.



To qualify, the youth must have successfully completed the Hanna program and demonstrate a desire to continue their education. Scholarship recipients will be announced this week.

This year's applicants had various goals for the scholarships, including plans to earn bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees as well as certificates in law, respiratory therapy, labor and employment studies, dental hygiene and correctional psychology.

"It is wonderful to see so many alumni returning to campus as accomplished young men," said Cameron Safarloo, CEO of the center. "The pursuit of higher education represents just one more step in their continuing journeys toward successful and productive lives."

Encouraging Hanna graduates to pursue formal education has been an essential part and a primary goal of the program since its inception.

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"This is by far one of my favorite days at the center," said Trish Goodwin, director of transitional programs and alumni relations, at the center's Scholarship Day on July 20. "It is such an incredible opportunity to witness all of the growth of these young men as they came back to share their stories and plans for their lives and academic futures."

One recent Hanna graduate, Hector, was living in poverty and an unstable environment when he first entered the center.

"I wasn't going to school and knew I had to make changes in my life," he said. "Hanna taught me independence and I learned more about my faith. This gave me skills and set me up for success."

He went on the graduate from the University of California, Davis, and has been accepted into a law school in Sacramento.

“I want to become an attorney so I can advocate for members of my community who cannot afford one,” he said.

Through the years, the center has awarded scholarships to hundreds of young men. Former Hanna students have successfully graduated from dozens of higher education institutions, including St. John’s University, Sonoma State University, Howard University, San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley.

Reach the reporter, Dan Johnson, at daniel.johnson@sonomanews.com.

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