

# Hanna Center

## Hanna Center Graduate Kevin



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Kevin didn't stay long when he arrived at Hanna Center for the first time in October of 2020. At Christmas break, home in L.A., he had no plans of returning to Sonoma. Not for the typical reasons (too much structure, too many expectations) - Kevin just didn't want to be so far from his family. Close to his mom and siblings, he thought he'd give high school at home another try.

At the start of his senior year, Kevin was still skipping classes and hanging with friends who “weren't good influences.” He sensed that this environment, a neighborhood known for violence and crime, would eventually bring him down. Not wanting to fail and disappoint his mom, Kevin cautiously called Hanna. “Like, there was no way they would take me back,” he says. “But they believed in me - and they did.”

Although he missed his family a great deal, Kevin kept his eye on the goal of graduating. Two of his older brothers before him had thrived at Hanna and were now at SRJC. “They left that neighborhood behind and benefitted by being here,” he says. Very grateful for the second chance, Kevin “doesn't miss an opportunity” to express his gratitude to the Hanna staff that made it possible.

Always respectful and courteous to others (“That all comes from my mom,” he says), Kevin always brought his positive and upbeat energy, which endeared him to his peers and staff alike—so much so that he received Hanna Center's' 2024 Boy of the Year' award, presented to only one student each year.

**“Hanna consistently pushed me out of my comfort zone,” he says. “Each time, they were building me up to be independent and successful.”**



“What was demonstrated to me during my time here,” he says, “was caring, understanding and being reasonable. Even if I would get mad about something, they just showed patience. When my head was stuck in, ‘I gotta go down this track,’ they told me, ‘No, think bigger. The sky is the limit.’ My whole life, I always thought I’d just work construction for a job. The counselors told me it was OK to open my mind to other possibilities.” Having been awarded multiple scholarships, Kevin will

attend SRJC this fall and is excited to share a dorm room with his older brother. He will work towards a career as an electrician and hopes for an apprenticeship opportunity. He would like to earn enough money to someday move his family out of LA and “bring them here.”

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*Hanna Academy educates, prepares, and empowers students with learning and emotional challenges to succeed in school and life by developing their unique and individual talents and gifts. The student driven program develops academic, social, and career skills within a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment.*