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## **Café Bustelo® Brand Provides Financial Support To Hispanic Students Seeking College Degrees**

*Nine of the Nation's Brightest and Most Driven Latino Students Each Awarded \$5,000 in College Scholarships, Recognized For Their Drive to Obtain Secondary Education and Motivation to Give Back in the Face of Adversity*

ORRVILLE, Ohio (Sept. 26, 2017) – Today, the **Café Bustelo®** brand, in partnership with the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (HACU), awarded nine deserving Latino students from around the country a **Café Bustelo** scholarship. This is the fourth consecutive year the brand has granted scholarships to Latino students.

Starting in January, the **Café Bustelo** brand challenged Latino students across the nation to an [800-word essay contest](#) describing how their heritage, family, and community in which they grew up inspired them to obtain a college degree and how they plan on giving back to their respective communities.

More than 1,000 eligible entries were received and reviewed by a qualified panel of judges. The following students have been selected as the official winners of the 2017 *El Café del Futuro Scholarship*, awarded for their ambition to further their education and unparalleled commitment to their communities:

- **Taylor Pineda (Albuquerque, N.M.):** No stranger to volunteering and community involvement, Pineda is an education student at Arizona State University with dreams of becoming an educational policymaker. A firm believer in education's ability to improve and empower the lives of marginalized populations, Pineda has served on the board of the Chandler Coalition for Civil and Human Rights and has mentored hundreds of students as a volunteer with Si Se Puede Foundation (SSPF), coordinating a college readiness program to help prepare high school students for college.
- **Jassmin Benitez-Guevara (Houston):** A first generation college student majoring in pre-medicine at University of Houston, Benitez-Guevara spent her childhood summers in El Salvador, her parents' country of origin. Inspired by El Salvadorians' appreciation of life despite their tough economic situations, Benitez-Guevara dreams of becoming a doctor with a specialty in global medicine and dedicating her career to caring for underserved populations within the U.S. and in third-world countries.
- **Marlon Gaytan Jr. (Daly City, Calif.):** Inspired by his family's values of self-sufficiency, ambition and discipline—or as he coins "Guatemalan Grit"—Gaytan worked tirelessly to become an industrial engineering student at California State Polytechnic University (CSPU). Driven by his family's strength, as he faced many economic limitations in pursuit of an education, Gaytan enrolled at Skyline Community College where he coordinated 75 student body activities as the activities commissioner of the student government. Relying on close mentors and available academic resources, Gaytan ultimately transferred to CSPU and became a member of Lambda

Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc., in which he upholds the values of Latino empowerment and leadership through service and academic excellence.

- **Rogelio Avila (Bensenville, Ill.):** Born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico, Avila left Mexico at the age of 13 in search of better work opportunities to support his ill father. After graduating from high school, Avila worked alongside oncologists, surgeons, internists and nurses as a medical assistant for over seven years, igniting his own desire to pursue a career in nursing. Following his tenure as an assistant, Avila received the unique opportunity to conduct research at Northwestern University, where he learned about the disparities that exist in cancer incidence in underrepresented groups. This experience reaffirmed his interest in becoming a nurse, where he feels he'll be able to make the most direct impact on other peoples' lives.
- **Maria Perez (Soledad, Calif.):** Having grown up in a town plagued by gang violence and drugs, Perez made an early choice to alter the course of her life for the better. Receiving assistance from Youth Alive, a local non-profit organization located in Salinas, California, Perez realized early on the importance of obtaining a college degree in order to give back to her community and help others the way she was helped. With a dream of becoming a social worker and working with at-risk youth, her hope is to not only grow underprivileged children into successful adults but to also grow their parents into strong, reliable support systems for them.
- **Gerardo Contreras (Laredo, Texas):** At the age of 15, Contreras left Mexico with his brother to pursue a more promising life and career in the U.S. Facing a language barrier and difficulty adjusting to a new culture, Contreras decided to get out of his comfort zone and become more actively involved in English-speaking organizations such as the League of the United American Citizens and Latinos in Science and Engineering, where he learned the importance of collaboration and ultimately acquired English as a second language. Although he's faced many unique challenges and educational setbacks, Contreras remains eager to become a mechanical engineer and motivated to share his academic knowledge with future generations of engineers.
- **Rosa Maldonado (Los Angeles):** As a first generation college student, Maldonado always swore by the words of her mother, "Education is an escape from poverty." Inspired by her father's experience as a refugee of the Guatemalan War, Maldonado pursued an undergraduate degree in Chicana/o and Central American Studies, with the intent of uncovering what social and political occurrences took place during the Guatemalan War. With the help of a close mentor, Maldonado worked diligently to obtain a summer fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania through the Leadership Alliance Mellon Initiative. Through this experience, she hopes to become a mentor to other disadvantaged students one day, helping them find networking opportunities and access programs with long-term career benefits.
- **Janel Navarro (Hawthorne, Calif.):** Navarro never dreamed of success as the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, instead she woke up every day and worked hard at it. Although she grew up at times homeless and without anyone to teach her English, Navarro remained focus on her academics and chose to pursue school. Inspired by her parents' unrelenting work ethic to thrive in America amidst the many challenges they faced as immigrants, she is excited to further her education in the hopes of becoming a social worker, serving as an advocate for other immigrants living in the U.S. and helping them pursue dreams in line with their passions.
- **Said Gonzalez (Menifee, Calif.):** Gonzalez attributes his own innate creativity and perseverance in the face of difficulty to his two loving parents, immigrants from San Mateo el Viejo, Mexico. Growing up, his weekends weren't spent riding his bike or playing football in his California neighborhood, but rather lending a helping hand to his mother and father as they juggled many jobs. Looking back, he admires his parents for their tireless work ethic and for instilling in him the mentality that with hard work, he can accomplish whatever his heart calls him to. Today,

Said is pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health with a dream of attending medical school and becoming a general practitioner for underprivileged immigrant families.

Stay updated on the latest **Café Bustelo** news by following along on social media: [@CafeBustelo](#) on Twitter and [/CafeBusteloOFFICIAL](#) on Facebook.

#### **About *Café Bustelo***

Our delicious coffee and rich espresso heritage was born in 1931. Since then, we've not only been proud of our rich, full-bodied flavor, but also of our unique and inviting culture. **Café Bustelo** coffee can be prepared using your preferred method. Available in the forms you want, including K-Cup® pods.

#### **About HACU**

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents approximately 470 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America and Spain. The association's headquarters are located in San Antonio, Texas, with government relations offices in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, California. HACU is the only national association representing existing and emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Information is available at [www.hacu.net](http://www.hacu.net).

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