

Educational Programs and Scholarships

by Aimee L'Heureux

Since the scholarship and educational program support began in 1957, more than \$235 million has been committed to Texas students for their education. Currently, 1,934 students are furthering their education with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo scholarships. Enrolled students are attending eighty-eight different Texas colleges and universities. In order to qualify for any of the scholarships, students must demonstrate academic potential, citizenship/leadership, and financial need. Winners may major in any field of study leading to a bachelor's degree; however, they must attend a college or university in Texas. These three students are a sampling of the many scholarship recipients who were able to accomplish their goals and, today, follow the example set by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's scholarship program by giving back to the community.

Kristina Kovar, a Rodeo Art Scholar from Lamar Consolidated High School who graduated in 2005, says that The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Scholarship made a difference in her life because it enabled her to attend college and pursue her dreams without worrying about how to pay her expenses or divide her time between work and school. Her artwork was chosen for the Rodeo Art Auction and sold for \$9,000. She says the auction was bittersweet because she knew that she would never again see the picture that she had poured hundreds of hours into; but much to her shock and surprise, the artwork was donated back to her. Kristina says that her life is now full of unlimited possibilities because of the generosity of the scholarship donors and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Since graduating summa cum laude from the University of Houston with a B.F.A. in Interior Design and a minor in Architecture, she is now attending Graduate School at UH, seeking a master's degree in Architecture, as well as being a student design intern at Newberry Campa Architects. Her time spent with the rodeo through the years, volunteering at their scholarship booth and speaking at one of their meetings were memorable and rewarding experiences that she treasures to this day. Kristina's ultimate goal is to give something back to the people and community that have given her so much. Through architecture, she hopes to positively contribute to the fabric of society.

Audrie Luna, a Metropolitan Scholarship recipient, 2002-2006, says that The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo scholarship helped her to attain her goal, while also providing her family with the peace of mind that she would be able to attend college even though they could not assist financially. Audrie Luna graduated from the University of Houston in 2006 with a B.S. in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. She is currently working at LINN Energy, a mid-sized oil and gas company in Downtown Houston as an executive assistant for the company's top three executives. In her spare time, she volunteers with CanCare, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their families.

Gabynely Galvan-Solis graduated from Furr High School in the top five percent of her class and always dreamt of going to college. Coming from a very low income Hispanic family, she wanted to be one of the first in her family to obtain a bachelor's degree. College was not an option unless she riddled herself with student loan debt. Her parents only achieved a middle school education and, even though she knew they wanted to

help financially, they did not know how to make this dream a reality. With her high school counselors and teachers pushing her to apply for as many scholarships as possible, the final tally was between thirty-five and forty applications. One by one she was rejected. Just as she was beginning to lose hope, she received a big yellow envelope in the mail that said she had been awarded \$10,000 from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Gabynely Solis graduated in May of 2008 from the University of Houston majoring in Public Relations and minoring in Russian. Since graduation she has been working at the College of Optometry at the University of Houston as a Pediatric Research Coordinator. The program offers patients services, such as free eye exams, free eye care, and free eyewear.

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CURRENT SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH THE HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO INCLUDE:

FFA SCHOLARSHIP: 70 four-year scholarships at \$15,000 each, statewide.

4-H: 70 four-year scholarships at \$15,000 each, statewide.

FCCLA: 10 four-year scholarships at \$15,000 each, statewide.

METROPOLITAN: 214 four-year, \$15,000 scholarships to outstanding students graduating from Houston-area public school districts in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties.

OPPORTUNITY: 100 four-year, \$15,000 scholarships to outstanding students graduating from specified school districts within Harris, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties.

AREA GO TEXAN: 70 four-year, \$15,000 scholarships presented to outstanding eligible students representing the counties participating in the Show's Area Go Texan program. An additional 10 awards are given at large to students within the 60 counties represented in the Area Go Texan Scholarship Program.

SCHOOL ART: 15 four-year scholarships at \$15,000 each.

HILDEBRAND: one four-year scholarship at \$15,000.



Gabynely Solis (right) was able to make her dream come true, becoming the first in her family to graduate from college, with much thanks to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Scholarship program. She is joined by Chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission, the Honorable Elizabeth Ames Jones.