



**For Immediate Release**

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**Local Student Awarded a Surprise of a Lifetime**

*Frank L. Madla Early College High School student awarded surprise University of Texas \$48,000 scholarship*

**SAN ANTONIO** — Romina Castaneda, a Frank L. Madla Early College High School senior, received a surprise that will have a lasting impact. Led to an auditorium under the guise of a school assembly, Castaneda – surrounded by two hundred of student peers – was surprised by a \$48,000 Impact Scholarship from the University of Texas at Austin.

Impact Scholarships cover tuition by providing students with \$12,000 annually for four years. Four Impact Scholarships were awarded to San Antonio area students with potential to transform their communities. Students are selected for the Impact Scholarship through UT’s holistic review process, which considers students’ academics, extracurriculars and their community contributions.

Frank L. Madla Early College High School is operated through a partnership between New Frontiers Public Schools and Alamo Colleges District - Palo Alto College. This past May, their inaugural graduating class collectively secured over 7 million dollars in college scholarships and 256 college acceptances.

Palo Alto College is an active partner with several schools across the community. They currently partner with seven educational entities to operate Early College High Schools with varying models.

“As champions for educational access, Palo Alto College couldn’t be more proud of Romina and her accomplishments,” said college president Dr. Robert Garza. “As the future workforce of San Antonio, students enrolled in early college high schools are getting opportunities that can change the course of their lives. We’re reminded that with hard work and determination, all students can achieve their educational goals and aspirations of building a successful career.”

Early College High Schools (ECHS) are innovative schools designated by the Texas Education Agency that provide an opportunity for students to earn a distinguished high school diploma and an Associate’s degree. The schools provide college tuition at no cost to students; offer rigorous instruction and accelerated courses; provide academic and social support services to help students succeed and reduce barriers to college access.

Frank L. Madla Early College High School is a part of New Frontiers Public Schools, a tuition-free, local network of schools in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of operation serving the south San Antonio community.

“We are very proud of Romina and her Frank L. Madla Early College High School peers – who themselves are receiving college acceptances daily,” New Frontiers Public Schools CEO Alfredo Segura Jr. said. “They are trailblazing down our path to and through college.”

**About Palo Alto College**

Palo Alto College, part of the Alamo Colleges District, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and a recipient of the 2015 Texas Award for Performance Excellence, a finalist for the 2016 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and a top 10 finalist for the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. With over 10,000 students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees and short-term certificates. The College is located on the south side of San Antonio at 1400 W. Villaret Blvd. at I-410 and Texas Hwy 16 and online at [alamo.edu/pac](http://alamo.edu/pac).

**About New Frontiers Public Schools**

New Frontiers Public Schools is a local, community-based, free public charter school district serving children in kindergarten through high school on the south side of San Antonio since 1998. The district operates the Frank L. Madla Accelerated Collegiate Academy and the Frank L. Madla Early College High School. Campuses operate under a college immersion model where all students in every grade receive a collegiate experience. For information on New Frontiers Public Schools, visit [www.newfrontierspublicschools.org](http://www.newfrontierspublicschools.org).

**About Early College High Schools**

Early College High Schools are innovative high schools that allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and up to 60 college credit hours. Under the authority of Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091, the TEA has developed a designation process for ECHS. The designation process ensures that districts and colleges operating ECHS campuses maintain the integrity of the model, which was researched and designed to target and serve students who would not otherwise consider attending college.

**Event Details**

Thursday, December 13, 2018

Time: 11:30AM

Location: Palo Alto College, Legacy Room