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CSU Monterey Bay senior wins first Philanthropic Young Adult award

By RIA MEGNIN
rmegnin@thecalifornian.com

For many Salinas-area residents, giving back to the community means sending occasional checks to charitable organizations. Today, one 23-year-old will be honored for doing much, much more.

Rachel Osias, a senior at California State University, Monterey Bay, will receive the first Philanthropic Young Adult of the Year award in Pebble Beach for her leadership on four major service projects.

The award is given as part of the local celebration of National Philanthropy Day.

So far in her CSUMB career, the East Bay native has:

- Coordinated student meetings with farmers in the local Agricultural Land Based Training Association, learning about their lives, work, food justice and labor rights.
- Organized annual weekend programs for middle school students throughout Monterey County to learn about and prepare for college.
- Created food drives for Alisal Community Healthy Start and Pajaro Valley farmworkers, leading fellow students to collect more than \$7,000 in CSUMB meal points and helping pack and deliver the meals to more than 200 families.

"The more involved I became with the Service Learning Institute, the more passionate I became ... about being with people and learning more about their lives," Osias said. "There's a lot more to learn than from textbooks."

At its sold-out 18th annual National Philanthropy Day luncheon today, the Central Coast's Association of Fundraising Professionals will recognize Osias and fellow community leaders Peggy Bates, the Audrey and Robert Talbott Foundation, the Shake Family, Caroline Yoon and Omega Nu of Santa Cruz.

Brenda Whitsett, co-chairwoman of the Central Coast's National Philanthropy Day committee, said Osias was the clear winner for this year's inaugural Young Adult award.

"It's always tough to choose when you see such wonderful things that young people are doing, but she was really a stand-out," Whitsett said. "She had to have vision, and she had to engage others. And she created programs that could be sustained after she graduates."

Beyond CSUMB, Osias plans to work as an environmental educator for disadvantaged children, helping connect them with their culture and the environment.

"Sometimes [service work] is overwhelming," she said, "and the heart can take a beating, but it helps me grow in bigger ways than I expected."

Additional Facts

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