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Big Fresno Fair 4.0 & Above Program Calls for Community Support To Reward Fresno County Academic All-stars

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, September 16, 2014...The Big Fresno Fair is encouraging the community and local businesses to come forward in support of educational excellence by championing the 4.0 & Above Program, presented by Toyota & EECU. In partnership with the Fresno County Office of Education, The Big Fresno Fair 4.0 & Above Program rewards high-achieving high school students who have earned a cumulative 4.0 or above grade point average as of June 2014.

In return for their academic dedication and hard work, the program offers students the opportunity to enter to win \$3,000 scholarships, mountain bikes, \$100 Visa gift cards, Apple iPads and the grand prize of a new Toyota Corolla through generous contributions from various scholarship donors, Toyota, EECU and Friends of the Fair (the Fair's Non-profit 501 (c) 3 Foundation) on Opening Day of The Big Fresno Fair in a rally-like setting that applauds educational distinction. With the help from the community, the Fair and its partners are able to grow the program more and more each year and prove to these young leaders that a lifetime of rewards can be earned in return for hard work and educational drive.

Standing apart from other program prizes, scholarships donated by residents and businesses throughout the community are significant in making the 4.0 & Above Program a staple for rewarding educational excellence, as well as reminding other community members and organizations that high academic achievements are something that should never go unnoticed. Last year, the community stepped up in a big way by contributing approximately \$30,000 in scholarship funds to the 4.0 and Above Program – allowing ten local students to focus their energy on education without the financial burden of how to purchase books and supplies, as well as the many other expenses that come with obtaining a quality education. This year, The Big Fresno Fair has already raised \$39,000 in scholarship funds and is calling on the community for additional contributions.

In addition to the program's scholarships, Toyota is donating a new car for the fourth year in a row as the grand prize of the 4.0 and Above Program. Toyota's partnership in this program is another way the company works to lead by example – being committed to the communities they serve and enhancing the quality of K-12 education by building partnerships and supporting innovative programs, Through their support of community programs along

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with community stewards who step up to join these efforts, The Big Fresno Fair aims to enrich the young lives of local scholars while building a better future for all as these students later enter the work force with a first-class educational background.

The fairly-new 4.0 & Above Program only in its fourth year is already making a difference in the lives of local students. Madeline Kumagai, winner of the The Yruegui Family \$3,000 Scholarship in 2013 is currently a Junior at University High school and has put her money in an EECU 529 College Savings Account that she plans to use toward medical school after attending a four-year university; and Pedro Gomez, winner of the Markar & Virginia Shapazian Family \$3,000 Scholarship in 2012 said that winning the scholarship alleviated a major stress of his life where he can now focus his energy on succeeding in school at John Hopkins University where he majors in Molecular and Cellular Biology.

“If it wasn't for the scholarship, I don't know where I would find the funds to buy the long list of things that I needed to buy before college, especially the small and usually unaccounted expenses,” Pedro said. “I am truly grateful for the Markar & Virginia Shapazian Family Scholarship.”

The Fair, along with all of its partners, are thrilled to see the results of this year's 4.0 & Above Program on Opening Day of the 2014 Big Fresno Fair, Wednesday, October 1. All Fresno County high schools students whose cumulative grade point average is 4.0 or above as of June 2014 are invited to The Big Fresno Fair for free on this day to participate in the program. All qualified students in attendance have the opportunity to enter to win all community-funded scholarships and other assorted prizes in the Brian I. Tatarian Grandstand as a reward for their academic success. Individual schools will be distributing the information needed to participate to those who qualify.

“It is our privilege and honor to recognize Fresno County high-achieving high school students moving into this program's fourth year,” said John C. Alkire, CEO of The Big Fresno Fair. “With the support of the community, this program has endless possibilities. Hardworking students deserve to know their community is proud of their success and supports them in their educational ventures.”

For more information on the 4.0 & Above Program, visit www.fresnofair.com/4-0-above-program or contact the Fair Communications Department at (559) 650-3229. If you're interested in donating a new scholarship or prize toward the 4.0 & Above Program, please contact the Fair Sponsorship Department at (559) 227-9999.



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