



NEW LEADER SCHOLAR BIOS 2010

HALEH BADKOOBEHI, (See 2012 entry, awarded a Fourth New Leader Scholarship).

GABRIELLE FALZONE, (See 2012 entry, awarded a Third New Leader Scholarship).

ANGEL KU, 22, is a San Francisco State senior studying Cell and Molecular Biology with the goal of doing graduate work in Public Health and studying health disparities. As an undocumented student, Angel has faced the serious challenges met by his family and his community. "My morning walks to the bus station for my commute to San Francisco State [are] always accompanied with the fear of having my future and family taken from me." His deep commitment to his community and his indomitable focus on academic achievement has resulted in goals that merge his love of science with his commitment to community action. The result is his plan to work in community-based participatory research that will lead to sustainable health-care solutions for challenged communities. "With these tools....I will attempt to uplift my communities," he says. Angel spends his non-academic time as President and Student Organizer for IDEAS to achieve legislation to help undocumented students move into higher education. This is his second New Leader Scholarship.

VIRGINIA (Jenna) LEE, 26, graduated with a degree in Social Welfare at U.C., Berkeley and continues at the school of Social Welfare for a Master's in Social Welfare, Management and Planning. She was born in Macau, China and lived in Southeast Asia, Taiwan, Mexico and many other countries until she was seventeen. Virginia was home-schooled and self-educated until entering community college. At the age of seventeen, she came to the United States independently and became a volunteer at a center for street and homeless youth in Oregon. It was here that she developed her strong commitment to help those in great need, being inspired by the example of the couple that founded and ran Hearthstone Ministries. Subsequently, she volunteered for an organization in Morelia, Mexico and witnessed conditions of poverty that far exceeded those of the homeless with whom she had previously worked. These and subsequent work and life experiences have informed her desire to have a career in public service. This is her second New Leader Scholarship.

MELISSA RIVAS, 21, is a senior at U.C., Berkeley, working toward her degree in Sociology. Born in San Francisco, Melissa's mother is a San Salvadoran immigrant who together with Melissa, has "struggled to find the Latino American Dream." Daily she sees the men, women and children in her community striving and struggling to survive. "This is the world I was born into," she says, "this is the world I am trying to change." To that end, in addition to school and working to help support herself, Melissa is an Outreach Intern for the Raza Recruitment and Retention Center and works with "By Any Means Necessary" (BAMN) to give a voice to the Latino community. She hopes to teach Sociology at the college level to "better improve my community and communities like mine." Melissa has been a recipient of Next Generation Scholars and has taught underserved middle school children through their program. This is her second New Leader Scholarship.

CHRISTYNA SERRANO, (See 2012 entry, awarded a Sixth New Leader Scholarship).