



of Carpinteria

## **NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Girls Inc. of Carpinteria Members Awarded \$25K in Scholarships from Girls Inc. National Scholars Program**

*-- Outstanding Carpinteria students Michelle Alpizar and Laura Flores to utilize funds for college --*

**CARPINTERIA, CA (February 27, 2020)**—**Girls Inc. of Carpinteria** members **Michelle Alpizar** and **Laura Flores** have been awarded a total of \$25,000 in college scholarships through the competitive Girls Inc. National Scholars Program. Alpizar and Flores are among 23 young women around the nation to be hand-selected to receive the prestigious recognition from a pool of more than 100 applicants.

The Girls Inc. National Scholars Program selects outstanding young women across the U.S. who exemplify the Girls Inc. mission of inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Recipients are role models for other girls who demonstrate a commitment to achieving academically and serving their communities.

“Michelle and Laura are truly driven, resilient, and compassionate young women and we are thrilled to see them receive this well-deserved recognition,” said **Jamie Collins**, executive director at Girls Inc. of Carpinteria. “We are so proud of the confident, assertive, and focused young women they have grown to be and all that they have achieved through their hard work. We look forward to seeing Michelle and Laura continue to thrive and use their voices to serve as agents of social change.”

Each year, Girls Inc. National awards the selected Scholars with scholarships for educational expenses at any accredited college or university. Of the 23 national recipients, 17-year-old Alpizar is one of only 13 to score the \$20,000 scholarship.

A senior at Carpinteria High School, Alpizar joined Girls Inc. of Carpinteria when she was in first grade. She later joined the nonprofit’s Eureka! program, a college-bound program that provides girls with opportunities to explore and develop new interests, step outside of their comfort zones, and overcome barriers to their achievement. Through Eureka!, Alpizar received a paid internship at the age of 15, traveled to Washington D.C. and lobbied with elected officials, and visited a multitude of college campuses. She credits the program for helping her realize attending college as a first-generation student is possible.

Alpizar says Girls Inc. was a safe place to learn new experiences and thrive, especially during the toughest of times. When facing challenges at school and at home, Girls Inc. remained her support system and encouraged her to seek help and use her voice. Her experience volunteering at Girls Inc. as a counselor in training, serving as an intern for children of low-income families, and her personal struggles have inspired Alpizar to pursue a career in child psychology.

In addition to maintaining a cumulative 4.5 GPA, she is vice president of the Spanish Club, plays volleyball and basketball, and has earned over 500 hours of community service.

“Girls Inc. provided a safe place for me where I was able to make new friends and find adults I could trust and confide in,” said Alpizar. “When it felt as if everything was going downhill, Girls Inc. taught me about

persistence, inner strength, and self-determination. They provided me a shoulder to cry on, knowledge about college, and experiences that helped me take on the real world.”

Flores, 16 and a junior at Carpinteria High, joined Girls Inc. of Carpinteria as a sixth grader. She participated in the Teen Center, Eureka! and the Living Safe & Strong program, learning about economic literacy, human sexuality, mental health and self-defense.

Flores currently serves as Junior Class Vice President, is a member of Link Crew, Site Council, Celebrating Adversity, Diversity, and Education (CADE), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), California Scholarship Fund and others. She says Girls Inc. gave her the confidence to travel abroad; last summer, she volunteered on a mission trip to Panama with her local church where she served as a translator for doctors to communicate with their patients. Flores has also completed over 100 hours of community service at Girls Inc. and completed an internship through Eureka! with the Boys & Girls Club, which affirmed her passion for teaching.

“I was unsure of myself as a young girl, but everything changed when the power of Girls Inc.’s programming, environment, and staff helped me challenge stereotypes, find my voice, and gain confidence,” said Flores. “Girls Inc. became my practice field for courageous, bold moments. I know I will continue to overcome the barriers set in front of me and challenge the limits set by others because of my gender.”

Since 1993, Girls Inc. has awarded over \$4.6 million in scholarships, making higher education a reality for hundreds of high school girls across the United States and Canada. Girls Inc. of Carpinteria participants have received a total of 35 National Scholar awards and \$228,500 in total scholarships.

To learn more about Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, please call (805) 684-6364 or visit [www.girlsinc-carp.org](http://www.girlsinc-carp.org).

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*Girls Inc. of Carpinteria is a member of Girls Incorporated®, a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Our programming focuses on the development of the whole girl: we deliver life-changing programs and experiences designed to equip girls to overcome serious barriers and grow up healthy, educated, and independent. A combination of long-lasting mentoring relationships, a pro-girl environment and research-based programming prepares girls to lead fulfilling and productive lives and become role models in their community. Girls Inc. of Carpinteria currently serves more than 1100 youth in the Carpinteria Valley and Ventura Country, from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. To learn more, become a volunteer or offer support, please visit [www.girlsinc-carp.org/](http://www.girlsinc-carp.org/).*

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