

# Posse L.A. Celebrates Newest Scholars

Posse Los Angeles hosted its seventh annual Awards Ceremony at the Colburn School of Music's Zipper Hall on Saturday, January 9, 2010. Posse staff, board members, volunteers and supporters joined the Scholars' families in honoring the newly selected Possees.

Posse Los Angeles' partner institutions awarded four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships to 86 students, Los Angeles' largest class to date. These Scholars will attend Bucknell University, Dickinson College, Grinnell College, Kalamazoo College, Tulane University, UC Berkeley, UCLA and University of Wisconsin-Madison in the fall.

## THE POSSE CONCEPT IS ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS I'VE ENCOUNTERED

The Awards Ceremony is the culmination of the Dynamic Assessment Process, which is Posse's three-month selection process that begins each September.

Last year was Posse Los Angeles' largest recruitment cycle yet, with a record 2,300 nominations.

Among those in attendance at the Awards Ceremony were The Posse Foundation's Regional Vice President Chastity Lord and Chief Operating Officer Matthew Fasciano, who was the keynote speaker. Representatives from partner universities also attended the event.

The Awards Ceremony was made



Wisconsin Posse 8 Scholars and Peter Weil (center), Posse supporter and distinguished UW alumnus.

possible by its sponsors—Kirkland & Ellis LLP; AT&T; Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP; and U.S. Bank.

"The Posse concept, and its consistently successful implementation, is one of the most inspiring and effective programs I've encountered," writes Posse volunteer Sylvia Sukop, who covered the

event for *The Huffington Post*.

Posse Los Angeles Director Tamara Craver also spoke at the Awards Ceremony. "We hear a lot about what's wrong with the L.A. public school system, but this," she said, turning to the group of Posse Scholars on stage, "this is what's right with the system." ✨



Denise Leung, Wisconsin Posse 8, and her family.



(from left) Sophia Acevedo, Dickinson Posse 6, and Bucknell Posse 1 Scholars Saba Davis and Rose Dimal.

# Grinnell Scholars Win Mellon Mays Fellowship

Lizeth Gutierrez sang and danced. Isaiah Iboko almost cried. Nidia Bautista felt grateful. Melissa Vasquez was overcome with pure excitement. Such were

the reactions of these four Grinnell Posse 6 Scholars upon learning that they had each won a Mellon Mays Fellowship for aspiring teachers.

The Mellon Mays Fellowship encourages minority students to earn Ph.D.s in the arts and sciences, pursue professorships and demonstrate a

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POSSE LOS ANGELES SPRING 2010

# L.A. Alumni Secure Competitive Jobs

One of The Posse Foundation's long-term goals is to create a professional leadership network that more accurately represents the changing demographics of our nation. Posse Los Angeles is already witnessing the emergence of such leaders in our growing network of young Alumni who have been offered opportunities with some outstanding companies and organizations.

The following stories offer just a glimpse into the exciting careers our Alumni are launching.

## BRENTT BALTIMORE

Brentt Baltimore, Claremont McKenna Posse 2, will be working with Credit Suisse as a first-year investment banking analyst.

Brentt's road to success is a true testament to the talent of Posse Scholars. During his undergraduate years as an economics and finance major, Brentt interned with Deloitte and The Walt Disney Studios, both of which are Career Program partners.

His relentless drive and sense of purpose, coupled with a clear plan for the future, will undoubtedly continue to set Brentt apart as a rising star in finance.

## ALUMNI HAVE BEEN OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES WITH OUTSTANDING COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

## GLENDA GARCIA

Glenda Garcia, Dickinson Posse 1, never would have learned about her current job at the National Farm Workers Service Center (NFWSC) without the help of Facebook. After posting on Facebook that she was looking for a job, a fellow Dickinson alumna contacted her about the Cesar E. Chavez Fellowship with the NFWSC, in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA.

As a Cesar E. Chavez Fellow, Glenda oversees the Si Se Puede! Learning Center in Somerton, Arizona, and leads two staff members, coordinating volunteers and managing the after-school programs.

While most recent graduates are thinking about their personal gain when starting a new career, Glenda is focused on



(from left) Ben Ruano, Michigan Posse 1, with fellow associates Jean Schwausch and Robert Benton, was recently hired as a divisional wholesaler by the Capital Group Companies.

giving back. "I'm thinking bigger picture," she says. "Why not use my efforts to help and empower an entire community?"

## ELIZABETH VAZQUEZ

Elizabeth Vazquez, Wisconsin Posse 1, is now working at the organization that once nominated her for the Posse Scholarship.

Last summer Elizabeth was hired on to Los Angeles Conservation Corps' Clean & Green Program, and most recently became wildlife education planner. In this role she will coordinate service-learning trips and nature hikes to promote wildlife awareness, which is particularly exciting for Elizabeth who studied wildlife ecology and zoology at UW-Madison.

Returning to the LA Conservation Corps is important to Elizabeth not just because she is a graduate of the program, but because she truly believes in its mission of providing at-risk youth with tools for professional development.

"These youth grew up where I did, and many struggle with school and beyond because they lack the right support and role models," says Elizabeth.

## TWO ALUMNI WERE HIRED BY POSSE CAREER PROGRAM PARTNER CAPITAL GROUP COMPANIES

## BEN RUANO & SHAKA TAFARI

Not one, but two Alumni from Los Angeles, Ben Ruano (Michigan Posse 1)



Elizabeth Vazquez, Wisconsin Posse 1, works at the LA Conservation Corps, which nominated her for the Posse Scholarship.

and Shaka Tafari (Dickinson Posse 1) were hired as divisional wholesalers with the Capital Group Companies, a Posse Career Program partner.

Although they began training together in Indianapolis, Ben has since moved to the San Antonio, Texas, office, while Shaka has remained in Indiana.

While neither Ben nor Shaka took the conventional route to achieving jobs in finance—Ben earned a degree in political science from the University of Michigan, and Shaka majored in American studies at Dickinson College—they both prove to have the determination and positive outlook needed to reach their goals and achieve success. ✨

# Scholars Boost Interview, Resume-Writing Skills

Brittany King-Pleas, Kalamazoo Posse 1, took home one lesson during the Posse Career Boost event in December: eye contact with the interviewer is extremely important yet hard to maintain.

The freshman learned this during her mock interview as part of the Career Program's Winter Programming event, developed to help Scholars prepare to interview for potential internships.

The Posse Career Boost served as a reminder of the importance of internships and interviewing, especially with internship season in full swing.

Representatives from Bain & Co., City Year, DirecTV, Travelers and Disney donated their time to conduct mock interviews for Posse Scholars and give



Scholars participate in mock interviews at Posse's Career Boost workshop in January.

feedback as well as provide tips to improve their resumes.

The Scholars also participated in small group discussions where they asked

specific questions of volunteers, who gave advice on networking, professionalism and resume building. Alumni Yazmin Watkins (Dickinson 1) and Tony Nguyen (Michigan 1), were in attendance and shared their internship experiences.

In addition to the Career Boost, Scholars showing interest in entertainment industry careers were invited to an exclusive resume workshop presented by Peter Campbell of DreamWorks Animation's Human Resources Department.

To cap off the day, Scholars were given access to a special screening of DreamWorks' new feature film, *How to Train Your Dragon*.✱

## 86 New Scholars Begin Pre-Collegiate Training

On January 25, 2010, the Posse Los Angeles office was buzzing with excitement and anticipation. The newest Posse Scholars had arrived to begin their Posse journey with their first workshop in Pre-Collegiate Training (PCT).

That day's workshop, entitled "Posse's Mission," taught them about Posse's goals and how the organization achieves them.

Scholars were put in pairs, and each pair was asked to learn one Posse goal verbatim, which they then presented to the rest of the group. This inspired a discussion on Posse's work in the community and nationwide.

These workshops are part of Posse's eight-month Pre-Collegiate Training

Program, which prepares Scholars to succeed in college, create community and be agents of change.

### PRE-COLLEGIATE TRAINING GIVES SCHOLARS TOOLS TO PROMOTE CHANGE AND DIALOGUE

During their senior year in high school, Scholars participate in weekly workshops focusing on four components: team building and group support, cross-cultural communication, leadership and becoming an active agent of change on campus, and academic excellence.

"The Pre-Collegiate Training helps

Scholars get to know one another," says Program Director Silvestre Vallejo, "but also gives them the tools they need to spark conversations on campus that promote change and open dialogue."

This year, Posse Los Angeles is preparing eight Posses, over 80 Scholars, to attend Bucknell University, Grinnell College, Kalamazoo College, Tulane University, UC Berkeley, UCLA and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

By the end of their training, they will be cohesive groups that will support one another, succeed academically and promote change on their campuses. Scholars will matriculate in August upon completion of their training. ✱

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commitment to overcoming racial disparities. All four Grinnell Posse 6 Scholars are prepared to do just that.

In pursuing her Ph.D., Melissa plans to research the Bolivian housekeeper industry as a reflection of how Bolivian society perceives indigenous women. Isaiah and Nidia will both pursue their Ph.D.s in sexuality and women's studies, and Lizeth will pursue a Ph.D. in Latin American studies with a focus on societal structures.

"I believe higher education is a privilege that needs to be taken advantage of if given the opportunity," says Lizeth.

"And I hope to inspire inner-city youth to pursue a higher education themselves."

As Mellon Fellows, each Scholar will be mentored by Grinnell faculty, receive funding for loan repayment and conference attendance and other resources to help them become agents of change in an academic setting. The funding will also allow students like Nidia to focus entirely on academics.

"I currently work three jobs," says Nidia. "Now I will be able to focus more on my studies and less on manual labor. This opportunity is incredible and I am extremely grateful." ✱



Nidia Bautista, Grinnell Posse 6.

# Volunteer Witnesses ‘Greatest Transformation’

For the past three years, Karl Domangue has been a huge asset to Posse Los Angeles. He’s volunteered as an evaluator for the Dynamic Assessment Process (DAP) and as a writing coach. We asked him to share a little about his experiences with Posse.



Karl Domangue, Posse volunteer.

coach for Posse’s Pre-Collegiate Training Program to help transition students’ high school writing styles into well-defined articulate college-level prose. As a writing coach, I witnessed the greatest transformation in Posse Scholars.

One student remarked that his teacher told him he’d seen a significant improvement in the student’s essay writing skills since becoming a Posse Scholar. It’s a great feeling knowing that I’ve helped a student progress in this way.

Warm, cozy feelings aside, my reasons for lending my time to Posse are a little more selfish. I get inspired by the energy and enthusiasm of the Posse Scholars. They remind me that I’m still a work in progress myself, and I feed off their ambitions.

So if you want to do for self, consider volunteering for any one of the upcoming Posse events. The energy, enthusiasm and encouragement you generate will be reflected back on you tenfold.\*

## volunteer highlight

Karl Domangue

Throughout my college career, money—the lack of it—seemed to be at the root of all my problems. I was a good student, outgoing and athletic, and a leader in a number of my school’s student-run organizations. However, academic scholarships targeting top students often eluded me.

That’s why when a friend invited me to volunteer with Posse Los Angeles, I jumped at the opportunity.

Volunteering for the first time as an evaluator during the Dynamic Assessment Process, or DAP, was very daunting for

me. My decisions helped determine who proceeded further in the selection process. These are tough decisions that may affect the rest of these students’ lives. But, it’s rewarding to see a student who I advocated for emerge months later a Posse Scholar. Since then, I’ve become a writing

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