

Kiwanis Awards 2026

Scholarships and Hope of American Awards to Graduating High School Seniors

The Kiwanis Club and Foundation of Tierrasanta awarded scholarships and Hope of America Awards with scholarships to graduating seniors at Canyon Hills High School, Hoover High School and the Charter School of San Diego in Tierrasanta to help defray the costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies and room and board at an institution of higher learning. The club established a scholarship program in 1982 for Serra High School graduates, renamed Canyon Hills High School in 2021, and now annually awards four scholarships through the club foundation to graduating Canyon Hills High School students bound for college who best exemplify the high ideals of Kiwanis service including character, leadership, academic and athletic achievement and service to school and community. The foundation selects the recipients based on a review of applications submitted for the awards, including an essay, school transcripts and documentation of school and community activities, service and leadership. The awards honor three former outstanding Kiwanians now deceased and family members of donating Kiwanians.

Howie Pham received the Vernon D. Bowman \$4,000 Scholarship. He graduated near the top of his class with a Total 9-12 WGPA of 4.25. Howie demonstrated leadership in school activities that positively impacted Canyon Hills High School and his fellow students. He served as class president in 2026, ASB Commissioner of Technology and Multimedia Club President. He was captain of the varsity boys' basketball team and defensive player of the year. He was captain of the varsity lacrosse team and most improved player. He was a member of the Key Club and served many hours as a Vietnamese youth leader. Howie is leaning toward attending college at UC Berkley, UC San Diego or San Diego State University in the fall.

Belle Britson received the \$1,000 Thomas G. Cherniss Scholarship. Belle's Total 9-12 WGPA was 4.27. Belle started her outstanding record of participation, leadership and service as a member of the Girl Scouts of America earning the Girl

Scout Gold Award. She was class vice-president in 2026 and the ASB president and ASB vice-treasurer at Canyon Hills High School, captain of the Varsity Competition Cheerleading and captain of the Varsity Sideline Cheerleading. She won the Cheerleading Most Dedicated award in 2025. She was outstanding as a Figure Skater and won the Scholar Athlete Award each year for 2023 to 2026. Belle is planning to attend either UCSD or UCLA in the Fall.

Dylan Knepple received the \$1,000 George V. Paluso Scholarship, also awarding participation, leadership and excellence in athletics. Dylan achieved a Total 9-12 WGPA of 4.33. Dylan provided leadership at Canyon Hills High School as a cross-country track athlete and very active member of Club Elevated serving as both Head Designer and Event Coordinator providing service to the community. He was an outstanding track athlete receiving the All-Academic League award for his high GPA and athletic prowess in cross country and track. He was the cross-country distance team captain, a cross-country manager in the 10th and 11th grades and received the Coach's Award his senior year in cross country for demonstrating leadership and determination to his team members and coaches. Dylan plans to attend California State University San Marcos in the fall.

Alina Aldana received a \$1,000 Lonnie and Elaine Folsom Scholarship established by them to honor their grandson Richard Torpy and his wife Kelli, to be awarded to five students in \$1,000 increments over a period of five-years. Alina graduated with a Total 9-12 WGPA of 4.36. Alina has been very involved in her community and church. She was active in Girl Scouts of America and received her Girl Scout Gold Award. She was an Ascension Catholic Church volunteer from the 9th through 12th grades. At Canyon Hills she provided outstanding leadership and service as a member of the Canyon Hills Key Club. She was a field hockey coach at De Portola Middle School and participated in Canyon Hills sports on the field hockey team and served as captain of the team. Alina plans to attend San Diego State University in the Fall.

The Canyon Hills High School Hope of America Award recipients were **Jaye Bourda, Nicholas Nelson** and **Mia Pates**. The Hoover High recipients were

Monica Cazales and Melanie Velez. Sabri Jones received the San Diego Charter School award. Kiwanis initiated the Hope of America Award program for all the public schools in Tierrasanta and Murphy Canyon in 1979, now expanded to include all schools assisted by the club and the Tierrasanta campus of the Charter School of San Diego. The California-Nevada-Hawaii District of Kiwanis International has presented Hope of America Awards since 1984. The award recognizes students selected by school faculty members and administrators to honor and encourage students who have demonstrated academic accomplishment, leadership and good ethical and moral character- all traits of leaders who have sustained our democratic way of life. Such outstanding citizenship traits and consistent devotion to the acquisition of learning skills as exhibited by the award recipients are very important to help guarantee the future of the United States of America. The awards include an award certificate, an award letter, a certificate featuring the American's Creed and a \$250 scholarship.



Kiwanian Sheila Weiner presents a Charter School of San Diego High School Hope of America Award and Scholarship to Sabri Jones

[Photographs Were Not Submitted for Other Recipients]