

# SAN DIEGO BAY WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

## THE [SAN DIEGO BAY WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL](#)® ANNOUNCES FINANCIAL BENEFICIARIES OF 2023 HOSPITALITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*Seven local San Diegans were selected to receive scholarships ranging between \$300 - \$2,500*

**(San Diego / December 5, 2023)** - In its ongoing commitment to investing in future culinary trailblazers and their efforts, the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival is proud to offer [scholarship opportunities](#) to students pursuing careers in the culinary, hospitality, viticulture and enology industries. Since its inception, the Festival has granted more than \$600,000 to help aspiring professionals accomplish their dreams through its ongoing partnership with Fast Forward Futures, a national nonprofit organization that awards industry scholarships for full or part-time continuing education programs.

This year, seven (7) student recipients were selected by the 2023 Scholarship Committee to receive scholarships ranging between \$300 - \$2,500:

### [Lex Fuller | California State Polytechnic University, Pomona](#)

A student at California Polytechnic University, Pomona studying Hospitality Management with an emphasis in Lodging and Hotel Operations. Lex is interested in exploring executive management in the industry, and eventually, hotel ownership.

### [Janessa Williams | Grossmont College](#)

Janessa began Grossmont College's culinary arts program in 2021, and went from having little to no culinary experience to working in one of the most celebrated restaurants in San Diego.

Janessa is hoping to hone her culinary expertise to eventually open a restaurant of her own, and later return to school for a teaching credential so she can inspire students as the chefs she has worked with have done for her.

### [Shawn Sistrunk | NewSchool of Architecture and Design](#)

Hailing from the Land of 10,000 Lakes, Shawn immersed himself in the hospitality and nightclub industry in San Diego and quickly rose through the ranks. Hospitality ignited his desire for design and the artistic process and his goal became clear: to transform

spaces into living works of art, infusing them with the same warmth and allure.

[Carolina Lopez | Grossmont College](#)

Carolina is a first generation Latina student and the first in her family to get into the culinary arts. She is an extremely driven student participating in Grossmont College's culinary arts program and balances the physical demands of the industry and her full-time job with keeping her body healthy and investing in her future.

[Tracy Nguyen | San Diego College of Continuing Education](#)

Growing up in the greater Los Angeles area, Tracy often helped out at her parent's Chinese restaurant. She learned cooking and knife skills by watching her father and the other cooks in the kitchen. Since a young age, she has always wanted to attend culinary school and has decided to pursue her dream of getting more formal training in the culinary arts.

[Alexis Jordan | San Diego State University](#)

Alexis is currently the Food and Beverage Manager at Belmont Park and is currently earning her Masters in Hospitality and Tourism Management from San Diego State University. She is looking forward to making a positive impact and creating memorable experiences within the world of hospitality.

[Antoinette Kraft | Poway Unified School District](#)

Antoinette is part of the team launching the culinary and nutrition program for Special Education, a culinary and nutrition program with an emphasis on smart farming and zero waste. Antoinette hopes to have a regional model within 3 years so that young students can train to become employable assets to the community and the hospitality and food systems industries.

Each year, the Scholarship Committee is hand-picked to select recipients. These influential members of San Diego's local hospitality and culinary communities, read, review and discuss the applications before interviewing hopeful applicants. Winners were announced and recognized during the 2023 San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival's Grand Weekend which took place November 10th -12th.

This year's esteemed Scholarship Committee members included:

- Jessica + Chef Davin Waite (Disruptive Dining: The Plot, The Plot Express, Brine Box, Wrench & Rodent, Shoots Fish & Beer, Oceanside/Carlsbad)
- Chef DuVal Warner (Ranch 45, Del Mar)
- Bernard Guillas (Maître Cuisinier de France)
- Chef Flor Franco (Casa de Flor, San Diego)
- Chef Aron Schwartz (Ranch 45, Del Mar)
- Marcee Katz (Chef Works, San Diego)
- Chef Jesse Llaptian (Loews Coronado Bay)

“This scholarship program is a testament to our belief in investing not just in the present, but in the future trailblazers of our local culinary and hospitality industries,” says San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival co-founder, Michelle Metter. “As these talented individuals embark on their educational journeys, we are honored to be a part of their growth, and are excited to congratulate each recipient on their well-deserved recognition. Our commitment goes beyond the festival dates; it’s a year-round dedication to fostering a supportive environment that encourages creativity and education. We believe that by empowering these aspiring professionals, we contribute to the long-lasting enrichment of San Diego’s vibrant culinary industry.”

While each year is understandably different, the Scholarship Committee is committed to certain qualifying criteria as members accept and consider applications for the program:

- Scholarships typically range from \$500 to \$5,000.
- All schools must be accredited, offering continuous, relevant, hands-on and in-person experience.
- As the money for the scholarships is raised by the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival, scholarships are only awarded to people who are connected to San Diego by school, work, or recent involvement in food, wine, or hotel management in the area.
- The scholarship funds may be used for study within or outside of San Diego County.

For information on the 2024 San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival (November 4th - 10th), please visit the festival [website](#) and follow along on Instagram: [@sdbayfest](#).

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