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STUDENTS HONORED FOR DOING GOOD FOR CHICAGO

Twelve Noble Juniors Recognized with the Vittum Human Spirit Award

CHICAGO – Today, the [Noble Network of Charter Schools](#) announced the winners of the annual Vittum Human Spirit Award, which recognizes juniors who are driven, dynamic and compassionate. Created in memoriam of Daniel Vittum, Jr. – Noble’s founding board chairman who was dedicated to providing high-quality education to Chicago students – the winners will be recognized Tuesday, Feb. 10. Just as Daniel Vittum built a positive legacy for Chicago’s youth, these Noble students are following in his footsteps to transform their communities.

“These students embody the ideals and potential that my late husband, Daniel Vittum, exemplified. They demonstrate a high standard of achievement and character and look beyond themselves to help their peers and the broader community,” said Dr. Christine Jacobek. “Daniel was passionate and dedicated to ensuring that students had quality academic as well as character enhancing opportunities. These students are taking full advantage of those opportunities that Noble offers and encourages. Within the Noble environment, they are developing their own sense of self and direction in life. They are an inspiration to all of us.”

The 12 students are being recognized because they are well-rounded – they not only excel academically, but they are kind and compassionate individuals. This year’s recipients have outstanding GPAs, are active in school government, sports and other extracurricular activities, and are motivated to change their communities for the better.

Among those being recognized is Jocelyn Baeza from [Noble Street College Prep](#), who moved to Chicago when she was 6 years old. At the time, Baeza only spoke Spanish. Learning a new language took time. She spends much of her free time volunteering for programs that have supported her through life.

“I want to show children, especially teens, in my community that they can become someone important if they are willing to work hard to get there,” said Baeza. “I believe that giving back to my community is a way to give young people hope.”

Her work has not gone unnoticed.

“Jocelyn demonstrates service to others in all of her actions,” said advisor Tricia Fahy. “She is helpful in tutoring her peers during and after class, looks to lend a helping hand to her teachers, and seeks out formal community service opportunities to make a positive impact on the greater Chicago community.”

Baeza is just one of 12 students who will be recognized this week. Other students to be recognized are:

- Eder Aguilar, at [Rauner College Prep](#), is an active member of the student council, robotics team and the Rauner STEM Honors program. Aguilar spends his free time volunteering at marathons across the city for good causes.
- Mahasin Al-Amin, at [Gary Comer College Prep](#), participates in a number of sports on campus and is also an outstanding student leader who hopes to attend the University of Michigan.
- Pascal Casimier, at [Hansberry College Prep](#), is a member of the International Baccalaureate Program, serves as a peer counselor and the manager of the school's basketball team. Outside of school, Casimier volunteers at the AGAPE Center in Roseland and spends summers at Camp Beechpoint serving as a youth leader.
- Danna Gallegos, at [Golder College Prep](#), moved to the U.S. from Mexico in eighth grade and has been at the top of her class since enrolling at Noble. Gallegos is on the student council and mentors younger students.
- Zariah Harris, at [Rowe-Clark Math and Science Academy](#), travels an hour each way to get to school yet maintains a strong GPA and positive attitude. Harris is also a positive role model and leader for her peers.
- Javier Huazano, at [Pritzker College Prep](#), moved to the U.S. when he was 13. He worked hard to learn English, take his citizenship test and support his family as they did the same. Huazano is a dedicated student who also works two jobs but never misses class.
- Nia Hurst, at [DRW College Prep](#), is the top student in her class and has already completed 40 hours of community service in and around the North Lawndale neighborhood.
- Joseph Komperda, at [Muchin College Prep](#), is known for his compassion and humility. He is always willing to support his classmates, and when he faces challenges, is willing to reflect on how he can improve.
- Luis Salazar, at [UIC College Prep](#), is the class president. Known for his kindness, Salazar volunteers his time as a tutor in UICCP's writing center, coaching his peers through the writing process.
- Angelica Saldana, at [Chicago Bulls College Prep](#), is known for her integrity and plans to attend Yale University.
- Jasmine Stephens, at [Johnson College Prep](#), is an outstanding scholar, ambitious athlete and thoughtful leader who is ranked first in her class. Stephens, who hopes to attend Yale University in pursuit of becoming a doctor, tutors her peers.

About Noble

Noble (www.noblenetwork.org) is Chicago's largest and highest performing network of public high schools. Last year, Noble campuses are eight of the top 10 open enrollment public high schools in Chicago and more than 90 percent of graduates matriculated to college this year. Noble is a non-selective network serving more than 10,000 students throughout Chicago at 16 campuses. Noble campuses are located in some of Chicago's highest need communities and serve a student population that is 89 percent low-income and 98 percent minority. As a public non-selective high school, there are no testing requirements for enrollment at any of Noble's campuses.

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