



June 2023

## CEO Update

This Saturday, BLCI will be hosting the 19th Annual Graduation Celebration for our seniors. This will be the tenth time I have participated in this honor, and I have seen the need for BLCI grow with each year. My first graduation was attended by 17 seniors from the original Barrio Logan program location. This year, we have 50 graduates joining us from all five BLCI program locations.

The graduation celebration not only honors the work of our seniors, but also provides motivation for our younger students as they themselves promote from elementary and middle school and have an opportunity to envision a future that is now within their reach.



There's something special that happens when we include the younger students in the graduation. They see how an education can change a life and are reminded why they made a commitment to join BLCI and graduate from college. They see themselves in the older students who succeed and are reminded that they can do it too. As the seniors walk onto the stage to accept the many scholarship awards and recognitions, the students look on in awe and challenge themselves to meet or beat the record each year.

They say life is a marathon, not a sprint. The same goes for changing a student's educational path. Every year, we are grateful for our supporters who help us reach this annual milestone with our students. Your support is critical and allows BLCI to show up each and every fall when we open our doors and welcome in a new group of eager 3rd grade students ready to change their future through education. We will be covering the graduation on our social channels, and I invite you to log in

and follow along. Thank you for supporting BLCI and believing in our students.

**Sara Boquin**

Chief Executive Officer, BLCI

## Impact in Action: Scholarships



June is an exciting time at BLCI! As the school year ends, students have an opportunity to reflect on the previous year and look forward at what's to come. Melissa is a Class of 2022 BLCI Alumna, and just completed her first year at St. Mary's College of California with support from the BLCI Scholarship Program. Melissa's scholarship was made possible thanks to Suzy Macgillvray who made the gift as a way to honor her late husband Bill and show gratitude for the quality education he received from St. Mary's. "Bill

would be so pleased to know that Melissa is our first recipient as she exemplifies the quality and spirit of someone who is willing to engage in the pursuit of knowledge, even when the road is sometimes difficult."

Suzy hopes the scholarship will inspire others to transform their lives. Read more about Melissa and how her scholarship is helping her reach her dream of becoming a college graduate.

### **What was the biggest challenge you faced this school year?**

*"The biggest challenge I've faced so far would be assimilating and starting college in general. I am a First Generation student, meaning I am the first person to make it to college. I had to get used to the idea of being alone in college, where I needed to study differently and talk to my professors and learn how to manage my time that fits my schedule."*

### **How did BLCI help prepare you for challenges like these?**

*"BLCI helped me prepare for challenges like these by doing these lessons called workshops. When I was in my senior year, we talked about many tips and tricks for surviving college. Learning how to manage your finances and how to get financial aid, understanding your limits, knowing how to study for yourself, how to have a balanced student life, and so much more. I've taken what I learned from BLCI and used it in college numerous times."*

### **What kind of impact did the BLCI scholarship have on you this year?**

*"Without the BLCI Scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to experience the things mentioned above. I love going to this college and I love the people I have met. Without the aid of the scholarship, I would've been stressed about loans and the money without being able to experience the first year of college with such positivity. Sure there were some rough setbacks, yet I am grateful to have them as I learned to grow from them and I learned how to manage them. Because of the BLCI scholarship, I have been able to make it to college and kickstart my goals that will lead to my dream."*

When you support BLCI, you are helping us create stories like Melissa's. If you are interested in supporting BLCI Scholarships, please contact Erin Miserlis, Chief Philanthropy Officer: [erin@blci.org](mailto:erin@blci.org)

## Senior Spotlight

Congratulations, Mohammed! We are honored to announce that he is the **very first graduate from BLCI's El Cajon site!** This exciting milestone will allow us to officially launch the El Cajon Alumni program, which will help us to support Mohammed on his college journey.



Mohammed was accepted into CSU San Marcos, CSU Los Angeles, UC Riverside, CSU Long Beach, and San Diego State University. **With careful consideration, Mohammed has committed to San Diego State University to study Biochemistry!** We cannot wait to see him strive as he enters this new chapter.

When asked about how BLCI supported him on his journey, Mohammed shared, *"tutoring, workshops, volunteering, campus visits, assistance with college, financial aid, and scholarship applications were among the things I received. Mrs. Naima and Ms. Beatriz would take time out of their own life to assist me whenever I needed it. Of all the services I received, I feel the most beneficial was the mental health check-ups. When I was low, there was always someone at the program to help me out! am certain that I would not be where I am now without them."*

At our El Cajon site, we are proud to partner with [EJE Academies](#) to bring our services to the students and families of El Cajon. One of our primary goals for the upcoming school year is to grow this site and provide services to more students. [Support our efforts today.](#)

## Thank You!

Thank you to our generous May 2023 supporters!

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