

The Weekly Calistogan

Calistoga grad among scholarship winners

La Pradera resident first in family to see college

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By John Waters Jr

A Calistoga High School graduate was among 18 recipients awarded college scholarships from BRIDGE Housing during a special awards luncheon in San Francisco Sept. 30.

Jose Avila of Calistoga, 21, of Calistoga, and Hedali Robledo of St. Helena -- the only other Napa County resident to receive the Alan and Ruth Stein Educational Assistance Program, which contributes up to \$6,000 to help pay for tuition and expenses not covered by traditional scholarships, such as child care, transportation, books and supplies.

Avila, is the first person in his family to pursue a university degree. He has completed his coursework for an Associate of

Arts degree at Santa Rosa Junior College and will transfer to San Francisco State to continue working toward a Bachelor Arts degree in psychology.

Robledo, 20, decided to pursue a career in nursing after helping a family member navigate a serious illness. She is currently a student at Santa Rosa Junior College.

"It will be a long way," she said, "but I will try my hardest and do whatever it takes to accomplish my goals and someday become a nurse," Robledo said.

"Particularly in today's economy, it's more important than ever to offer our residents this resource to help them pursue career goals and

build greater financial security for their families," said BRIDGE Interim President and CEO Lydia Tan.

The scholarship program has awarded 120 scholarships, making more than \$450,000 available to applicants.

Avila and the others had to provide letters of recommendation, financial plans and essays describing their career goals and personal life stories.

BRIDGE Housing is a leading nonprofit developer of affordable housing. They own and maintain the La Pradera apartment community in Calistoga and Hunt's Grove in St. Helena.