

## CALIFORNIA SENATOR HONORS CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

### *Four students from Options For Youth receive Scholastic Achievement Award at the Capitol*

#### *Senate pro Tem President Darrell Steinberg reminds educators and media to “praise the positives”*

SACRAMENTO, Calif., May 29, 2013 – California Senate pro Tem President Darrell Steinberg presented the Scholastic Achievement Award to four students from Options for Youth (OFY), the premiere alternative public charter school for under-served students.

More than 82% of OFY’s students qualify for the National School Lunch Program, the key indicator that they are socio-economically disadvantaged.

On the North Steps of the California State Capitol, Senator Steinberg congratulated the students for their hard work and perseverance. He reminded the educators in the audience to continue praising the positives, saying that too often students in the area get recognized for what they do wrong. That message was echoed by Jocelyn Baldwin, OFY regional supervisor.

“All students are capable of success as long as they have people behind them in their corner – for many of our students that person is a teacher or an advisor,” said Baldwin. “Our staff helps students to achieve post-secondary success.”

OFY’s educational model emphasizes personal responsibility. To avoid boredom and frustration, OFY teachers and advisors involve the students in the planning and implementation of their own program, guiding the students as they choose their exit strategy, coursework, and scheduling. Students meet one-on-one with OFY teachers for a minimum of two hours per week while completing the majority of coursework outside of the learning centers.

The students, Alex Cruz, Athena Markham, Esmeralda Franco, and Yarsolav Kaminskiy all have a few things in common: they each adopted new academic habits and goals, saw drastic academic improvement through independent study, and found new skills through extracurricular or experiential learning.

#### **Additional Quotes:**

“We get the everyday privilege of meeting and helping these inspirational young leaders, it is nice to see such high recognition for their accomplishments. In many ways our students actually teach *us* about the infinite human potential we all possess,” said Joan Hall, president of Options for Youth.

“Our students consistently show us the power of perseverance, of self-discipline, and of teamwork. We are all on the same team – the student, the teachers, and the advisors. The team wins if we stick together and work diligently toward clear, high expectations,” said John Hall, co-founder of Options for Youth.

#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **The Founders’ Story**

OFY was the dream of John Hall, and his wife Joan Hall. John struggled to learn to read as a young student, and by seventh grade was a non-reader. John consequently found it difficult to fit in with peers, and began to act out in school. A literacy program at UCLA marked the turning point when he improved

his reading and re-enrolled in public high school. While still a challenge, Joan helped him to remain eligible for varsity football and to graduate with his class.

John eventually received his secondary teaching credential, while Joan earned her teaching credential in Special Education. John and Joan married, and as a team of educators decided to pursue their dream by founding Options For Youth, a public charter school to develop and implement a program to support the academic dreams of students like John, who are traditionally under-served by public education and at risk of dropping out of school.

#### **Links**

[Options for Youth](#)

OFY on [Facebook](#)

#### **About Options for Youth**

Options for Youth (OFY) is the dream of visionary couple John and Joan Hall. The Halls' leadership has created a model of innovation in the charter school industry to serve at-risk students with year round personalized study programs, one-on-one instruction, online courses, academic and life advisors, experiential learning, and a launch pad for life after high school. The OFY program strives to provide students and parents expanded educational choices within California's public school system.

Since 1987, Options for Youth has given 196,000 students a second chance to achieve their educational dreams.

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