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18 Talented Teens at California State Summer School for the Arts Win First Herb Alpert Scholarships for Emerging Young Artists

\$40,000 and \$2500 Scholarships Go to High School Artists and Freshmen at California Colleges

Sacramento and Santa Monica, Calif. – Oct. 23, 2008 – Eighteen talented California teens in six different arts categories were awarded the first Herb Alpert Scholarships for Emerging Young Artists, a \$1.2 million program in partnership with the California State Summer School for the Arts (CSSSA or InnerSpark) to nurture and recognize young, quality artists.

InnerSpark has provided its esteemed four-week summer arts program to 10,508 talented high school students for more than two decades. Its existence is made possible through a unique public/private sector partnership in which the California State Summer School Arts Foundation provides private sector contributions to the state-mandated school.

As a musician, producer, artist, and philanthropist, **Herb Alpert** is a longtime supporter of young artists. “We need quality arts programs for all students in California, whether the economy is supportive or not,” Alpert said. “The Scholarships for Emerging Young Artists will provide genuine financial support to students who have already demonstrated both talent and commitment to furthering their education in the arts.”

The scholarships were awarded to three students in each of six categories: Animation and Film/Video, Creative Writing, Dance, Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts. In each category, one outstanding student received \$40,000 to be awarded over the course of four years, and two students received single-year awards of \$2,500.

The recipients of \$40,000, four-year awards are: **Keary Champi**, (17, San Diego, CA), Dance; **Juan De La Cruz**, (18, Montclair, CA), Theatre; **Sage Po**, (14, Camptonville, CA), Music; **Esra Senvardarli**, (17, Santa Rosa, CA), Visual Arts; **Kristian Talley**, (16, Encinitas, CA), Animation and **Ashley Tapley**, (18, Lakewood, CA), Creative Writing. A complete list of recipients is attached.

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Kristian Talley feels that the scholarship is a tremendous gift. At the age of 12, Kristian began taking his artwork seriously, recognizing his ability to help people through his work. As a student at La Costa Canyon High School in Encinitas, Kristian has re-started the art club and begun revitalizing the school by painting murals on campus. His passion is to tell stories through visual arts.

“Receiving the scholarship is incredibly helpful to my family,” said Kristian. “I am grateful, because it has lessened an economic stress for my family. I feel like a burden has been lifted. It has also made it much easier for my younger siblings’ college futures.”

Another recipient, **Keary Champi**, began dancing in the fifth grade. With little formal dance training, he auditioned for InnerSpark and was accepted. “InnerSpark opened my eyes to the level of support that’s out there for me,” Keary, age 17, reinforced. Now a freshman at Stanford, he is majoring in Dance. As one of five children of Cambodian heritage, there was some concern that he was not choosing a practical profession, but receiving the scholarship “was the push I needed” to pursue a love of dance.

Scholarship recipients were selected by InnerSpark department faculties from students during the final week of the month-long summer program. The selection criteria included a balanced assessment of artistic talent, character and motivation, likeliness of success in a collegiate or professional training program, and financial need.

Students who are awarded the Scholarship will receive counseling during their senior year of high school from InnerSpark’s financial aid consultant to ensure that they maximize their resources to cover the costs of attendance at the college/arts conservatory or professional training program of their choice. The InnerSpark consultant also coordinates with respective financial aid offices for each student’s university-aid package and Scholarship.

For the 520 high school students accepted each year, InnerSpark represents a unique opportunity to spend four weeks studying and working with professional artists, writers and performers of national stature. The talented teenagers who successfully complete the program will receive three units of California State University course credit and be honored as Governor’s Arts Scholars.

Those wishing to find out more information about InnerSpark and the California State Summer School Arts Foundation should visit www.innerspark.us on the web, or call the Sacramento headquarters at (916) 274-5815.

About the Herb Alpert Foundation

The Herb Alpert Foundation, a non-profit, private foundation established in the late 1980’s, makes significant annual contributions to a range of programs in the fields of *Arts*, *Arts Education* and *Compassion and Well Being*. Its funding is directed toward projects in which Herb and Lani Alpert and Foundation President Rona Sebastian play an active role. The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals.

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About California State Summer School for the Arts

The California State Summer School for the Arts, known as InnerSpark, or CSSSA, was created by the California Legislature as a state agency and offers instruction in the fields of animation, music, dance, film and video, theater, creative writing and the visual arts. More than 10,000 young Californians have attended since the program's inaugural session in 1987. For many of them, InnerSpark has proven to be the first step to important and successful careers in the arts and related industries.

Alumni of the program include actor and Golden Globe recipient James Franco, featured in the *Spiderman* movies and the films *Annapolis*, *Flyboys*, and *City by the Seas*; Craig McCracken, the Emmy Award-winning animator and creator of *The Powerpuff Girls*; creative writer Dakila Davina, now managing editor of Parade Magazine; dancer Sharon Grimsley Teague, principal soloist for the Houston Ballet; award-winning fashion designer Sophie Buhai; and 2006 *American Idol* runner-up Katharine McPhee.

The California State Summer School Arts Foundation (CSSSAF) as mandated in the enabling legislation, was created in 1986 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization to be the private sector partner supporting InnerSpark to help achieve its mission by seeking corporate, foundation and individual contributions. This is a unique public and private partnership in California. At the cornerstone of the Foundation's role is the CSSSA Scholarship Fund, to ensure that no talented student is denied admission to InnerSpark because of an inability to pay tuition and fees. CSSSAF has awarded nearly \$4 million in scholarships to more than 39 percent of the highly talented students who have attended InnerSpark.

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(Note: List of recipients follows.)

Herb Alpert Scholarships for Emerging Young Artists

2008 Recipients from the California State Summer School for the Arts

Name	Discipline	Age	Sex	Hometown	School	Amount
Robert Anglero-Evan	Dance	17	M	Forrestville, CA	El Molino High School	\$2,500
His story:	Robert, or "Ro-Ro" as he was affectionately named by InnerSpark staff and students, is a humble and hardworking dancer. With little formal dance training, Robert flourished at InnerSpark. Coming from a low-income family, this scholarship was an important boost to his college aspirations.					
Natalie Casagran-Lopez	Creative Writing	16	F	Claremont, CA	Los Angeles County High School for the Arts	\$2,500
Her story:	Natalie's passion for the arts means commuting almost 1 ½ hours a day by train to school, where she studies theater. Since the age of five, Natalie has had an interest in acting; in middle school, she developed a love for writing, which InnerSpark helped reawaken. Having received the scholarship has helped Natalie recognize that she has an ability to write. "It was sort of a golden ticket," she said. She is now focusing more on her writing and has recently started a club at school, which publishes the magazine "Polygon".					
Keary Champi	Dance	17	M	San Diego, CA	Stanford	\$40,000
His story:	Keary began dancing in the fifth grade. With little formal dance training, he auditioned for InnerSpark and was accepted. "InnerSpark opened my eyes to the level of support that's out there for me," he said. Currently, a freshman at Stanford he is majoring in Dance. As one of five children of Cambodian heritage there was some concern that he did not choose a practical profession, but receiving the scholarship "was the push I needed" to pursue a love of dance.					
Juan De La Cruz	Theater	18	M	Montclair, CA	Cal Poly Pomona	\$40,000
His story:	Juan was extremely shy and scared as a child. It was only after signing up for theater during his junior year of high school that he found an outlet to help him open up. Having attended InnerSpark for two consecutive summers Juan came to realize that theater is what he wants to do. The middle child of Mexican-American heritage is now a freshman at Cal Poly Pomona where he is majoring in Theater.					
Jessica Dunn	Dance	18	F	Tehachapi, CA	Antelope Valley College	\$2,500
Her story:	Jessica discovered ballet at age nine. During her teen years, she rediscovered her love for dance and began going to competitions and performances to study other dancers' work. She currently studies dance at Antelope Valley College in Lancaster. "It really helps to know that someone thinks that you can do this," she said. "That you're actually good at what you do and that you can go further." She has aspirations of one day teaching or performing dance as career.					
Chantel Houston	Film/Video	17	F	Santa Monica, CA	Aleman High School	\$2,500
Her story:	As a participant of Inner City Filmmakers, Chantel seriously began pursuing her interest in film in the ninth grade. Now a senior, she produces a morning video program and participates in Commercial Club, which develops commercials for her school's morning program. Chantel is also actively involved in her church's media and worship team. Through each activity, Chantel is working towards one day becoming a movie editor and director. Receiving the scholarship "made me feel pretty accomplished," she said.					
Krystal Jagosz	Film/Video	17	F	Agua Dulce, CA	Providence High School	\$2,500
Her story:	"As a teenager, you go along day to day, but things come to a point...[where] you really need to know if what you're interested in is what you want to pursue," said Krystal. As a result of immersing herself in the art world at InnerSpark, she realized that film is her calling in life. Since the age of 12, Krystal has had an interest in film and video. She cultivates her interest by participating in the media program at her high school and in classes at the Echo Park Film Center. She plans on one day becoming a screenwriter and director, like her model, Julie Taymor. The scholarship will allow her to go that much further in pursuing her goals.					

2008 Recipients (cont'd)

Chelsea Keck	Theater	16	F	Oakland, CA	Oakland School of the Arts	\$2,500
Her story:	Chelsea's first time acting was in the eighth grade when she auditioned for the Oakland School of the Arts. Encouraged by her mother, she decided to try theater rather than visual arts and writing, which are also part of her creative repertory. It has been love ever since. For Chelsea, acting is about the study of people and situations as well as human interactions. The scholarship has given Chelsea added confidence and made her want to pursue theater even more. "I was just really honored to think that my teachers thought of me that way – as an emerging young artist," she said. She is currently looking into colleges with good theater programs.					
Jenna LeJeune	Theater	18	F	Bakersfield, CA	Graduate of Golden Valley High School	\$2,500
Her story:	Painting, drawing and sculpture were all a part Jenna's life before she discovered her passion for theater. In the eighth grade, Jenna found the stage and never looked back. She has performed in countless high school Shakespearean productions and has been a member of the Bakersfield Community Theater. InnerSpark "opened up some real possibilities and opportunities" which are amazing. Jenna plans on making her career in the theater and hopes to one day perform on the big screen. The Scholarship has made her "goals seem more real and more possible."					
Aida Lizalde	Visual Arts	18	F	Stockton, CA	San Joaquin Delta College	\$2,500
Her story:	Aida moved from Mexico to California with her family just three years ago. She began painting with acrylics at the same time. As a student at InnerSpark, "I discovered that I was really passionate about being an artist," said Aida. She is thrilled with her scholarship. "It fell from heaven," she said. "It was exactly what I needed." With this money Aida will be able to keep to her goal of completing junior college as a fulltime student. Aida is the first generation in her family to attend college. Her goal is to do something in fine arts, most likely painting.					
Madeline Mahrer	Creative Writing	17	F	Santa Rosa, CA	Analy High School	\$2,500
Her story:	Madeline hasn't always felt secure about her writing, but participating in InnerSpark along with being awarded the scholarship has given her "more confidence about a future in writing," she noted. She is positive that she will major in creative writing and pursue becoming a screenplay writer. Madeline predominately writes poetry and songs, but she also enjoys drama and is performing in The Crucible at school. She also has a passion for the Japanese language, which she has studied since eighth grade.					
Chase Morrin	Music	15	M	San Diego, CA	Canyon Crest Academy	\$2,500
His story:	At age nine, Chase began playing piano and composing; he now predominately plays jazz. He is currently in four bands in addition to his high school band and is working on a musical theater production. In his spare time, he teaches piano and drums to three students. [InnerSpark] "totally opened my musical perspective," he said. "Before I was pessimistic about the music industry, but this school really made me more optimistic about going into music as a career." He sees himself in the future becoming a composer for movies, video games or bands.					
Kathryn 'Katie' Pelon	Visual Arts	16	F	Tujunga, CA	Verdugo Hills High School	\$2,500
Her story:	Having grown up with photographer her parents, Katie developed a natural interest in the art form. With no formal training she still practices regularly on nature and wildlife photography. Katie plans on becoming a marine biologist and would like to incorporate underwater photography into her work. As a volunteer at the L.A. Zoo and the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium as well as a participant in the Marine Conservation and InnerArts clubs, Katie is continuously working towards her goals. InnerSpark "made me think that I can be an artist and that I am better than I think," she said.					

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2008 Recipients (cont'd)

Sage Po	Music	14	F	Camptonville, CA	Forest Charter School	\$40,000
Her story:	Piano was the overture to Sage Po's love for the harp. At age eight, she became enchanted with the Celtic harp, which she studied three and a half years before studying classical (pedal) harp. In addition to studying harp, she participates in the Young Composer Program part of Music in the Mountains. Sage eventually hopes to be a harp teacher. "I want to pass on the gift," she said. "I've had two amazing teachers, and I want to be that for someone else." The scholarship will enable her to pursue her dream of being a harpist and teacher.					
Esra Senvardarli	Visual Arts	17	F	Santa Rosa, CA	Santa Rosa High School	\$40,000
Her story:	Born in Turkey, Esra moved to the United States at age 10. She began drawing as part of her elementary school curriculum in Turkey. With encouragement from her teacher, she entered an art contest and won. Since then, Esra's passion for art has grown. She is currently part of ArtQuest, "an amazing art program," at her high school through which she is building a portfolio. She also works two days a week at a teen center art studio. In considering her future college pursuits, Esra would like to combine a major in print making with creative writing, as well as explore communication sciences. In talking about her scholarship she said, "I was really excited and cried just a little...It was really for my parents, thinking about the relief that they would have with the scholarship."					
Kristian Talley	Animation	16	M	Encinitas, CA	La Costa Canyon High School	\$40,000
His story:	"InnerSpark made me realize that there are so many other ways to go about storytelling, not just animation," Kristian recalled. Art for Kristian is about telling stories and helping people through his work. At age 12, he became serious about art and began to draw consistently, but he didn't take a formal art class until he was 15. Now he is leading a revitalization effort at his school through the art club that he restarted earlier this year- they are painting murals throughout campus. Kristian comes from a low-income family, so receiving the scholarship was incredible. "I am grateful, because it has lessened an economic stress for my family," he said. "I feel like a burden has been lifted."					
Ashley Tapley	Creative Writing	18	F	Lakewood, CA	Long Beach City College	\$40,000
Her story:	Writing has always been a part of Ashley's life. Since age nine, she has been writing short stories, plays, screenplays and poetry. Having the opportunity to attend InnerSpark was "a once in a lifetime experience." She was able to write anything that she wanted without constraints. She also saw her writing improve. Now that she has entered college, she continues to write constantly and knows that whatever her career is, writing will definitely be a part of it.					
Aya Yagi	Music	16	F	Oakland, CA	Skyline High School	\$2,500
Her story:	Piano in the third grade, violin and orchestra since fourth grade, singing and guitar as well as an elementary school band, Aya is zealous when it comes to her love for music. She is currently a member of the Young People's Symphony Orchestra, a straight A student who speaks Japanese and French, and a volunteer at the Oakland Zoo. InnerSpark helped her recognize that she wants to be a professional musician. [This scholarship] "is helping me to realize my dream and know that it's not just a hobby," she said. Aya's goal is to become a violinist in Europe.					