



Pomona College News

- > [For the Media](#)
- > [Emergency](#)
- > [Communications Office](#)
- > [News Archive](#)
- > [Pomona College Magazine](#)
- > [The Student Life](#)

News Categories

Pomona College Academy for Youth Success Graduates Headed to Colleges Around the Country

By Cynthia Peters 1:30 pm June 19, 2014 Faculty, Students, Life on Campus

College acceptances have been sent and this fall all 30 members of the [Pomona College Academy for Youth Success \(PAYS\)](#) Class of 2014 are headed to four-year colleges and universities across the country.

PAYS is a four-year college preparation and mentoring program for underserved high school students in the Inland Valley and surrounding communities. Since the program's founding in 2003, all 270 PAYS graduates have been admitted to selective four-year colleges and universities.

"I had never been on a college campus before arriving at Pomona," says Zsa'mine Hopkins, from Etiwanda High School. "The campus was inspiring and made me think of my future. To see the beautiful green trees and the kids walking around happy... just glad to be there and ready to say 'I'm a Pomona College student,' it was just a very big contrast to what we saw in our day-to-day lives."



PAYS Class of 2013

This fall, the PAYS Class of 2014 is headed to Brown University, Howard University, Vassar College and the University of California campuses in Berkeley (five students), Davis, Irvine (2), Merced (2) and Riverside. They will also attend Claremont McKenna, CSU Channel Islands, CSU Long Beach, CSU Monterey Bay (2), Cal Poly Pomona, Johnson and Wales University/Providence, Kalamazoo College, New York University, Smith College and the University of LaVerne.

Four will attend Pomona College, joining the 12 PAYS grads in the Classes of 15, 16 & 17. Fourteen PAYS alumni have already graduated from [Pomona College](#). On June 22, a brand new class of high-school students will begin the PAYS program on Pomona's campus.

For Eduardo Ramirez, from Sierra Vista High School, "The most valuable part of the PAYS Program is the opportunities it provides its participants to hone their leadership skills and be a part of a community that enshrines diversity. PAYS has helped me learn about the many differences and similarities between people. All the PAYS participants have had a fair share of barriers and obstacles that prevented them from reaching their goals. PAYS, however, has taught us that friendship, perseverance and unity will overpower."

"Interacting with high-achieving college students allows us to see the balance between having fun and hitting the books, like the unofficial PAYS motto "Work hard, play hard." The current Pomona students not only are our role models but also, and most importantly, our friends," he says.

Meeting Pomona Psychology Prof. Eric Hurley was particularly inspiring for Hopkins. "He spoke to us in one of our community meetings and connected with the group as a whole as well as me as a person, being African American. He talked about the education system and how we were taught to think that education is only taught this one way, how we're supposed to act a certain way in the classroom and, if you don't, they write you off. He also went to [Howard University](#) and that was my dream school. I got to talk to him a week later, and he was telling me all about the university and just gave me more of a feel of what it would be like....He gave me hope, and talked about my GPA and SAT scores, and what I could do to get there. He gave me a little bit more insight to feel like THIS is possible, and I can do it." She is indeed headed to Howard this fall.

PAYS is the signature program of the [Pomona College Draper Center for Community Partnerships](#), which works to foster mutually beneficial exchanges among community members, students, faculty and staff in order to support educational outreach initiatives, community-based research and learning, and other community engagement activities that improve the quality of life beyond Pomona College.

According to Blanca Ramirez, Eduardo's mother, PAYS "has propelled him toward a brighter future. He started high school not knowing what to expect. The program has allowed him a brighter path toward a college education. I am sure that he will accomplish all his goals because he can count on the support from both his families, including his second family, the PAYS family." Eduardo is headed to [UC Berkeley](#).

Comments