

Nota de prensa publicada por el CDE relativa a la concesión de una beca Ruta Quetzal 2009 a la alumna Daisy Walker, estudiante en la escuela Laguna Hills H.S., del distrito escolar de Saddleback Valley.

STATE SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O'CONNELL CONGRATULATES CALIFORNIA STUDENT FOR WINNING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

SACRAMENTO – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell today congratulated Laguna Hills High School student Daisy Walker for winning a 2009 Ruta Quetzal-BBVA scholarship from the Ministry of Education of Spain.

"I would like to congratulate Daisy and her two teachers, Yoleisy Avila and Patricia López," said O'Connell. "I'd also like to thank the Embassy of Spain Education Office for making this generous scholarship available for California students. Daisy joins an elite group of four students nationwide who won a contest writing in a language other than his or her native tongue -- Spanish. In today's global economy, it just makes good economic sense to encourage all students to effectively learn about the different languages and cultures of people with whom they will be interacting."

California is home to the most diverse student population in the country where more than a hundred languages and dialects are spoken by children in the state's public school system. That's one reason why O'Connell strongly recommended in January that the State Board of Education vote to adopt his draft World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve. He commended the Board for voting to approve the standards that further cements California's reputation as not only a national, but an international trendsetter in education.

Daisy Walker is 15 years old and lives in Mission Viejo. She is a sophomore at Laguna Hills High School in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District in Orange County. She started in a Two-Way Immersion Program in the first grade when she attended Gates Elementary School in Lake Forest. Then 6-year-old Daisy learned about the Ruta Quetzal scholarship while vacationing with her family in Mexico City, where they talked to another group of teenagers visiting some ancient Aztec ruins. Last summer, she visited St. Paul's Cathedral in the United Kingdom and saw the beautiful mosaic inside the building that served as an inspiration for her scholarship project. Daisy made a mosaic interpreting "La Ciudad de los Césares," showing a landscape of a temple, lake, and Andes Mountains. She also wrote a fictional diary entry in Spanish explaining what one of the discoverers of "La Ciudad" would have seen.

"I am very grateful for being in the Two-Way Immersion Program because it has given me such great opportunities, such as participating in the Ruta Quetzal," said Daisy. "I believe this will also continue to be influential in terms of my admission to colleges, and job resumes. In the future, I would like to attend UCLA and major in a science field, like biology. But whatever field of study I choose, Spanish will have an important part in it."

Saddleback Valley Unified School District places a high value on its Two-Way Immersion and foreign language curriculum. Its K-12 Two-Way Language Immersion Program is housed at Gates Elementary School, Los Alisos Intermediate School, and Laguna Hills High School. The Program provides parents with a voluntary educational parent choice option for their children. The goal is to develop oral fluency and literacy in two languages, Spanish and English, while students are learning the district's core curriculum.

“Laguna Hills High School is proud of its globally focused programs such as: Two-Way Language Immersion Program International Baccalaureate Degree Program, and our Model United Nations Program,” said Principal Sean Boulton. “Further, our partnership with the University of California, Irvine that provides instructional support for our International Relations/Globalization classes also bolsters our globally focused curriculum offered to our students. One of the classes is part of our Two-Way Language Immersion Program high school pathway. Programs such as this are conducive to our mission of fostering the minds of students who will become our global citizens of tomorrow.”

The Ruta Quetzal-BBVA is described as an academic and travel adventure. Winners receive six weeks of travel valued as a \$16,000 scholarship that includes study trips to Chile and Spain. Applicants had to write about certain historical events in Spanish and meet other rigorous academic standards. The generous scholarship is part of a Memorandum of Understanding between the California Department of Education and the Ministry of Education of Spain that benefits students at no cost to the state. Each year, one or two California students win this prestigious scholarship. For more information about the contest, please visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/me/il/escrbo.asp>.