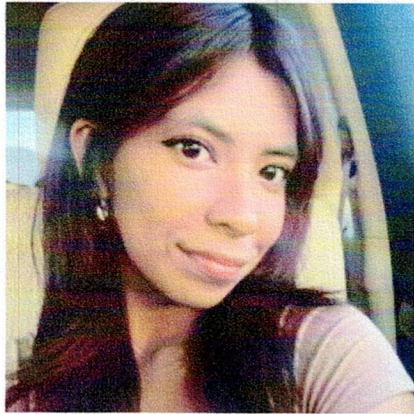


Texas Association Of County Engineers and Road Administrators Scholarship 2023-2024 Recipient

Paola Ortega



Introduction

Hello, my name is Paola Ortega and I am 17 years old. I am a 2023 high school graduate and progressing with my studies at Texas A&M-Kingsville. I live in a small, border city in the Rio Grande Valley called San Benito. I am the oldest of the 4 children that my immigrant parents had, and the first person to go to college. Never did I thought that I was going to "break the record" of not going to college. As a daughter of immigrant parents, I am always busy around the house. My hobbies include cleaning the house inside and outside, as well as being active around church. Throughout my high school years, I discovered a passion for volunteering within my community. I got involve in different clubs and in those clubs, I found myself enjoying the moments were we would gather and help the community by either cleaning streets, volunteering at the animal shelter, school sales, etc.

Please express your gratitude to your scholarship donor with a thank you message.

I am very grateful to be a recipient for the Texas Association of County Engineers and Road Administrators Scholarship. Not only will it help me towards my tuition but it will take one more weight off of my parents. This award will help me be able to fully proceed onto my studies at the university. I am beyond grateful to the organization, that words will be short to describe how grateful I am.

What influenced you to choose your area of study?

My father was my primary influence to pursue the engineering field. Initially, I was confused as to I wanted to study. At times I wanted to be a doctor, but then I wanted to be lawyer. I just never seemed to make up my mind as to what was going to be my career. My father is an engineer at a construction company, and every night he would set up his blue prints on the table and would look at every detail of the paper. Little by little I would sit besides my dad and asked him questions as to what the prints read. I wasn't interested at first, but eventually I started to gain knowledge from my father and got and interest for it. I then noticed that I had a passion for math and that Civil Engineering requires much of it. I eventually made up my mind and decided that I loved everything about engineering, leading me to pursue it.

What does receiving this scholarship means to you?

This scholarship means a weight off of my parents shoulders. As a family of 6 living in a small city and with immigrant parents, our income doesn't allow us to pay off of our pockets. I would have to get loans, but in reality, I wouldn't want my parents to struggle with paying debts. I currently have a part time job as a waitress, but those funds are to help my family. This scholarship would is a great helping hand for not just me but for my family as well.

Please share why you chose to attend Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

Texas A&M-Kingsville is known to have a great engineering program. I fell in love with this specific school because it is not that far from my hometown, it is a small city, and on top of that, the school offers a great engineering and business program which allows me to double major.