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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Eleven Yakima Valley Students Earn Full Act Six Leadership Scholarships to Heritage University**

Toppenish, WA - The Act Six Leadership and Scholarship Initiative has announced that eleven emerging community leaders across the Yakima Valley have won full-tuition scholarships to Heritage University.

Selected through a rigorous three-month competition among more than 100 applicants valley-wide, these student leaders were chosen for their distinctive leadership, academic potential and commitment to making a difference in their communities.

In 2002, the Northwest Leadership Foundation (NLF) launched the Act Six initiative in Tacoma, WA. Act Six arrived to the Yakima Valley in 2010 through the efforts of The Yakima Leadership Foundation, whose founder and president is former Yakima mayor and city council member Dave Edler.

Act Six seeks to develop urban and community leaders to be agents of change on campus and in their hometowns. Since Act Six began, 61 cohorts of ethnically diverse and mostly first-generation, low-income scholars from Tacoma, Seattle, Portland, Spokane, and the Yakima Valley have enrolled at eight Northwest colleges and universities.

The eleven selected to receive the Act Six scholarships at Heritage University this year are:

Justin Burke, West Valley High School  
Samuel Cuevas, Grandview High School  
Jesus Grajales, White Swan High School  
Isaias Guerrero, Sunnyside Senior High School  
Sandra Mena, Granger High School  
Alexis Osuna, Sunnyside Senior High School  
Alexis Oxley, Sunnyside Senior High School  
Brandon Padgett, Sunnyside Senior High School  
Efren Ponce, Zillah High School  
Anitramarina Reyna, A.C. Davis Senior High School  
Cecilia Vizcaino de la Mora, A.C. Davis Senior High School

- More -

Act Six develops leaders through a simple, but powerful, four-step strategy:

**Recruit and select** diverse, multicultural cadres of the Northwest's most promising emerging urban and community leaders.

**Train and prepare** these groups of students in the year prior to college, equipping them to support each other, succeed academically, and grow as service-minded leaders and agents of transformation.

**Send and fund** the teams together to select private, liberal arts colleges in the Northwest on four year, full-tuition, full-need scholarships.

**Support and inspire** by providing strong campus support and ongoing leadership development to nurture these young people as they find their vocation and grow into the next generation of community leaders.

To date, more than 85 percent of the 556 scholars who have started college have graduated or are still enrolled – reflecting graduation and retention rates that far exceed national averages. Six Act Six scholars have been elected as student-body presidents and scholars have been involved in numerous other leadership roles on campus and in the community.

Nearly 85 percent of Act Six alumni have brought their degrees back home to serve and lead in Northwest communities, and more than a quarter are pursuing or have earned graduate degrees. Together, these connected and educated alumni are forming a fabric of leadership that is working to make their communities more vibrant and just.

"The Act Six program has opened so many doors for me and continues to do so day in and day out," said Kayli Berk, an Act Six scholar at Heritage University. "I am developing networking skills and am held to high expectations from my peers and instructors as an Act Six Scholar. Being part of the Act Six program has been one of the best and most rewarding experiences in my life, it is the reason why I am able to pursue my dream. I am very grateful and blessed to be part of the Act Six program, said Berk.

The eleven new Act Six Scholarship recipients join 45 Act Six scholars already on Heritage's campus. To date, 94% of Act Six scholars chosen since 2011 are still enrolled at Heritage. This reflects retention rates that far exceed national averages. Four Act Six scholars have been elected as student government leaders and scholars have been involved in numerous other leadership roles on campus and in the community.

The newest Act Six scholars will be recognized during a community celebration in Toppenish on Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hope for the Nations Foursquare Church. The media and the public are invited to attend.

For more information, contact:

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Learn more about Act Six online at [www.actsix.org](http://www.actsix.org).

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