



SENIOR STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Minds Matter of Denver is proud to announce Anahi Casillas, a graduate of Denver North High School, as the 2007 Minds Matter of Denver Achievement Award Scholarship recipient. Created in 2006 through the generosity of founder and Board member Bijal Choksi and her husband and Minds Matter alumnus Sureel, the Denver Achievement Scholarship helps fund the undergraduate education of a deserving college-bound student each year. Criteria for receiving the award include overall performance throughout the weekly program, acceptance to an accredited four-year college or university, financial need, academic achievement, and quality of scholarship application and essay.

Anahi, who is currently attending the University of Colorado, will receive \$10,000 in financial assistance over the course of the next four years. When asked about Anahi's receiving the scholarship, mentor Marni Banazek affirmed, "After extensive college research and applications, it was a delightful surprise to hear that Anahi would be awarded the Minds Matter scholarship. This money, in conjunction with various other grants and scholarships, will allow Anahi to attend her freshman year with virtually zero out-of-pocket expenses from her family."

Anahi's grades, extra-curricular activities, and attitude were only a few of the many factors that led to her selection for this

prestigious award. In the summer of her sophomore year, Anahi attended the Putney School in Vermont, where she studied film, photography, and the arts which helped foster her creative interests. She balanced this experience by attending an SAT preparatory program at the University of California the summer of her junior year. Back in her hometown, Anahi was invited to attend monthly meetings with the Denver public schools to act as a student advisor. As one of two students selected district-wide, Anahi had the unique opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the Denver public school system.

In her first semester at the University of Colorado, Anahi is taking Intro to Business, Micro Economics, Finite Math, and the History of Pompeii. She is considering majoring in business but plans to weigh all her options before making a final commitment. When asked about receiving the award, Anahi responded, "I feel lucky and thankful. I appreciate knowing that my education is being paid for somehow. It feels unreal that I am actually in college. I have been anticipating this for so long and working hard to get here—although I do miss going to Minds Matter on Mondays."

Anahi has grown in her confidence over the past few years and is much more prepared to succeed, both in college and in life. She is willing and able to take more of a leadership role and is passing along much of what she has learned. Anahi cares about the quality of education in the United States and school reform and hopes to continue to support such initiatives. She's also looking forward to becoming a Minds Matter mentor herself someday.