

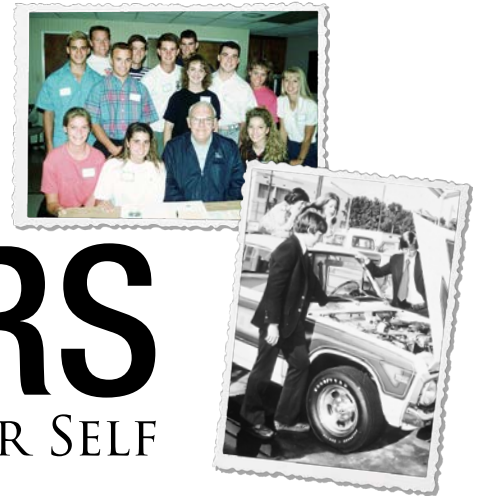
# UpDate

NEWSLETTER OF THE FOUNDATION & FORD ALUMNI • 2024



Celebrating

50 YEARS  
of SERVICE OVER SELF



## Looking Back at 50 Years of Ford Dimension...What A Ride It Has Been!

Jim Burke had a passion for business, education, and students. In the early 1970s, he decided to become “Education’s Business Partner,” which was the spark plug for the Ford Dimension program. In 1974, with four West High seniors who were passionate about debate and social concerns: Mary Baird, Marianne Logan, Leon Harris, and Sterling Wilson, the Ford Dimension was born. The education community quickly supported the program, and the “Ford Dimension” became a reality that hit the road! Now, here we are, 50 years later, and many changes have enhanced the program: an increase in representatives, a greater emphasis on career-building skills, and the importance of “Service over Self.” What started as a simple concept has become a loyal Ford Family friendship of over 1,000 alumni. Being the Director of the Ford Dimension for over 40 years has been a joyful journey. I am incredibly proud of our Ford Family and what they have accomplished, especially their continued commitment to our motto of “Service over Self.” As I reflect on the evolution of our program, I must admit that there have been many adventures and perhaps too much fun.

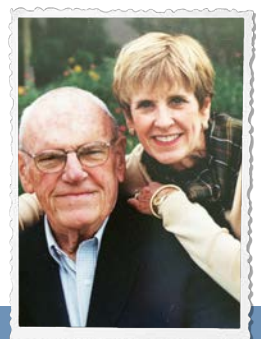
*“I smile when I think of Jim Burke saying, “I never met a teacher I didn’t like,” because he was one of the great teachers in life. He strongly influenced me; perhaps he never knew how many silent lessons he gave: Be Kind. Work hard and ethically, and let it be your reason to rise to the top. Give without advertisement and without wanting anything in return. Love your family. Enjoy your friends.”*

—Katie (Dezember) Werdel '90

I still can’t believe I allowed our Ford kids to test-drive cars. Years later, I learned that evaluating freeway driving conditions included a trip to Avila Beach! Mostly, I think of my dad and how his investment in our youth and Bakersfield’s future turned into a family that expands across the globe. I imagine my father must be smiling down from the heavens—a dream come true!

**Join us in celebrating this milestone year and discover on the following pages how our student leaders, past and present, are serving others.**

*Mikie Hay*  
Mikie Hay,  
Jim Burke Education Foundation



# 2023-2024 Dream Build

## Team “Battling Mosquitoes”

Sponsored by Aera Energy LLC

In collaboration with Kern Vector Control, Boy Scouts, and the City of Bakersfield, Team Aera Energy LLC hosted a bat box-building event at Norris Middle School. Partnering with Wind Wolves Preserve and Panorama Vista Preserve, over 20 boxes were strategically placed throughout Kern County to establish essential bat habitats to help battle mosquitoes and the West Nile Virus!

*\$250 donated to Cal State University’s “Fab Lab”*

**TEAM MEMBERS Top Row** Harjaisal Brar Stockdale,

Branton Dickey BCBS, Dylan Scherer Liberty

**Bottom Row** Katie Johnson Highland, Breanna Gallardo East,

Daniela Dibble Centennial, Alondra Rodriguez Ridgeview



## Team “K.E.Y.S. to the Future”

Sponsored by Bank of the Sierra

K.E.Y.S., Kern Entrepreneurship Youth Symposium, in partnership with ROC & CTEC, a news station, junior high schools, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Kern County, and local businesses, ignited the creative spirit of 200 junior high students by putting on a day-long interactive symposium on entrepreneurship!

*\$250 Donated to Norris PTC, SLED Virtual Business*

**TEAM MEMBERS Top Row** Ricardo Marin BHS, Arek Plate Liberty,

Lucas Wright Stockdale, Zachary Been Centennial,

**Bottom Row** Iamanni Jackson Highland, Jiya Patel Frontier,

Stella Holland Garces, Sarah Celine Pursel BCBS



*“People want to be on a team. They want to  
They want to be in a situation where they feel th*

# Builders Community Projects

Team Photos FROM EVENT NIGHT  
soluxe | creative  
soluxecreative.com

## Team "C.H.E.F.s for Change"

Sponsored by Dignity Health, Mercy and Memorial Hospitals

From beakers to baking sheets, Team C.H.E.F.s retrofitted chemistry carts into fully-equipped mobile kitchens, sparking a culinary revolution at the Boys and Girls Club of Kern County. Students can now master kitchen skills, explore healthy recipes, and become food-forward thinkers through interactive cookbooks and video tutorials created by Team C.H.E.F.s.!

*\$250 donated to Boys and Girls Clubs of Kern County*

**TEAM MEMBERS** Top Row Eduardo Chew Golden Valley, Nathan Martinez Frontier, Konrad Hettinger BCHS, Ryan James Liberty  
Bottom Row Kelsey Abraham Garces, Noor El Kereamy Stockdale, Ileanna Salinas Ridgeview, Amy Alias Highland, Tatiana Gonzalez South



## Team "Pedal for a Purpose"

Sponsored by Grimmway Farms

Upon recognizing Bakersfield's alarming pedestrian fatality rate, Team Grimmway rallied to create a safer cycling community. Their event combined bike safety education, free repairs, and a bike race, all under the watchful eyes of the Bakersfield Police Department. Partnering with several local businesses, including Sniders Cycling and Finish Line, the team held quizzes on bike safety, the results of which were shared with Blue Zones, who will carry out this pedal-powered initiative.

*\$250 donated to BPD Cadet Unit #521*

**TEAM MEMBERS** Top Row Jared Delgado East, Riley Truong Stockdale, Michael Kyei Liberty, Izyan Ali Independence, Bottom Row Riley Anwyl BCHS, Mary Calley Centennial, Natalie Hawkins Frontier, Anna Oesch BHS



*be part of something bigger than themselves.  
at they are doing something for the greater good."*

— Mike Krzyzewski, Duke University, Head Basketball Coach

# Funding Students' Futures



Since 1988, the Education Foundation has provided **over \$654,000** in scholarships for high school seniors. Our foundation is grateful for the community support and generous contributions that made it possible for us to award 32 Ford Dream Builder student leaders with a **\$2,000 scholarship** to aid with college expenses. The Foundation also presented **twelve \$1,000 awards** to seniors who actively demonstrated leadership and rose above personal challenges.



## Tatiana Gonzalez, Iamanni Jackson, Sarah Celine Pursel and Nathan Martinez Recipients of the Bank of the Sierra Scholarship

Through a grant, Bank of the Sierra provided four scholarships to our students. Larry Velasquez, Market President and Ford Dream Builders advisor, presented the scholarships. Currently, Tatiana is at UC Irvine, Iamanni is attending Stanford, Sarah Celine is at Cal Poly SLO and Nathan is at UC Davis.



## Noor El Kereamy Recipient of the Vaughan Family Scholarship

This scholarship honors the Vaughan family who have been integral to our program since its inception in 1975. Jeff and Jackson Vaughan presented this scholarship on behalf of their family. Noor is currently attending Stanford University.



## Kelsey Abraham and Anna Oesch Recipients of the Mikie Hay Friendship Scholarship

These two exceptional young women received scholarships in the name of our founder, Mikie Hay, which her Pi Phi sorority sisters funded. Mikie presented the scholarships on behalf of her Pi Phi sisters. Kelsey is attending Cal Poly SLO, and Anna is attending Gonzaga University.



## Zachary Been, Harjaisal Brar, Stella Holland and Natalie Hawkins Recipients of the Ray Dezember Memorial Scholarship

Ray Dezember was a local business leader and philanthropist who appreciated the ideals of the Dream Builders program: "service over self," leadership, and mentorship. Cheri Dezember Ezell, on behalf of her family, presented four scholarships. Zachary is attending Oklahoma State, Harjaisal is at Columbia University, Stella is attending the University of Oregon, and Natalie is attending Cal State University Bakersfield.

## You can make a difference! Consider becoming a student scholarship supporter.



Join Bank of the Sierra and others by sponsoring a Ford Dream Builders scholarship for \$1,000. An investment in a student's future is worth its weight in gold.

For more information contact Troy Fringer, Foundation Treasurer at (661) 328-3601 or [tfringer@burkeauto.com](mailto:tfringer@burkeauto.com).



# The Tracy Kiser Humanitarian Scholarship

Each year, the Foundation Board selects a person, couple, or family who has greatly supported our program and honors them with a scholarship in their name. This year, we chose a local business owner and philanthropist who has meant very much to our Ford Dream Builders program. Tracy Kiser, owner of H. Walker’s Clothing & Gifts, has been outfitting our Ford Dimension boys for many years. Tracy’s heart for helping Bakersfield extends beyond our program. She is a Downtown Rotary and Junior League member and serves on the Memorial Hospital Foundation, in addition to many other volunteer organizations. Michael Kyei was chosen as the recipient of this scholarship for exemplifying the same generosity and leadership as Tracy. He is attending UC Berkeley, majoring in electrical engineering and computer science.

*Thank you, Tracy, for your devotion to our Ford Dream Builders Program!*

## Beyond the Classroom: Turning Passions into Profits

We are simply amazed by what our students accomplish in their high school careers and beyond. This year was no exception. Four of our 2024 Ford Dream Builders class showed exceptional promise for entrepreneurship in their respective fields! Pictured left to right: **Stella Holland (Garces), Ricardo Marin (BHS), Sarah Celine Pursel (BCHS), and Zachary Been (Centennial High School).**

Beyond their academic pursuits and involvement as Ford Dream Builders, these students have built impressive entrepreneurial resumes. Stella, a gifted artist, launched a successful commission-based art business. Sarah transformed her backyard chicken coop into a homegrown egg and agriculture enterprise. Zachary’s carpentry skills led to his business Been Brothers, specializing in large furniture pieces. Ricardo, who is just as tech-savvy as he is kind, created his own online tech company.

These young minds are brilliant examples of what The Jim Burke Education Foundation strives to foster. As these Dream Builders head off to college, we know without doubt that they will continue to make extraordinary impacts on our world.



*“Being an entrepreneur in high school proved itself challenging yet extremely rewarding. I learned of my love for working with people and Agriculture. I feel blessed to be able to further this passion at Cal Poly!”*

— Sarah Celine Pursel, Class of 2024

## 2023-2024 Corporate & Community Advisors

- Ali Border
- Mikaela Cardenas
- Gaby Chumpitaz
- Jane Couperus
- Mickey Cushine
- Liz Haley
- George Hay
- Lisa Jacoby
- Vinny Oddo
- Alex Parsons
- Kaelyn Peterson
- Caleb Pollema
- Lowell Pollema
- Tyler Sweaney
- Laura Thomas
- Nicolette Thomson
- Sarah Trichell
- Larry Velasquez
- Amanda Waters

Remember to update your contact info.





# Ford Dimension: 50 Years of Student Involvement

## How It All Began: The Legacy of Jim Burke

In 1994, two hundred Ford Dimension alumni from across the country gathered to honor Jim Burke and thank him for the contributions he made to improve educational opportunities for local youth through the Ford Dimension program. As a tribute to Mr. Burke, and the program he began in 1975, the alumni announced the founding of the Jim Burke Education Foundation.

In 2003, Ford Dimension alumni and the Jim Burke Education Foundation Directors created Dream Builders, a student leadership program for achieving high school seniors that promotes “service over self,” and career and life skills through the development of community projects. The Foundation’s mission is to continue Jim Burke’s legacy of generosity for the educational support of others.

**1975-1976** Mary Baird • Leon Harris • Marianne Logan • Sterling Wilson **1976-1977** Mary Burlington • Nahum Chandler • Anna Ermigarat • Fr. Craig Harrison • Mike Kelly • Kerry Kelly • Tom Moore • Clair Trotter **1977-1978** Mark Andrew • Karen Coulston • David Eastwood • Pam Knight • Blaine Randolph • Teri Phillips • Jeanne Van Schaack • Scott Whitley **1978-1979** Jill Brock • Harriet Rice • Dr. Peter Ruiz • Vince Sakowski • Juliana Secor • Greg Towery • Darryl Tucker • Jeff Vaughan **1979-1980** Silvia Aguila • Julie Bowser • Judy Fisher • Gina Franconi • Bonita Iritani • Shawn Kelly • Scott Kohlbush • Pam Norris • Pete Rodriguez • Mark Wu **1980-1981** Mary Busacca • Darrin Craig • John Denvir • Julie Duggan • Dr. Charles Flowers • Becci Gutierrez • Dr. Fred Teixeira • Leslie Wetterholm • Peter Wu **1981-1982** Julie Amenta • Michael Cassidy • Cathy Curtis • Mary Kay Haller • Dr. Fred Laningham • Nathan Lehmann • Clare Loken • Brett Morris • John Perisich • Cynthia Wong **1982-1983** Tracy Andrew • Tim Blanton • Jeanne Denvir • Jim Freitas • Kathy Goodwin • Patrick Lencioni • Mark Luttrell • James Moore • Robert Mosley • Shari Ortiz • Dana Sears **1983-1984** Helen Chao • Jack Coronel • Rowena Dalton • Diane Haller • Dr. Matthew Jones • Joel Judge II • Jay Julian • Kimberlee Kingsbury • Alicia Ritter • Jeff Walls **1984-1985** Marcie Antongiovanni • Karen Banducci • Chris Cunningham • John Garone • Paul Goodwin • Chad Hendrix • Dr. Dineen Johnson • Lisa Maloney • Shem Oesch • Beth Wainwright **1985-1986** Brian Adams • Amy Anspach • Lisa Caswell • Alonzo Hill • Laura Keith • Jay Kuster • Amy McMurtrey • Doug Morrison • Robert Ruiz **1986-1987** Dr. Nalyn Ang • Tina Antongiovanni • Doug Camenisch • Robert Duquette • Brian Jett • Doug MacMillan • Annie Madsen • Erica Schmidt • Todd Sorrell • Mike Williams • Dr. Sally Wonderly **1987-1988** Maria Bernal • Brian Enge • Jennifer Hartenberger • Anton Holty • John Kovacevich • Dr. John Kuss • Renee Massey • Cathy Muxlow • Nicole Parra • Gary Rush • Bryan Taylor • Hilary Werdel **1988-1989** Bernice Garza • John Gillett • Vanessa Goodyear • Karyn Lewis • Camille Mosley • Peter Parra • Cassie Pulscamp • Scott Reade • John Werdel • Derek Yurosek **1989-1990** John Anderson • Shelley Anthony • Tess Bernal • Matt Billings • Nate Cooper • Katie Dezember • Justin Fortmeyer • Nicole Gafford • Mike James • Jason Rankin • Trisha Stiles • Chandler Wonderly **1990-1991** Alexis Ash • Jeneen Arrache • Dr. J.W. Beard • Angelique Berens • Jason Cherry • Aimee Dover • John Grant • Matt Ornelaz • Robert Ray • Deborah Robertson • Mike Serban • Sunshine Smith • Brandon Taylor **1991-1992** Jim Beagle • Jeff Buckley • Kristen Carstensen • Payam Edalat • Corey Funk • Adam Icardo • Bridgette Loyd • Chad Manning • Karen Morales • Beth Oesch • Zachery Shaffer • Cindy Sopko • Katie Werdel **1992-1993** Tom Antongiovanni • Taylor Ashland • David Beard • Emmy Cattani • Deborah Finn • Carrie Gillett • Brian Grant • Nick Herndon • Alison MacGuire • Joo-Jin Ong • Sharon Stephenson • Jody Thomas **1993-1994** Amanda Duquette • Anica Dutto • Joseph Etcheverry • Amador Galvez III • Jay Heisey • Jason Karr • Sharon Koenig • Carmella Lucas • Tim McAbee • Beth Nakashima • Nicolette Ornelaz • Craig Reid • Jeremy Scheidle • Melinda Smith **1994-1995** Steven Acosta • Mike Echeverria • Kenny Eynaud • Angie Grah • Jason Hodgson • Amber Jung • Adam Kovacevich • Jamie Larma • Kelly Loyd • Tiffani Ludd • Brian Sherrill • Michelle Sopko • Jody Yaksitch • Elliot Zimmer **1995-1996** Michelle Bella • Katie Brewer • Lauren Brock • Ryan Carstensen • Ryan Doolittle • Russell Hiney • Gary Lewis • Trish Rhode • Jamal Watkins **1996-1997** Don Bynum • Andrew Elms • Janelle Giumarra • Janelle Gress • Matthew Hadden • Kayla Jones • Nicole Rizkalla • Jackie Sisante • Dan Thorp • Josh Williams **1997-1998** Matt Antongiovanni • Laura Brommelsiek • Reagan Franks • Jarrod Hicks • David Klein • Jeff Larma • Niki Perez • Andrea Pfister • Crystal Porter • Bernardo Salcido • Jason Waugh • Anna Wegis **1998-1999** Vidhya Bala • Tiffany Campbell • Luis Caric • Antone Chicca • Lesley Clifford • Willa Crosby • Thomas Fiori • Ryan Green • Marques Mascarinas • Rikky Penney • Nicole Sampley • Min Su • Allison Ulbrich **1999-2000** Katie Benham • Elisa Carroll • Jason Carter • Alex Fong • Ryan Garcia • Melissa Grimm • Kate Hersberger • Sydney Howard • Megan Jager • Taliah Nuriddin • Aaron Orndorff • Todd Sachs • Kevin Thelen • Amanda Whitten **2000-2001** Mohamed Ahmed • Katy Assaturian • Natalie Erlendson • Patrick Frazier • Eric Garthoffner • Mark Gonzalez • Lisa Green • Elizabeth Hill • Feven Kiflegiorgis • Chase Nunneley • Shannon Robertson • Rylan Rozell • Amy Sakowski • Joseph Sithole • Kirstin Woody **2001-2002** Sarah Audelo • Andrew Boylan • Ray Crosby • Kathy Elliott • Nicolette Eyherabide • Christina Gutierrez • Tyler Hair • Brandon Jones • Alex McGillivray • Peter Nichols • Stacey O’Neill • Nick Reese • Kevin Saiki • Jared Smith • Kristina Smith • Amanda Weddle **2002-2003** Jacob Ceccarelli • Céleigh Chapman • Paige Hill • Eric Hughes • Brian Jacobs • Courtney Lewis • Steven McCutcheon • Melissa Miro • Amerika Niño • Kevin Porter • Jared Schwacho • Rebecca Scoonover • Greg Swertfager • Laura Thomas • Patience Thompson **2003-2004** Amberia Allen • Denise Benavente • Marley Bynum • Chase Chapman • Suzanne Dezember • Ellen Dobie • Whitney Johnson • Keith Legro • Alexandria Madera • Tom Montgomery • Andy Reese • Josh Stephens • Darren Thomas • Joe Whittington • Laura Yoon **2004-2005** Ian Brenner • Rosie Etcheverry • Matthew Hammett • Stephanie Hankinson • Bradley Huge • Courtney McKinley • Neha Mehta • Ryan Newbrough • Patrick Noland • Natalie Ryan • Matthew Scanlan • Joshua Speidel • Renee Taylor • Katherine Thomas **2005-2006** Jessie Garcia • Andia Heydari • Matthew Hicks • Mitchell Lecrone • Patrick McDermott • Lindsey Shambaugh • Talesha Triplett • Cori Tucker • Josh Waldon • Kelsey Woodard **2006-2007** Brian Anderson • Denise Ellison • Rick Gonzalez • Jessica Hagen • Matt Heiss • Nick Northrop • John Pierucci • Christina Quintanilla • Zochiltl Ramos • Brittney Smith **2007-2008** Brant Bonetti • Aaron Dobie • Tesfa Habebo • Hannah Haggerty • Ana Heydari • Justin Koh • Peter Mitchell • Angelina Roman • Bryce Vlach • Carolyne Yu **2008-2009** Joey Bermudez • Derrick Chan • Liz Crowe • Jackie Garcia • Paul Guaglianone • Laura Hicks • Deepa Kannappan • Riley Scott • Evan Szablowski • Allison Wiener **2009-2010** Joanne Bae • Austin Davis • Kirby Ellis • Charles Glavin • Melissa Merrill • Grant Paulson • Lauren Richardson • Samantha Valdez • Drew Wiggins • Andrew Whittington **2010-2011** Cory Barker • Lauren Cline • Dwyane Facho • Alex Gomez • Corey Hobbs • Brandon Louey • Jocelyn McGill • Sarah Moore • Victoria Nakagawa • Vid Reddy **2011-2012** Nicole Angelini • Christopher Bedke • Seth Champness • Enoch Chang • Jotthe Kannappan • Zeno Lee • Scout Ocampo • Paola Pena • Teddi Pierce • Spencer Shoemaker **2012-2013** Brock Burger • Derek Frost • Ryan Holmes • Connor Kingsbury • Erica McCall • Abigail Mejia • Ashly Mohankumar • Theimus Roberson • Anne Shambaugh • Brianna Wright **2013-2014** Marbella Avalos • Annie Bardet • Vincent Del Papa • Christina Fuentes • Ariella Goldstein • Gurjot Kaur • Christopher Mazmanian • Alex Mazzeo • Alex Medina • Jaskaran Sandhu **2014-2015** Joseph Aguilar • Olivia Belda • Nia Brazzell • Nelson Chandler • Lisa Darquea • Jordon Dawson • Amrit Dhillon • Elizabeth McMurray • John Soper • Ali Vaughan **2015-2016** Alexis Adjei • Garrett Andrew • Chandler Beck • Cassidy Grimsley • Garret Kingsbury • Neal Mathew • Noelle Pardo • Nicollette Sanchez • Brock Simpson • Brittany St. Clair **2016-2017** Sophia Caputo • Ryan Crowley • Samantha Jimenez • Raguvir Kunani • Artemis Mansur • Zach Parham • Caleb Pollema • Kyra Sales • Shikha Srinivas • Tyler Sweaney **2017-2018** Fernando Argueta • Mikaela Cardenas • Michael Del Mundo • Austin Gaines • Caleb Garcia • Karla Guzman • Liane McQueen • O’zie Sagbohan • Molly Soper • Jackson Vaughan **2018-2019** Claire Champagne • Amador Gallardo • Naomi Jennings • Margo Kuney • Naveen Mathew • Payton Renz • Nate Roodzant • Jessica Stump • Fernando Tello • Shotaro Yamaguchi **2019-2020** Natalie Hawatmeh • Jasmine Garza • Mahima Kunani • Chase McLewis • Zachary McNaughton • Benji Nixon • Nick Pardo • Keshav Patel • Hailey Plugge • Aleyna Young **2020-2021** Lauren Buetow • Isabella Caputo • James Guarena • Luz Lara • Isaac Larroque • Joachim Ma • Jake Nahama • Phoebe Nguyen • Bricen Rigby • Madalyn Schonauer **2021-2022** Iman Abumeri • Jacob Borda • Sophia Curutchague • Dara Deru • Sam Ellis • Cristal Flores • Garrett Guinn • Janae Hutson • Liam O’Connor • Travis Plugge **2022-2023** Mukul Anand • Joshua Braun • Gabriella Camou • Kaitlyn Corral • Daniel Hall • Bella Hawatmeh • JT Toler • Ivan Tran • Sofia Truong • Aiden Young **2023-2024** Kelsey Abraham • Zachary Been • Harjaisal Brar • Branton Dickey • Noor El Kereamy • Natalie Hawkins • Katie Johnson • Michael Kyei • Nathan Martinez • Sarah Celine Pursel

**BACK ROW**

- Thomas Woods** BHS
- Noah Santillan** Highland
- Vaughan Forsyth** Independence
- Braden Mendiburu** Liberty
- Thomas Buckley** Garces

**FRONT ROW**

- River Carreno** Highland
- Valeria Jirano** West
- Rachelle Barreyro** Frontier
- Sienna Surgener** Garces
- Brooke Tallon** Liberty



# theFord Dimension **2025 BOARD MEMBERS SELECTED** Welcome to Our Ford Family!

*Fifty years seems like a blink in time. Our Ford Dimension Family now has a global reach with members impacting the world as they continue to put "service over self." — Mikie Hay*



## Looking Back, Moving Forward

Dear Mikie,

As I begin my sophomore year at MIT, I reflect on my time in Ford Dimension. This program truly provided the friendships and tools that made my freshman year possible. My first year in Massachusetts was filled with academic challenges and medical obstacles, but the unwavering support from you and the Ford team was a foundational constant. When I needed advice or a listening ear, I always knew I had a friend in Ford. Additionally, my time in Ford taught me time management, resourcefulness, collaboration, and the value of asking for help—skills I have used in designing safe technology for preteens, building electromagnets, creating dorm construction proposals, and more! The Ford program is far more than a transformative academic program— it is a family and a lifelong support system that I am blessed beyond words to be a part of.

Thank you for building this family!

With love,  
JT Taler (FD' 23), Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2027



Mikie Hay  
PO Box 316  
Bakersfield, CA 93302  
USA





Photos by:  
**soluxe | creative**  
soluxecreative.com



## INTRODUCING THE **2024-2025 Dream Builders**

### *Fostering Community Growth: Del Oro's First Dream Builder*

I am truly excited to contribute to our community through Ford Dream Builders this year. Giving back is essential for fostering growth and creating a positive impact. I can't wait to build meaningful connections while working together to uplift those around us. Meeting students from different backgrounds and learning from their unique perspectives is another aspect I'm eager to experience. As the first Ford Dream Builder from Del Oro High School, I feel honored to represent my school and inspire future students to join this incredible program.

—Alexandra Cruz, Del Oro



## Spotlight on Excellence Iamanni Jackson - Reaching for the Stars

One of our shining stars in the 2024 Dream Builders class was Iamanni Jackson. You'd never guess the challenges she quietly endured. Life's curveballs arrived with a vengeance during her senior year, disrupting her carefully laid plans. "It changed my perceptions of life," she said. "I was supposed to be locking in on all my commitments. Instead, I was sleeping at my grandma's house on the floor. I was in pain, and staying focused or motivated was hard."

However, being the ever-persevering optimist that Iamanni is, she didn't let the bumps in the road stunt her personal and academic growth. Instead, **she achieved her lifelong dream of earning a spot at Stanford University!** At the age of seven, Iamanni discovered the Astronautics and Aeronautics major at Stanford. Now, she is pursuing this major and will study at the world-renowned **Stanford Space Institute.**

Ford Dream Builders was not the only one to recognize the celestial spark inside Iamanni. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation saw that spark, too. After a rigorous application and interview process, they **awarded her their highly selective Gates Scholarship,** which bridges the gap between trials and triumph.

Iamanni looks back fondly on her time as a Dream Builder. "Being in Dream Builders made me feel safe and allowed me to move past my problems and help others," she said. She also added, "I loved my team. We laughed so hard, and we did something good." When asked if she could give any advice to future Ford Dream Builders, especially those facing adversity, she told us, "Just do your best...your best is all you can do, and that's all you need to do."

***Reach for the stars, Iamanni —we'll be looking for you among them!***





**ABOVE STUDENTS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Mark Mikhail Stockdale, Malia Giumarra Garces, Matthew Fan BCHS, Sophia Camou Garces, Quinlan Ray Frontier, Andres Acevedo West, Charlotte Rivera BCHS, David Guillen Stockdale, Sara Sepulveda Stockdale, Samuel Ayeni Frontier, Elianna Garcia East, Baleigh Organ Frontier, Mahdox Gantong Highland, Byron Alfaro Golden Valley, Shelbie Porter Liberty, Albert Abad Stockdale, Madeline Baker BCHS, Charlie Gless BHS, Andrew Chow Highland, Alicia Hall BHS, Alexandra Cruz Del Oro, Angel Gallardo East

# Dream Builders Alumni: 21 Years & 85 Civic Projects

**2003-2004** Jacquelyne Bartell • Ximena Benitz • Nick Braaten • Vanna Cable • Madisyn Coniglio • Lauren DeBranch • Carey Demos • Jon Dickson • Jeffrey Elms • CheyLinel Gaston • Justin Grammy • Michael Gutierrez • Ben Hicks • Tara Howlett • Andrew Huge • Michael Hughes • Daniel Hughes • Jessica Koh • Kristin Love • Roxanne Martinez • Philip McDermott • Cody Meek • Laura Northrop • Katie Pierruci • Rena Romanini • Blanca Sanchez • Lisa-Marie Stramaglia • Tiphannie White **2004-2005** Michael John Arraztoa • Katie Barton • Jennifer Berry • Katie Berry • Akriti Bhambi • Lyndon Braganza • Caitlin Chapman • Niles Dhanens • Kristen Edwards • Megan Elrod • John Gaugel • Neil Gehlawat • Jordan Hall • Kristen Hay • Jonathan Hughes • Rena Jacobs • Jeff Lippert • Gustavo Luna • Ashley Mettler • Anna Miro • Mary Grace Panos • Emily Parker • Alex Parsons • Albert Raygoza • Brittany Rice • Gina Rossi • John Scott • Marci Scott • Emma Shapiro • Jennifer Shuler • Jessie Simonson • James Tasker • Ebony Villaseñor • Kirsten Wirth • Mercedes Yepez • Amanda Zvirblis **2005-2006** Taylor Barnes • Domenick Buck • Matt Cappuccio • Josh Cella • Candy Cuestas • Amy DeZember • Ashley Dunn • Sarah Franz • Ben Giesbrecht • Dustin Glentzer • Mark Goya • Gregory Gutierrez • Chris Holloway • Meagan Jackson • Summer Jordan • Maria Krauter • Nathan Longcrier • Catie Mueller • Alexis Nelson • Stacie Nichols • Raechel Paine • Chris Ruiz • Paige Phillips • Justin Salters • Elizabeth Scarbrough **2006-2007** Byron Alexander • Audrey Austin • Katie Belluomini • Katrina Berry • Andrew Bryant • Matthew Cuellar • Kasem Cornelius • Marco De Leon • Amanda Haney • Nick Harrington • Nicholas Houchin • Taylor Hurt • Kevin Koblikska • Melissa Lucas • Sydney Mackessy • Alexandra Maxwell • John Moore • Mandy Morley • Nancy Nasrawin • Viet Nguyen • Filiberto Nieves • Nnenna Odeluga • Courtney Richmond • Ryan Wingate **2007-2008** Taylor Alexander • Mara Arevalo • Kseniya Astakhova • Geoffrey Becker • Heather Brenner • James Creech • David Heisler • Danae Jarrett • Nina Krauter • Peter Kelly • Jacob Loeffler • Kevin Lott • Divya Manohara • Samuel Musick • Nick Niveaz • Devin Russell • Terryn Soelberg • Torree Soelberg • Julianne Thomas • Paige Tucker • Kehaulani Valos • Monique White **2008-2009** Nicole Banister • Kristina Barrientos • Julia Berchtold • Clay Camp • Mayra Estrada • Ashlyn Eyraud • Lynsey Fringer • Michael Golich • Alejandro Gonzalez • Bryan Grimm • Taylor Hankinson • Nathaniel Ketelhut • Geoffrey Lee • Libby Loeffler • Alex Mitchell • Josh Novins • Vinny Oddo • Deborah Pena • Meghan Prout • Josh Shambaugh • Lynn Tasker • Sarah Urata **2009-2010** Sandra Aldama • P.J. Atchison • Brian Austin • Morgan Barnes • Rosalinda Cortez • John Cummings • Matt Darr • Kyle Gillespie • Mona Gupta • Amy Kelly • Kacie Mills • Elise Norris • Hillary Orton • Cici Pandol • D.J. Pepito • Justin Roney • David Roth • Cornelius Sackey • Rodolfo Salgado • Morgan Solorio • Lisa Soper • Paul Steele **2010-2011** Samson Ahferom • Kirsten Albers • William Beechinor • Eli Carroll • Mackenzie Carter • Lance Collins • Marley Dawson • Sophia Garcia • Julio Gonzalez • Juan Heredia • Jessica Hernandez • Bryce Keene • Daniel Kooren • Gage Marchini • Mason Otten • Archana Patel • Melanie Reis • Gagandeep Samra • Manpreet Sandhu • Viviana Sanchez • Meagan Shambaugh • Chad Spalinger **2011-2012** Kayla Bernardino • Annie Berry • Cory Camp • Molly Chandler • Gabriela Cuevas • Austin Donovan • Lauren Fringer • Cameron Hines • Sharonjeet Kaur • Joshua Miller • Leah Moore • Danny Munoz • Kelsie Rhodes • Scott Riccomini • Grecia Rivera • Ali Schroeter • Luigi Soper • Joshua St. Clair • Nick Treiberg • Curtis Valencia • Tyler Valencia • Carli Yoro **2012-2013** Paige Basconcillo • Connor Brady • Corbin Burnes • Nolan Cooney • Katie Cornford • Xitlaly Estrada • Connor Fischer • Joshua 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**2015-2016** Andrew Aleman • Chandler Basconcillo • Julia Castro • Ethan Francis • Lexi Gibson • Shawn Hill • Kaylee Holland • Jordan Holmes • Jordian Hunter • Madeline Kuney • Fahad Molla • Ryan Morosa • Veena Narashiman • Libby Otten • Andre Paradise • Jesus Perez • Grace Prall • Cameron Reeves • Lucas Solis • Gabriel Torres • Aaron Wan • Payton Yee **2016-2017** John Abrams • Jackson Carroll • Gabriela Chumpitaz • Ishani Desai • Spencer Glazer • Luisa Guzman Gomez • Carlos Hernandez • Raja Kumar • Grace Martinez • Clayton Nalesnik • Sean Nguyen • Karen Quezada • Carlos Ramirez • Laura Randolph • Krystal Raynes • Emma Reynolds • Kathryn Rodriguez • Edgar Sanchez Jr. • Tommy Toretta • Daniel Tweedy • Andrea Uribe • Victoria Von Flue **2017-2018** Emily Aldritt • Eddy Aleman • Dawn Bransby • Nyoko Brown • Ethan Estrada • Manny Flores • Malcolm Francisco • Noe Garcia • Adam Hererra • Bryce Jackson • Emily Johnston • Aarushi Kapoor • Logan King • Kim Marquez • Noah McNaughton • Alexis Melo • Michael Morosa • Jada Ochoa • Courtney Olsen • Bailey Sweaney • Shannon Patterson • Elexis Zamora Zamora **2018-2019** Quintin Arreche • Josh Aubin • Alyssa Bell • Evan Berry • Uday Birdi • Nayeli Camacho • Alex Castro • Macy Cholometes • Sydney Crabtree • Sean Crowley • Valeria Fuentes • Karen Hinojosa • Daniel Kim • Noemi Martinez • Nikka Padilla • Mark Pandol • Carson Parks • Isela Pina • Serena Rojas • Charles Rous • Edneishia Tucker • Jack Waite **2019-2020** Farah Abumeri • Charisma Arreola • Candice Bishop • Bella Carreno • Maria Castillejo • Danian Castillo • Rushil Desai • Ashton Gaines • Dahlia Keo • Karen Martinez • Jake O'Connell • Karla Perez • Hayden Pisano • Riley Pisano • Makayla Ramirez • Javier Salinas • Jaden Sanchez • Lauren Sandoval • Gilberto Sepulveda • Nathan Schmidt II • Omar Vergara • Maya Wright • Tom Zaninovich **2020-2021** Juan Ayala • Kayden Bingham • Ishaan Brar • Zach Buckley • Angel Casmiro • Shivreet Dhillon • Jake Dougherty • Kyle Guinn • 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# On The Road to Success

## West High Debate Students

First Ford Dimension Class, comprised of four West High debate students, rolls out campaign to educate business leaders about the buying power of youth.



1974

1979



## Ambassadors For The Dealership

Student leaders become ambassadors for the dealership at the Economic Business Conference.

## The Ford Demolition!

The tradition of test-driving Ford vehicles continued, but with a new name and short existence, due to the fender benders and unauthorized trips!



1982

## Annual Prayer Breakfast

The first of many Ford Dimensioners gives the Student Prayer at the annual Bakersfield Prayer Breakfast.



1987

## Golden Empire Gleaner

A wonderful association with the Golden Empire Dimensioners volunteer time to give back.



1990

# ess

*Highlights from 50 years of fun and student leadership—and what a ride it has been!*

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## History in the Making!

Ford Dimension is expanded, and Dream Builders is created to include 22 more student leaders in the program.



1994



## Ford Dimension Scavenger Hunt

Golf carts for Ford Dimension scavenger hunts were scuttled after too much fun!

Jim Burke Education Foundation created by alumni.

2003



## Ford Dream Builders Meet Ford CEO

Student leaders meet with Ford Motor Company CEO Jim Farley. The tradition of the business/youth connection continues!

2024

# Board of Directors

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Cindy Meek  
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### SPECIAL THANKS TO

Soluxe Creative, Photography  
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# Back To Bakersfield!

We have been so fortunate to have many alumni return to Bakersfield and invest in its future. We caught up with a few of our Ford Dimension family and reminisced about the program and how they continue to serve our community.

*Grab a pen and have fun trying to connect alumni's recent photo on the right with their graduation photo on the left!*



FD Year: '90

## Nicole (Gafford) Bickham

**CURRENT JOB:** First Grade Teacher, Highgate Elementary

### **My Dimension Memories:**

Our group bonded quickly and spent time together outside of Ford Dimension events. It was instant friendship with high-quality people. The matching plaid skirts and sweater vests from Papagallos were the icing on top. Through all the events we participated in, we looked snazzy and felt proud to represent this fantastic organization. Can you believe we were allowed to drive a Ford car of our choice for a test drive? I chose the Mustang!

It's been 35 years since I was part of this organization, and I would hope I have carried on that mantra in a small way. As a teacher, service is the center of my life. I always look for families that need a little extra support and love each year and make it a priority to help when needed. Our family has served others through our church outreach programs. I also came back to serve as a Ford Dream Builder advisor and thoroughly enjoyed my time working with teams to serve our community.



FD Year: '92

## Chad Manning

**CURRENT JOB:** Vice President of Sales, Jim Burke Ford

### **My Dimension Memories:**

Well, I'm about to turn 50, and I spent 13 years playing football. I'm lucky I remember my name! But I remember all my Ford Dimension classmates and the many laughs we shared, especially for hours in the parking lot after the meetings. I remember the Jim Burke Ford Company Picnic sack race at the Kern River picnic area. For some reason, the race was down the hill. About two hops in, I fell to the ground, rolled down the hill, and took out half of my classmates!

I spend much of my free time investing in the youth of Kern County. I believe that team sports and athletics in general provide a great support system for today's youth. Coaches and mentors can help develop valuable characteristics like hard work, discipline, selflessness, humility, and the expectation of succeeding at whatever it is you work hard to accomplish. Coaching allows me to spend time with my kids, doing what they love.



FD Year: '88

## Maria (Bernal) Toretta

**CURRENT JOB:** Teacher at Mira Monte High School

### **My Dimension Memories:**

Our group was incredibly cohesive; we worked well together to help others in our community. It wasn't just about the work; we also had a lot of fun and genuinely enjoyed each other's company.

I've been involved with two non-profits that hold special significance for me: the Jim Burke Education Foundation and the Kern County Basque Club (KCBC). Despite their differences, both organizations share a common purpose.



FD Year: '93

## Brian Grant

**CURRENT JOB:** President, Nickel Family LLC

### **My Dimension Memories:**

What I remember the most are the horrible 1992/93 ties we had to wear for our uniform! They were something out of a bad 1980s new-wave video. We wore them with pride, but go lots of jokes.

For the last nine years, I have been involved in the non-profit Sequoia Riverlands Trust, which is based in Visalia and serves as the go-to land conservation entity for the southern San Joaquin Valley and surrounding mountains and foothills. I enjoy this work as it offers land stewards (farmers and ranchers) tools to help preserve and protect land and help with estate planning to pass working lands to future generations.

Celebrating **50** YEARS  
of SERVICE OVER SELF



FD Year: '77

### Craig Harrison

**CURRENT JOB:** Author, Inspirational Speaker, Certified Grief and Trauma Counselor

#### *My Dimension Memories:*

Having been part of the original Ford Dimension program in 1977, I never realized the impact it would have on my life 47 years later. I have made so many friendships, even today, with new Ford Dimensioners, and this is what I call a BLESSING!

My favorite organization I have worked with over the years is St. Vincent de Paul. We built the homeless center, and I love being on the board and making sure the mission of feeding clothing and taking care of those most in need. Paying it forward.



FD Year: '88

### Renee Massey

**CURRENT JOB:** Vice President of People & Culture, Jim Burke Ford

#### *My Dimension Memories:*

I remember going to the LA New Car Show – we got to miss school, and they took us to a fancy dinner. We attended the Hyundai Grand Opening at the Auto Mall and served hot dogs and popcorn! We also got to help with the Special Olympics at BC.

I served for over twenty years on the Jim Burke Education Foundation and as a Dream Builders team advisor. I have also served on the Golden Empire Gleaners board since 2006 and I am the current board chair.



FD Year: '12

### Spencer (Shoemaker) Lewis

**CURRENT JOB:** Counselor, Frontier High School

#### *My Dimension Memories:*

Overall, picking a favorite memory is hard. I have always said that being a part of Ford Dimension was the highlight of my senior year of high school, especially because of the people I met. I made amazing friends from all over town, and we spent a lot of time together outside of Ford! We went to Dewars, art nights downtown, judged each other's school Airband competitions, and celebrated many accomplished goals together.

When I came home from college, I had the opportunity to work with Ford Dream Builders as an assistant director. For four years I was able to help run the program that gave me so much and touched so many parts of our community. One of my roles as a counselor is helping students apply to colleges, and I also stop by Ford Dream Builders every summer to go over the UC application with them.

*“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”*

—Charles Dickens

**Calling all alumni!  
Scan to update  
your contact info.**



### Dr. Katherine (Thomas) Whittington

**CURRENT JOB:** Physician, Internal medicine Hospitalist and Physician Advisor for Bakersfield Memorial Hospital

and

### Joseph Whittington

**CURRENT JOB:** Attorney, Rodriguez and Associates

#### *Our Ford Dimension Memories:*

Joseph was in the class of 2004, and I was in the class of 2005. We met each other through Ford Dimension. The new 2005 Ford Dimension members received “rejection” letters, only to be surprised by the class of 2004 Ford Dimensioners at the Brookside Dewars to celebrate. Ford Dimension provided an incredible opportunity for us to meet and collaborate with local community members, make new friendships, and establish professionalism that carried us through college, graduate school, and our current careers.

**Katherine:** I am involved with Mother's Milk Bank; I am currently donating breastmilk that is given to NICU babies across California after we recently welcomed our daughter Claire Madeline in May. I also volunteer for multiple Dignity Health hospital committees.

**Joseph:** I am a Friends of Mercy Foundation board member, a non-profit organization that helps raise funds for Mercy Southwest and Mercy Downtown hospitals.



# What a Party!

## Congratulations Mr. & Mrs. Tom Champness!

Winner of this year's Ghost Party sweepstake prize of two airline tickets from **Uniglobe Golden Empire Travel**. Safe travels and have a wonderful adventure!

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 Mr. and Mrs. Marko Zaninovich Sr.

Boo! Your Ghost Party invitation is in the mail. Join us!

Many thanks to Ray Watson Jr. at  
**Uniglobe**  
 Golden Empire Travel  
 for making this trip possible.

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## How It Will Continue

The legacy of Jim Burke and his spirit of generosity continues to be the driving force of the Foundation. Contributions of time, resources, and talent from advisors, directors, and community supporters have enabled the Foundation to grow in its support of education through scholarships, grants and leadership programs such as Dream Builders.

*Please consider joining us in furthering the living legacy of Jim Burke through the Education Foundation!*

Scan QR Code to contribute online:



## Or contribute by check payable to:

**Jim Burke Education Foundation**  
 P.O. Box 316, Bakersfield, CA 93302

Name

Address

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Contribution

501(C)3 Non-Profit, 77-0387337 IRC

# Treasurer Report

Of the total assets, the Foundation has exceeded its goal of establishing a \$1 million endowment fund that will help provide additional funds for education. The balance at June 30, 2024 is \$1,585,341

## Where We Stand Financially

Thank you Kern County! Once again, you have generously donated to the Jim Burke Education Foundation. This has allowed us to fund our Dream Builders program and provide financial support to many outstanding Kern County students and educational programs. Last year we received approximately **\$106,000 in community contributions through Ghost Party donations and memorial gifts.**

In March 2024, the Foundation granted **\$72,000 in college scholarships.** This year, because of our donors' generosity, we maintained the scholarship amount at \$2,000 for every Ford Dimension—Dream Builder student leader and continued funding special recognition awards and renewal scholarships. The Foundation also provided financial grants totaling \$1,000 to four educational programs in Kern County and funded \$22,106 for the Dream Builders student leadership program.

## Summary of Foundation Financial Activities as of June 30, 2024

<b>Total Income</b> . . . . .	\$	133,310
<i>(Contributions, fundraisers and investment income)</i>		
<b>Expenses</b>		
Scholarships and Grants . . . . .	\$	73,000
Dream Builders . . . . .	\$	22,106
Fundraising . . . . .	\$	11,093
Community Outreach . . . . .	\$	11,998
<b>Total Expenses</b> . . . . .	\$	113,186
<b>Net Income</b> . . . . .	\$	15,123
<b>Total Assets at 6/30/2023</b> . . . . .	\$	1,585,341

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EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCEL  
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Celebrating  
**50 YEARS**  
of SERVICE OVER SELF



## Where Are They Now?

### Catching up with Ford Dream Builder alumnus **Ulysis Baal**

**U**lysis Baal was the focus of our 2020 newsletter cover story. We caught up with him, reminisced, and found out what he was doing now. **Relief Shoppers** was an incredible experience that I had the privilege of leading during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a non-profit initiative that delivered over \$30,000 in groceries to vulnerable individuals during the pandemic.

*“Those who think they can change the world are the ones who do.”*

In 2021, I started medical school at Wake Forest School of Medicine in North Carolina. I've been grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with underserved clinics, homeless shelters, health equity education programs, global health initiatives, and senior medication delivery programs. In 2022, I helped start **RxPurpose**, an initiative that salvages excess food from Wake Forest Baptist Hospital to distribute to community organizations. We currently provide meals for 50 people per week at our local Salvation Army, with hopes to expand the program to other hospitals in Winston-Salem, Charlotte, and beyond.

*Relief Shoppers and RxPurpose are, at their core, Dream Builders projects. They embody the idealism, creativity, and collaboration emphasized in the Ford Dimension Dream Builders program. Dream Builders taught me that even a single voice, when passionate and determined, can significantly impact society.*



**KEEP IN TOUCH!**  
Update Our Alumni List

 Follow Us! @ FordDreamBuilders