



***South Bay Workforce Investment Board***

**PRESS RELEASE**

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South Bay Workforce Investment Board  
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**“Fit for Gold” participant Receives 2016 Gates Millennium Scholarship**

*Hawthorne resident is a senior at Leuzinger High School*

**Hawthorne** – Leuzinger High School senior Kimberly Rodriguez was recently informed that she is the recipient of a 2016 Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS) to receive funding to attend any accredited college or university located in the United States.

Out of a pool of 53,000 candidates, Rodriguez was one of only 1,000 recipients. The award was granted to Rodriguez as a result of her “stellar academic achievement, adept leadership skills, and commitment to community service.

“I found out I received the Gates Scholarship on Monday April 18, 2016 by mail. I immediately called my mom, brothers and teachers, and friends to share the wonderful news. The world stopped for a minute as I stood in disbelief.” She added, “Joining the Fit for Gold program has helped me to take responsibility and has inspired me to help those in need of motivation and aspirations for a better future. I hope to be a role model for the children that I help mentor at Kornblum Elementary School.”

Fit for Gold Tutoring & Fitness Academy (Fit for Gold), was established in 2003 by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) as an after-school program. In the program, high school seniors are trained to provide homework assistance, nutrition information and physical fitness activities to students, grades 3-8, while participating in enrichment, mentoring, and college readiness activities. Operated by the SBWIB, is a community collaboration serving youth living in the service area cities of Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, Lawndale, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach and Carson. Fit for Gold is funded through various federal, state, county and foundation grants, including the AT&T High School Success Program.

Jan Vogel, SBWIB Executive Director, said “This is wonderful news for a bright, young student at an important stage of her academic life. The Fit for Gold program provides wonderful opportunities for students to become mentors and shining examples to younger students. This full-ride scholarship means that she will be able to focus on her studies without the financial burden.”

Rodriguez plans to attend the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), as an undergrad (an estimated cost of \$136,000) and eventually desires to transfer to another school (an Ivy League) as a grad student. Rodriguez intends to study Business and Psychology at UCLA. In addition, if Rodriguez chooses to pursue graduate studies in the fields of Computer Science, Education, Engineering, Library Science, Mathematics, Public Health or Science, she will be eligible for GMS fellowship funding for master’s and doctoral degrees.



**The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program**, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding low income African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline they choose. Continuing Gates Scholars may request funding for a graduate degree program in one of the following discipline areas: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science. The goal of GMS is to promote academic excellence by providing thousands of outstanding students, who have significant financial need, the opportunity to reach their full potential.



Kimberly Rodriguez, Hawthorne