



## **WNLR Distance Runner Scholarship Award Recipients Class of 2025**

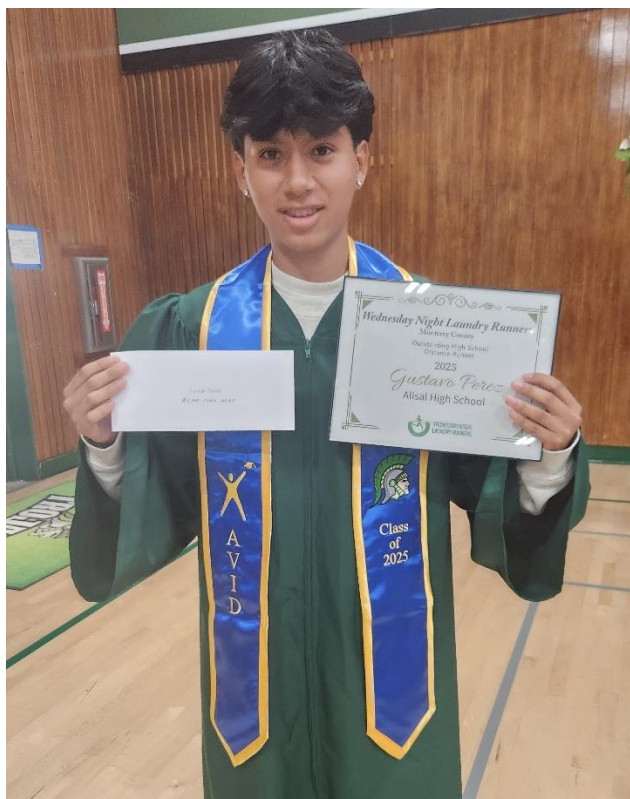
Thanks to the generous donations from our club members, from Granite Construction, and from Big Sur Marathon Foundation, WNLR provided \$10,000 in scholarship awards this spring to outstanding track and cross country student-athletes in Monterey County's High School Graduating Class of 2025. This brings the total scholarship money awarded to Monterey County High School Seniors since the inception of this program to a whopping \$192,375. To receive this award, eligible student-athletes must have some of the most competitive track and cross country times in Monterey County, must have a GPA of at least 3.0, must demonstrate good character and leadership qualities as described in a letter of recommendation by a coach and in an interview, must be actively involved in community service, and may demonstrate financial need. Eligible students are assessed on their personal-best times for the 3-mile cross country distance, and for the 3200m, 1600m, and 800m track distances. Demonstrated improvement and dedication to the sport is crucial, and candidates must also intend to continue their running careers at the collegiate level.

This year, eleven winners were chosen from a county-wide pool of eligible student-athletes. Many of these student-athletes you may soon find running local races.

| <b><u>High School</u></b> | <b><u>Recipient</u></b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alisal                    | Gustavo Perez           |
| Carmel                    | Ava Ghio                |
| Carmel                    | Mack Aldi               |
| Gonzales                  | Giovanni Ochoa          |
| King City                 | Alvaro Garcia           |
| King City                 | Joaquin Arriaga         |
| King City                 | Yahaira Torres          |
| Marina                    | Tarin Riner             |
| Marina                    | Juan Carlos Perez       |
| North Monterey County     | Deisy Gracida Gabriel   |
| Palma                     | Wells Lilly             |

## Alisal High School

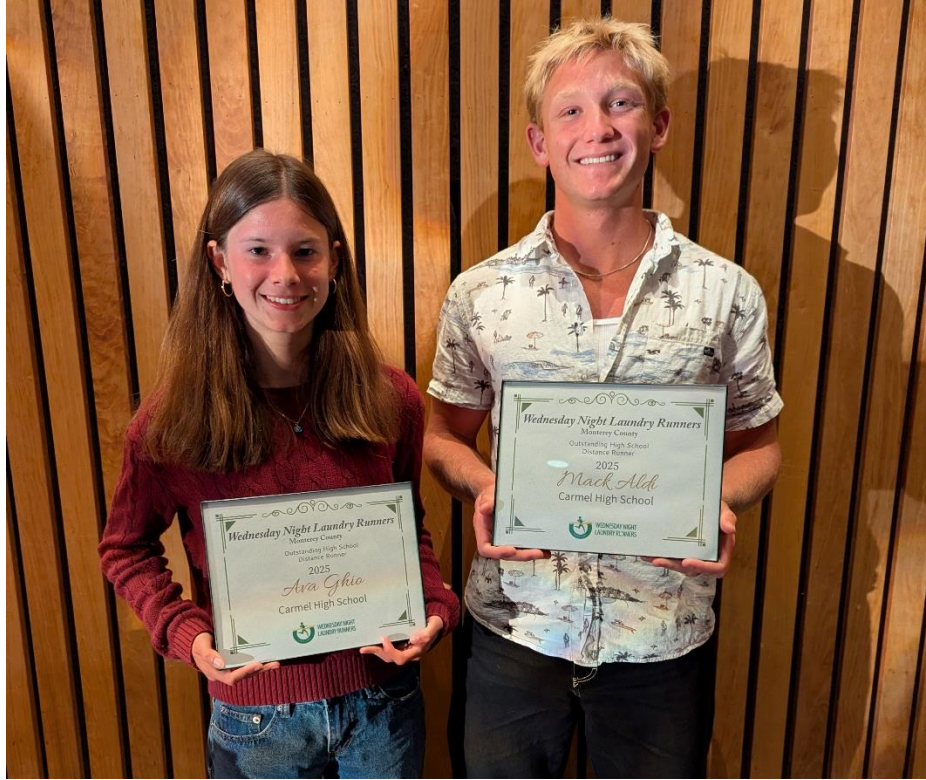
### Gustavo Perez



Gustavo Perez is the overall fastest runner of our Class of 2025. He was a key member in leading Alisal's track and field team to their first ever league championship threepeat and in leading Alisal's cross country team to back-to-back titles. His blisteringly-fast PRs—13:50 in cross country, 9:25 in the 3200m, and 4:23 in the 1600m—are among the best we've seen out of Monterey County student-athletes. When he's not competing at the league and state level, Gustavo guides new runners on his team; volunteers across domains such as community counseling, Ciclovía bicycle programs, and recycling programs; holds leadership roles in Alisal's Environmental Club and Athletics Program; and keeps-up with his academics. This fall you can find Gustavo at UC Davis majoring in Environmental Engineering!

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# Carmel High School



## Ava Ghio

Ava is captain of her track and cross country teams at Carmel High School. She helped take her team to three CIF Championships in Cross Country and she has been to CCS in Track and Field for each of her track seasons. With a personal best of 11:25 in the 3200m (her favorite event) and a personal best of 19:30 at the Toro Park course, Ava leads with excellence and dedication. When she's not training, Ava is dedicated to her academics. This valedictorian has taken 12 AP classes, is president of the Math and Science club and competes competitively in those subjects. Ava is looking forward to running with UC Berkeley's track and cross country clubs while she pursues her BS in Civil Engineering this fall.

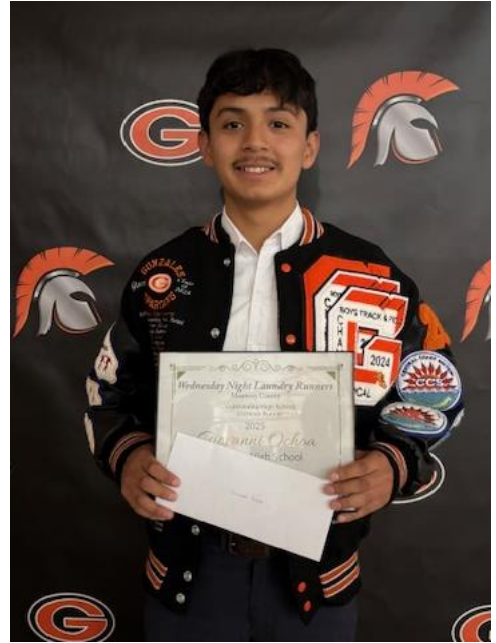
## Mack Aldi

Mack is a dedicated athlete who has competed at the highest levels in California. He is an inspiration to his teammates and other athletes at the CCS and state levels. Despite his focus being the 800m race, Mack has excelled in both cross country and longer track distances. His 1:53 personal record in the 800m and his 4:19 personal record in the 1600m are among the top this committee has seen across Monterey County. In addition to being an excellent student-athlete, Mack holds down after-school and weekend jobs and finds time to volunteer at summer camps and for the Big Sur Marathon. This fall, Mack aims to pursue a major in business at University of Colorado Boulder.

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## Gonzales High School Giovanni Ochoa

Giovanni's coach was quick to point out that this young man is the only Gonzales athlete to EVER qualify for state-level competition three times in their high school career. What an achievement! Giovanni has been a team captain all every that he has participated in track and cross country and he leads his teams with purpose and an uplifting attitude. His speedy personal best cross country time of 15:49 paired with his impressive long-distance track efforts illustrate his commitment to the sport of running. This fall you can find him either at Hartnell College or at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, running the roads and trails.



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## King City High School





## **Alvaro Garcia**

In his coach's words, Alvaro "leads by example". His positive mindset paired with his inclusive attitude help make practices feel like "family time". This team captain has a competitive 1600m PR (4:33) and speaks of running as an activity that he finds joy in and as a tool that helps keep him motivated. With an admirable GPA, Alvaro is looking to pursue a career either in nursing or teaching. In fact, he has already started taking classes at Hartnell to get ahead. We're looking forward to seeing where life bring Alvaro in the coming years!

## **Joaquin Arriaga**

Joaquin, has been running for King City High School since his freshmen year. During this time, his competitive times (personal bests of 10:01 in the 3200m and 4:34 in the 1600m) helped his team earn a league title and place competitively in the Central Coast Section. Although he is a long distance runner at heart, Joaquin's coach says that he will "run in any event I need him in." This team-focused attitude paired with robust volunteer activities and exceptional academics illustrates how well-rounded a student-athlete Joaquin is. This fall you can find him running with Coach Zepeda for Hartnell College in Salinas.

## **Yahaira Torres**

Yahaira's coach credits her with helping to establish the girls running program at King City High School. When running found Yahaira, he dedicated her time to being the best student-athlete—and role model—she could be. Her most competitive event is the 3mi cross country distance (PR of 19:42) and her favorite course is Toro Park... there's just something about those hills! When she's not championing King City running, she can be found volunteering at Sunstreet Center Youth. This fall, she will attend Hartnell College.

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# Marina High School



## Tarin Riner

Tarin Riner has dedicated his high school athletic journey to excelling in the sport of running. He is consistently one of Marina's top 3 runners in any distance he participates in. He earned his first spot at a PCAL Masters meet in his sophomore year and has only improved since then. A distance generalist—he excels similarly in the 800m, 1600m, 3200m, and on the cross country course—Tarin's well-rounded athleticism mirrors his well-rounded extracurricular persona. Tarin balances excellence in running with excellence in orchestra and a solid academic foundation. He will continue his academic journey at MPC or Hartnell in the fall.

## Juan Carlos Perez

Juan Carlos Perez is “one of the best team captains” Marina running has had. His A+ work ethic has brought him far. During his high school career, Juan Carlos Perez shaved a full minute off of his 800 time and dropped 2.5 minutes off of his 3200 time, leading to him placing in the Marina Top 10 All Time lists in all three track distance events. He also led Marina High School to their first ever CCS Championship in any sport! Juan Carlos has already started attending classes at MPC and plans to continue his academic journey at either MPC or Hartnell in the fall, where he will major in criminology so he can pursue a career in law enforcement.

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## North Monterey County High School Deisy Gracida Gabriel

Deisy was a key factor in helping North Monterey County High School win their first league title in 2022 after a nearly 10-year drought. She has received All-League honors in both cross country and track and is closing-out her senior year on a string of high achievements. Deisy's competitive 3200m PR of 12:32 and dedication to her sport of running makes her a fantastic candidate for our scholarship. When she's not helping her team win new titles, Deisy focuses on her volunteering efforts and on her academics so she can advance her career opportunities at Harntell this fall. Way to go, Deisy!



## Palma High School Wells Lilly



In his coach's words, "Wells doesn't just run; he represents the essence of overcoming challenges, setting an example that inspires those around him...with tenacity." With a 16:16 personal best cross country time and a 10:08 personal best 3200 time, Wells represents what hard work and dedication can achieve. When not competing at a runner or keeping up with his academics, Wells volunteers with the Big Sur Marathon Foundation and supports the athletic department at Palma. His perseverance in both school and sport has landed him a spot on the cross country and track teams at Westmount College Santa Barbara, where he will major in business this fall.



*The purpose of the WNLRL Scholarship Program is to recognize local excellence in athletic and academic achievement and to help our Monterey County student-athletes achieve broader success. We hope to continue using the WNLRL Scholarship Program to ease the financial burden of college for exceptional Monterey County student-athletes who may otherwise find college prohibitively expensive. Your donations are welcome and encouraged.*

*For more information about the Wednesday Night Laundry Runner Scholarship Program, please visit [www.wnlr.org/scholarships](http://www.wnlr.org/scholarships)*

*Special thanks go to Pat Brew, Lan Clayton, Emily Cole, Mike Dove, Rod MacKinlay, Adam Roach, and all the Monterey County teachers and coaches for facilitating the nomination, interview, and decision-making process.*



