

## 2006-2007 Scholarship Recipients

### **BRIAN FUSO-Lodi High School**

My name is Brian Fusco and I graduated from Lodi High School in June of 2006. My mother is a teacher for Lodi Unified School District and my father is a viticulturist in the Lodi area. Throughout high school, I maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.8 and graduated in the top 6% of my class with a class ranking of 35 out of 547.

Throughout high school, I was involved in many different activities such as band, the J.V. baseball, team and FFA. I was the Marching band, the Pep Band, the Wind Ensemble, and the Jazz Band. I was also the Assistant Drum Major, a member of the Band Council, and received the Donald Sutherland Outstanding Bandsman Award. We traveled to band competitions in Mexico, Los Angeles and Hawaii. I will be accompanying the band in 2007 as an alumnus to Carnegie Hall in New York. During my senior year in FFA, I traveled to Fresno and Cal Poly to compete in judging competitions with Lodi's FFA Team and through Lodi's EAST class, (Environmental and Spatial Technologies) three of us were instrumental in clearing and preparing the field behind the Agriculture Building on school grounds to be planted in vineyards.

Outside of high school, I have been a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church for the past 13 years. I am on the Youth Leadership Team, Co-Chairman of the Fellowship committee and a member of the church softball team. I was a member of Boy Scout troop 199 where I received my Eagle rank on October 11, 2005, the highest rank in scouting.

My work experience includes moving equipment, driving tractor, fixing equipment, helping with harvest hand crews and grape harvesters and anything else Fusco Farms needs. I will be attending Delta College for two years to receive my AA degree and then I plan on transferring to California State University, Fresno, where I will finish my schooling. I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Viticulture or Agriculture Business. After college I plan on coming home to work on the ranch as an employee of Fusco Farms and F.F.G. Mechanical Grape Harvesting. One day my goal is to take over both companies and continue in the success and growth of the companies.

### **GARY VALENTE-Tokay High School**

Thank you for selecting me as your 2006 scholarship winner. I am proud to receive the Jim Kissler Memorial Award.

I have been very involved in the Tokay High FFA program all four years that I was in high school. I was President of the chapter for two years. I was involved with many activities that have broadened my knowledge through the FFA. I was on the state winning vine judging team and the state winner in the vine pruning competition. I have also judged and pruned fruit trees, public speaking, livestock and agricultural mechanics exhibiting at the San Joaquin County Fair. This spring, I was also named the state winner in Viticulture Entrepreneurship at the FFA State Convention.

I take care of a one-acre old-vine Zinfandel vineyard. This was one of my projects for FFA. I pruned, sprayed, sulfured, disked and picked this vineyard. I gained knowledge and appreciation for growing a desirable wine crop.

I was also active in the Tokay Colony 4-H Club and the Livestock Youth Advisory Committee which I am also President of both organizations. I was on the Homecoming Court, Line Crew and involved in the "Every 15 Minutes" program this year at Tokay High.

I plan to further my knowledge by attending California State University, Fresno, in the fall. I am majoring in agricultural education, in hopes of being an agricultural teacher at the high school level.

Thank you, again, for awarding me this scholarship. I will put the money received to good use while at Fresno State.

### **ALEX VAZ-St. Mary's High School**

I would like to begin by thanking the Scholarship Committee for awarding me a Jim Kissler Memorial Scholarship for the 2006 fall term.

I am currently majoring in Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California with an emphasis in Urban Planning and Development. After finishing my undergraduate degree I intend to attend law school and eventually become a land use attorney and strive to find a balance between the inevitable new development of the future and Lodi's precious farmland, especially its vineyards.

My experiences have ranged from the excitement and fun of attending home football games at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum to the demands of mid-terms and finals. I have learned that at a place as alive and busy as Los Angeles there is never a dull moment. I believe that it is a

valuable experience to move away from home and live elsewhere for at least a short period of time, and I think that these years of my life are the best years to do so. It is only through a change of venue such as this that one can learn differing perspectives and really find out what is important to oneself. I could not imagine being anywhere else and am truly grateful for the opportunity to attend USC. I intend to return to Lodi and apply what I have learned to try to make an impact on local development practices.

While at school, my interests range from taking in USC football games to going to Hollywood to catch a movie. In a city like Los Angeles it is never hard to find something exciting to do. When home in Lodi I enjoy attending high school basketball and football games which remind me of my own times in high school. After a year of living on my own I have a new appreciation for my parents and all the hard work they do.

Thank you so much again for the generous scholarship.

### **Charles Anema-Lodi High School**

Growing up in the fertile San Joaquin Valley surrounded by vineyards had a great affect on me. I always loved watching the farmers during grape harvest season. In Lodi, grape harvest season is always a big event. I always knew I would pursue a career in agriculture. In high school, I was always very strong in the study of sciences. It was not until I took AP Chemistry in my junior year that I discovered I could combine my love of agriculture with my love of chemistry and major in enology and viticulture.

Recently, I graduated from Lodi High School and have been admitted to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in the viticulture and enology program. What I liked about this program is their motto, learning by doing. There are many internships with wineries available and opportunities to study abroad. As a freshman in this program, I will be exposed to the many aspects of this field. I will then be able to determine what part of this field interests me the most.

This summer I plan to work for a winery in order to gain first-hand experience. I appreciate being selected as a scholarship recipient. I look forward to starting my career path at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

### **BRIE WITT-Lodi High School**

I have been involved in my family's feedlot since a very young age and it is my belief that being raised in an agricultural lifestyle has helped me gain a love, appreciation, and passion for agriculture and its industry.

Throughout high school I was very involved in the FFA. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of my FFA involvement because most activities were agriculture related and career development events. I was involved in every aspect of our high school FFA Chapter and took great pride in it. I served as a three year chapter officer, a judging team members, and was involved in several other activities. FFA helped discover and develop many of my natural talents. I knew that whether it was raising my market steers or serving as chapter President that the leadership and personal skills I gained had and would continue to help me to become a confident leader in all aspects of my life.

In the fall of 2006, I will be attending California State University, Fresno. My planned major is agriculture business with a focus on economics. Upon graduation from Fresno, I plan to pursue a career in agriculture appraisal. I look forward to turning a new page in my life with enthusiasm. I desire to continue to strive for success and hope that I can continue my success through college and life. Someday through my education and past experiences I aspire to embark on a career in the agriculture industry in which I can continue to experience the joys of an agricultural lifestyle.