



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT LAUNDRY RUNNERS

### **WNLR Outstanding Distance Runner Scholarship Award Recipients for 2019**

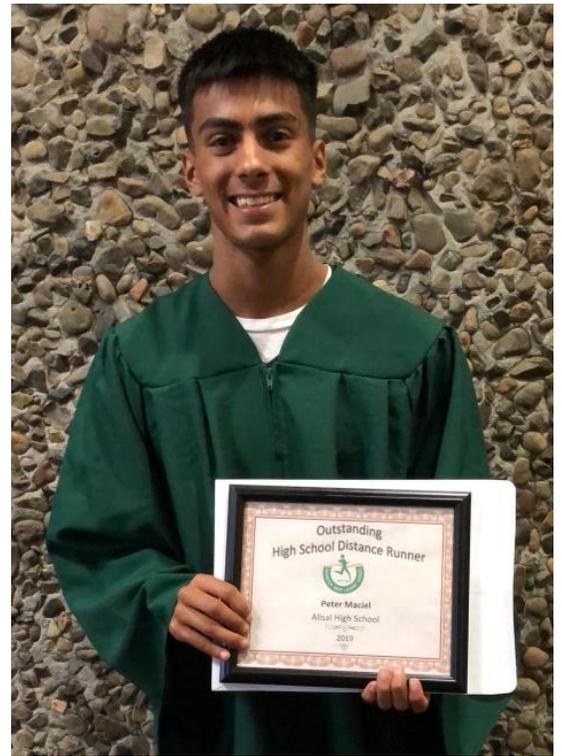
Thanks to the generous donations from our members, from the Big Sur Marathon Foundation, and from Lululemon, WNLR gave away \$11,000 in scholarship awards this spring to outstanding track and cross country student-athletes in Monterey County's High School Graduating Class of 2019. To receive this award, 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, 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. As such, eligible student-athletes must also intend to continue their running careers at the collegiate level.

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

<b><u>High School</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>
Alisal	Pedro Maciel
Carmel	Colleen Lang
Marina	Christopher Plascencia
Monterey	Isaac Gensel
North Monterey County	Faith Mora
North Salinas	Valeria Lozano Gomez
North Salinas	Elizabeth Padilla
Pacific Grove	Jake Alt
Palma	Tommy Padilla
Soledad	Jesus Rodriguez

## Alisal High School – Pedro Maciel

Preferring the distance of cross country events to the intense speed of track events, Pedro Maciel is one of the most outstanding distance runners to come out of Alisal High School. With a zippy 9:37 3200m personal best and only about 10 seconds separating him from our other top recipients in each distance, Pedro has shown his strength as an exceptional Monterey County athlete. In addition to his athletic accomplishments, he is active in many community-outreach programs, including Gil Basketball Academy, Ciclovía, and Head Start, making him a well-rounded candidate. Pedro will be studying kinesiology in the fall.



## Carmel High School – Colleen Lang



As Carmel High School's #1 runner for both her junior and senior years, Colleen Lang posted an impressive set of cross country and track times, including a personal best 19:29 in the 3-miler at the end of her senior season. In addition to an exemplary athlete, Colleen is also a proven leader: she has been captain of the Carmel track team since her freshman year and captain of the cross country team since her sophomore year, acquiring the nickname "team mom" along the way as a nod to her natural tendency to check on her teammates' readiness to travel and compete. Colleen has completed over 150 hours of community service throughout her high school career and will attend Azuza Pacific in the fall where she will study nursing and continue her running at the collegiate level.

## Marina High School – Christopher Plascencia



For every running distance we measure, Christopher Plascencia is the fastest runner in Monterey County's Class of 2019. His achievements both on and off the field (or track or trail) have helped put Marina's cross country team in the league spotlight. Not only was Christopher the cross country and track team captain for his sophomore, junior, and senior years – leading his team to an undefeated 2017 season in his first year of leadership – but he also now holds every relevant Marina High School athletic record. While not competing in athletics, he has shown exemplary dedication to his academics and aspires to become a veterinarian or physical therapist. Christopher plans to attend CSUMB in the fall and will be the third Marina High School graduate to continue their sport in college.

## Monterey High School – Isaac Gensel

Isaac is the kind of passionate runner we love to see. He has leveraged his off-season time to continue his training and better himself as an athlete and as a team leader, landing the title of MVP for the past three years. Isaac is most proud of his achievements at the MBL Championships and as a top CCS qualifier. In addition to his athletic achievements, Isaac is an Eagle Scout and has also amassed hundreds of community service hours with both the Key Club and Huddle Club at Monterey High School. His goal is to teach at the elementary level, and will attend Hartnell to further advance his running career before transferring to a four-year school to finish his education degree.



## North Monterey County High School – Faith Mora



With her 19:14 3-mile time – the fastest in our 2019 pool of female recipients – and with a passion for running that defines her personality, Faith Mora has set herself apart from her peers. In her tenure as team captain, she has worked hard to earn the respect of all members of her team, showing that she fully understands the concept of “Team as Family.” When not focused on academics or running, Faith volunteers with the Interact Club, with a local homeless shelter, and with the Peer Assisted Learning program. Faith will attend Hartnell in the fall, where she will run competitively and pursue a career in nursing.

## North Salinas High School – Valeria Lozano Gomez

With an impressive 5:13 1600m and a speedy 11:18 3200m, Valeria Lozano Gomez holds two of the fastest times in our pool of female recipients. According her coach, Valeria demonstrates leadership and insight beyond her years, playing a “key role as a leader and motivator for her teammates, particularly underclassmen ... providing brutal honesty and forcing us to coach outside of the box of our normal comfort zone.” While not at school or at practice, Valeria spends time volunteering for Dorothy’s Kitchen, at the Spreckels Fourth of July events, and at various Salinas municipal events. Valeria will attend Hartnell in the fall where she will pursue a degree in Radiology Technology and continue her pursuits as a competitive runner.



## North Salinas High School – Elizabeth Padilla



Elizabeth Padilla is one of the top female runners in Monterey County’s class of 2019. Her 800m time (2:18) is the fastest in our pool of female recipients, and her 1600m, 3200m, and 3-mile times (5:19, 11:24, and 19:18) are all close seconds. In her coach’s words, “Elizabeth is one of those runners who validate a career spent coaching.” In addition to her athletic endeavors, Elizabeth excels academically and participates in Student Athletic Council, Pi Nation, French Club, First Tee Monterey, Yearbook, and Ciclovía. She also completed over 400 hours of community service during her high school career. Elizabeth will pursue a degree in business at UC Irvine in the fall, where she will continue to run competitively.

## Pacific Grove High School – Jake Alt

With a personal best of 4:23, Jake has the second-fastest 1600m in our pool of boy’s recipients. As if that weren’t enough, he is tied with Palma’s scholarship recipient for the second-fastest 800m time (1:59) in our scholarship class of 2019. Despite his speedy track times, Jake’s real running passion is on the trails. If not studying or running (either on the track or in the woods), Jake can be found guiding his Boy Scout troop on backcountry camping trips or capturing nature’s beauty on film for one of his many photography projects. Jake has cleverly parlayed these passions into his plan to major in forestry at Oregon State University in the fall, where he will continue his running career at the club level.



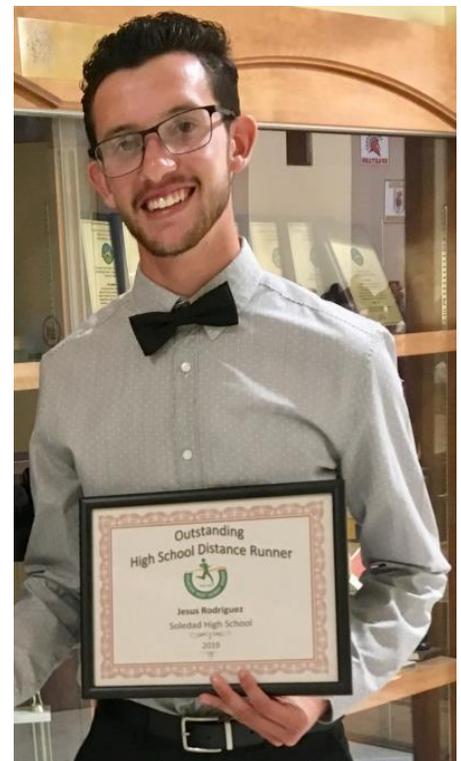
## Palma High School – Tommy Padilla



Mere seconds behind Marina's Christopher Plascencia in both the 800m (1:59) and the 3-mile (15:58), Tommy Padilla is one of the top runners in Salinas's graduating class of 2019. In fact, Tommy Padilla is Palma's first ever freshman to qualify for the California State meet in cross country, and he holds Palma's fastest-ever 5k record for freshmen (16:00). Impressive! When not studying or training, Tommy volunteers at a hospital and at Dorothy's Kitchen, tutors his peers, and assists with coaching youth basketball. Tommy will be attending West Point in the fall, where he plans to continue running competitively.

## Soledad High School – Jesus Rodriguez

Jesus Rodriguez is another example of an exemplary student-athlete who embodies the spirit of the WNLR Scholarship. As a freshman, Jesus earned an individual bid to the state cross country championships, and has continued to be the leader for his small team. Jesus has continued to excel, and has set school records in many – if not all – of the individual and relay distances in track and cross country, while also playing soccer in the off-season. If that isn't enough, Jesus is a straight-A student and is an active member of the Interact, MESA, Yearbook, and SP clubs. Jesus plans to attend CSU Sacramento in the fall, where he will continue his running and will major in math and liberal studies in pursuit of his dream of becoming a teacher.





*The purpose of the WNLRL Scholarship fund 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 Fund 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 Emily Cole, Mike Dove, Erin Golec, Rod MacKinlay, Patie McCracken, Cath Tandler, Susan Walkup, and all of the Monterey County teachers and coaches for facilitating the nomination, interview, and decision-making process. Additional thanks goes to those committee members who attended high school award ceremonies to present the student-athletes their awards.*