



Media Contact

Jill Faucher

(619) 318-0318; [jfaucher@wheelhousecu.com](mailto:jfaucher@wheelhousecu.com)

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Wheelhouse Credit Union Honors San Diego County First Responders with 2025 *Badge of Honor* Scholarships

#### **\*\* Scholarship Program Supports Children of San Diego County First Responders \*\***

San Diego, CA – August 21, 2025 –Wheelhouse Credit Union (Wheelhouse) has awarded six \$1,000 “*Badge of Honor*” Scholarships to college-bound students to honor the heroic efforts of San Diego County’s first responders and their families.

In the sixth year of the *Badge of Honor* program, scholarships were awarded to rising college freshmen with a parent/grandparent/legal guardian who is an active member of law enforcement, fire protection service, healthcare or EMT in San Diego County.

“We are deeply grateful to San Diego’s first responders, and we’re honored to recognize the next generation of their families through our *Badge of Honor* Scholarships,” said Wheelhouse President/CEO Lisa Paul-Hill. “Each of these students has demonstrated both academic achievement and a strong sense of purpose and character shaped by the example of their first responder family members. Their stories reflect the deep commitment and personal sacrifice first responders make every day to keep our communities safe. We’re proud to stand behind these remarkable students as they begin this exciting next chapter, and we thank their families for their service and dedication.”

The Wheelhouse 2025 *Badge of Honor* Scholarship recipients are:

Recipient	School	City	College Attending	Family First Responder
Gabriela Alfaro	Mater Dei Catholic High School	Chula Vista	University of Alabama	Homeland Security Investigations, Special Agent
Ashlyn Castro	Granite Hills High School	El Cajon	Arizona State University	San Diego Police Department, Detective
Charlotte Crudale	Poway High School	Poway	Nazareth University	Department of Homeland Security, Asst. Chief Patrol Agent
Keala Custodio	Mission Hills High School	San Marcos	San Diego State University	Registered Nurse
Siena Ferreyra-MacPete	Academy of Our Lady of Peace	San Diego	Brown University	UCSD, Ophthalmologist-Vitreoretinal Surgeon
Charlotte Lourey	Valhalla High School	El Cajon	University of California, Los Angeles	SHARP Healthcare & SD Unified School District, Registered Nurse



***(L-R) San Diego Police Department Chief and former Wheelhouse Supervisory Committee Member Scott Wahl, Wheelhouse Badge of Honor Recipients Charlotte Crudale and Gabriela Alfaro, and Wheelhouse President/CEO Lisa Paul-Hill during a Badge of Honor Scholarship presentation at Wheelhouse Credit Union.***

Beyond having a parent, grandparent or legal guardian as a first responder, all recipients recently graduated from San Diego County high schools with plans to attend an accredited college. Award criteria included academic achievement, letters of recommendation, an essay about the first responder in their family, and a desire to make an impact on their schools and communities.

The *Badge of Honor* scholarships are in addition to the Credit Union's annual Sustainability College Scholarship Program, which was created in 2005 to support high school seniors in San Diego County. Since the creation of these programs, Wheelhouse has awarded \$137,000 in scholarships to local students.

***About Wheelhouse Credit Union***

*Wheelhouse Credit Union (formerly San Diego Metropolitan Credit Union) is a federally insured, state chartered credit union founded in 1934 serving more than 32,000 community members in the greater San Diego area and beyond. The full-service financial institution is dedicated to excellence in personalized banking services which extends to solar and energy-efficient loans, the best checking account features in the industry, and expert guidance and support. The Credit Union is committed to creating a community where financial and environmental well-being go hand in hand. Please visit [wheelhousecu.com](http://wheelhousecu.com) for more information, or follow Wheelhouse on Instagram®, Facebook® and X®.*

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