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## Student Spotlight January 2015

### Patrick Vega

Phoenix, AZ



After losing his father when he was only 12 years old, Patrick Vega vowed to help his mom in any way that he could. He realized that succeeding in school and being a productive member of his family and the community were the best things he could offer. Thanks to a scholarship from the AAA Scholarship Foundation, Patrick has been able to fulfill that promise and has risen as a star at his school – excelling in academics, sports and other extracurricular activities.

The untimely passing of Patrick's father left an empty space in the Vega family and put a financial strain on Patrick's mother, Gracie. She was determined to keep Patrick on track with his academics during this tough time, but worried that she would not be able to afford the tuition for him to attend Bourgade Catholic High School, where his older brother attended and where the members of the church and school had served as a close-knit community for the Vega family after the loss of her husband. However, after consulting with the financial aid department at Bourgade, she learned about the AAA Scholarship Foundation and applied. Receiving the news that Patrick was approved for a scholarship provided Gracie with a huge sense of relief and reassurance that her family was going to be okay.

Recognizing what a gift it was to receive the scholarship, Patrick was motivated to take full advantage of the opportunities available to him at his parent-selected school. Now in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Bourgade, Patrick is excelling academically with a 3.4 grade point average and consistently bringing home A's and B's in all his subjects. He has developed a love for math and science and even plans to study forensics when he goes to college in the fall. He has not yet decided what college he will attend, but he has options to choose from after already receiving acceptance letters from two schools, with more pending.

In addition to his exceptional schoolwork, Patrick is involved in several extracurricular activities at Bourgade – including the basketball and swim teams, as well as the theater program, in which he just landed the lead role in a play. His school has also inspired him to give back to the community and help those in need. The theology class he is enrolled in at school requires him to complete at least 20 hours of community service – but Patrick has far surpassed that and completed more than 190 volunteer hours just last year! He volunteers with his church in

activities like leading the vacation bible school for younger children; working with Andre House to feed the homeless; and participating in the school mission trip to build houses for those in need.

Bourgade Catholic – which only has about 400 students total – has served as an extended family for the Vega family over the years, with the teachers and staff providing guidance, support and, most of all, a solid educational foundation for Patrick. Looking at the gifted young man her son has become, Gracie realizes that the opportunities and experiences that Patrick has had would not have been possible without the scholarship program. Although she still makes sacrifices to send her son to Bourgade – including the 20-mile trip back and forth to the school each day – she has no doubt that it is all worth it.

“As a parent, you want to do anything possible to ensure your children are successful,” says Gracie Vega. “The AAA Scholarship Foundation helped to ease the financial burden I faced and made it possible for me to send my son to a school where he has been able to reach his full potential and develop into a young man that cares about his community and has goals for the future. I am forever grateful to those that make this program possible.”

### **About AAA Scholarship Foundation**

The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. The average household income of families accepted to receive scholarships is \$23,559 for a family of four. Many children are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their child to reverse inadequate learning and/or social patterns and the potential lifelong negative impact. They wish to change their child's learning environment, acquaintances, and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.

AAA Scholarships are funded in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Pennsylvania by corporations that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a tax credit (dollar for dollar in Alabama, Arizona, Florida and Georgia and up to 90 percent in Pennsylvania). The AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only approved Scholarship 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations exclusively serving qualifying low-income, disabled and/or displaced students through these Scholarship Tax Credit programs. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single-solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit [www.AAAScholarships.org](http://www.AAAScholarships.org), or contact Kerri Vaughan at [kerri@aaascholarships.org](mailto:kerri@aaascholarships.org) or (786) 367-0823.



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