

KeizerCommunity

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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Fidel Garcia Morales, Carlos Cruz, Emely Medina and Lidia Valdez received

Four Celts land full ride Act Six scholarships

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The Act Six Scholarship selects approximately 25 of the most promising urban leaders in the Salem-Portland area for full-tuition, full-need scholarships to three local Christian colleges. Four of this year's recipients are from McNary High School.

McNary seniors Carlos Cruz, Emely Medina, Lidia Valdez and Fidel Garcia Morales received full-ride scholarships to attend college this fall.

"They come from amazing families, but some difficult backgrounds, so to see these kids have this opportunity, I can't even describe how exciting it is to know that they don't have to worry about school cost. They can really pour their full potential into their future and make a difference in their local community," said Rochelle Farris, a guidance counselor at Mc-

Nary.

The goal of the Act Six program is to equip emerging urban and community leaders to engage the college campus and their communities at home through a simple but powerful four-part strategy:

- Recruit and Select
- Train and Prepare
- Send and Fund
- Support and Inspire

For Morales, being a leader starts at his house.

Morales was raised by a single mother and is the oldest of four siblings. After he's done with school, he picks up all of his younger siblings from their schools and then, often times, will make dinner for them and take care of them before they go to bed.

"I'm the oldest so I have to set the example," Morales said.

During the selection process — which involves an application review, an interactive session and a campus visit — Morales felt he was able to

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stand out as a strong candidate.

"What made me different was that I had what it took to be a leader. I truly care for others and I think that's what made me stand out," Morales said.

Morales will be attending Warner Pacific University and plans to study nursing.

"This scholarship means a lot to me. It's another opportunity to further my education

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Keizer man's Air Force career lets him serve in unique ways

By LAUREN MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

When Brennen Hankins graduated from McNary he wasn't sure what to do.

"I didn't really have a game plan I was just kind of trying to make my own way," Hankins said.

He spent a year bouncing between odd jobs in Oregon and Alaska, where his dad worked as a commercial fisherman, before deciding to pursue the U.S. Marshals Service.

For him, the military was a means to an end.

"I spoke to a U.S. Marshals recruiter in Portland and he said that the easiest way to get into the Marshal Service was to be a veteran," Hankins said, which is when he decided to enlist.

The minimum requirements to join the Marshals service are being at least 21 years of age and having four continuous years of a supervised job — both of which could be satisfied with a tour in the military.

Hankins went to the Salem Air Force recruitment office and signed up for seven years.

"I did my tour in the military and I kind of liked it," he said.

When his contract expired, Hankins re-enlisted for another four years.

"I've hit the minimum rank to retire, now I just got to put in the years," Hankins said.

He is an Air Force staff sergeant and, if he continued to work at this rank without advancing, he would be retired in 20 years.

"I'm still trying to get promoted because, you know, better job, better pay, but if I don't

promote I'll still be able to make it to retirement," he said. Hankins is working in the civil engineering squadron based in Montana.

Hankins likes the regularity of his job, and the opportunities it gives him to travel.

"I've been in six different countries, I've driven through every state west of the Mississippi with the exception of North Dakota," he said.

One thing Hankins wishes civilians knew about veterans is that they can't all be painted with one brush.

"Not everyone in the military has seen combat, for example. I'm one of those people," Hankins said.

There is a wide variety of jobs and duties within the military that require different sets of skills, just like in the civilian workplace. Hankins said that military jobs range from clerical work to piloting to combat and everything in between.

Hankins warned against asking veterans if they had been in combat or if they'd ever shot someone.

"It's a horrible question to



Staff Sgt. Brennan Hankins.

ask," he said.

He said there are three types of answer to questions like those: someone who says no and then feels their role serving their country has been minimized, someone who says yes and has to deal with the unpleasant memories that are dredged up when thinking about their time in combat or, alternatively, someone ends up sounding like a braggart, which isn't good for the perception of the person or military service as a whole.

"None of those is a good thing," Hankins said.

Hankins got engaged to his fiancée, Emma a couple weeks prior to talking to the Keizertimes and is contracted to serve another three years.



A Keizertimes series focusing on the lives of veterans and active duty military personnel.

2020 Census roll out begins

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Taking part in the United States Census has an impact on almost every aspect of daily life from city to federal levels and, for the first time, completing it can be done online in about 10 minutes.

The 2020 Census officially kicked off this month and residents can either wait for a notice with an authorization code to come through the mail or simply visit 2020census.gov and fill out the survey

ahead of schedule.

The questionnaire asks for the names, gender, age (including date of birth) and race/ethnicity of each person living at the residence, whether residents own or rent and for a phone number in case there is a need to follow up. There is no question about citizenship status.

Only one person per household should fill out the Census form. U.S. law prohibits the Census Bureau from

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