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Breakthrough Central Texas Celebrates Largest Ever Graduating Class

92 students in program from AISD and Manor ISD become first in families to enroll in college

AUSTIN, Texas (May 3, 2018) — Breakthrough Central Texas, a nonprofit helping students become the first in their families to graduate from college, is celebrating its largest ever graduating class of 92 high school seniors from AISD and Manor ISD who will become the first in their families to enroll in college.

This year's class of college-bound students is twice as large as last year's and includes the first Manor ISD student participants to graduate since Breakthrough expanded its program into the Manor school district in 2011.

Founded in 2001, Breakthrough Central Texas makes a 12-year commitment to students beginning in middle school, providing a comprehensive program that integrates academics, enrichment activities, character education, and dedicated advisor-advocates to help students overcome obstacles—academic, financial, or personal—and stay on track through their entire educational career.

“We’re extremely proud of all of our graduating seniors who have worked so hard and overcome many obstacles to finish high school and enroll in college,” said Breakthrough Central Texas Executive Director Michael Griffith. “Earning a college degree is key to economic opportunity and economic security in today’s economy. We look forward to celebrating these students and their families and hope that these celebrations continue to grow each year.”

Breakthrough believes that education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and bridge the growing economic divide in our community. Currently only eight percent of low-income middle school students in Central Texas go on to graduate from college while nearly two-thirds of new jobs created in the Austin area require a college degree.

Breakthrough currently serves more than 1,600 students in the Austin, Manor and Del Valle Independent school districts providing tutoring, counseling and summer educational programs to every student enrolled from grades 6-12.

And unlike similar programs in Central Texas, Breakthrough continues to support students through college, resulting in a college graduation rate within six years that is nearly seven times higher than the general graduation rate for low-income students and more than twice as high as the graduation rate for all Central Texas students regardless of income.

More than 100 Breakthrough students have now gone on to graduate from college as of this May, including Barbara Falcon, who will earn a degree in Political Science from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio where she was elected Student Government Association President and Homecoming Queen. Falcon recently accepted a full-time position at Google in Mountain View, Calif.

“Breakthrough changed my life in the best way possible,” Falcon said. “It not only did what it promised to do, get me to college, but it also delivered so much more. They helped me gain confidence, find my calling, and breakthrough the path and expectations that had been set for me as a first generation student. Breakthrough is much more than a 10-year program. It’s a support system and a family. It’s a force that can’t be described.”

Breakthrough Central Texas will honor this year’s graduating class of AISD students with a ceremony at St. Edward’s University on May 5 and a ceremony for Manor ISD graduates at Huston-Tillotson University on May 12.

About Breakthrough Central Texas

Breakthrough Central Texas builds a path to and through college for students in low-income communities who will be the first in their families to earn a degree. Breakthrough provides extended learning, comprehensive advising and leadership experiences starting in 6th grade through college graduation to make students nearly seven times more likely to graduate from college than similar peers in Central Texas. Breakthrough currently serves more than 1,600 students, and plans to serve more than 2,000 students by 2020. Learn more at <http://www.breakthroughctx.org>.

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