



News Release

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Atascadero Resident, Cuesta College Graduate Earns Scholarship

A Cuesta College fashion merchandising and fashion design graduate bound for Westmont College received a \$1,000 Southern California Gas Co. scholarship earlier this month.

The Gas Company's Timothy Mahoney presented the scholarship award June 11 to Atascadero resident Monique Smaby. He said Smaby earned the "Energizing Our Future" scholarship because of her community involvement, field of study and her grade point average.

"I think her grades reflect an attitude of excellence," Mahoney said. "The search for excellence is where somebody is willing to go out and go that extra mile and work hard and participate in school — inside and outside the classroom."

Smaby, who was home schooled by her parents, Mary and Scott Smaby, began her studies at Cuesta in the fall of 2005 while still in high school. She graduated with a double major in May.

During her time at Cuesta, Smaby earned several state awards. In May of 2008 she was honored at the annual, statewide Fashion Symposium in Los Angeles for her short evening dress design that was selected for an exclusive symposium fashion show. At the 2006 fashion symposium she took home "Best in Show" in the display category for her creative and colorful Hankie Handbag. A month after that, she received a gold medal in culinary arts competition at the state finals of the SkillsUSA competition.

"I initially choose Cuesta because it was close to home," she said. "It was really cost-effective. I was able to start while in high school and when you start in high school it double-counts as high school and college."

She said her courses were challenging, instructors inspiring and class projects applicable to what she hopes will be a career in business.

"Cuesta makes stuff really relevant, like the real world — the working world," she said. "It prepares you to step out."

Smaby's business instructor Gary Rubin called her special and that she'd "no doubt be a major player in the (fashion) industry some day."

"She is one of those few people who has right- and left-brain capabilities superior to most," Rubin said. "Her passion is fashion design. Her creative talents lend themselves not only to clothing, but also to the culinary arts. Her interpersonal skills lend themselves well to collaborative assignments, and she is very well organized."

In August, Smaby will begin at Westmont, a nationally ranked Christian liberal arts college with nearly 1,350 students. Her career aspirations are to own her own business.

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