Cabrillo Advancement Program welcomes new students

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OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

APTOS — Cheers and applause rocked Cabrillo College’s Crocker Theater on Tuesday night at the 23rd annual Cabrillo Advancement Program (CAP) awards ceremony, a new batch of sixth-grade students from schools across the county were inducted into the scholarship and support program designed to increase the academic success of high-risk, low-income students and support their journey to college.

One by one, sixth-grade students representing six middle schools, filed across the stage, receiving a medal and certificate from Cabrillo College administrators and supporters, including donors such as Barbara Sampsom, who has given more than $2 million to the college and is Cabrillo’s largest individual donor.

The ceremony also recognized graduating seniors who have participated in the program since they were in middle school and CAP alumnus Alejandro Beristain-Barajas, who entered the program in 2001 and graduated from Harvard University with a bachelor’s degree in neurobiology in 2010.

Beristain-Barajas is a teacher at Ceiba Preparatory School in Watsonville. During her keynote address, she told the incoming sixth-grade class to “use the tools at your disposal and make sure you have a support network,” which for her growing up through the public school system, was CAP.

It’s important to use all your resources — go to the summer institute, make sure your parents get connected — go to the pool parties and do all your work, especially your math,” said the math teacher.

Sponsored by Cabrillo College and the Cabrillo College Foundation, the CAP program awards college scholarships to sixth-graders from Santa Cruz County schools. Students who complete CAP receive $2,000 in scholarships upon high school graduation for their first and second years at Cabrillo.

In collaboration with the schools, CAP also provides supplemental counseling, after-school tutoring, Saturday academies, guest speakers, a summer institute, family outreach and support for academic development to all CAP recipients.

In 1991, 12 sixth-graders at EA Hall Middle School were chosen to receive the first CAP scholarships. CAP has since expanded to Lakeview Middle School, Mission Hill Junior High School, Pajaro Middle School, Rolling Hills Middle School and Shoreline Middle School.

Including Tuesday evening’s presentations, CAP has awarded 978 scholarships to sixth-grade students in the county.