



MEDIA RELEASE

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Two Students Selected for 2019-2020 FOCUS Scholarship Award Applications Being Accepted for Next Year's Award

Lakeland, FL – The Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) has selected two recipients for its 2019-2020 Fire-Service Opportunity and Career for Under-served Students (FOCUS) Scholarship. The scholarship program has been offered by LFD since 2014 and is intended to provide the opportunity at a successful career in the fire service to deserving students who may have not had the opportunity otherwise, due to financial hardship.

The two selected candidates are Jessica Olaez and David Vasquez, both residents of Polk County (photos attached).

The fire service has provided many firefighters with a successful career and enriching experiences. It is the department's hope that through this program the same can be afforded to even more potential firefighters. Applications are currently being accepted through May of 2020, for the upcoming 2020-2021 award.

The sponsorship on behalf of the Lakeland Fire Department Provides:

- Paid tuition to Ridge Career Center's Fire Standard Program
- Paid books and materials necessary for required course work
- Paid uniforms required for fire standards program
- Direct mentorships by active duty LFD firefighters and administration
- Paid exam fees for all exams

The entire package is valued at over \$3,500 of financial support, in addition to the priceless mentorship from active-duty members of the Lakeland Fire Department. The scholarship program was born from the department's desire to help those in need in its community, while at the same time addressing the need to develop a workforce that is more representative of its community.

Any interested person, aged 18 and up, that meets the financial, physical, and admission requirements for the Ridge Career Center's Fire Academy is strongly encouraged to apply. Detailed information about the FOCUS Scholarship, requirements, how to apply, and a testimonial video from a successful graduate and current employee is available at www.lakelandgov.net/LFD > Community Programs.

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