

# Scholarship a feather in hat for Copper Canyon student

by **Megan Gordon** - Nov. 29, 2008 07:00 AM  
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Wearing a big red sweat shirt and carrying a school and gym bag, Margarito Najera's quiet mannerisms help him blend into the crowd at Copper Canyon High School.

But Najera, 17, of Phoenix, does anything but blend in when it comes to academics and sports.

Najera was recently awarded a full scholarship to Nouveau University, a Scottsdale-based online business school. The Five Star Scholarship was awarded by the Frank Edward Piccolo Foundation and is worth up to \$60,000.

The foundation looked for "at-risk" Valley students who showed integrity, leadership, commitment, community service and excellence, said Sonya Lee, the foundation's director of new program development.

Najera's grade-point average at the Glendale school is above a 4.0, and he is ranked second in the senior class, said Alicia Moreno, Copper Canyon's lead counselor. He leads by example on and off the basketball court by excelling in the classroom and holding a starting position on the team, she said.

Najera's life has not always been easy.

Born in Mexico, Najera's father immigrated to the United States at 13, after dropping out of school. Although times were rough on Najera and his two sisters growing up, he said his parents always supported him in school.

"I didn't want to just waste the opportunity of living here. I wanted to do good in school for my parents," he said. "My parents always told me that education is what gets you further in life."

Najera said his parents have worked hard to provide for his family, but with little education, Najera said, they still find it hard at times.

"I want to make sure (my parents) can retire and not worry anymore," he said as a reason he strives for excellence in school.

After graduation, Najera has his sights set on the University of Arizona.

Najera plans to use his foundation scholarship to attend Nouveau University for a degree in business, or for extra classes while attending UofA or Arizona State University.

"The outlook for him seems really bright. Whatever this young man sets his mind to do I think he's going to be able to do it," said the Rev. Eve Nunez, who works with Najera in a mentor program.

Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/community/swvalley/articles/2008/11/28/20081128swv-profile1128.html>