

# MEET THE SPRING 2021 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



## ALIZA ARIF



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
SAN LUIS OBISPO  
MAJOR: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

I am originally from a small city called Tracy, California. I have lived in Tracy since I was 4 years old and call this place home. Everyone around is nice and caring, and all the food and shopping places are nearby. I graduated from West High School, and after graduating I went to Las Positas Community College for my first two years of college. At first, I wanted to become a civil engineer, but after taking classes at Las Positas I discovered I did not want to sit behind a desk all day. I prefer to work outdoors and get my hands dirty while working with a team.

When I found out about construction management, I fell in love with this major. Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo was my dream school. I am honored to be getting my degree from this amazing school in fall 2022. After graduating, I plan to work in the professional construction world and make my way up to a superintendent or even vice president in an organization. I am super excited about what the future holds for me, and I cannot thank Cal Poly enough for giving me the hands-on experience I will need to be successful in the future.

## ANTONIO GONZALEZ



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY**  
**MAJOR: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

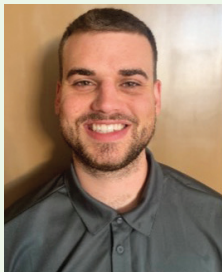
I was born in La Estancia Del Refugio, Guanajuato, Mexico. It is a small town where everyone knows each other, and it is full of culture and tradition. At the age of 7, my parents decided to migrate to the United States in pursuit of the American dream, a decision that shaped my future and changed my life for the better. This decision also brought me to the Bay Area, more specifically San Jose, California, where I spent the rest of my childhood and currently still reside.

While I was growing up, I did not imagine that I would come to enjoy the construction field as much as I do now. A couple of my family members had worked in the construction industry most of their lives, but it wasn't until my father joined construction that my

interest began. To me, my father is my idol; I really looked up to him and I knew that I wanted to be like him when I got older. I started my journey in this field and what began originally as a weekend gig became a passion, and I have my father to thank for that.

I am a firm believer that no dream is too big. I aspire to one day work for a well-respected construction company where I can continue to grow and learn more about this field, and eventually I hope to have the opportunity to start my own commercial electrical company. As I continue to pursue my dreams, I also wish to make a difference in my community and help inspire others to pursue their passion as well.

## CODY NILFORD



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO**  
**MAJOR: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

I was born in Stockton and raised there for a great portion of my life, but I moved around the Central Valley a bit and now live in Riverbank. All my education from elementary school through high school was done in Manteca. The Central Valley has great diversity and is changing along with the world. It was a great place to be raised, to create high goals for myself and to one day move to somewhere bigger and better.

Growing up, I always had an idea that engineering would be where I would end up. I excelled in all my math and science classes, but in high school I realized that wasn't exactly where my heart was at. I took all the agricultural and shop classes that my high school had to offer, including mechanics, welding, construction and woodshop. I quickly discovered my interest in building and working with a team to get a project done. This led me to

steer my path toward construction management at Chico State, and right away I knew that it was going to be the perfect major and profession for me.

For my career goals, I hope to enter the workforce right after I graduate in spring 2022 for a general contractor and quickly move my way up in the company. I see myself entering as a field engineer and later transferring into a superintendent before ultimately becoming a project manager. I like to have an end goal, but I believe it is better to set shorter-term goals and milestones to focus on gradually and securely reaching that goal. I believe that making a profit as a company is very important, and even more important is to help the local communities that you are building in. I hope that with each project I work on, I can help make the world a better and more sustainable place.

## GEORGE ROMO



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY**  
**MAJOR: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

I grew up in Ceres, California, a small town located next to Modesto in Stanislaus County. Growing up, I didn't have much, but I did have parents who showed me the value of hard work and what dedication is. As a young teenager, I saw my mom get laid off and watched my dad carry the weight of the family on his shoulders. Watching him relocate to work in the Bay Area in Oakland when I was 14 was tough to experience. Knowing the sacrifice he would have to make in terms of losing precious time with us, his family, was difficult for him, but he wanted to give us the best life possible.

I have always had a passion for building things. The effort and coordination that goes into these projects that I would watch get built would just fascinate me. I remember growing up and going to San Francisco, I would be excited only for the reason of getting to cross the old Bay Bridge and watching the new Bay Bridge being built. I also love the teamwork that goes into projects. I am big on sports and consider myself

a team-first kind of guy, who emphasizes communication when on the field or the court. I feel the same way with construction — the better you communicate with your team, the better the outcome.

I picked construction management because I love to build. I also picked construction management because of my dad. It was because of my dad's hard work and sacrifice that I chose this degree. Knowing the challenges that I would face with work and school, while still factoring in commuting, was a challenge. But I know it will just make that degree feel a whole lot sweeter when it's in my hands.

After graduating in spring 2022, I plan on being a full-time project engineer, and in the future, a project manager. I also hope to return to CSU East Bay in hopes of recruiting the next wave of young CM students and help them get internships and push them to challenge themselves as well.

## ELIJAH STANLEY



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO**  
**MAJOR: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

I was born and raised in Chico, California. My family has lived in the area since the 1850s. I have moved away a few times, but the beauty of Upper Park has always brought me back. My mom was a track and field coach as well as a basketball coach at the local high school, so most of my childhood was spent in a gym or at a track. This experience showed me that hard work pays off. I took this focus and applied it to my career and education. The opportunity to study at Chico State in my hometown has been a privilege. Chico will always be my home, but I am excited to see what the future holds.

Construction has always played a large role in my family. My uncle owned a construction business in Chico, and my cousins and I often spent our summers on the job site. This is where I first got to see the process of construction, and I knew then construction is what I wanted to do. When my cousins

made the move to Santa Cruz, construction became something we did on vacation. Most of the time I was a manual laborer and enjoyed getting to work by the beach. Later, I was able to perform more finish work and I learned to pay attention to detail. It took me a few years to realize I could get a degree in construction management, but once I found this major, I felt at home.

Once I graduate in fall 2021, I hope to continue my career as a field engineer and eventually become a superintendent. Having a 4-year-old daughter drives me to do better. This is a major reason why I hope to focus on sustainability and green building. Making sure something is left behind for future generations is key for me, and I hope to find a company with similar values. I want to leave something better than the way I found it and hope to incorporate this idea throughout my career.