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Melinda Cabrera Appointed President and CEO of the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, CA — Melinda Cabrera, who as vice president of United Way of Santa Barbara County helped spearhead that organization’s robust response to the Covid-19 pandemic, has been named president and CEO of the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara. She will begin serving in her new role on August 14.

“Melinda comes to us with an impressive record of community engagement and energetic leadership. Our search committee was struck by her work ethic, her commitment to collaboration, and her obvious enthusiasm for efforts to improve the lives of area residents. We are confident she is well suited to building on the Scholarship Foundation’s remarkable legacy, and taking the organization to the next level,” said Foundation Board Chair Danna McGrew.

A native of Apple Valley, California, Ms. Cabrera earned a bachelor’s degree in communications at Loyola Marymount University before being named assistant director of guest services at the Santa Barbara Zoo. She joined the United Way of Santa Barbara County in 2013, serving first as a community impact officer and later as director of strategic partnerships from 2016 to 2020. In her current role, Ms. Cabrera leads United Way’s programming and initiatives in the areas of financial empowerment, education, and crisis response and recovery. She was instrumental in the organization’s pandemic response efforts, which included emergency funding to some 8,800 local individuals and families. Under her leadership, United Way’s pandemic-related outlays totaled more than \$53 million. In 2019, Ms. Cabrera was included in *Pacific Coast Business Times’* “40 Under 40” report.

Ms. Cabrera’s appointment caps a two-month nationwide search conducted by Blair Search Partners. She will succeed Dr. Mary Dwyer, who has led the Scholarship Foundation as interim president and chief executive officer since January 1.

“I am honored to lead an organization with such an impressive history of increasing access to postsecondary education and creating opportunity in our community,” said Ms. Cabrera. “I believe in the power of education and know firsthand that it leads to positive outcomes for children and families. It is important to invest now in our youth so we can reap the benefits of a stronger, more stable community in the future. I look forward to contributing to the Scholarship Foundation’s rich legacy.”

The Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara is the nation’s largest community-based provider of college scholarships, having cumulatively awarded in excess of \$150 million to more than 60,000 county students since its founding in 1962. A nonprofit organization, the Scholarship Foundation also provides free financial aid advising services. For additional information, visit www.sbscholarship.org.

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