



**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR DISTRIBUTION: IMMEDIATE**

May 6th, 2016

FSCNY ANNOUNCES 20th ANNUAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

***State Assembly Member Michael Blake, a former FSCNY Scholarship Winner,
to speak at upcoming Scholarship Awards Presentation***

The Financial Service Centers of New York (FSCNY) announced its 20th Annual Scholarship Award winners.

Seven students from across New York City's five boroughs and Westchester County, will receive over \$40,000 in scholarship money and prizes, the highest annual amount ever granted by the by **FSCNY/MoneyGram Scholarship Program**.

The awards will be presented during FSCNY's Scholarship Program Luncheon scheduled for Tuesday, May 10th at 1:00PM, at the Brooklyn Marriott, during FSCNY's Annual Conference. State Assembly Member **Michael Blake** (District 79, Bronx), a former FSCNY Scholarship recipient who has forged a nationally-renowned career in public service, will present an inspirational address to the 2016 student honorees.

"Success stories like Assembly Member Michael Blake's, spotlight the importance of having faith in the power of education to transform someone's life", said **Gigi Guerrero**, Chairwoman of the FSCNY/MoneyGram Scholarship Program. "There are so many smart and capable young people in our communities, and initiatives such as FSCNY's Scholarship Program are vital for these promising individuals to reach their maximum potential".

Born in The Bronx to an immigrant family, Blake received an FSCNY Scholarship to attend the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. Upon graduation, he launched a noted career as a national, state and local organizer focused on economic empowerment, community affairs, government and politics. From 2009 through 2012 he held various titles in the Obama Administration, including Associate Director of Public Engagement & Deputy Associate Director of the Office of Intergovernmental. He has described his personal path to success as a "Journey from no house to the White House". He was elected Assembly Member for the 79th District of The Bronx, in 2014.

“Investing in our future is about providing our young scholars with equal opportunities by breaking down the barriers that stand in the way of their success,” Assembly Member Blake said. “FSCNY’s Scholarship Program made a strong difference in my life, as I started my journey to the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, and gave me the foundation to provide long-term contributions to my community. I can’t wait to address the 2016 scholarship recipients and hopefully motivate them to pursue a lifetime of achievement, excellence and civic engagement. I thank and congratulate FSCNY for its commitment to making education and opportunity a priority of its community outreach programs. This effort of educational advancement is the epitome of our 3, 2, 1 vision of Economic Development, Education and Equality for All.”

After an application review and student interview process, FSCNY’s Scholarship Committee selected two grand prize winners for the **William Siegel Scholarship and Gene Schott Scholarship Awards** (\$7,500 each), and five First Place Scholarship Award winners (\$5,000 each). Each winner will also receive a laptop computer courtesy of **TellerMetrix**, a FSCNY associate member. All winners are high school seniors entering their freshman year in college in the Fall.

2016 FSCNY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Grand Prizes:

Jerson Mejia-Castro, High School of Computers and Technology, Bronx NY (**Gene Schott Memorial Scholarship Award**)
Rose Reiken, White Plains High School, White Plains, NY (**William Siegel Memorial Scholarship Award**)

First Place Scholarship Awards:

Julianne Sanscartier, Harrison High School, Harrison NY
Zahra Aboul-Hassan, High School of fashion Industries, New York NY
Sandeep Kaur, The Baccalaureate School for Global Education, Queens NY
Rahat Hossany, Jamaica Gateway to the Sciences, Queens NY
Sara Taha, Fort Hamilton High School, Staten Island NY

FSCNY’s Scholarship Program has granted more than three-quarter of a million dollars to 317 students, since its inception in 1996.

About FSCNY (Financial Service Centers of New York):

The Financial Service Centers of New York is the industry’s leading voice on legislative, regulatory, and business issues and the leading advocate for the rights of consumers to access basic financial services in New York. The New York check cashing industry consists of approximately 530 check cashing locations, which employ nearly 4,000 New York residents. Nearly 80% of employees are African American and Latino. The industry is composed largely of small businesses that are located in the working class neighborhoods that have been abandoned or never served by banks. The industry cashes nearly 20 million checks annually with a face value of nearly \$11 billion. New York’s check cashing fee cap of 2.01% is among the lowest in the nation. For more information about FSCNY’s Scholarships and other community programs, visit www.fscny.org.