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UT SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL STUDENT NAMED NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

DALLAS--When Francisco DeLeon looks to the future, he not only ponders what will happen to him, he also concerns himself with how his actions will benefit others.

The 24-year-old medical student at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center embraces an altruistic philosophy, and his persistence and intelligence are being rewarded this year with a Baxter Foundation Scholarship. The scholarship, one of two given nationally, provides a \$2,500 annual stipend.

With the 1993 Baxter Foundation Scholarship, DeLeon, a second-year medical student, can pursue his medical degree and achieve his dream of helping low-income people. The Foundation awards the scholarships through the National Medical Fellowships Inc. The two need-based scholarships are given to second-year, under-represented minority students on the basis of outstanding academic achievement and leadership in both undergraduate and medical school.

The soft-spoken native of Mexico, who immigrated to Dallas with his family when he was four years old, knows first-hand the value of medical care and the hardship of not being able to afford it.

"One of the main reasons I wanted to become a doctor was because I come from a poor family," DeLeon said. "A lot of my relatives were always complaining of something that was wrong with them and they couldn't afford to go to doctors."

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"Most of the time they ended up going to elders in the community who treated them with home remedies," he said. "I hated feeling helpless, and being a doctor makes me useful."

DeLeon is a firm believer in giving back to the community. He considers his education both an investment and a reward for his past experiences. He plans to practice in Dallas with an emphasis on helping Hispanics, especially those who only speak Spanish, as do his parents.

"This is where I grew up, and this is where being bilingual will let me help those people," he said. "I want them to be given adequate treatment."

He learned the value of being bilingual by working summers in the emergency room and the pediatric intensive care unit at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas and at a community clinic in a primarily Hispanic area of Dallas. "When doctors who didn't speak Spanish would ask patients what was wrong or try to explain when to take the medications, the patients were sometimes too embarrassed to say that they didn't understand, so they would just nod 'yes'," he remembers.

DeLeon also wants to be a role model for younger disadvantaged Hispanics and emphasizes that persistence is as important an element as intelligence in being successful. "I want to show them that someone poor and Hispanic can do it and so can they.

"Persistence is what I believe can help me most to achieve my goals," DeLeon said. "No matter how many things may be against me or how many times I may fall, I must keep my eyes on the prize."

Obtaining an education has been a lifelong goal for DeLeon, who started on a medical career as a student at the High School for Health Professions, a

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magnet school run by the Dallas Independent School District for students interested in health sciences. Students must be recommended to be admitted into the school.

Today, DeLeon follows the advice that Lois Thomas, a mentor and chemistry teacher, imparted to him while he was in high school and working a part-time job to help with family expenses. "She told teenagers working and going to school at the same time to concentrate on going to school because the little bit of money one can earn as a teenager does not equal the benefits one can reap by getting an education," he recalled.

He shares that wisdom with his wife, Priscilla, who plans to become a nurse. And the pair has vowed to pass it to the next generation through their two-year-old daughter, Lillian.

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NOTE: The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School, affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics.