



**Photo** – (From left) Sabrina Baldassarre and Denise Ruiz

## **Two FSW Collegiate High Students Awarded Prestigious QuestBridge Scholarships**

**FEBRUARY 9, 2017 – FORT MYERS, FLA.** – Florida SouthWestern State College Collegiate High School (FSWC-Lee) students Sabrina Baldassarre and Denise Ruiz have been awarded the QuestBridge National College Match scholarship for the upcoming academic year.

QuestBridge’s National College Match program pairs high-achieving, low income high school seniors with full scholarships to some of the nation’s top colleges. Only 767 students were awarded the National College Match scholarship. The students are guaranteed a full, four-year scholarship, including tuition, room and board, and other expenses.

After an extensive application and interview process, both Baldassarre and Ruiz were matched with their first choice colleges.

“I chose the University of Virginia (UVA) because I admire the principles it was founded on – Thomas Jefferson's belief in the pursuit of knowledge being never-ending and in an equality of ideas,” said Baldassarre. “I plan to pursue a degree in Biomedical Engineering and a degree in Chinese Studies, or perhaps a minor in East Asian Humanities with a concentration in Korean.”

Ruiz chose to attend the University of Chicago (U of C) and plans to study political science with a minor in human rights.

“I want to attend U of C because of their overall attitude toward learning and higher education and their history of commitment to free speech,” said Ruiz. “I believe that this is incredibly important especially in a polarized nation where many will only listen to those with the same views as themselves.”

Both students are grateful and honored to have received the scholarship.

“After I found out I received the scholarship, I was honestly in shock,” Baldassarre said. “It provided me with a sense of fulfillment because receiving the scholarship showed me that my efforts in school were not unnoticed and that UVA wanted me as a student on their campus.”

“The day I learned I had received the scholarship was incredibly emotional,” Ruiz said. “Overall it is difficult to find the words for what I am feeling. I am still a little shocked but mostly excited to attend the University of Chicago in the fall.”

“The QuestBridge National College Match scholarship requires a high level of academic achievement and is an extremely prestigious recognition for a student to earn,” said Dr. Brian Botts, principal, FSWC-Lee. “To have two of our students receive it in a single year is extraordinary, and it proves the quality of FSWC-Lee’s faculty, staff and academic instruction as well as our students’ commitment to education. We are extremely proud of Sabrina and Denise.”

**About QuestBridge:** QuestBridge, a national non-profit based in Palo Alto, California, connects the nation’s most exceptional, low-income youth with leading institutions of higher education and further life opportunities. By recruiting, developing, and motivating these students—beginning in high school through college to their first job—QuestBridge aims to increase the percentage of talented low income students attending the nations’ best colleges and to support them to achieve success in their respective careers and communities.