



Sonabank Provides Scholarship to a Student to Attend Blue Ridge School.

Bank provides scholarship for a low income student from Newburgh, New York

Glen Allen, Va. (July 6, 2019) – Sonabank recently announced the bank has provided Miguel Benitez of Newburgh, NY a scholarship to attend Blue Ridge School, a private all-male boarding school in St. George, VA near Charlottesville, VA.

The scholarship was announced after Rod Porter and Georgia Derrico, Sona’s Vice Chairman and Chairman, met Father Mark, of San Miguel Academy, at the Michael G. Santangelo Scholarship Fund’s annual event last December. They were taken on a tour of the academy a month later and we were incredibly impressed. Father Mark then told them the story of Miguel Benitez and Blue Ridge School in Charlottesville. Upon hearing Miguel’s story, Rod Porter and Georgia Derrico committed to form a scholarship to help fund Miguel’s education at Blue Ridge School for the next four years in honor of the late Tom and Suzie Baker. The Bakers were longstanding friends of the Sonabank Family and Tom served as the Chief Credit Officer of Sonabank. The scholarship was the perfect way to remember the Bakers and inspire a brighter future for Miguel.

Miguel recently graduated from San Miguel Academy of Newburg, NY. San Miguel is a tuition-free, faith-based, independent middle school for at risk boys. The academy provides a safe haven for intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth.

As indicated on the school’s website, Newburgh, NY is ranked the 14th most dangerous city in the United States according to Neighborhood Scout’s 2016 Top 100 Most Dangerous Cities List. Newburgh was once headlined as the murder capital of New York.

According to Father Mark Connell of San Miguel Academy, “Education is the tool that breaks the poverty cycle.” Newburgh is a community that is very poor and the crime rate is very high. After observing the depth of poverty that existed in the area, Father Connell and supporters were able to start San Miguel Academy with just twelve students. Today, San Miguel Academy is entering into its 14th academic year and currently supports over 200 families, typically enrolling 16 new students per year.



Miguel Benitez, Recipient of Sonabank scholarship to The Blue Ridge School.

The scholarship to Blue Ridge School will provide Miguel with opportunities that many young boys coming from such a dangerous and low-income environment would normally not be able to pursue. Blue Ridge School, located near Charlottesville is distinguished as one of the only all-boys, all-boarding schools in the nation that provides young men an environment in which they are able to develop and enjoy academic success and personal growth.

“It is the intention of Sonabank to foster the future of Miguel,” said Georgia Derrico, Chairman of the Board. “We are very proud to support Miguel and are thrilled that together with the San Miguel Academy and Blue Ridge School, we will help provide a wonderful and thriving educational opportunity for him. “Corporate responsibility is an important piece of our business. By giving this scholarship to a well-deserved student like Miguel, this demonstrates our desire to improve the lives of those less fortunate. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for Miguel and know he will prosper and grow at The Blue Ridge School.”

“Miguel Benitez, like many boys from his background and of his age, is very excited about soccer and is a talented athlete. He’s quite determined and motivated to succeed. San Miguel Academy is an alternative program for boys at risk and Miguel has really taken full advantage of the program and is well on the path to success. Miguel has demonstrated real courage in choosing Blue Ridge School and choosing an education and should really be commended for that and for his strength and resolve in making that choice time and again,” said Connell.

“It is a privilege for Miguel to attend Blue Ridge School. We are so grateful for the opportunity for our son and so thankful to be able to go and see where Miguel will be going to school. When Miguel heard that he was accepted, he was jumping with happiness,” said Flor Tlatelpa, mother of Miguel Benitez. “We, as a family, are here to support Miguel and we are so blessed that he received his scholarship from Sonabank.”

Sonabank is proud to help Miguel continue his education and passion for learning and is eager to see him grow and thrive at Blue Ridge School.

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About Sonabank:

Sonabank is a Virginia state-chartered bank that provides a range of financial services to individuals and small and medium sized businesses. As of March 31, 2019, Southern National had \$2.70 billion in total assets, \$2.16 billion in total loans and \$2.11 billion in total deposits. Sonabank provides a range of financial services to individuals and small and medium sized businesses. At March 31, 2019, Sonabank had forty-five full-service branches. Thirty-eight full-service retail branches are in Virginia, located in the counties of Chesterfield (2), Essex (2), Fairfax (Reston, McLean and Fairfax), Gloucester (2), Hanover (3), King William, Lancaster, Middlesex (3), New Kent, Northumberland (3), Southampton, Surry, Sussex, and in Charlottesville, Clifton Forge, Colonial Heights, Front Royal, Hampton, Haymarket, Leesburg, Middleburg, New Market, Newport News, Richmond, South Riding, Warrenton, and Williamsburg, and

seven full-service retail branches in Maryland, in Rockville, Shady Grove, Bethesda, Upper Marlboro, Brandywine, Owings and Huntingtown. For more information, visit sonabank.com.

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