

GRADUATE'S SPECIAL EDITION

Gila River Indian Community Celebrates Our Scholars



THE GRIN



SPECIAL EDITION

GILA RIVER INDIAN NEWS || www.GRICNEWS.org

JUNE 19, 2020

Graduate earns degree in medicine, will begin residency at Mayo Clinic



Belinda Galeano followed her Ph.D. with an M.D. Photo Courtesy Belinda Galeano

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

Belinda Galeano, packed-up her life in Arizona to pursue a Ph.D. and a degree in medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science in Rochester, Minn., and will soon begin a residency in Pathology at the Mayo Clinic. In an interview she discussed education, studying medicine and words of advice for students who wish to attend a university.

"My grandmother is Lylah Donahue Mitchell, from District 7. I was born and raised in Prescott, Ariz., then went to college at the University of Arizona," said Galeano.

After graduating, she moved to Minnesota to pursue a Ph.D. and M.D. She completed her Ph.D. in Biochemistry, with a focus on structural biology at Mayo Clinic in 2015 and recently obtained her M.D. from the Mayo Clinic School of Medicine. In her spare time, she enjoys team rop-

ing and gardening.

Galeano has always been interested in research, and will take advantage of this opportunity in the coming years.

"The next step in this training process will be residency in pathology at Mayo Clinic, which will take several more years to complete. During this period, I will devote some time to research," she said.

Galeano understands that medicine is a calling that combines helping others with mental discipline.

"Medicine draws people who are committed to serving others who also enjoy the mental challenge. My interest in pathology was piqued while working with light and electron microscopes during research."

Pathology is a great specialty for those who are detail-oriented and have an interest in academic medicine studying structures that exist on a really small scale.

Her advice for students inter-

ested in going to college or interested in pursuing a career of any kind, "Have an open mind about what you would like to do for a career. Your heart may be set on one field, then realize that you are more passionate about another career, so take the time to explore what interests you!"

Galeano recommends that students ask their counselors to connect them with people in their field of interest.

"There are plenty of people who are eager to share with you what their careers are like and are very willing to serve as a mentor to help guide you through the steps necessary to reach your goals," she said.

College presents its own set of challenges and experiences that requires the help of advisors.

"In order to stay on track, talk with advisors and develop a plan to keep you moving forward...set short, intermediate, and

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Senior year in the time of COVID-19: Grads reflect on high school

Kyle Knox
Gila River Indian News

A student's high school journey traditionally culminates at the end of the spring semester with graduation. For graduating seniors, 2020 was anything but traditional due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic hampered a multitude of tribal events including the Five Tribes Treaty of Peace Celebration and Memorial Day celebrations among many others. For the most part, those events can be rescheduled for the following year, but the same can't be said for a high school senior whose time has come.

Jasmine Elizarrerez and Susanna Osife, two graduating seniors from the Gila River Indian Community, have an intimate view of completing high school during the pandemic and how their experience changed their end-of-the-year expectations.

Elizarrerez, District 7, and Osife, District 2, imagined a dif-

ferent ending to the spring semester than what took place like walking across the stage to roaring applause from friends and family as they received their high school diplomas.

Osife attended Coolidge High School and had a lot to look forward to sharing, "I wished I had the opportunity to experience all of our senior days and times with my friends." Her class had plans for a senior trip, pep rallies, and a trip to Disneyland with CHS's Tribe's club.

Elizarrerez attended Cesar Chavez High School and also missed out on her Senior Sunset event, where all the seniors watch the sunset on the last day of school.

"I never attended prom because I thought it would make it more special and mean more if I attended my senior year, but with the virus, I wasn't able to attend," said Elizarrerez.

Those experiences would've

created lasting memories punctuated by every senior's one shining moment at graduation. In the time of COVID-19, many schools honored their students in a variety of creative ways. Due to social distancing and safety precautions, many have developed ingenious ways to execute creative graduation ceremonies.

Osife's school organized a parade in the City of Coolidge.

"It was fun and exciting because my classmates and I were still able to be recognized," she said.

There was a virtual ceremony in addition to a diploma presentation by CHS principal Armstrong and Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis. Osife said, "of course, I would have loved to have the experience of walking the stage, but I am very grateful for what my school has done for the class of



Jasmine Elizarrerez with her graduation regalia after completing her senior year. Photo Courtesy Jasmine Elizarrerez

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CLASS of 2020

#GilaRiverStrong



- Governor
Stephen Roe Lewis
- Lt. Governor
Robert Stone
- Community Council
Representatives
 - District 1**
Arzie Hogg
Joey Whitman
 - District 2**
Carol Schurz
 - District 3**
Avery White
Rodney Jackson
 - District 4**
Jennifer Allison
Regina Antone-Smith
Delmar Jones
Monica Antone
 - District 5**
Marlin Dixon
Franklin Pablo, Sr.
Thomas White
James De La Rosa
 - District 6**
Anthony Villareal, Sr.
Terrance B. Evans
Charles Goldtooth
 - District 7**
Devin Redbird
Robert Keller, Tribal Treasurer
Shannon White,
Community Council Secretary

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

2020 graduates.”

Cesar Chavez High School held a drive-thru graduation ceremony. Every student decorated a vehicle and drove throughout the school parking lot, which concluded with receiving their diplomas from the CCHS administration. It was intimate and “interesting,” as Elizarrarez said. “I personally wasn’t a fan of this idea because my family wasn’t able to watch me graduate except on Facebook Live, which was very creative, I’ll say,” said Elizarrarez.

The class of 2020 learned more than they anticipated after the schools closed.

Osife said, “some things I’ve learned was to stay aware of what’s going on and its impact, we may think it’s small and not serious but trust me, it is. During the COVID shut down, I was able to focus on myself, family, health, and safety.”

Elizarrarez stressed, “In such dark times we can often find ourselves staying in a dark mindset, but you just have to keep your head up because things do get better. In the moment, it may be harder to believe that, but there’s always something to smile about and something to be thankful for,



Susanna Osife (second from left) with Owen Osife and her parents after receiving their high school diplomas. Christopher Lomahquahu/GRIN

big or small.”

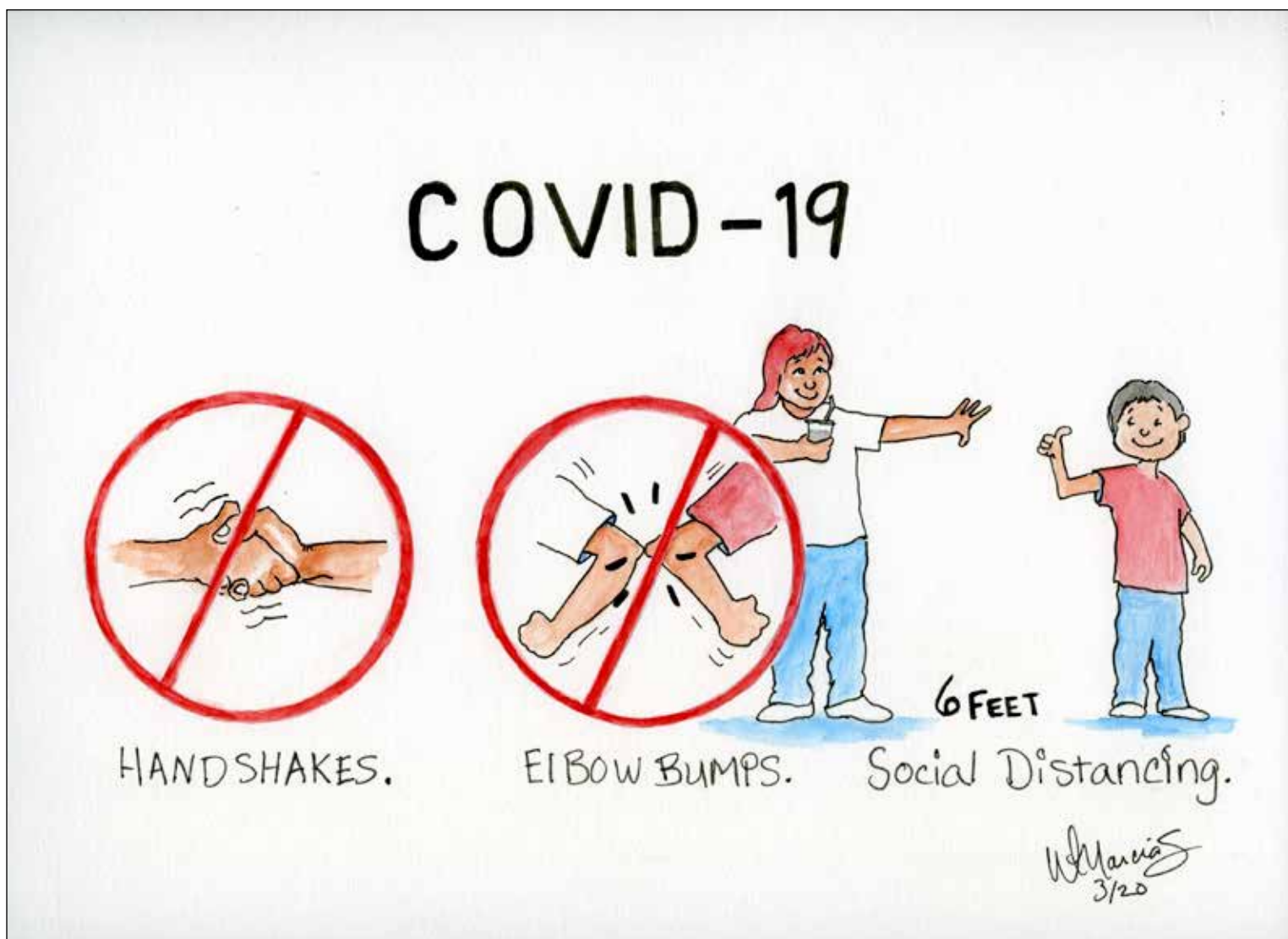
Both students are continuing their academic journeys to assist the Community in the future.

“I plan to study in the field of nursing. I have developed a stronger passion in healthcare since the COVID-19 pandemic. Making sure we have a safe and healthy environment for the

Community is my biggest goal,” said Osife.

Elizarrarez said, “I will be attending South Mountain Community College in the fall, and the plan is to transfer to ASU or NAU. For now, my plans are to find a major and career that can help people and my Community.”

Though the traditional high school graduation may have been a missed experience, it’s apparent that post-secondary graduation is in the foreseeable future. For now, though, Elizarrarez wants to share with all high school graduates, “Congratulations to the class of 2020! You made it, and I wish the best for you all!”



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NAJA
 Native American Journalists Association

Higher Education Graduates



Allan Miles

New Mexico State University
Bachelor's - Anthropology

I never would have thought three years ago that I would be where I am now, but I'm so glad that I am. I've been lucky, but I also know that I've worked hard, and that there are few better feelings than turning in work you can be proud of. Every one of us has it in us to make it, you just have to take those steps. I did, and I couldn't be happier.



Alyshia Enas

Central Arizona College
Associate of Arts, Liberal – Nursing

Thank you to my family for all their love and support!



Beatrice Gonzalez

University of Southern California

Master-Health Care Administration

Many who know me will readily agree that education has always been a passion of mine. Since first stepping into the realm of healthcare, I realized that to make a difference, to make an impact, my compassion and desire to improve the lives of those in my Community would not be enough, thus more school! Thank you to my family, my friends and my Community for supporting me in this journey!



Bianca Marissa Hernandez

Graduated from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke with a Bachelors degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance, cum Laude. She will be attending graduate school at UNC-Pembroke studying Healthcare Administration.



Danielle Allen

University of Dubuque
Bachelor-Criminal Justice

I want to thank my family for all your support and encouragement these past two years, I could have not done this without you all. My love, you have been my rock and thank you for everything.



Laiken Molina

Arizona State University
Bachelor of Arts-: Educational Studies

This accomplishment is for my daughter, Lainey, who is my motivation to move forward in all aspects of my life. My family, who have made this accomplishment easier and GRIC Higher Edu. Dept, who have made this opportunity possible!



Nicholas Osife

California State University, Long Beach

Master of Science- Applied Statistics

I grew up in District 5 with my grandparents, Dana Osife Jr. and the late Sharon Osife. This accomplishment is a result of their love, encouragement, and constant indulgence of my curiosities. Special thanks to my many mentors who pushed me forward at different stages of my life: John and Tanya Duck, Toni Osife, Denise Osife, Paula Osife, Richard Vance, Peggy Marcoline, and Dr. Russell Benford.



Rachael Rae Antone

Central Arizona College
Associate of Arts

The Antone Family of Rachael Rae Antone are very proud of her accomplishments at CAC and that she is moving on to higher levels of her goals by attending ASU. We wish her the best as an ASU Sun Devil.- Love, Family



Monique Horton

Aveda Institute Phoenix
Esthiology



Rheanna Melissa Jackson

Feather River College

Associate of Science-Health & Exercise Sciences

Plans to attend Grand Canyon University



Robin Jackson

Chandler Gilbert Community College

Associates of Arts, Associates of Science in the field of Organizational Management and certificate of completion in Organizational Leadership

Further education: going to NAU fall 2020 for Bachelor's Degree



Velia Moncada

Arizona State University-College of Health Solutions

Bachelor's Exercise Wellness, Minor in Spanish

There were times when I couldn't see the end. Thank you to my family, friends and mentors for guiding me through this adventure. Por ustedes Y para ustedes! Viva la mujerque lucha!



Cassandra Peña

Arizona State University

Master of Social Work- Social Work(Policy, Administration, and Community Practice)

I'm forever grateful for the support from GRIC, the Tribal Education Department, and my family. My college experience has been life changing and I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you!!



Catherine D. Williamson

Arizona State University

Master's- American Indian Studies: Indigenous Rights and Social Justice

I would like to thank my Community for the support to pursue my dream of obtaining my Master's Degree. I would like to thank my family and friends for their support.



Ryan Myore

Haskell Indian Nations University

Bachelors of Science in Business Administration

I want to thank my family, friends, advisors, the Smith family, Coach Al Gipp, the Cross Country/Track & Field Team, The Brotherhood of Phi Sigma Nu, the GRIC Higher Ed Department and many others for their support in helping me obtain my degree(s) at Haskell Indian Nations University. Onward Haskell!



Shoshone Hayes

Arizona State University
Bachelor- Applied Biological Sciences

Due to many adversities, I didn't follow the traditional 4 year schedule. What kept me going was "your journey is not their journey." This last year I conquered my goal while being pregnant with my first child. Zion Lennox Gyamfi was born on 5/20/2020 days after graduating. I'm overjoyed by both obtaining my bachelors degree in Applied Biological Sciences and starting this new chapter as a mother.



Monica Romero-Garcia

Ottawa University

Master's Degree-Masters in Education for School Counseling

I am the mother of three handsome boys, a wife & was a full-time student. I finished for my family. I am now blessed to be working in my dream position as a school counselor. Working in my Community, advocating for my Community & giving back to our Community and students.



Yvonne Garcia

Scottsdale Community College

Associate of Arts

Motion Picture, Television and New Media Productions

Life is like a camera, focus on what's important, capture the good times, develop from the negative, and if things don't work out, take another shot. -unknown

High School Graduates



Alette Paul
Coolidge High School



Annalia Elyse Singhurst
The Dalles High School
Anna will be pursuing a degree in Nursing at Columbia Gorge Community College



Carlos Verdugo
Cesar Chavez High School



Jacob A. Williams
Coolidge High School
You did it. Williams Family proud of you Cubby.



Jordan Apkaw
Casa Grande Union High School
Plans to Attend Northwest Indian College
Thank you to my family, friends and coaches without all of you I wouldn't be where I am today.
#oodhamstrong



Allen Pratt
Casa Grande Union High School



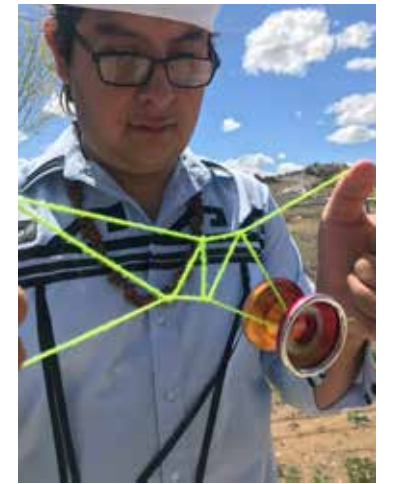
Antonio Garcia
Casa Grande Union High School
Parent or Graduate Comment:
Words can't express how very proud I am of you son. You lead as a great example for your son. You are one in a million my boy. Continue to strive for the very best. I love you with everything in me.



Emil A. Zavala
Casa Grande Union High School
I graduated in mid-term of December with a grade point average of 3.56 and had 22.6 credits. I have a disability of Autism. I was challenged and even proceeded my disability and I'm planning to continue my career in cooking and whatever I chose to do with my life.



Jay'Lynn Griffin
Jay'Lynn plans to attend Palm Beach State College and then off to Florida International University where he plans to pursue a degree in Computer & Game Programming.



Joshua Salazar
Miyamura High School
Plans to attend Grand Canyon University
Joshua graduates with a 4.0 GPA and High Honor recipient. The Rotary Club Senior of the Year for Miyamura High School. He is also the New Mexico State YoYo Champion and ranked 10 in Arizona State yoyo contest. 3rd place skills USA: Carpentry



Angelina Camacho
Our daughter is graduating from her school Girls leadership of Arizona with all A's. She was a shy girl and with every year she has opened up and grown so much. With everything going on in the world she and her fellow high schoolers missed out on all the senior activities. So any little thing i can do to show she is and has done a good thing making it threw school. I will do what i can as a mother to let her know is an awesome young lady. Her father and I and all our family are very proud of her. We love you so much and want the best for your future.



Aram Coleman
Chandler High School
Congratulations Aram! We are so proud of you!
Jazzmyne Terry
Hamilton High School
Congratulations Jazz! We are so proud of you.



Gabriella Hart
Coolidge High School
I am proud of Gabriella for pushing through and graduating. I am proud of the leadership she is showing in the Community to other GRIC students. I am excited to see where she will go next. She has the best heart and I know she will do great things



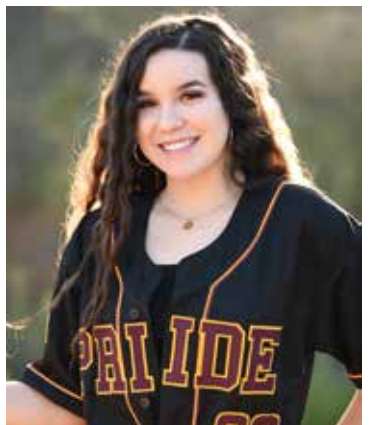
Joseph H. Cooper III
Coolidge High School
We are so proud of you! This only closes one chapter in your life, there are many more to come. We know you will accomplish all the goals you have set out for yourself. Remember we will always be here for you and WE LOVE YOU. -Mom and Dad



Joylyn A. Dawahoya
Coolidge Alternative Program
Through life's struggles you overcame and made us proud of you. I can see your dad's big proud smile. We Love you Joy! Congratulations & God Bless You!



Anjelo Ortiz
RISE Learning Academy
Congratulations Anjelo! We're all super proud of you and look forward to what comes next for you!
Love,
Mom, Grandma, Grandpa, Celia and Kitty Paws



Cameron Andrew
Cameron Andrew is a senior at Mountain Point High School. She carries a 4.26 weight gpa and is a member of the National Honor Society, Rho Kappa (Social Studies Honor Society) and Cheer. She is a AP and Dual Enrollment student who is in the top 11% of her graduating class. This fall she is headed to Arizona State University to pursue a career in Dermatological Surgery.



Jeremy Ramirez
Casa Grande Union High School



Jeanine Lopez
Vista Grande High School



Judis Acunia
Cesar Chavez High School
I'm so proud of you and I love you so much. Don't forget I'll always be here for you. - Love, Mom



David Reams
Hamilton High School



Adam Gonzales
Coolidge Alternative Program

High School Graduates



Julien Young
James Bowie High School, Arlington TX
Bachelor Degree, Communications



Malachi Siquieros
Dr. Camille Casteel High School
Plans to attend Northern University
Malachi, continue to chase your goals and fulfill your dreams! You will always have the love and support of your family in everything you do. We are very proud of you!! GO JACKS!!



Nizhoni M. Begay
Benjamin Franklin High School
Plans to attend Los Angeles Community College
I would like to thank my mom Melissa for making sure I'm on track with everything; homework grades and credits just to be sure I graduate. Also want to thank my grandmother Omerlene for giving me advice and helping on my college applications and the real world. I'm proud of myself for making my family proud and having goals in life! Love ya guys!



Rachael Whempner
Betty Fairfax
Our Sweetie, your accomplishments and achievements in school and life have been endless. You have set so many goals that you keep checking off. We see all the hard work and sacrifices you endure to reach the well deserved success that has come your way, babe. You make us very PROUD. May the Lord continue to bless and watch over you. Love Mom & Dad



Savannah Dora Dixon
Casa Grande Union High School



Sydney Johns
Casa Grande Union High School
Congratulations to our beautiful daughter Sydney Johns, Class of 2020! Your Grandparents and all of your relatives throughout the Gila River Indian Community also extend their sincerest congratulations! We are extremely proud of you and May God continue to bless you! With love, your parents Loren and Joni Johns.



Kaylyn Ellousie Escalante
Coolidge High School
Congratulations to you Our strong, powerful, smart, hard working daughter. We are so proud of you. YOU DID IT!! Continue to strive, work hard and succeed in everything that you do. WE LOVE YOU! Continued Blessings! Our Cakes, love Your Mom (Carolyn), Step-Dad (Danny), Grandma Corinne, Your sister Karissa, Your brothers (Sheaquille, Clay, Antonio, Nickolas, Isaac, Caleb) and Family!



Makayla Lemaster
Vista Grande High School



Ovidio Gonzales
Casa Grande Union High School
Son we are so proud of you for making it to this part of your life. I remember the first day of your kindergarten school walking you towards your first class and I'll look at you all grown up and ready to graduate congratulations your dad and I are so proud of you you're such an amazing son keep up the good work and never give up on your dreams ! We love you so much congratulations Son.



ReddSun Mack
Florence High School
To my Son, you did it! Congratulations on your achievement. We are so proud of you. Now on to your next accomplishment in life, whatever it may be. You have it in you to reach for the stars. With much Love. From Jose-Allen Family



Shayna E. Antone
Coolidge Alternative School
Our family is very proud of Shayna! She is planning to continue her education to become an aesthetic Nurse.



Ta'fv Gail Dillon
Betty Fairfax High School
"Climb the mountain so you can see the world. Not so the world can see you!" Continuing on to New York University, Shanghai Campus



Lucille Rhodes
Lucille Rhodes and she is graduating from Primavera. She is currently attending CAVIT where she is studying to become a medical assistant. Unfortunately Lucille was diagnosed with a medical condition her sophomore year yet she never gave up. I am so proud of her for never giving up.



Mira Jose
Florence High School
To my beautiful A:li Tash-Hadunig. Congratulations on all your achievements that you have put yourself through. Grandma, Grandpa, your uncles as well as Dad, Mom, Brothers and Baby Sister are all very proud of you. Keep reaching for your dreams and do not let anyone get in your way. With much love from the Jose-Allen Family.



Phillip Johns
Casa Grande Union High School
My name is Phillip Johns and I am from D4 and my parents are Ruben Johns and April Miles and after graduation i plan on going to college and play basketball or enter the workforce. I want to thank my mom for believing in everything that i do and always pushing me keeping going to school.



Tristan Natani
Casa Grande Union High School
To our son Tristan, follow your passion, stay true to yourself, take pride in how far you've come and have faith in how far you will go. We are very proud of you. Congratulations!!



Susanna Osife
Susanna was Jr. Miss Gila River for the school year 2019/2020 while she was also a senior at Coolidge High School. Susanna maintained an average GPA of 3.5 and had a 98% attendance rating. Susanna was involved in her school tribes club for all 4 years of high school and she played both basketball and volleyball for Coolidge High School. Susanna has also won several awards such as the YES to LIFE program, Coolidge High School Student Character award, 1st place for Artwork in the Tribal Education 2020 Mul-Chu-Tha Art and Essay Contest and best essay for GRICUA's Washington Youth Tour. Susanna takes pride in her culture and continues to participate in traditional dancing. Susanna plans are to go on to college and become a nurse.



Trista Sadie Lucia Pedro
Casa Grande Union High School
Our Beautiful daughter Trista had some weathered days where the storms came down but through it all, there were sunny days to be blessed with. She kept on doing her best, never giving up! With support from her teachers and family she accomplished what she set out to do. She graduated High School! We're so proud of you!! From your Family with Love.



Sadie Notah
Casteel High School and East Valley Institute of Technology Program: Physical Therapy Tech
School Continuing: Chandler Gilbert Community College



Tony A. R. Martinez
Mission Heights Preparatory High School
I am so proud of you Tony for completing high school during these times. Which ever university you choose, both your dad and I are always in your corner to encourage and support you in your future endeavors. We love you, and keep on reaching for the stars son. Love, Mom.



Tyler Namoki
Casa Grande Union High School



Ty Niokade Murphy
Gilbert High School
We are so very proud of you! Love, Mom and Dad and Family

Jr. High Promotions



Alyssia Allison
Coolidge Junior High



Christopher Pino
Smith Jr. High School
Christopher, you did an amazing job this school year. I am so very proud of you! Always continue to do your best and work hard. I am always here to help you. We love you!



Evan Namingha
Imagine Prep Coolidge
Reach for the stars, don't settle for less. Because you deserve true happiness, you were born to be special, one of a kind with a beautiful soul and a beautiful mind. Making your way with your own ideas, you've kept your spirit throughout the years, you're kind, loving, funny and true. Which is why, son there's nobody quite like you. Congrats son we are so PROUD OF YOU.
Love, Mom, Hailey and family



Gilberto J. Villarreal Jr.
Coolidge Junior High School
To my 8th grade graduate, We are so proud of what you accomplished so far. The next 4 years you will face many challenges, just remember to believe in yourself as we believe in you and will always be proud of you and with many more accomplishments to come. Congrats! Love, Mom, Dad and all your Family.



Jazmyn Norris-Burnett
Imagine Prep Coolidge
Picture was taken at promotion dinner with her Grandma sitting next to her and Great Grandma who just turned 90, along with her Grandfather who is 94. They are proud to have lived so long to watch her grow.



Manuel Casey Murillo IV
Western Valley Middle School
We are so very proud of our son who has always put fourth 100% effort in all his studies throughout his schooling which began in pre-school. We have always stressed the importance of perfect attendance, and to always put fourth his very best effort in everything he does. Our son continues to amaze us!



Amaris Blackwater
Payne Junior High School
Will attend Casa Grande Union High School



Clarice Marie Johnson
Madison #1 Middle School
Clarice amazes me as she continues to grow into a beautiful young lady. Clarice playing in the school orchestra led her to the Harmony Project. She's played in front of audiences at the Tempe Center for the Arts and ASU School of Music. Clarice has been able to maintain a rigorous rehearsal schedule, grades, softball, volunteer and still be engulfed in K-Pop. Clarice's music brings such happiness.



Elias Michael Smith
Coolidge Jr. High School
Congratulations to my son. We are so proud of you. Love you, Mom, Chante, Kids, Granny & the gang.



Hailey K. Allison
Coolidge Junior High School
As a family we want to say we are so proud of you, love you more than you know. We know this year had its share of ups and downs but you stayed strong and got it done. Congrats baby. Love Mom, Jerrod, Ky, Niko, Bella, Vincent, Nana, Tata, Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle



Jerry Pedro Jr.
Sacaton Middle School
Our son has done an amazing job while in school at Sacaton Middle School. Even though he had challenges. He continued to overcome them and get the task done at hand with the help of his teachers and support from family. We believe he finished his schooling strong. We are very proud of you!! From your family with love.



Marcel D. Zavala
Sacaton Middle School
I am Autistic but I overcame that and I finished with high honor of my class. If I can do it even though I'm disabled, anyone can do it, too!



Ami Hernandez
Rogers Ranch, Laveen
Will attend Betty Fairfax High School



Crouse I. Lewis-Mcrae
8th grade promotion from Cactus Middle School in Casa Grande AZ .



Gabriel Lewis
Imagine Prep-Coolidge
We're proud of you!



Isaac & Jacob Lewis
Gila Crossing Community School
Isaac & Jacob, we are so proud of you! Keep going, explore and adventure, we love you.



Luna Harrison
New Horizon Choice Program



Matthew A. Rodriguez
Coolidge Jr. High
Congratulations! Make the next four years ones to remember! We love you! C/O 2024



Bertram Donahue
Gila Crossing Community School
You little genius you! Finish this next 4 years so we can play the video games you make. We love you so much! Your crazy family



Dayna Da'Shar Sharp
Coolidge Jr. High School
You're a very bright young lady, you know what you want in life. You set very high standards to complete your goals. We will always be here to support you. Congratulations from your family & friends.



Gabriel Roy Coppedge
Pueblo Middle School
We are so proud of the good person you are and the young man you've become. Don't forget to try new things, be open to new adventures, and continue to do good. Always know as things get harder I'm always here and all of your family supports you. You have so many people that love you. Happy 8th grade graduation. Love, mom #schmabys



Kaydence Rain Apkaw
Villago Middle School
High School here I come!



Madison Ruvalcaba
Skyline Gila River
"I say this because I know what I am planning for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future." – Jeremiah 29:11
Mamas, I know this year didn't go as planned but we want you to know we are all very proud of you. You amaze us every day and we are all beside you in everything you do. Your future is just beginning so, let's do this!! High School Bound!!!! Love always, your family.



Melissa Rae Dixon
AZ Compass Prep



Casey Winston McAfee III
Raul H. Castro Middle School
Casey, your dad, brother, sister and I are so proud of you. Love Always Mom & Dad

Jr. High Promotions



Mireya "Momo" Piedra
Mireya "Momo" Piedra is promoting to high school from Villago Middle School. She promotes with honors. She will be attending Casa Grande union High School.



Princess Trujillo
Coolidge Jr. High
All your family is very proud of you!!



Skye J. Donahue
Gila Crossing Community School
We know you could do it! Unicorn Tingz... Keep doing you! We love you so much, the crazy ones you call family.



Patrice Nasewytewa
Vista del Sur Accelerated Academy
Congratulations, Patrice! This is the beginning of the next step in your education. We know you will continue to do a great job. We are very proud of you.



Saniah Elaine Mercado
Dos Rios Elementary
Congratulations to our beloved angel Saniah! We are so proud of you! May all your future endeavors behold your destined pathway to achieving success. Congratulations to the Class of 2020!



Tizoc Manuel Ayala
Coolidge Junior High
8th Grade to High School
Will be attending Coolidge High School
Son,
We are all very happy and proud of you for finishing your elementary school years. I know it was tasking, but you did it, and with little help I might add. You see, it's that kind of determination that will never fail you, not only in school but in life. But also never forget the School drop off mantra, "I love you. Do your best. And keep Josh Thok with you." Congratulations,
From All of Your Families



Nevaeh Quiroz
Coolidge Junior High
From Mom & Dad, we are so proud of you and all of your accomplishments. You are such a hard worker and strive to be better. We can not wait to see you strive in high school and all your new accomplishments in the future. We are so appreciative of what the Lord has done for you.



Ruby Laws-Albano
Ruby Laws-Albano who has been promoted from 8th grade to high school. She plays all school sports and club softball. She's a hard working student athlete who keep her gpa high. She has been attending early identification softball camps with Mike Candrea of UOfA softball. Her dream is to play on his team and attend college at UOfA.



Odessa Thomas
Payne Jr. High - Chandler
Good Job Baby! We're very proud of you.



Serena Lomaktewa
Villago Middle School
Serena best of luck to you, on to High School now. We all are beyond proud of you Serena!! have fun and enjoy High School!!! keep up them grades kid.

Lil' Grads



Alanzo Carmen
Vah-Ki Head Start



Aubriella Bojorquez
Sacaton Headstart
We are all so very proud of you Aubrie! You're growing up so fast and will soon be in Kindergarten and going to school with sister. I can't thank God enough for blessing us with you. Your such an awesome smart, kind, loving and tough little girl. We will all continue to be here for you and support you in life. With love, Mom, Dad, Sister, Grandma Morning, Uncle Bee, Auntie Erisa, Alex, Jaden and Blake.



Autiyona Gibson
Gila Crossing Community School
Thanks to Ms. A and Mrs. Alicia for being the best teachers and teaching my daughter.



Aziah Morris
Early Education Child Care
Way to go!! We are very proud of you. Continue to strive for the best, we are here to support you and guide you to a brighter path of education. You are the future!! Love always, your Morris Family.



Elle Valencia
Vah-Ki Head Start



Alexander Jones
Sacaton Head Start
You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes, you steer yourself any direction you choose. -Dr. Seuss



Canneda Murphy
Canneda Murphy has completed Headstart @ the D4 Headstart facility. He will begin kindergarten at Orangewood Elementary School in Phoenix. His parents are Christopher & Kristin Murphy, extended family is the Rhodes family from D3. Congratulations to our Little Big Man!



Chad L. Kisto
Casa Blanca Community School

Brent B. Escalante II
Sacaton Head Start
From PreK Going to Kindergarten at Blackwater Community School
You started at the Early Head Start since you were 2 weeks old. You only missed a few days of school and look at how smart you are!! We all love you so much Little Dude, and are so SO PROUD of all of the accomplishments you have reached in Head Start! we are excited to see what the future holds for you!!!! Now On To The BIG SCHOOL!
Love, Mom, Dad, Sister and Brothers!!!!



Francisco Kisto
Vah-Ki Head Start

Lil' Grads



Henry Porter
Sacaton Head Start
The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go. -Dr. Seuss



Kaneda Murphy
Sacaton Head Start
You're off to great places!! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so... get on your way! -Dr. Seuss



Malia L. Sanchez
District 4 Headstart
We are proud of our baby girl! This is only the beginning of many more adventures to come, love you!



Jace Jensen
Blackwater Community School
Congratulations my son, it is the first start of your education and life has so much more for you. There are no limits on education and we will be with you the whole way. Mom and Dad love you so much Jace. "The Sky is the limit" always remember that son.



Lily Lewis
Vah-Ki Head Start



Nilah Phyllis Rhodes
Casa Blanca Community School
Nilah is very excited to move on to 1st grade



Selena Sky Velarde Allison
Sacaton Elementary School
Your father, siblings and I are so very proud of you our Selena Sky! Continue to be that positive, smart, beautiful, shining light! We love you to no end, Your Family



Mariano J. Conde
Vah-Ki Head Start
Continue to reach for the stars, Mariano



O. Juan
Vah-Ki Headstart



Sunshine Perez
Santan Head Start
Be bold, be courageous, be your best! -Gabrielle Giffords



Michael Kisto
Vah-Ki Head Start



Rayland R. Colt
Gila Crossing Community School
We are so proud of you! You did it!! First Grade here we come!



Markus Vincent
Vah-Ki Head Start



James Soke
Gila Crossing Community School
Jimmy, I'm so proud of all your hard work this past year. Just know we are always going to be here for you and we love you. Love, Mom and Dad.



Jennifer Blackwater
Gila Crossing Community School
This is only the start, know your family is always here for you. We love you Minnie.



Sacaton School during the eighth grade promotion program Sacaton School District Photo

Sacaton School District works through pandemic for successful year

Emma Hughes
Gila River Indian News

This academic school year has experienced many changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After many schools began closing for health and safety, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey and Arizona Superintendent Kathy Hoffman announced in March that schools would be closed for the remainder of the academic school year.

With schools closing for the health and safety of everyone, many have had to adjust to sudden changes in continuing providing education. Working closely with Community representative's schools created a COVID-19 preparedness plan.

Sacaton School District was on spring break when school closures for the state was announced. "Our number one priority is the safety of our students and our staff to be in service to the Community," said Cheryl Paul, Sacaton School District Superintendent. The school provided two pathways for students to continue learning from home. Pre-school and Kindergarten students received iPads while first - eighth grade students received Chromebooks for online learning through Google classrooms and Zoom instructional video meetings and learning packets were distributed.

Schools have also been providing meals in the Community. Sacaton School District has provided over 47,000 meals, offered curbside or drop off at designated locations. Gila Crossing Community School has also provided around 70,000 meals to students and families in the Community. Both schools will continue to provide meals throughout the summer.

While returning to school will be different, all schools are preparing to return in August. Taking safety measures and adhering to CDC recommendations with hand sanitizers being installed, more thorough cleaning of classrooms and campuses, face masks, temperature checks, and even classroom adjustments for physical distancing.

Sacaton Middle School Promotion

Like many schools in the Community have finished out their school year and have found new ways to celebrate the accomplishments of students.

Sacaton Middle School celebrated 50 students with a parade. On March 20, promoting eight graders rode along Bluebird Road as family, friends, teachers and staff parked on the side applauded them. To celebrate the achievement, students received their certificate of promotion, a "swag bag" filled with school supplies, dinner and a yard

sign with their picture on it for the family. The promotion was broadcasted live on Gila River Broadcasting Corp.

Lt. Gov. Robert Stone was present at the promotion sharing a few words with the students and family, "little different but none the less very exciting, right?" Lt Gov. Stone closed the promotion parade with a few remarks, thanking everyone who showed up and made it possible while congratulating the students, "this is something unique that they will remember down the road in their lives."

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis also joined the parade, "Attending graduations and grade promotions of our Gila River students is one of the most rewarding events I get to participate in as your governor," said Gov. Lewis to the Sacaton Braves of 2020.

Superintendent Paul has said it was the most memorable event because of all the heartfelt support from the Community to celebrate the student's accomplishment during a time like this.

During the school's promotion Sacaton Superintendent, Cheryl Paul introduced Sacaton Middle School's new principal, Cindy Lewis whose education career spans 20 years of working with K-12.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

long-term goals," she said.

As with many goals in life Galeano said, "Dedicate your spare time towards a hobby or learning a new skill and master it. By doing this, you are not only investing in yourself by expanding your knowledge and building self-confidence."

The payoff, she added,

is the investment back into the community, by sharing your skills and knowledge with others. When times are tough, hobbies help recharge individuals mentally and physically, and can connect people to a supportive community where students plan to attend school.

"Remember that it is nearly impossible to reach

your goals alone. Your community wants to see you succeed and will help you reach your goals," said Galeano. She said, in order to foster support, the community needs to be aware of your presence and be aware of how they can help you, so get out into the community and ask for help.

Graduate who grew up in District 5 studies statistics and thanks mentors

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

Nicolas Osife took the time to look back on his education, from leaving the reservation to moving west to obtain two degrees at California State University, Long Beach.

Last December, Osife received his master's degree in Applied Statistics, which followed a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics and Arts in Mathematical Economics from CSU in 2017.

"Currently, I work as an Insurance Adjuster for Kemper Insurance Corporation," said Osife. He continues to study statistics on his spare time, which influenced him to pursue a graduate degree in statistics.

He said "I grew up in District 5 with my grandparents, Dana Osife Jr. and the late Sharon Osife. This accomplishment is a result of their love, encouragement, and constant indulgence of my curiosities."

Although Osife works away from the Community, he would like to come home and apply his knowledge to benefit GRIC in any way possible. Osife said it is important for students to not be afraid to fail, and take each assignment or course one at a time.

"It doesn't have to be perfect; it just has to be done," Osife remembers a professor telling the class about the deadline for a difficult assignment.

Osife added that he

wanted to drop out of college, and as a new student the amount of work can be daunting, but taking things slow helped with his transition through school.

"Over the last eight years, when fear held me back, those words pushed me forward. If you want to be a college graduate, it only takes one imperfect assignment at a time," said Osife.

Osife acknowledged his many mentors who pushed him forward at different stages of his life including John and Tanya Duck, Toni Osife, Denise Osife, Paula Osife, Richard Vance, Peggy Marcoline, and Dr. Russell Benford.



Nicolas Osife earned two degrees, most recently a master's in Applied Statistics from California State University, Long Beach. Photo Courtesy Nicolas Osife

It was fun in the summertime at Vah-Ki Head Start's drive-thru promotion



Students and staff enjoyed a summertime beach theme for their drive-thru promotion in District 5. Kyle Knox/GRIN



Anarina Kisto (center) received her certificate at the ceremony. Kyle Knox/GRIN

Kyle Knox
Gila River Indian News

Vah-Ki Head Start honored their students who completed a successful 2019-2020 year on Friday, June 12, with a drive-thru promotion at the District 5 Multipurpose Building. Community departments and programs lined the parking lot with vehicles adorned with a summertime beach theme giving out incentives and gifts.

Doriann Pahona, Vah-Ki Head Start Family Service Advocate, helped coordinate the drive-thru promotion for the students. Pahona said, "We really missed our kids and wanted to bring them out for something different. After seeing how other drive-thru promotions were held, we felt we could offer the same for kids."

Pahona mentioned that 37 students that attended Vah-Ki, 32 students par-

ticipated in the promotion, and 20 of those will be promoted to Kindergarten next year. Ms. Angie was the teacher for the Head Start students, and Ms. Neva, Ms. Veronica, and Ms. Coree were the instructors for the Pre-K students. All teachers and staff were in attendance to deliver certificates and gifts.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., families entered the parking lot in 15-minute increments based on student names. Winding around the lot, families received goodie bags, backpacks, treats, and facemasks from the school administration. Students were met by their teachers who gave them their certificates, unique gifts, and a polaroid with their teachers to take home at the end of the route.

Ms. Neva, the preschool teacher, was excited to see her students at the promotion. Neva felt that this event was necessary

because, "We have a connection with the children and families and want to show support for them during this time of COVID and want to feel supported aside from homework packets and food delivery."

Students appeared happy to see their teachers, bus drivers, and school staff for the occasion. The drive-thru style is just one of many new and innovative ways to celebrate students' accomplishments across the Community. And before the drive-thru in May, the Vah-Ki Head Start held a parade where they drove by their students' homes and cheered them on as a means of keeping in touch.

Ms. Coree, Head Start teacher aide, said the parade and promotion are essential because "we're trying to help make things as normal as possible, at the moment, and for them to know they are important."



Vehicles lined up for the drive-thru promotion in accordance to public health concerns due to COVID-19. Kyle Knox/GRIN

Class of 2020



High School Graduates

Joseph Cooper III, Coolidge High School

Amaya Duran, Coolidge High School

Kaylyn Escalante, Coolidge High School

Gabriella Hart, Coolidge High School

Antonio Manuel, Coolidge High School

Xavier Martinez, Coolidge High School

Sonja Mendoza, Coolidge High School

Gabriella Ordonez, Coolidge High School

Owen Osife, Coolidge High School

Susanna Osife, Coolidge High School

Alette Paul, Coolidge High School

Kristopher Perkins, Coolidge High School

Maliciah Allen, Hamilton High School

Samantha Munoz, Hamilton High School

David Reams, Hamilton High School

Kode Joaquin, Hamilton High School

Jazzmyne Terry, Hamilton High School

Monique Makil, ICAN/Basha High School

Erin Allison, ICAN/ Basha High School

Macio Lewis, ICAN/ Hamilton

Michaela Dixon, Basha High School

Patricia Stewart, Basha High School

Maxwell Xavier, Basha High School

Sadie Notah, Camille Casteel High School

Malachi Siquieros, Camille Casteel High School

Aram Coleman, Chandler High School

Gabrielle Francisco, Chandler High School

Angelo Mendoza Jr., Chandler High School

Analicia Pablo, Chandler High School

Jasmine Ramos, Chandler High School

Domnick Johnson, CAP

Kevin Pino, CAP

Shayna Antone, CAP

Dedric Osife, CAP

Dinah Lewis, CAP

Adam Gonzales, CAP

Alicia Pedro, Casa Grande Union High School

Helen Whitman, Casa Grande Union High School

Allen Pratt, Casa Grande Union High School

Jeremy Ramirez, Casa Grande Union High School

Allisia Ramon, Casa Grande Union High School

Adrianna Santos, Casa Grande Union High School

Jacob Stone, Casa Grande Union High School

Emil Zavala, Casa Grande Union High School

Larry Carra, Vista Grande High School

Makayla Lemaster, Vista Grande High School

Jeanine Lopez, Vista Grande High School

Nicoleah Morgan, Vista Grande High School

Karissa Ortega, Vista Grande High School

Julian Sanchez, Casa Grande Union High School

Dominque Sims, Casa Grande Union High School

Zachary Lewis, Casa Grande Union High School

Phillip Johns, Casa Grande Union High School

Sydney Johns, Casa Grande Union High School

Sebastian Manuel, Casa Grande Union High School

Tristan Natani, Casa Grande Union High School

Karissa Ortega, Vista Grande High School

Julian Sanchez, Casa Grande Union High School

Dominque Sims, Casa Grande Union High School

Zachary Lewis, Casa Grande Union High School

Phillip Johns, Casa Grande Union High School

Sydney Johns, Casa Grande Union High School

Sebastian Manuel, Casa Grande Union High School

Tristan Natani, Casa Grande Union High School

Tyler Namoki, Casa Grande Union High School

Jordan Apkaw, Casa Grande High School

Delray Baptisto, Casa Grande High School

Emilee Baptisto, Casa Grande High School

Verlen Belgarde, Casa Grande High School

Elaysia Colt, Casa Grande High School

Marissa Copperfield, Casa Grande High School

Savannah Dixon, Casa Grande High School

Isaiah Francisco, Casa Grande High School

Antonio Garcia, Casa Grande High School

Ovidio Gonzales Jr., Casa Grande High School

Trista Pedro, Casa Grande High School

James Matthews, Casa Grande High School

Sabrina Marrietta, Chemawa Indian School

Kassandra French, Chemawa Indian School

Victoria Lewis, Chemawa Indian School

Reina Jackson, Chemawa Indian School

Erica Lopez, Chemawa Indian School

Alonzo Lopez, Chemawa Indian School

Lydia Antone, Chemawa Indian School

Johnathan Soke, Chemawa Indian School

Erika Guzman, Sherman Indian School

Jayden Smallcanyon, Sherman Indian School

Eleena Kisto, Riverside Indian School

Nathan Norris, Riverside Indian School

Civlik Avila, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Tafv Dillon, Betty H. Fairfax High School

David Hernandez, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Kaiuwe Johanning, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Tommy Knox, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Elwin Terrazas, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Rachael Whempner, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Roslynn Fohrenkam, Betty H. Fairfax High School

Sarai Ortiz, Desert Vista High School

Deja Sustaita, Desert Vista High School

Ashley Johnson, Desert Vista High School

Blanca Miranda, Tempe High School

Daniel Enos, Tempe High School

Cameron Andrew, Mountain Pointe High School

Harley Williams, Compadre High School

Judis Lee Acunia, Cesar Chavez High School

Ky Helen Allison, Cesar Chavez High School

Priscilla Bilagody, Cesar Chavez High School

Alisia Chavez, Cesar Chavez High School

Jasmine Elizarraraz, Cesar Chavez High School

Nicholas Hendricks, Cesar Chavez High School

Lorenzo James, Cesar Chavez High School

Malaya Pablo, Cesar Chavez High School

Marissa Stewart, Cesar Chavez High School

Carlos Verdugo, Cesar Chavez High School

Raman Palma, Cesar Chavez High School

Joshua Lamas-Enos, Cesar Chavez High School

Loukas Brown, Desert Hills High School

James Poreana, Quest High School

Christian Rodriquez, Apollo High School

Chauncey Jackson, Window Rock High School

Angelina Camacho, Girls Leadership of Arizona

Alisa Belgarde, Skyline Gila River

Amaironi Valtierra, Career Success High School

Angelica Ulate, Skyline Gila River

Anthony Hooke, Skyline Gila River

Arrosha Kelley, Skyline Gila River

Chauncey Jackson, Window Rock High School

Christian X Rodriguez, Apollo High School

Cloudia Acevedo, Leading Edge Academy

Darin Young, Lewisville High School

David Young, Lewisville High School

Deja Johns, South Mountain High School

Harley Williams, Compadre Academy

Hope Miles, Skyline Gila River

Izabelle Johns, AZ Compss Prep

James Pereana, Quest High School

Janel Lewis, Penn Foster High School Online

Jonathan Manuel Jr., Student Choice

Julien Young, James Bowie High School

Kesean McMahon, AZ Compass Prep

Kobie Jose, Skyline Gila River

Loukas Brown, Desert Hills High School

Lucille Rhodes, Primavera High School

Marielena Casarez, Skyline Gila River

McKenna Joyce White, Lawrence High School

Miah Gregg, Skyline Gila River

Mira Jose, Florence High School

Nizhonii Begay, Benjamin Franklin Senior High

Parnell Lewis Jr., Skyline Gila River

Reddsun Mack, Florence High School

Sequoia Lucero, Skyline Gila River

Ty Murphy, Gilbert High School

Yvette Hernandez, Skyline Gila River

Zaylen Joe, Skyline Gila River

Higher Education Graduates

Camille Bien	Antioch University	MA	Clinical Psychology
Monique Horton	Aveda	Certificate	Esthiology
Amy Jones	Carrington College	Certificate	Medical Assiting
Natalie Navarro	Carrington College	Certificate	Veterinary Assistant
Janita Sabori	Carrington College	Certificate	Pharmacy Technician
Myriah Scarlett-Coleman	Carrington College	Certificate	Medical Assiting
Stephanie Thomas	Carrington College	Certificate	Dental Assisting
Iris Murray	UC-San Diego	BA	Sociology
Sabrena Russell	FIDM	Masters	Business Administration
Emmanuel Whempner	Grand Canyon University	MS	Business Analytics
Robin Bilagody	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Pubic Service & Public Policy
David Curtis	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Educational Studies
Sarah Francisco	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Social Work
Shoshone Hayes	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Applied Biological Science
Brian Howard	Arizona State University	Masters	Science & Technology
Dominique Lopez	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Social Work
Laiken Molina	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Educational Studies
Cassandra Pena	Arizona State University	Master	Social Work
Ellisa Rangel	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Social & Behavioral Science
Eva Rodriguez	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Business Administration
David Ruiz	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Marketing
Maria Varelas	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Social Work
Danielle Whempner	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Business Communications
Catherine Williamson	Arizona State University	Masters	American Indian Studies
Alyxandria Woodard	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Interdisciplinary Studies
Jaclyn Fox	Arizona State University	Master	American Indian Studies
Velia Moncada	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Interdisciplinary Studies
Nina White	Grand Canyon University	MS	Leadership
Manuela Acosta	Grand Canyon University	BA	Christian Studies
Paul Halbison	Northern Arizona University	BA	Music
Amber Mix	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	ABUS	Business, General Requirements
Anthony Gray	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	Certificate	Organizational Leadership
Santiago Jones	Mesa Community College	Certificate	Fire Science
Alianna Pratt	Mesa Community College	Associate	General Education
Nephi Howard	Mesa Community College	Associate	Exercise Science
Davia Wiston	Eastern Arizona College	Associate	General Education
Alyssa Wilks	Mesa Community College	Associate	Music Business
Julie Aparicio	Mesa Community College	Associate	Nursing
Alyshia Enas	Central Arizona College	Associate	Nursing
Marilyn Galvan	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	Associate	General Education - English
Andrew Zelenak-Ruiz	South Mountain Community College	AAS	General Business
Allen Baca	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	AAS	Nursing
Dani Satala	South Mountain Community College	AA	General Studies
Amy Antone	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	AA	Information Technology
Patrick White	Glendale Community College	AA	Emergency Response & Operations
Shea Pablo	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	AA	Science
Allan Miles	New Mexico State University	Bachelor	Anthropology
Aric Wiseman	Boston University Metropolitan College	Master	Computer Information Systems
Belinda Galeano	Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science	MD	Doctor of Medicine
Christofer Crull	Coe College	Bachelor	Political Science
Danielle Allen	University of Dubuque	Bachelor	Criminal Justice
Jeffery Mercado	nsitute of American Indian Arts	Master	Creative Writing
Ryan Myore	Haskell Indian Nations University	Bachelor	Business Administration
Rheanna Jackson	Feather River Community College	Associate	Health and Exercise Science
Shawn Cortez	College of the Desert	Associate	Fire Science
Jamie Becker	California State University-Dominguez Hills	Bachelor	Business Administration
Beatrice Gonzalez	University of Southern California	Master	Health Administration
Steven Hyatt	American Public University	BA	Information Technology Mangement
Kanlee Poterfield	DeVry Univeristy	BS	Computer Infromation Systems
Isabella Tapelt	Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising	AA	Visual Communications
Monica Garcia	Ottawa Univeristy	MA	Education
Douglas Van Druff II	Western Washington Univeristy	BA	Psychology
Garry Jackson	RSI	Diploma	Electro-Mechanical
Kyle Milda	RSI	Diploma	Electro-Mechanical
Christina Wilson	UC-Santa Cruz	Certificate	Human Resources Mangement
Sara Duenez	Grand Canyon University	BS	Business Administration
Vanessa Jauregui	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Business Administration
Nataly Jimenez	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Healthcare
Theron Johns	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Exercise & Wellness
Naomi White	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Biological Science
Duncan Wiston	Arizona State University	Bachelor	Information Technology
Rachael Antone	Central Arizona College	Associate	Liberal Aits
Giavanna Trop	St. Johns University	Bachelor	Legal Studies
Nicholas Osife	California State University - Long Beach	Master	Applied Statistics
Roberto A. Jackson	Academy of Art University	Master	Photography
Bianca Hernandez	North Carolina Pembroke	Bachelor	Business Administration
Davidson Manygoats	Central Arizona College	AA	Electrical Engineering
Kaitlen Ida White	Haskell Indian Nations University	AA	Liberal Arts
Tracy McAfee	University of Arizona	Bachelor	Rehabilitation Studies and Services
Yvonne Garcia	Scottsdale Community College	AA	Motion Picture, Television and New Media Productions

Congratulations Message from Governor Stephen Roe Lewis

The class of 2020 met unprecedented challenges to complete the academic year. In the face of so much change and adversity, they still prevailed. With the closure of schools and public health concerns, they boldly continued with their school work and programs to show the world that they are truly GILARIVERSTRONG. The class of 2020 represents a high-point in a year filled with so much strain and difficulty. Our students stuck to their goals and adjusted to earn their promotions, diplomas and degrees. This year is historic in many ways, but it is also unparalleled in the pride that I have for all those who achieved their dreams during these tumultuous times. From home-schooling, to social distancing, and top-to-bottom changes to our tribal government, we stand before a group of individuals who showed us the real meaning of strength and determination.

I've often said that the future is in the hands of our youth and our graduates. Although that future may seem uncertain at times, I am more confident than ever that the class of 2020 is destined to play a big role in the prosperity of the Gila River Indian Community. They will use their minds, they will use their hearts, and they will use their inner-spirits to guide them as they have guided us this year.

Traditional pomp and circumstance was replaced with creative and unique ways to recognize our students. Although ceremonies were postponed, delayed or significantly modified, we will always remember this class for the way they carried themselves and represented our Community.

This is also a time to celebrate our Tribal Education Department, educators and school staff who likewise persevered to give these students a meaningful school year. This year would be much different had it not been for their cooperation and resourcefulness. The classrooms may have been empty, but they still found ways to fill eager young minds with valuable lessons.

No message of gratitude would be complete without mentioning the families that are also included in the class of 2020. Your example brought out the best in these students. From Pre-K and Kindergarten, middle school, high school, college and beyond, they looked to you for direction and you delivered. Your assistance deserves its own cap and gown, but as a parent, I know your only reward is seeing your children happy.

So once again, to this exceptional class, we are extremely proud of you and hopeful for the things you will accomplish in the coming years. Remember this feeling, get used to it, because success will follow you if you work hard and never stop learning. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020!



"Putting Our People First"
Stephen Roe Lewis
Governor, Gila River Indian Community



CLASS of 2020
#GilaRiverStrong