

2022 GRADUATION ISSUE

O'ODHAM ACTION NEWS

JUNE 2, 2022

OODHAMNEWS.ORG



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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

Cougar

Zara Apodaca
Alani Colon
Cesario Gonzalez
Royalty Ironleggins
Remy Martinez
Cedric Schurz
Savina Smith
Evan Pedro

Butterfly

Zayvin Johnson
Jordan Kavoka
Arlene Pacheco
Zaniyah Reyes
Daniella Roman
Beatrice Toya
Symon Yazzie

Turtle

Enok Antone
Pharoahe Benally
Violet Garza
Gracie Leyvas
Cedreah Prieto
Shyla Ramon
Amelia Ray
Jayden Spex
Illias Stevens

Eagle

Benjamin Burke
Carmelita Dallas Ramirez
Luna Hernandez
Ezekiel Jackson
Hazley James
Noah Lopez
Aviana Miles
Alexa Phillips
Addiana Soza
Matthew Tashquinth
Jayce Urias

Cottontail

Clarrissa Corona
Paizley Johnson
Emilia Ledezma
Logan Loring
Lilith Ludlow Martinez
Jose Ramos Galvin
Aunistee Reyes
Terrence Rincon

Quail

Lorenzo Boone
Kassidy Cabrera
Kaden Fulwilder
Brianna Goodwin
Adriana Griego
Christopher Hayes

SRES KINDERGARTEN PROMOTION

CLASS OF 2022



Kindergarten Classes

Mrs. Valencia

Lyonia Acosta
Mya Beach
Juanita Cruz Burns
Emmaline Enas
Lovell Enos
Zekial Jackson
Carlos Mendivil
Shea Millford
Jaymes Perez
Julian Rodriguez
Romeo Romo
Adrian Ulloa
Kazehn Zotigh-Lewis

Mrs. Hunsaker

Larry Gates
Lylie Juan
Shaolynn Leonard
Brice Manuel
Kylie Manuel
Joshua Miguel
Imari Ramirez
Malcolm Santos
Sy'anna Tate
Rizzoe Tanner
Kori Valencia
Mason Veale
John Wahpeta-Ross
Serenity Wendell

SRES 6TH GRADE PROMOTION

CLASS OF 2022



6TH Grade Grads Class of 2028

Mason Baptisto
Melody Brown
Abiel Catan *In memory of
Abiel Catan
Brionna Carlos
Dani Enos
Elizabeth Fulwilder
Beniam Gonzalez
Aukiah Goseyun
Anthony Grey
Kellia Hayes
Roselina Hernandez
Maxwell Holmes
Cyenna Lewis
Adrian Ludlow
Lotus Manuel
Adrian McGilbary
Eliza McIntosh-Hill
Lexi Milford
Matthew Mitchell
Alanisia Montano
Trianna Montiel
Danny Morrie
Cameron Ramirez
Lacey Richards
Kayla Schurz
Angelina Soto
Alina Valencia
Victoria Valencia
Risela Vest

MARCIA THOMAS



MILES KING

CAMERON MILLER



HOSHIIN REINA



OMAR VILLALPANDO



VICTORIA SMITH



ERICA SCHURZ



NYESE JONES



JACOB COOPER



NALONI LOPEZ



MINA ROSE THOMAS



JOSEPH HOWARD



AIMERY KUWANVAMA



ANDREEA MIGUEL



ALYSSA FRANCISCO



GABRIEL SALDIVAR



ROBERT VALLES



CARLIN TANNER



ARLYSSA SMITH



KERSTIN JOHNSON



EMILY VICENTE



AIMERY KUWANVAMA



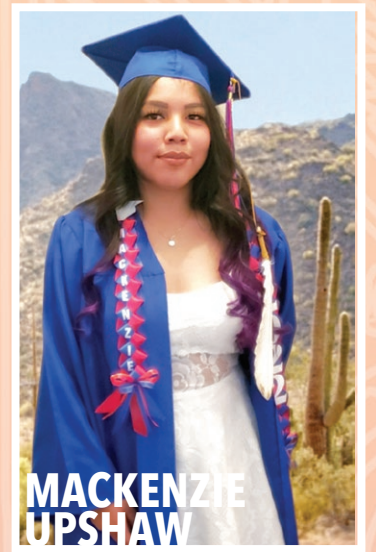
ANDREW WOOD



SKYLER JOHNSON



KENNISE MCGERRT



MACKENZIE UPSHAW



KY-MANI HARNEY



ALYSE SILVERSMITH

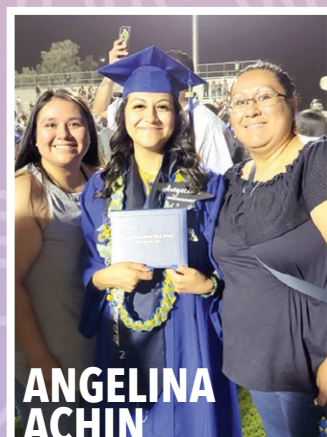


VICTORIO NOLINE-TIGER

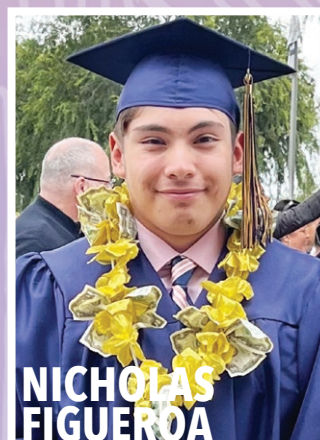
ARACELI MONTIEL-JAIME
ALYSE SILVERSMITH



SOLIEL SMITH



ANGELINA ACHIN



NICHOLAS FIGUEROA



SAVANNAH GAITAN

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

CLASS OF 2022



JAMES SCHAAF



SHADOWHAWK HARRIS



JESSE THOMAS

Isaac David Vallejo Jr. Graduates from North Canyon High School

BY STEPHANIE HONEYCUTT

Parents: Eliza M. Smith (bot) and Isaac D. Vallejo Sr. (bot)

Maternal Grandparents: Stephanie Honeycutt and Ronald G. Smith (bot)

Paternal Grandparents: Deborah Vallejo and David Vallejo Sr.

Isaac Vallejo Jr. spent his years at North Canyon High School in AP Honors classes and earned a spot on the Dean's List for obtaining straight A's! He is planning to attend the University of Arizona to major in medicine and minor in math. We are extremely proud of Isaac's accomplishments thus far and we love him immensely.

Isaac is the son of Eliza Smith, the sixth-grade teacher at Salt River Elementary School who died tragically on July 30, 2019. Although Isaac lost both of his parents on the same day, he was able to overcome what could have been a detriment to his future. I would like to acknowledge, honor and commend the per-



Isaac Vallejo, Jr.

son who stepped up to be his guardian and adoptive mother, Valerie Vallejo. She gave her life for Isaac Jr. and his two sisters and became their full-time support. She never wavered in helping them grow into the people they are meant to be. Isaac is making his mark in this world and we are all here to cheer him on so one day we will call him Dr. Vallejo! He is going to make our Community proud.



HALEY SMITH

COLLEGE GRADUATES

CLASS OF 2022



Justine Cooper

Avalon Institute Esthetics Program
Congratulations!



Rosa Cruz

Grand Canyon University
Bachelor of Science in Applied Management
I am very thankful to the SRPMIC for the opportunity to further my education. The resources that are available to us as Community members are wonderful. I am proud to serve this Community.



Vincent Littlecharlie

RSI
HVAC Certificate
I'd like to express my gratitude towards George Standing Elk for pushing me to this opportunity, and thankful for everyone that were helpful through this profound journey. Much love and appreciation.



VANESSA BAMBI POOYOUA

Master's of Eller Executive Business
We are so proud of you, Vanessa (Bambi) Pooyouma, for your perseverance in obtaining your Master's Degree while working full time! We are so honored & proud to watch you grow.



Xavier Smith

RSI
Electro-Mechanical Technologies
What an amazing experience! I'm extremely grateful for my wife and son. I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for them. Thank you both. I love you guys!



Rachel Stoneburner

Arizona College
Medical Billing and Coding
Congratulations Rachel on accomplishing and finishing college. We know how hard you worked for this and we are so proud of you. We wish you all the best and success for your future.



Werahre Tahmahkera

Arizona State University
Bachelor of Science in Political Science
Werahre your family is proud of your hard work and accomplishments graduating Summa Cum Laude honors and continuation of Law Masters of Sports Law program in the fall. #Go Devils!



Felicia Toya

Associate's Degree in Healthcare Administration
The struggle and long nights were all worth it. This is for you my babies!



ALEXANDER PAUL FIGUEROA

Pima Medical Institute
Veterinary Assistant
Congratulations!

Parents: Veronica Paul Figueroa and the late Edwin Lloyd Paul.



Humberto Figueroa Jr.

Point Loma Nazarene University
Masters of Sport Medicine
Congratulations!

Parents: Veronica Paul Figueroa and the late Edwin Lloyd Paul.

Q&A: DEEDRA DALLAS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA Master's in Library and Information Science

Tell us about your educational background.
I recently received my Master's in Library and Information Science (MLIS) from the University of Arizona. Prior to this, I received my Bachelor of Science in Food and Nutrition Management from Arizona State University (2016). I attended Scottsdale Community College to complete my general studies before transferring to the university.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The friends and connections that I made during my MLIS program at the University of Arizona was a highlight for me. I had to push myself to connect with others, since my program was completely online, but I appreciated the group projects because they opened doors for me to get to know others in my field/program. One of my top highlights was completing my Master's program with a 4.0. I struggled academically in high school and I failed a lot in my undergrad program, so to graduate with my MLIS with all A's showed me that I can push myself to succeed and go for something if I really want it for myself. My past failures pushed me to succeed.

What are your future plans?

Connecting others to information and personnel services has become a passion and a highlight for me in the beginning stages of my career in the Library and Information Science field. I look forward to opportunities that will help me excel in positions serving individuals through information services. One of my main career goals is to use my education to serve Native American communities. Whether serving my community in Salt River or on the Hopi reservation, I hope to use my education and experience advocating for access to information and technology for Native American individuals. I am committed to working toward building diverse and inclusive library and information environments for Native populations throughout my career. The thought of all of this is exciting!

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I've recognized that on rural Native American reservations, there is a lack of information and communication technology services. I realize that this economic downfall has an impact on access to justice, public health and government services, and education and employment opportunities. In the next 10 years, I want to use my education and knowledge to advocate for change in these areas.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

My parents both influenced me to get an education, along with my brother. I saw the opportunities that opened up for them after pursuing their education. I also realized that achievement in higher education among Native populations is lower than the national average. After realizing this and wanting to make change, I told myself this change begins with me.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

When I graduated from high school, my GPA was so low that I had to start from the very bottom when I enrolled for courses at Scottsdale Community College. I



spent many hours in the tutoring center, and I enrolled in a math tutoring course so that I could pass my math courses. I failed courses and had to take them over, but I kept pushing myself to succeed. My hardships and challenges in my undergraduate studies shaped my focus and determination that helped me get through graduate school.

When I got into my graduate courses, I had to push myself to open up and share with my graduate peers. Graduate school at times was lonely and awkward since I did not have many Native American peers, and in some courses I was the only Native student. I had to learn when to speak up and when it was okay to stay silent and listen. Learning about the disparities in access to library and information services among diverse populations was a hard pill to swallow, but it helped shape my career goals.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

Be graceful with yourself and learn new subjects while in school. It is okay to fail, failure is normal, but get back up and try again and ask for help when you need it. I failed chemistry in my undergrad program three times. The fourth time, I passed the course at the top of my class. You just have to keep trying. Also, when it comes to your educational and career goals, remember yourself overall. Yes, definitely pursue your higher educational and career goals, but don't lose yourself in the process.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I am thankful for my dad, who passed on some years ago. I know he would be excited and proud of how far I've come. I am also thankful for my mom, Laverne Dallas, and my brother, Stephen Dallas. Without them, I don't know where I would be today. I love them so much, as they are the foundation and support that hold me up when I fall and push me to keep going when I feel doubtful. Thank you also to my professors at the University of Arizona during my MLIS graduate program and my advisor at the Salt River Higher Education Office, Mario West. Finally, a shoutout to the University of Arizona for putting together an MLIS program that addresses marginalized and underserved communities within the library and information field. This definitely needed much highlight and change

Parents: Laverne and Patrick C. Dallas

Q&A: DARREN HARRIS

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design

Tell us about your educational background.

I received my Associate of Applied Science from the Art Institute of Phoenix back in 1997. In 2010, I went to Gateway Community College for Office Technology. I received my Associate in Applied Science in Motion Pictures at Scottsdale School of Film and Theatre in 2016. Then in 2017, I received a Certificate of Completion in editing at Scottsdale School of Film and Theatre. I went to Arizona State University for an undergraduate degree in Environmental Design and graduated on May 9, 2022.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The only thing I can say is that I was able to attend college about 20-something years since I was in high school. Some of the conversations I sat in are things I would not talk about, but I am glad to have had that experience.

What are your future plans?

I plan to keep working for the Community. I like what I do here in the Information Technology department, making videos for the Community on governmental departments and anything culturally on Community members.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I hope to work in a supervisory position and maybe receive my master's in communications from Arizona State University.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

No one went to college in my immediate family; everyone started to work for their families. Getting a higher education was something I wanted to do for myself. I also wanted to get paid more in my current position. I like to learn new things that can help me out daily.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

The only obstacle I faced attending ASU was time. In 2017, I tried to go for the Graphic Design program, but I didn't get into the program for my first year, so I had to pick another major. I decided on Environmental Design. That put me a year behind. Then in August 2019, two days before the fall semester started at ASU, I was unable to stand on my right foot for about two hours after work that day. I had a doctor's appointment at the old clinic in Salt River the next day. The doctor told me what was wrong with my foot, but unfortunately they didn't have the technology to help me. I needed to go to the



nearest emergency room or go to Phoenix Indian Medical Center. In the end, I was diagnosed with bone deformation, and my right ankle will never be the same. I had to learn how to walk again and take that semester off. There were some challenges working with Salt River Higher Education because of the number of semesters it took me to graduate, but in the end, it all worked out okay.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

I say do it for yourself. Do what I did and strive to understand the classes you are taking. Set high personal and academic goals and aim for them. Show up for class, study and work hard so you can accomplish your higher education goals. Don't be afraid to ask questions, even if you ask another student who may have a better understanding of the subject and can explain it better to you. If you have doubt, remind yourself that you can do this. Like my mom would say, "You can do it because you are O'odham."

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I want to thank Mary Garcia and Dee Dee (Diane Cashoya) for their support on my higher education journey. Those two were the ones who told me I could do it initially when I was thinking about getting my Bachelor's in Graphic Design; unfortunately, that didn't happen. It was meant for me to get a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design. I also want to thank my mom. Although she is not here physically to see me graduate, I know she was there spiritually.

Parents: Ruth Perkins (Salt River) and Leroy Harris (San Carlos)

Grandparents: Henry (Salt River) and Hattie (Vah-ki) Perkins, Albert (San Carlos) and Hattie (San Carlos) Harris

Q&A: REINA WASHINGTON-JOHNSON

SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Associate of Applied Science in Hospitality, Spa & Wellness Management

Tell us about your educational background.

In 2012, I started the [SRPMIC] Apprenticeship Program for hotel management. I also interned at Talking Stick Resort, completing 2,000 hours of on-the-job training. I worked as a housekeeper, phone operator, hostess for Orange Sky Restaurant and Wandering Horse Buffet, cashier for Black Fig Bistro, room service runner, and as a locker attendant and front desk receptionist for the spa. In 2014, I received my Apprenticeship Certificate for Hotel Management. I was permanently hired at Talking Stick Resort in the spa department, and in 2020 I was promoted to Guest Services Lead for the spa.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

My most rewarding college experience was graduating. That feeling of accomplishment has made me a stronger person!

What are your future plans?

Next, I plan to focus on family! So much of my time has been dedicated to work and homework, leaving no time to really just sit and visit with family. I am looking forward to connecting with my family!

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

I really love working at the spa. I wanted to learn more about the spa industry, and I wanted to be more of an asset to the spa department. My education taught me so many valuable skills that I can apply to my job. Also, I watched my mom pursue her college degree while having a full-time job and raising six kids. My mom is such a hard worker, and she showed me that dedication and always doing the right thing will take you far in life. She has been an inspiration to me!

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

It definitely was not an easy journey. I work full-time, have a 7-year-old daughter, and at one point I was a caregiver for my grandparents. Balancing life was certainly a challenge, but what



always kept me going was my end goal and my family. My family has always been there for me. If I needed a babysitter, a ride or anything else, they were there.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

My advice is to believe in yourself and the rest will fall into place. And wherever you go, go with all your heart!

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I want to thank my amazing husband, Michael Johnson. He helped me in so many ways. He takes care of me, our daughter and our home. His love and support for us is unmatched. My entire life changed for the better when I met my husband! I want to thank my beautiful mom, my sisters (Crystal, Adrianna, Arcelia and Andrea) and my most loving grandparents! I also want to say thank you to Jana Bakus for being that spark that sent me on my education journey. Also, my amazing bosses at work, who I learn so much from. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone who believed in me and encouraged me every step of the way! I am so blessed to have such wonderful people in my life. I love every one of them!

Parents: Linda and Guillermo Gonzalez
Grandparents: Leon and Ruthella Washington

Q&A: ROCIO ANN MARQUEZ

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA Professional Science Master's in Applied Nutrition

Tell us about your educational background.

In 2006, I received my Associate of Occupational Studies from Le Cordon Bleu in Scottsdale. In 2018, I received my second associate degree (Associate of Arts) from Scottsdale Community College before earning my Bachelor of Science in Nutrition (December 2020) from Arizona State University. Currently, I am attending the University of Arizona for my Professional Science Master's in Applied Nutrition (with an emphasis in Health and Wellness), which will be completed in three more months! I am also working part-time with the [SRPMIC] Diabetes Education Program, where I must implement a program in order to fulfill my Capstone project for graduate school.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

I work very hard trying to balance my schoolwork, mental health, physical health and family life, so every "A" I receive gives me a sense of pride because it shows me that almost anything is possible with hard work and diligence. So far, I've graduated with high distinction from SCC and summa cum laude from ASU, and I currently have a 4.0 in graduate school.

What are your future plans?

A month ago, I was one of two applicants accepted for the Southwestern Dietetic Internship, which will take place in August at Phoenix Indian Medical Center along with a two-week rotation in Pinon on the Navajo Nation. Every registered dietitian-to-be must complete an accredited internship of 1,200 hours before taking the national RD examination to receive the credentials. I am excited that this internship will provide me with the experience of working with the Indigenous population so that I may better assist our Community, since my future goal is to work as a registered dietitian for our tribe.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I would like to be working for our Community as an RD, become a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES) and help my husband pay off our mortgage.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

I wanted to do something that would benefit the lives of other people. I was a blackjack dealer for four years when I decided that that occupation was not something that brought me fulfillment. I started thinking, Well, what would make me happy? What is needed in the world? Helping my Community in bettering their health was the answer, especially since my mom had passed away from complications due to diabetes the year prior.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

When I started my first semester of college, I was working part-time and had an 18-month-old and then



another baby a year and half later. Balancing my babies and school was my toughest obstacle. It was important to me to be a present mother. To achieve this, I attended college part-time. Although it has taken me seven years of schooling to receive my bachelor's and (soon) master's degrees, it was worth spreading out my courses, because it gave me more time to understand the material (in order to get the best grades) and I was able to thoroughly enjoy watching my babies grow. They will be 9 and 6 this summer!

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

I was so scared of attending college because I didn't think I was smart enough. It turns out you don't have to be super smart; you just have to work super hard, be organized and stay (mostly) focused. Keep telling yourself you can and do your best to make your mental health a priority. Our minds are a powerful tool to help us achieve what we want in life, so take care of it.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

My husband has been my cheerleader and main source of support through these past seven years of college. He's always there to boost my morale and lend an ear when I need to vent. Thank you, babe, for nurturing my soul when I faced uncertainty and for putting up with my mood swings! Another person I would like to acknowledge is my cousin Girssy (Denelle Prieto). She was the first of the cousins to go to college and has inspired me to do the same. Many times, I thought, If she can do it, I can too. Some days, that was all I needed to push through.

Parents: Gloria "Gill" Ann Flores (Wellington) and Agustin Flores

Grandparents: Joshua Lewis Wellington and Louvella Wellington (Andrews)

Q&A: SAMANTHA MIELKEY

ARIZONA COLLEGE Associate of Applied Science—Health Care Administration

Tell us about your educational background.

Westwood/EVIT: High school diploma and Certified Nurse Assistant, 2001
Arizona College: Medical Assistant Certification, 2019

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The most rewarding is telling other people that they, too, can achieve certificates and degrees.

What are your future plans?

I have just taken my nurse entrance exam and got accepted to the Arizona College of Nursing. I start on June 27. I will be obtaining my Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2024.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I will be working as a nurse in a hospital or clinic, preferably in Salt River, working toward my Master's in Nursing. I also hope to be traveling the world and having new adventures.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

My Aunt Victoria Makil was an LPN, and I always wanted to be a nurse like her. Thank you, Auntie. I know you see me from heaven.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

In my fourth session, I contracted COVID-19. When I finally went to the hospital to receive an IV treatment, the doctor said I could not receive the treatment because my oxygen level was too low. They immediately took me to the emergency room. I was put on regular oxygen and admitted. I spent one day on a regular floor, and then the next day they moved me to the intensive care unit. My oxygen was not improving, but in fact getting worse. The doctor put me on high-flow oxygen, and then my oxygen level was finally holding steady and improving. Two weeks later I was moved out of ICU, and one week later I was released. During this time my mother was also admitted to the hospital for COVID-19, and thankfully she was released within two weeks. I am extremely grateful for our recovery.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

You can do it! Just try and try again.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I thank God first and foremost, and a great thank-you from my heart to my wonderful, beautiful mother, Sandra Lee Ybarra, for all her infinite love, care, time, effort and discipline. Without you, Mom, I could not make it. I hope I make you happy and proud. I love you more than anything in the world. I would also like to thank my sisters, Marie and Marla; my nephews, Zach and Marcelino; and all my loved ones who listened and helped in any way and pushed me to finish and continue.

Parents: Marcelino Torres Ybarra Jr. and Sandra Lee Ybarra



Q&A: IDA SCABBY

SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Associate in Business Management

Tell us about your educational background.

After graduating in 2006 from Mesa Mountain View High School, I met my husband on a study abroad program to Australia, where we shared our culture with the Indigenous people of the Australian Outback, the Aboriginal people. From there I both attended school and worked full-time thanks to Casino Arizona's education program for Community members. I finished two degrees from Scottsdale Community College in the past seven years, and I am very interested in learning more about business and business management. I will be transferring to Arizona State University, where I hope to be accepted into the W.P. Carey School of Business.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

My most rewarding experiences have always been right before graduation, when I always learned the most about myself. In 2015, during the last two months of the semester, I had my third son right before finals and graduation. With a brand-new baby, I had to figure out how to pass all my classes in order to graduate. It was a super-tough semester, but luckily I graduated with my AA degree. My current graduation experience for 2022 was very rewarding and by far the most difficult. I had two accounting courses back-to-back, an online Calculus 3 class, and a statistics class that I had to pass with a C or better. I was

afraid I would not pass my calculus class—not that it was too hard, but I had to learn how to manage my time in order to study for each class. I felt like I did not have enough time in the day to finish my assignments. The reward came when I got to graduate and feel the relief of completing a difficult task that took many years.

What are your future plans?

I plan on attending ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business and graduating a few years down the road.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I would like to finish paying off my house and find a job that I love at the [SRPMIC] where I can use my strengths to help others or challenge myself again.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

My parents are my biggest influencers. I dedicated my semester and graduation to my late father, Robert Lee Scabby, who passed away in 2020. He wanted me to always finish what I started. He helped tutor me during my 2020 school semester when the schools shut down during the pandemic. He was able to see me complete another tough semester before he passed. He would "lovingly" get after me to keep going and encouraged me to think critically. He wanted me to be strong in math and improve my overall mental capabilities. He would tell us to "be mentally strong, don't quit, and always finish strong even if you feel weak." My other great influences are my grandparents, Paul and Beverly

Smith. I am named after my great-grandma Ida, and everyone always tells me that she devoted all of her time and career to the tribe's Education programs. This includes my grandma Beverly, as she also worked in education. So, I guess you can say I wanted to live up to my namesake. I also personally wanted to go to school, because so many trailblazers have paved the way for us. Without them dedicating their lives to provide the aid and programs that we have now, we wouldn't have these educational opportunities so readily available.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

The hardest part of my final semester was time management and prioritizing. All my classes demanded the same amount of time and energy, so I had to decide which ones I would focus on and which would have to wait. It was a constant battle to keep my life in balance. I would spend the morning on math, the afternoon on accounting, and the evening on stats. All this included my normal work schedule too. I would study at work when it was slow. Studying for the exams was my biggest obstacle during the semester.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

You can do it! It is worth the time and effort.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I would like to thank the Slots department at Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort for allowing me to go to school and work at the same



time. It would not have been possible to graduate without their flexibility with my school schedule. I would also like to thank my tribe for paying for my education and helping me to achieve all that I have achieved. I am truly blessed to be part of a great Community such as the SRPMIC.

Parents: Robert and Deanna Scabby
Grandparents: Paul and Beverly Smith

Q&A: TASHA SILVERHORN

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY Master of Arts in Communication

Tell us about your educational background.
I graduated 20 years ago from Westwood High School. I also attended the East Valley Institute of Technology, where I took photography and received a certificate of completion. Right after high school I had a one-month break and started my Associate in Visual Communications (Graphic Design) at Collins College. I went on to get my bachelor's degree, but unfortunately, I was dropped due to bad attendance. In 2017 I joined about 40 other SRPMIC members in taking Grand Canyon University's cohort program to receive a Bachelor of Science in Applied Management. I completed that program in spring 2020. I began my master's program for Communication in fall 2020 and completed it this spring.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

My most rewarding college experience was learning. I got to refresh my brain and learn what is new and what has changed over the last 20 years. Another was getting to participate in a college graduation and have my husband and children there to see me get my diploma. I hope that was something my girls know they can also achieve and experience someday.

What are your future plans?

My future plans are to not do homework for a while, but I would like to take other courses to learn about different things at Scottsdale Community College, since it is free for SRPMIC members. I enjoy being a reporter, so I will continue to work for *O'odham Action News*.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

I hope to be retired! But if that does not happen, I will continue to work for the Community and maybe have a management position within my current department at the Community Relations Office.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

In 2017 I looked at the graduation issue of *O'odham Action News* (I wasn't working there at the time) and I saw lot of my peers getting their degrees. I thought I could do that too. My cousin Tasbah Adams let me know about the GCU Cohort program, and we started in fall 2017 with a group of 40 SRPMIC members. Some have finished and others are still working on their degrees, but it was a start to getting back into school. The reason I went for my master's degree was so that when I walk into a room someone will play Metallica's song "Master of Puppets" as I walk through the door (no one has played that when I walk into a room yet) and the program didn't seem so hard to complete. I



also wanted to pursue my higher education to advance in my career and show my children, nieces and nephews that they can do anything as long as they put their minds to it.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

This time around there was only one obstacle that set back my progress by a few months. I had to undergo chemotherapy last spring and I had to put school on hold. But even before my treatment was done, I continued on with my classes.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

Give it a shot. If you thinking about going to college or taking any kind of classes, go for it! If you have not taken classes in a long time, it might take a bit to get into it, but once you finish you will feel happy you took the chance.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I would like to thank my husband, Seneca Silverhorn, for all his encouragement and support, and my children Marcia, Alva and Thaila for giving me space to do my assignments. Thank you to my job for their support, as well as my family, friends, the Community and the SRPMIC Higher Education Department.

Parents: Lauren Butler and Terrance Villalpando

Maternal Grandparents: The late Timothy Butler and Melva (Lewis) Butler

Paternal Grandparents: Gretta (Collins) Federico and the late Amos Villalpando

Q&A: KYLIE SMITH

UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Tell us about your educational background.

I attended the University of Portland and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. My first two years of college were dedicated to prerequisites and the last two years were dedicated to my nursing courses.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

It was a rewarding experience to be able to attend classes in person again and see all my friends after 1.5 years of online classes.

What are your future plans?

There are so many career opportunities in the nursing field. I plan on working in labor and delivery or on any pediatric unit as a new grad nurse. After being a nurse for a couple of years, I hope to go back to school to become a nurse practitioner or nurse midwife.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

Professionally, I hope to flourish in the healthcare field and learn everything about the specialty that I'm working in. Personally, I hope to travel, buy a house, start a family and invest in real estate properties.

Who or what influenced you to pursue your higher education?

My parents and grandparents have influenced me to pursue higher education since I was young.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

Go for it! Find your passion and work toward that goal so that your career is something that you find rewarding and inspiring every day.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me throughout nursing school and encouraging me to be my best self. I would also like to thank Salt River Higher Education for making it possible for me to go to my dream school and be part of an excellent nursing program.

Parents: Lonnie and Shawna Smith

Grandparents: Gerald Smith and Gloria Culbertson



Q&A: ANGELA WILLEFORD

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY Masters in Legal Studies

Tell us about your educational background.

Masters in Legal Studies from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at ASU

What are your future plans?

Continue to grow and advocate for the Community.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

Be the best version of myself.

Did you face any obstacles while attending college/university? If so, how did you overcome them?

Working, being a mom and being with law students was very eye opening, I doubted myself and it was tough to retrain my brain to think like a lawyer.

What advice would you give people considering higher education?

Do it. Don't think about it and waste years just get it done! You can do it!

Is there anyone you would like to thank for their support as you pursued your education?

I want to thank ASU ILP for supporting me and of course my husband and my lovely kids: Jacob, Sandra and Kaya.



SRPMIC & Salt River Schools Present...



2022 GRADUATION RECOGNITION PROGRAM

**Talking Stick Resort
Thursday, June 23, at 6 p.m.**

OPEN TO THOSE
WHO REGISTERED
BY FRIDAY, JUNE 3

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (480) 362-2547
OR VISIT HE.SALTRIVERSCHOOLS.ORG



THINKING ABOUT GOING TO COLLEGE?

The Salt River Higher Education Program Provides Financial Aid, Scholarship, recruitment, Retention and advising services to Community members interested in furthering their education.

QUESTIONS CALL (480) 362-2547 OR VISIT WWW.SALTRIVERSCHOOLS.ORG/

CONGRATULATIONS 2022 GRADUATES!



ANGELINA ACHIN

Casa Grande Union High School
"We are proud of you Angie, all your hard work has paid off!" Love, your family!



ABEL ACUÑA JR.

Saguaro High School
Congratulations we're so proud! Son of Chuvak Montiel-Nuñez and Abel Acuña. Grandson of David and Alida Montiel, and Margaret Acuña and the late Jesse Acuña Sr.



MASON BAPTISTO

Congratulations on your 6th grade graduation! I'm so proud of you son! You are smart and can achieve anything you want. Good luck next year in 7th grade. Love, your mom Marcy.



EVAN PEDRO BURNS

ECEC
Daddy is so happy you are starting your future I wish you nothing but the best so let's do good in school daddy might need a lawyer one day.



AZARIAH CARMELO

Coronado High School
Congratulations Azariah Carmelo! Way to go. Wishing you the best. Parents: Joseph and Dominica Navarro.



ALANI COLÓN

ECEC
Alani, we are proud of you and what you have learned in pre-school, you're going to do great in kindergarten! May God watch over you always. Love, the Family.



KATRINA COOPER

Lehi Elementary
She was awarded for best sign language and best dancer.



JOSHUA CORREA

Mohave Middle School
We are very proud of our Joshua and we can't wait to see what the future brings for him. We're so excited to see him grow in his high school years! Dad, Mom, and Sissys love you so much Son!



KHLOE DEAN

Noah Webster Pima
"I'm so proud of you KhloeOey! Your determination, character, and positivity shined through the past year. I can't wait to see the great things life has in store for you."



NICHOLAS FIGUEROA

St. John Bosco High School
Congratulations!
Parents: Veronica Paul Figueroa and the late Edwin Lloyd Paul.



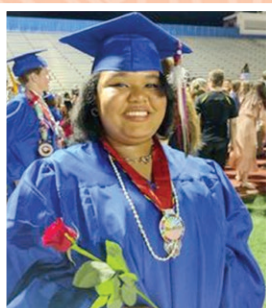
ALYSSA FRANCISCO

Westwood High School
Congratulations on your graduation from High School, we are so proud of you we know it wasn't easy but you did it! Job well done, Love your family.



SAVANNAH GAITAN

Skyline High School
Her family is proud of her and are her biggest fans! She will be attending ASU to continue her education.



TAYLOR GUTIERREZ

Mountain View High School
CONGRATULATIONS! All the hard work and being pushed from time to time paid off and YOU DID IT! Class Of 2022! We're ALL PROUD OF YOU!
Parents: Kristin & Lizeth Gutierrez



KY-MANI HARNEY

Saguaro High School
Congratulations on your latest accomplishment, continue to shine at whatever you choose to do! We love you Ki! -Mom, Dad and family



SHADOW HAWK HARRIS

Sequoia School for the Deaf
Shadow you faced many challenges and defeated all odds! We are overjoyed to witness this huge life achievement, may Creator continue to guide you to accomplish great things in life.



JESSE HOSAY, JR.

Mountain View High School
Congratulations son, I can't wait to see all the other great things you will do in your life. You make us so proud. Love your sisters and madre.



KERSTIN JOHNSON

Westwood High School
Congratulations! We are so proud of you and this is just the beginning of more success in your future. We love you!!



SKYLER JOHNSON

"Congratulation and BRAVO!" for your well-deserved success! We're all happy to share in your impressive achievement and wish you continued success! God bless you and be with you always. Love your family.



MILES KING

Westwood High School
Congratulations Miles! Your entire family is proud of you, good luck on the next chapter of your life. Love, all of your family and friends.



AIMERY KUWANVAMA

Westwood High School
"Babe, you DID IT! I hope you continue to do good things in life. We are so proud of you. Congratulations Babe! -Mom, Mal, Dad, and Tata".



MARCO LEWIS

Hermosa Vista Elementary
Congratulations on all of your achievements this year Marco. We are so proud of you and can't wait to see what great accomplishments Junior High will bring you.



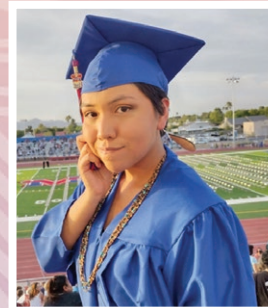
GRACIE LEYVAS

ECEC
Congratulation Gracie Baby! We are so proud of you! Love Mom, Dad & Sissy.



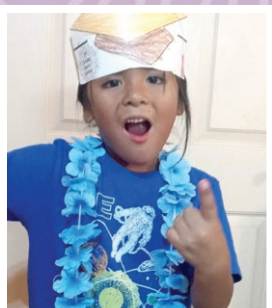
NALANI LOPEZ

Westwood High School
Nalani, you always make us so proud of you. Continue to challenge yourself and make your own path. We love you sooo much little lady! Go Sun Devils!



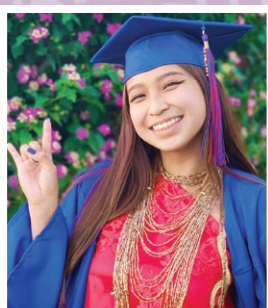
SOMARA LORING

Mountain View High School
YOU DID IT BABYGIRL! We're so proud of you, words can't express the joy we all felt that day. You will achieve great success so don't stop here keep going!



DYLLAN MANUEL

Pima Traditional School
Congratulations Dyllan we know how hard you worked. Daddy and Grandpa are always with you. Well ACTUALLY you make us proud we love you with all our hearts! Your family!



KENNISE MCGERTT

Mountain View High School
May Creator guide you in the next chapters of your life! He knows that you have the capability to move mountains. Congratulations Keeks! We love you!



JOSEPH MIGUEL

Congratulations Joseph Miguel with this year's ups and downs you made it. We are so proud of you class of 2022 love always your mom, brothers & the Justin & Soos families.



ARACELI MONTIEL-JAIME

Saguaro High School
Granddaughter of David and Alida Montiel. She's Aukmor O'odham, Yaqui and Mexico. Mom, sister, aunties, grandparents, and cousins congratulate you! Ara, may Creator bless and protect you.



KORRA NARANJO

San Ildefonso Pueblo Headstart
We're so proud of you baby girl. Seeing you grow is the greatest gift we could ask for. We all love you. The Family.



VICTORIO NOLINE TIGER

Saguaro High School
Thank you to the family and friends who help shape and mold him, we are proud of all that you have accomplished and of the future that lays before you.

CONGRATULATIONS 2022 GRADUATES!



ELI SQUISH OSIF

Hermosa Vista Elementary
Congratulations to "Squish" Moving on to 7th grade...Keep up the good work...your family is proud of you and we're here to help in any way we can...good luck!!



HOSTIIN J. REINA

Westwood High School
This is only the beginning of a great journey. Make sure to help others, be ever grateful and live your best life along the way. R-Crew



AVA ROSE REYNA

Noah Webster Pima
Great Job Ava! We are always proud of you; you work so hard. Keep up the good work you do! Love Grandma, Dad, Aunties and Uncle Liam!



BRANDON REYNA

Noah Webster Pima
Proud of you Grandson. You're going to 6th Grade! All your hard work paid off, what an achievement! Love from us all, Grandma, Dad, and the whole Silversmith, Reyna Family.



JAZMYRN RIENNA

Webster Elementary
You've excelled in science, played the Cello in Orchestra, and overall adapted graciously as a kind young lady this last year of Elementary. We couldn't be prouder.



ELI RUIZ

Whittier Elementary School
Congratulations! Promoted from kindergarten.



KAYLEE RUIZ

Noah Webster Pima
Congratulations!



JAMES SCHAAF

Corona del Sol High School
We are so proud of you! Have fun at ASU & Congrats on making the ASU Marching Band Drumline!! Love Mom, Dad, Ava & Grandma Pat



ERICA SCHURZ

Westwood High School
Congratulations Erica you did it! The obstacles you went though you still managed to do it! We are super proud of you! Don't stop here, keep pushing, keep standing strong.



KAYLA SCHURZ

Salt River Elementary School
Kayla, CONGRATULATIONS on your sixth-grade promotion! Good luck in Jr. High School. -Love your entire family.



ALVA SILVERHORN

Mohave Middle School
Good job on completing Jr. High School Alva! Keep doing your best and we hope you have fun in High School, you only have four years left! We love you!



THAILA SILVERHORN

Noah Webster Pima
Yay Thaila! Keep reaching for the stars and shining in Jr. High School. We love you.



ALYSE SILVERSMITH

Saguaro High School
Sweet Girl, we are all so proud of you! You've accomplished all you strived for in high school. The beginning of many more wonderful achievements in your life. Love Mom, Family



JADE SILVERSMITH

Mohave Middle School
Yay! We are so proud of you! Congratulations and our Best to you on your next adventure, High School! Keep up the good work! Love You, Mom, Grandma, and Family.



HALEY SMITH

East Valley Academy
Congratulations Haley you did it we are all so very proud of your accomplishment You have completed your greatest task and finished strong with awards. Love you brother, sisters & Dad.



SOLIEL SMITH

Fountain Hills High School
You did it Lolly! Keep moving mountains daughter. You'll never cease to amaze me. I am very proud of you. I love you forever and always. - Mom



VICTORIA SMITH

Westwood High School
Congratulations Tori! You never gave up and you did it! We love you Mom, Kassie, Sonny, Ariana, Syla, grandma, auntie, uncles and many cousins.



VIOLET TALGO

ECEC
Congratulations!



AMAYA TASHQUINTH

Noah Webster Pima
Congratulations on your kindergarten promotion.



JESSE THOMAS

Basha High School
Congratulations Jesse! This is only the beginning of anything you want in life. We are so proud of you! Love Your Family.



MARCIA THOMAS

Westwood High School
Congratulations, we are so proud of you and your accomplishments. You never gave up. Can't wait to see what the future holds for you; reach for the stars. Love your family.



AIYANNA TOYA

Noah Webster Pima
6th grade Promotion. Jr. high here I come!



BEATRICE TOYA

Momma is very proud of you, always stay positive on your journey through life there always be many challenges, learn from them and it will make you stronger! Love Mom.



ISAIAH TOYA

Noah Webster Pima
1st grade here I come!



MACKENZIE UPSHAW

Mountain View High School
YOU DID IT! I'm so proud of you for never giving up and always trying your best. Now go out there and make good choices for yourself. Be happy! - Mom.



DAMIAN VELA

Noah Webster Pima
Congratulations papa, you made the honor roll all year and now you'll be going into accelerated 1st grade! Your daddy, Sergio, is always looking out for you up in heaven.



EMILY VICENTE

Congratulations Emily! We are excited and can't wait to see all the exciting things you will do as you further pursue your education! We Love you!



OMAR VILLALPANDO

Westwood High School
So proud of you and all that you have accomplished these past years, I know the road doesn't end here for you, now on to college. We love you son.



TAYLOR WILLIAMS-GUERRERO

Rancho Solano Preparatory School
From your first day at Adobe Montessori through Eagle College Prep to graduating from Rancho Solano Preparatory School, you continue to amaze! We are beyond proud! Love you most kid!



ANDREW WOOD

Mountain View High School
I'm so proud of you Andrew. Now your off to make all the choices in your life now. It doesn't matter where you go or don't go. I'll always love you and be proud of you. Love Mom.