

2019 GRADUATION ISSUE

OODHAM ACTION NEWS

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JUNE 6, 2019



CONGRATULATIONS



"Every great accomplishment was once considered impossible."

- Denelle Lynn Prieto, University of Oklahoma Graduate

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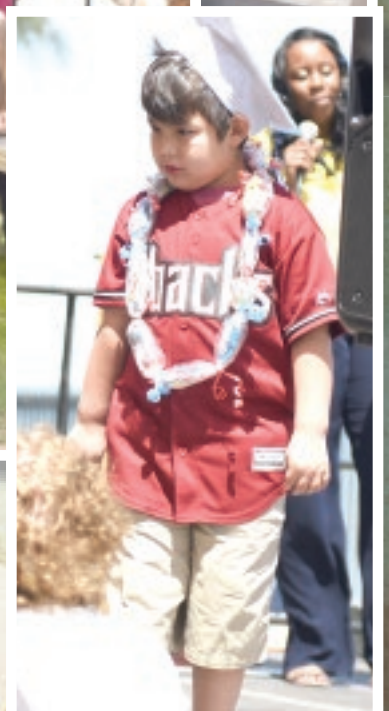
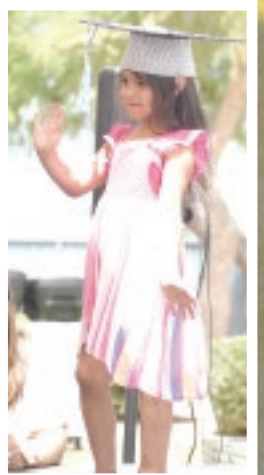
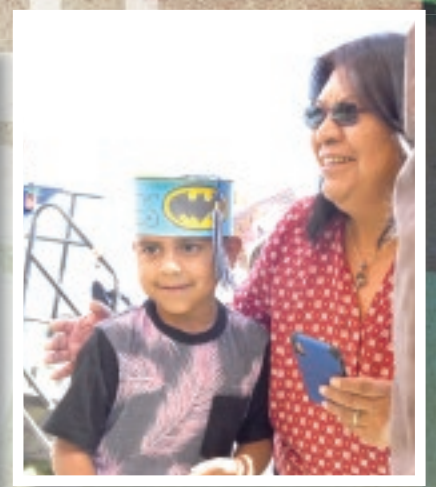
OTHER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

PG 8 -9- SALT RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

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PG 11-14 - Q&A, GRADUATE PROFILES

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



SALT RIVER KINDERGARTEN

Simya Alvarez	Nathaniel Smith
Evelyn Beach	Yessenia Ulloa
Jade Becenti	Fawn Velasquez
Aryah Biakeddy	Marcus White
Alanah Brown	Kaleb Whitman
Joseph Casias	Ayden Andreas
Nikaiden Joe	Cash Burns
Victoria Ledezma	Ryleigh Clitso
Maurico Lewis	Penelope Garza
Alonzo Lopez	Zayne Hosay
Adrian Miranda	Ray Lewis
Jaelynn Osby	Nathaniel Lopez
Johnny Sampson-Lewis	Amiyah Mack
Jasmine Santo	Liam Manuel
Ciara Schultz	Rosalee Manuel
Samaya Short	Eduardo Martin Ramirez
Zaiden Whitman	David Montiel
Eahn Zotigh	Zion Percy
Olan Antone	Adrick Rivers
Traymiah Baldwin	Heosig Valencia
Adrian Brown	Lyla-Anne Waters
Layla Campelos	Zaila Whitman
Jazzen Chiago	Rylee Carlyle
Kayzahn Lewis	Dominic Hinojosa
Evalee Manuel	Bradley James
Eryk Miles	Sa'vik Judum Lewis
Ariel Montiel	Joseph Miller
Aaron Reay	Numezio Sandoval
Joseph Red Elk	Nyjah Tecumseh
Reannon Santoya	Tzitlalli Zaragoza



NOAH WEBSTER KINDERGARTEN



NOAH WEBSTER 6TH GRADE PROMOTION



SALT RIVER 6TH GRADE PROMOTION

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Leon Anderson | Valdine Lovato |
| Vihnom Antone | Jacob Medina |
| Daryin Azule | Garial Miguel |
| Marcos Boone | James Miller |
| Stoahohokmel Brown | Jayson Pablo |
| Duryus Burke | Mackenzie Renteria |
| Michelle Carl | Micah Reyes |
| Isabella Clah | Eylihn Sampson |
| Dante Davis | Aubrey Smith |
| Kolby Declay | Lynniel Smith |
| Samira Dockerty | Alaina Stacey |
| Lucos Enos | Davon Strong |
| Nolan Fountain | Duke Talieje |
| Jayden Frederick | Rianna Tate |
| Ramon Garcia | Brianna Thomas |
| Manuela Gutierrez- | Dominick Thomas |
| Easchief | Serinty Thompson |
| Christian Holmes | Jobe Ulloa |
| Daniel Howard | Mario Vasquez |
| Alekcia Ivins | Cherish Vavages |
| Devin King | Roxanne Wood |
| Sidro Lewis | Nosiah Yazzie |
| Gabriella Lopez | |



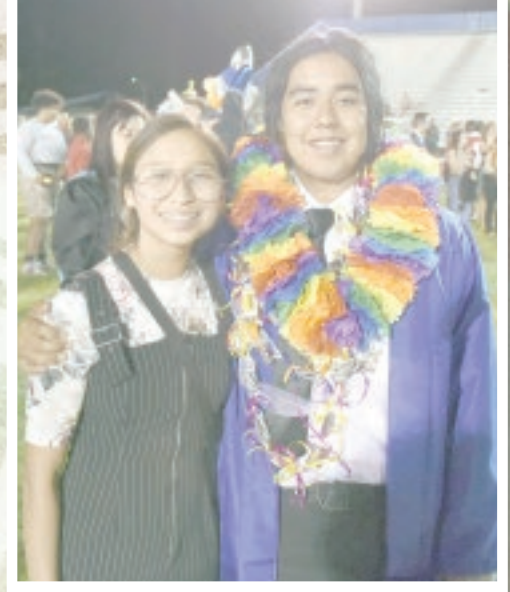
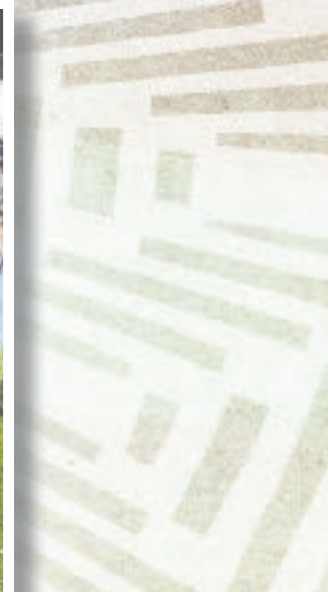
SALT RIVER 8TH GRADE PROMOTION

Diante Anderson
 Amerie Boni
 Isaiah Burns
 Jodeci Casias
 Oni Clah
 Morgan Cruz
 Damion Dorchester
 Benjamin Francisco
 Juy Fulwider Standing-Elk
 Taylor Garcia
 Samantha Harris
 Wisdom Hill
 Gage Howard
 Racine James
 Dominic King
 Hayden King
 Malcolm Kuwanvama Jr.
 Ayla Loring
 Diandra Losey
 Lucas Manuel
 Gabrielle Martinez
 Jade Martinez
 Mark Martinez
 Rosario Martinez
 Makayla Moses
 Samuel Peck
 Kendra Percy
 Ricky Prieto
 Robert Ray
 Wyatt Ray
 Sighman Schurz
 Louie Thomas
 Alex Ulloa
 Garrett Walker
 Samuel Wood Jr.



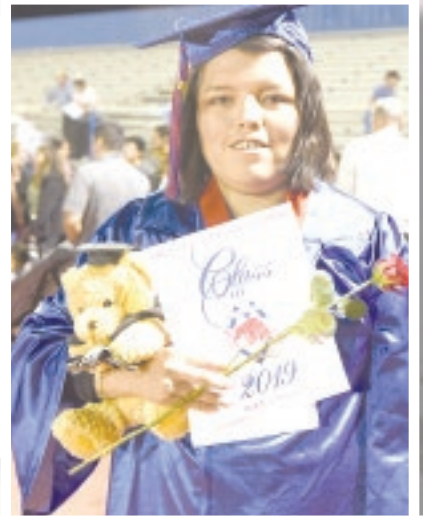
WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Jace Fulwider Standing Elk
 Reshard Antone
 Atel Butler
 Jasmine Cruz
 Vincent Eselgroth
 Xavier Gonzales
 Magdalena Montoya
 Kirium Reyes
 Cisary Richards
 Aiyana Rodriguez
 Annabelle Salcido
 Nathaniel Saldivar
 Jordyn Shaw
 Elyssa Velarde
 Adora Wesley-Howard
 Sage Williams
 Xiuhtlali Zepeda



MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Kyle Toya
 Joshua Smith
 Anaiya Tarango
 Juan Carlos Medina
 Gonzalez
 Derek Andrews
 David Campos
 Danisha Chiago
 David Garcia
 Rayanne Gates
 Justin Judge
 Casey Wood



OTHER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS



Brianna R. Ahumada - Carl Hayden High School



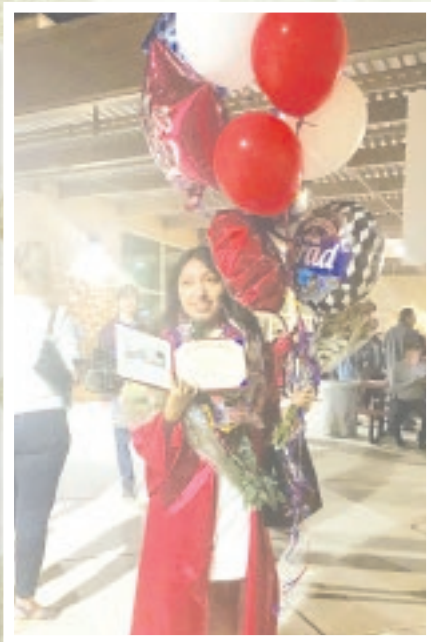
(L-R) Christopher Victor Miles and Julianne Tarrissa Janae Carlisle - Saguaro High School



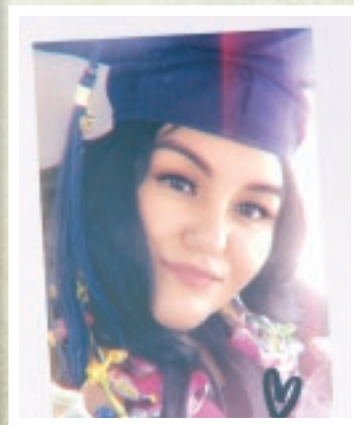
Theresa Thomas - Cesar Chavez High School



Justine Cooper - Chandler Prep



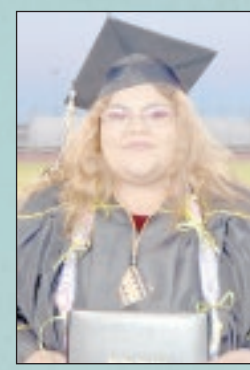
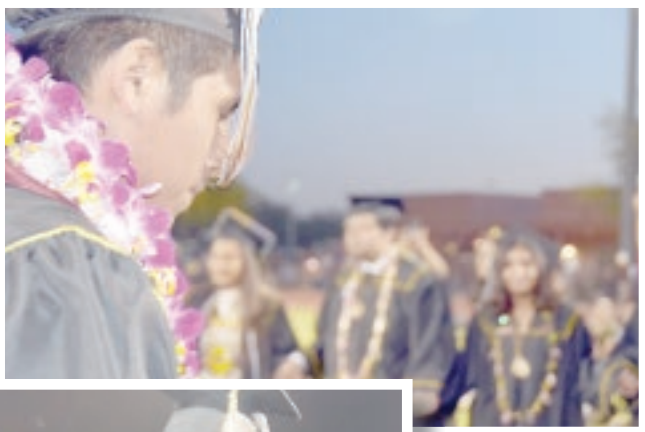
Seneca Johnson - Coronado High School



Alyssa Nino - Student Choice High School in Tempe, AZ



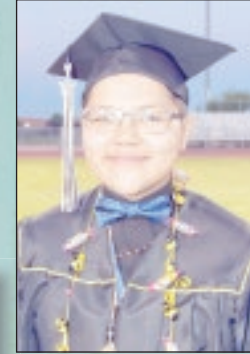
Kristian King - Fountain Hills High School



Sierra Baca



Mercyle Duwyenie



Leticia Hill



Nadine Howard



Luz Jimenez



Malee Joaquin



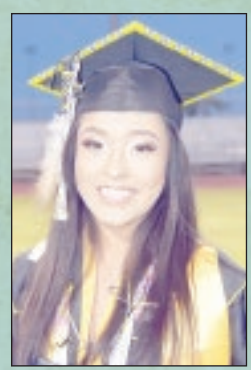
Gregorio Martinez



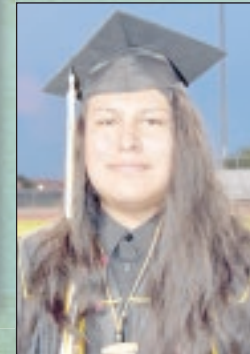
Aaliyah Nodman



Jonathan Perez



Victoria Ruiz



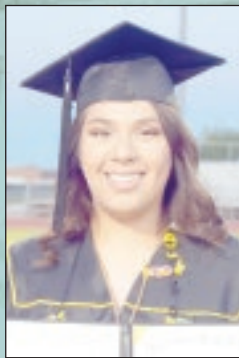
Ezekiael Shaw



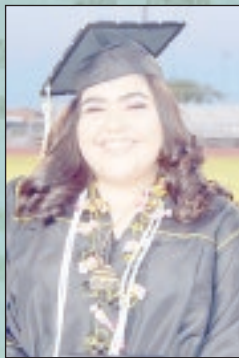
Angel Torres



HIGH SCHOOL



Julia Gutierrez



Solana Harris



Randy Jackson



Caleb Jimenez



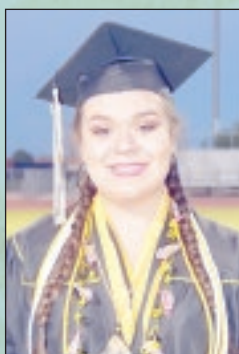
Deomey Lewis



Kyle Lewis



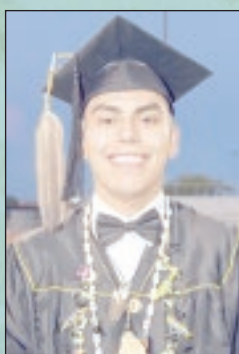
Keanna Osif



Kaitlyn Peck



Brandon Schurz



Jacob Schurz



Daphne Wolters



Amber Yazzie



COLLEGE GRAD PICS



Courtney Wood
Bachelors in Biomedical Studies
Arizona State University



Daniel Smith, Sr.
Bachelors in Justice Studies
Arizona State University



Jacob Robles
Bachelors in Exercise and Wellness
Arizona State University



Mikah Carlos
Bachelors in American Indian Studies
Arizona State University



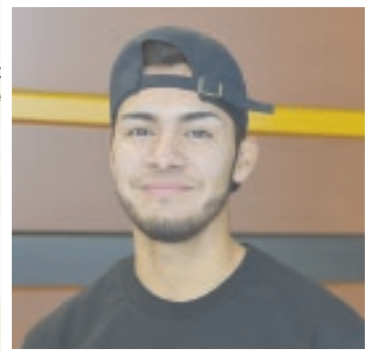
Janet Johnson, BSAM, GCU; Hayzek Rodriguez, Pre-K, ECEC; Teya Johnson-Tiger, HSGrad, ALA; back: Levi Johnson, AA, SCC



Ben Anton - Scottsdale Community College - Degree in Business and a Management Certificate



Tori Paukgana – Bachelor's Grand Canyon University



Aaron LaVar Makil
– Chandler-Gilbert
Community College

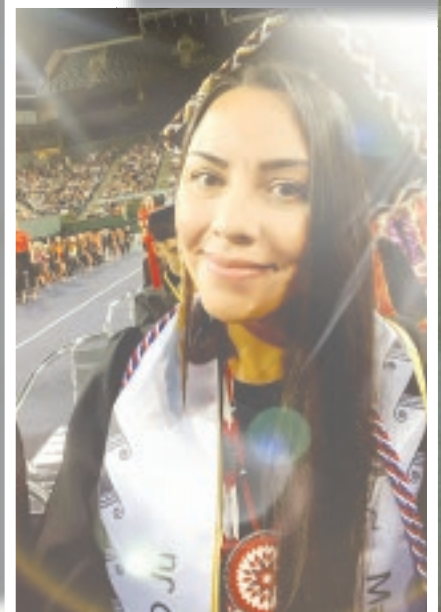


(L-R) Tori Paukgana, Rene Frederick*, Janet Johnson* and Jessica Riena*. *Honors

Congratulations! GCU Grads
Bachelors in Applied Management, Colangelo College of Business, Grand Canyon University
SRPMIC 2017 Fall Cohort Class. GO LOPES!



Andrea K. Noline- Grand Canyon University



P. Sienna Thomas – Associate of Arts-
Anthropology College of the Desert Indian Nation
College

Hosteen Smith Receives Degrees From Cloud County Community College in Kansas

BY MARISSA JOHNSON
O'odham Action News
marissa.johnson@srrpmic-nsn.gov

In 2017, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member Hosteen Smith moved to Kansas to attend Cloud County Community College. He graduated on May 17, receiving his associate of science degree in athletic training and an associate of fine arts degree. Smith is the son of LaRue Renee Smith. His maternal grandparents are Delphina Fern Burton Seota and Larry Alvin Smith. His paternal grandparents are Raymond and Jenny Begay.

Smith chose Cloud County to continue his wrestling career.

“Wrestling. This was the main force behind me going to school,” Smith said. “I wanted to inspire the kids who were younger than me that they can do more than just be really good in high school and not to be afraid to take scholarships that they receive. If I could go to college at my age and embrace the grind, hopefully it would be a catalyst for more people going to college and they can have somebody to look up to.”

Smith faced a lot of obstacles being away from home. Missing out on birth-

days and holidays was a big sacrifice, but it came with a stronger mentality.

“Going back to school and wrestling at the same time was probably the biggest obstacle of my college experience,” Smith said. “Not only did I have to adjust my physical health, but I also had to keep up with my school work and my study hours. I used the mentality [I had] when I was traditional dancing. They always told us that we were dancing for the people who can’t dance—the elders, the disabled and the young children. So, every time I felt like quitting, [I was] overwhelmed, or if I just wanted to go home because I missed everybody, I thought to myself, ‘You’re not just doing this for you; you’re doing this for the people.’”

He plans on coming home to continue school for athletic training. He is still deciding between Arizona State University or Arizona Christian University. Smith’s ultimate goal is to work for the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

His advice for those who want to pursue higher education?

“Don’t be afraid to take a chance,” Smith said. “It’s

probably going to be hard and scary, but when you look back at it, it will be worth it.”

With such a big decision in his life, Smith had a lot of support from those who love him. He thanks all of them for their support for this step.

“I would like to thank my mom and dad, LaRue and Maynard Jackson; my sister Ariel Smith; my best friends Luis Lopez-Rocha and Elaina Gutierrez and my niece and nephews, Tristan, Cameron and Tiaré. Also the rest of my family: my aunts, uncles and cousins.

“My wrestling coach, Cody Cole, for giving me a shot and being my rock when things got tough; my athletic trainer, Steve Schroeder; my training partner, Benny Hernandez III, for being there when I needed him; my teammates for going through the struggle with me and picking each other up; and my friend the late Uuhik Carpenter, for always calling and telling me to stay strong. The tribe, for always having my back and supporting me; and Erica Outcalt for helping with everything for Higher Education.

“To everyone who gave



me encouraging words—you may not have realized how meaningful something as simple as ‘good luck’ was, but it meant the world to me. Finally, to Andy Jay for making all this possible. I wanted to be as good as he was at wrestling since the first day we met when I

was 13; [I wanted] to have people say, ‘Man, that guy is really good.’ He taught me to embrace the grind and to always scrap, and he made sure I was mentally and physically prepared for this journey. I couldn’t have done it without him.”

15-Year College Student Earns Title ‘Dr. Manuelito’

BY TASHA SILVERHORN
O'odham Action News
tasha.silverhorn2@srrpmic-nsn.gov

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member Lacy Manuelito can finally hang up her student cap—she has finished 15 years of college to become a pediatrician. Manuelito graduated from high school in 2004 and graduated from the University of Arizona College of Medicine this spring, fulfilling her childhood dream of becoming a doctor.

“I always wanted to be a doctor, since I was a young girl—specifically a pediatrician, because of the relationship I had with my pediatrician,” said Manuelito, who is the daughter of Patricia and Dwayne Salway. “[I saw] the need in my Community hospital and how much doctors come and go. If someone from the Community became a doctor, they are more likely to stay working in the Community.”

Manuelito still has to complete a three-year residency, which she will serve in Tucson starting in June.

As she begins her career, Manuelito explained that it wasn’t easy to get to this point. Although she always knew what she wanted to do, she struggled with how to do it.

“The biggest thing for me was trying to figure out how to get to medical school. I didn’t have many mentors; I didn’t know where to find them or who to contact and talk to about what I needed to do to get [admitted] to medical school and how to be successful,” said Manuelito. “It wasn’t until a year before I started medical school that I found people to help me with all my questions and was able to be involved with the Association of American Indian Physicians.”

Manuelito was invited to participate in a pre-medical admission workshop, where she was able to meet other Native medical students and physicians. It was there where she made connec-

tions and found people to reach out to for advice and help down the road.

Manuelito explained that she enjoyed all of her 15 years of higher education, learning about cardiology, neurology, the musculoskeletal system and all the other systems of the body. “Within each system we have to learn the anatomy, the physiology and pathology, down to individual cells ... and how it all works together within the body,” Manuelito said.

“I enjoyed all of it. It’s difficult with all the content to learn to pass all of our exams and the national board exam,” said Manuelito. “But when we were able to see pediatric patients, it was all very rewarding.”

During her third-year outpatient clinic experience, she worked with pediatric patients. Interacting with young patients and helping with their care is the reward she gets out of all the hard work she put into school, she said.

Her advice to other Community members thinking about continuing their education after high school is to start volunteering someplace where they think they might want to work, even if they aren’t sure yet what they want for a career.

“If they might be interested in becoming a doctor or a nurse, there are so many different possibilities. It’s hard to get an idea of what you want to do if you don’t have any clue of what [the jobs are like]. Start shadowing doctors, reach out to people in those fields, find mentors and create relationships with them so they can navigate you through the process.”

Manuelito eventually wants to work with the Indian Health Service but is not sure yet which facility or location. Her long-term goal is to be involved with healthcare policy so she can help improve Native healthcare within the IHS at the Community, state or national level.

Manuelito thanks her husband, for being her

biggest supporter.

“We’ve been together since high school, and he has always made it his job to support me so I can accomplish what I wanted,” said Manuelito. “He has always been the one to work and make sure I didn’t have to so I could finish medical school. He’s always made sure our child; house and I were taken care of.”



Q&A: DENELLE LYNN PRIETO

BY TASHA SILVERHORN
O'odham Action News
tasha.silverhorn2@srpmic-nsn.gov

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA OU College of Law, Master of Legal Studies – Indigenous Peoples' Law

Tell us about your educational background.

2012: Scottsdale Community College, Associate of Arts/AGEC Certificate
2014: Arizona State University, Bachelor of Science in American Indian Studies – Policy
2017: Scottsdale Community College, Tribal Court Advocacy Certificate
2019: University of Oklahoma College of Law, Master of Legal Studies – Indigenous Peoples' Law

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

[My most rewarding experience was] having the opportunity to attend college with a full scholarship from SRPMIC. I had many great experiences, however, [including] networking and meeting people from different tribes and nationalities. I met a friend from Afghanistan who shared her culture with me, which I found very interesting. I had many opportunities to represent Salt River in presenting to my peers at the various colleges I attended. Through the ASU American Indian Studies program, we were presenting periodically; previously I had been extremely shy and did not have the courage to speak to the public. The mindset I adapted from furthering my education has helped me in assisting our people. The teachings at ASU from the American Indian Studies professors—from decolonization and knowing the effects of the federal Indian policies—have brought a clear understanding of how this ties into issues within Indian Country today. For University of Oklahoma, I am thankful to have studied intensely about the Indian Child Welfare Act, land and water law, Indian gaming law and other subjects. I now have a better understanding in these areas and will utilize my teachings in the future for the betterment of our Community.



What are your future plans?

To continue where I am currently employed, with the [SRPMIC] Higher Education program. I am very passionate and love assisting our tribe. In time, I would like to advocate for our Community families. Our Community children are the future leaders. I have witnessed families separated and the children being fostered out. We as a Community must find a solution, and I feel the solution is helping families as a whole through implementing traditional teachings and revitalizing our culture.

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

I hope to be advocating for all tribes and continue to follow in my grandfather's footsteps. I would also like to accomplish another master's degree, in either social work or education. I would also like to start my own business in advocating.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

My grandfather, the late Joshua Wellington. He was the first Native in Arizona to be employed by the Maricopa County Sheriff. Upon his retirement, he advocated for tribes throughout Arizona. I would love to carry on his line of work. Also, when the recession hit in 2009, my husband was laid off from his job after 19 years. I attempted to apply for a position, but I had no skills, no education and no experience. I turned my frustrations into education, and from that point I never stopped.

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

I encountered major obstacles at all three institutions. One was dealing with the loss of close family and friends. Also, balancing working full-time, being a full-time student and taking care of my family was a struggle at first. I managed through it all by taking small steps and learning by actually going through these times. I pushed myself to complete assignments and I spent many nights asleep at my desk. There were nights I stayed up all night attempting to complete my assignments or reading until I couldn't see anymore. I learned by taking care of myself, managing my time and most of all balance. That's what helped me through my academic years.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

My advice is do it. You are never too old to further your knowledge. Members of the SRPMIC are extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to attend any accredited institution of higher learning. One remark I hear is, "I am not smart enough to attend college." It's not about being smart, it's about learning to utilize the tools provided to become educated. Our ancestors fought for our lands and what we have today. It is our responsibility to protect our lands, take care of our people (elders) and empower our younger generation by instilling education in our future leaders. Most important, [we need to] revitalize our "himdak" and keep our traditional cultures strong. "Every great accomplishment was once considered impossible."

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

First of all, I would like to express much gratitude to Salt River in general, and the Higher Education program. My number-one supporter, my husband Rudy Prieto—without him and my family, I wouldn't have accomplished my educational goals. My mother and father, for their love and guidance while I was growing up. I now understand why you were both strict with me. It has molded me into what I am today. My grandfather, who made a path for me to follow—I love you, Grandpa Josh. Jan Stevenson, who encouraged me in high school to attend college. And all my friends and family who were influential in my accomplishment.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

My mother is Janice Manuel and my father is the late Dillon Manuel Sr. My maternal grandparents are the late Joshua Wellington and the late Louvella P. Wellington. My paternal grandparents are the late Norma Senich and the late Bilby Manuel.

Q&A: KIM ROSERO-RANCK

BY JESSICA JOAQUIN
O'odham Action News
jessica.joaquin@srpmic-nsn.gov

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY Bachelor of Science in Sociology (2017) and Master of Science in Sociology with an emphasis in Education (2019)

Tell us about your educational background.

I graduated from high school in 1986. Thereafter, I attended junior college and then technical school to become a certified legal secretary. I decided in 2013 that I wanted to pursue higher education. The rest is history.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

My most rewarding college experience is finally passing math and then getting my master's degree. I never imagined that I would ever get this far with my education!

What are your future plans?

I will continue working as the office administrator for a law firm and as a legal assistant to the owner of the law firm.

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

My master's degree is in sociology with an emphasis in education, so perhaps I will be teaching sociology online at Grand Canyon University or in a community college, or maybe I will go to law school to become a lawyer. We will see!

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

My twin sister Michelle influenced me to go back to school. I saw how higher education transformed the way she thought about things, and I saw how she implemented what she has learned in her home and in her work life. My other influencers are "my why"—they are my three sons, Bryce, Zack and Noah. I wanted to show them that anything is attainable as long as you put your mind to it and that we are never too old to learn.

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

I did! My first obstacle was passing math. I dropped it the first time, failed the second time, and passed



the third time! The other challenge I faced while attending Grand Canyon University was learning how to balance working full-time; becoming a single mom; raising my youngest son, who was in high school at the time; and doing my schoolwork after work. I had to prioritize what was important and what was not.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

If anyone ever tells you that school is a waste of time, it is not; and if someone ever says they are too old, they are not. I decided I was going to go back to school at the age of 44. I am now 50. When I first started school, I thought I would never get through this, it's so much work. I would think, Am I ever going to pass math? Anything is possible!

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

First, I would like to thank my SRPMIC Higher Education advisors. They walked with me every step of the way. Also the SRPMIC, which allows our Community members the opportunity seek higher education, and my family and friends who supported me all the way.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

Parents: Samuel and Melanie Rosero
Grandparents: Etheleen Jones Rosero and Bernardo Cobalis Rosero

Community Member Earns Doctor of Pharmacy Degree

BY RICHIE CORRALES
O'odham Action News
richie.corrales@srpmic-nsn.gov

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member Lindsey Baggerly Parks attended the University of Louisville in Kentucky, where she completed her bachelor of science undergraduate degree.

"I have always enjoyed math and science, so I decided to take it a step further and attend Lipscomb University College of Pharmacy [in Nashville, Tennessee] to receive my doctorate in pharmacy," said Parks.

Parks said her parents, Darrell Baggerly and Helene Quirarte Baggerly, always encouraged her to excel in her education, as did a lot of her advisors in high school and throughout college.

"My most rewarding college experience was the research and education I provided to new and expecting mothers regarding safe medica-

tion practices when nursing," said Parks.

She has a job lined up. "As of now, I will be working with Walgreen's pharmacy as a pharmacist. Over the next 10 years, I plan to continue to grow as a pharmacist and provide exceptional patient care in whatever pharmacy setting I may be in."

Her path through college wasn't always smooth. During her years as an undergraduate, she had classes that she struggled in and even had to retake. "But I used the resources available to me to seek help and continued to press forward and not let that hold me back," said Parks. "Continuing your education is a challenge worth your while. Set goals for yourself and do not let anything get in the way of reaching those goals."

She would like to give a special thank-you to her husband and num-

ber one supporter, Bob Parks. "He encouraged me to be my best and stuck by my side through it all," she said.



Q&A: KAILY LARUE TONEY

BY DEBORAH STONEBURNER
O'odham Action News
deborah.stoneburner@srpmic-nsn.gov

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design & Advertising

Tell us about your educational background.

I graduated from Westwood High School in the class of 2015. I also attended the East Valley Institute of Technology.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The most rewarding part of my experience was being able to share my culture through different areas of the work I created. It was very rewarding to educate individuals who don't know about Indigenous people especially O'odham and Piipaash people.



What are your future plans?

I plan to travel out of the country during the summer. It is important to me that I gain experiences outside of the Community, outside of the [United] States. I feel that I have worked very hard this past year, so I deserve to enjoy myself before finding a job.

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

In the next 10 years, I see myself being a part of many things. I hope to have my own business, which I have dreamt of since I was 15 years old. I also aspire to create a design agency or empowerment center within the Community that would be dedicated to the youth.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

Myself and my parents serve as the core influence of my education. They continuously supported me throughout my years in college and never stopped believing in me. I have had much support from the Community also, which helped me tremendously.

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

The toughest part for me during my college experience was that there were many fewer people around me who looked like me. It is not that I have trouble connecting to non-Natives, but it was hard to find individuals with similar experiences who could have helped me stay motivated and supported throughout the process. I had to maintain my sense of pride when I felt good about the things I created for my culture/people, even when I felt like no one understood or could see the purpose of my work.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

I understand the pressure the youth face as they graduate from high school. College seems like such a different experience and can be overwhelming to think about. Specifically, to the youth, I want them to know that I understand the feeling they have. They must feel anxious because they want to make their family proud but don't know what to do. I encourage the youth to stay in school, obtain degrees and never stop. We need more representation in higher education, and we have a tremendous opportunity to attend college for free; take advantage of that. You can do it; it can be done.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank my parents, family, Michael and Berlene Dallas, and Dione Dallas for supporting me and being there for me in my toughest times. I'd also like to thank Daniel Martinez for helping me professionally and helping me better my craft as a designer. There are so many other individuals I'd like to thank, but the list would go on and on.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

I am the daughter of Kathy Johnson-Toney and Theodus "Odie" Toney III. My maternal grandparents are LaRue and Gerold Johnson. My paternal grandparents are Marilyn and Theodus Toney II.



Q&A: COURTNEYWOOD

BY DALTON WALKER
O'odham Action News
dalton.walker@srpmic-nsn.gov

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences

Tell us about your educational background.

I graduated from Mountain View High School in 2015 as a member of the National Honor Society and the National Native American Honor Society. I got accepted to Arizona State University and then into Barrett, the Honors College within ASU for my undergrad, graduating in May 2019 with a bachelor of science in biomedical sciences and a minor in art history.



Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The most rewarding college experiences were studying abroad, becoming part of the first Native American sorority, doing an internship at the emergency room at HonorHealth Osborn Medical Center, being a teacher's aide for one of my professors, and completing my thesis project and successfully defending it.

What are your future plans?

I am currently applying to the Master of Science in Medical Nutrition program at ASU for fall 2019. This is what I am planning on doing for my gap year, as I am also applying to medical school for the 2020 cycle. I aspire to become a physician, leaning toward either pediatrics or family practice. I also want to work at the clinic on the Community, where I am currently an intern, as a physician.

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

In the next 10 years, I will have completed my master's degree. I hope to have graduated from medical school and be completing my residency in my specialty. I also hope to have maybe started to work back in the Community as a physician.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

My parents were the ones who always emphasized the importance of getting my education and continuing my education as I grew up. I also would say my Community influenced me, by providing me the support I needed throughout my education. Plus, I had my own drive to continue with my education due to these influences and liking going to school.

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

Obstacles that I faced during my undergrad years were living on campus, adjusting to college expectations, getting involved in school, finding my way around campus, finding other Native American students and learning about all the opportunities open to me. This was my first time living away from home, and it was definitely different. It was something I had to adjust to, but I got through it by making friends with my roommates, exploring campus and keeping busy at school. College is different from high school, and professors have different expectations of the students. For this I talked to the professor if I needed extra help/guidance and read the syllabus. I got involved in school by paying attention to emails sent by ASU, newsletters, and things my friends would tell me. Navigating campus was overwhelming, since it was much larger than high school. I was lost a few times and would have to ask people where I was going. I connected with more Native American students from looking at flyers and being emailed by some organizations.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

I would say keep going! Continue to excel in your education! It is hard to go back to school after taking a year or longer off from school. I want people to continue on to college and complete their bachelor's [degree]. It leads to more opportunities and can have [a positive] impact on your life.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank my parents most of all, for being my support system and always encouraging me to do my best, to continue my education and believing in me. I love you mom and dad! I want to thank my friends, family and boyfriend for being there for me, supporting me and making me a better person. I have a whole support system that I couldn't have done any of this without! I am lucky to have these amazing people in my life. Even in hard times, I can rely on all of you to help me and be there for me! I would also like to thank [SRPMIC] Higher Education, especially Joyla Gates, my advisor, for supporting me in all my endeavors towards my education.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

Parents: Natisha Wood and Nelson Wood
Maternal Grandparents: the late Lillian Clark and the late Eddie Clark
Paternal Grandparents: Marilyn Wood and Norman Wood

Q&A: BRYCE KEL-CHI TAMA MCGERTT

BY MARISSA JOHNSON
O'odham Action News
marissa.johnson@srpmic-nsn.gov

SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Associate of Arts and Associate of General Studies

Tell us about your educational background.

I graduated from Mountain View High School in 2014. I started at Scottsdale Community College in summer 2014 and completed my degree in spring 2019. I also started at Arizona State University in spring 2019.

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

I would have to say earning the title of Mr. Indian Scottsdale Community College 2017-2018. With this experience, I've learned to be outspoken, gained friendships among my fellow titleholders, expanded my networking and learned what degree I wanted to pursue at a major university. Also, I gained lifelong friends in the Sun Earth Alliance Indian Club and gained a sister, Katiri Herrera, who was Miss Indian SCC 2017-2018. We created a bond and it means the world that we continued to support one another after we had passed down our titles.

What are your future plans?

I plan to graduate with my bachelor's degree in communications at Arizona State University and pursue a master's degree at the University of Oklahoma or San Diego State University.

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

I haven't quite thought about what I would hope to accomplish in the next 10 years, but I'm excited for what's to come. Right now, my goal is to achieve a master's degree and work with Native youth!

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

My biggest influence would have to be my momma. She encouraged my sisters and me to pursue our higher education. I often look at my oldest sister as an inspiration, because she was able to obtain her associate's and bachelor's degrees in 2013 and 2014. Then my little sister is my motivator too, because I want to be an example for her and show her that with hard work, you can reach your goals.

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

The biggest obstacle I had to face while attending SCC was when I realized that the original degree I enrolled in was no longer my interest. It hurt my self-esteem, but with guidance from the American Indian Program, I was able to figure out the path that I needed to take in order to reach my career goals.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

My advice is to go for it! This is the place where you find out what your interests are, and you can start by taking general studies courses and take an elective course that appeals to you. Taking smaller portions of classes can help you figure out what you want to do. Also, don't be discouraged by your age; the important thing is that you are taking the initiative of obtaining your degree! It's never too late to jump back in. Also, whether you attend community college or university, it is still higher education! Go for it! And be proud of yourself, because your ancestors are cheering you on and celebrating because you're making a difference in Native Country.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank my momma, my sisters and my stepdad for always encouraging me, supporting me and loving me throughout my education endeavors. They have always had my back, even when it got hard. I'd also like to thank (SRPMIC) Higher Education for the hard work they do for Community members! Also, another thank-you to the American Indian Program for working with me throughout the years. I'm truly blessed by all the love and support!

Who are your parents and grandparents?

My mother is Sonya McGertt and my maternal grandparents are the late Kenneth McGertt Sr. and the late Delores McGertt.



Q&A: LEVI G. JOHNSON SR.

BY MARISSA JOHNSON
O'odham Action News
marissa.johnson@srpmic-nsn.gov

SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Associate of Applied Science in Graphic Design: Visual Communication

Tell us about your educational background.

Since graduating from Westwood High School in the class of 2000, I have been furthering my education. I attended the Arizona Automotive Institute in Glendale and received two occupational associate's degrees, for automotive autotronics and diesel technology. After that I earned an office technology certificate from Gateway Community College, and now I have my AAS in graphic design visual communication.



Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

My most rewarding college experience would be the interaction with all of my instructors, because they have lived in the industry. They are knowledgeable and have an overwhelming passion for the work they teach. They commonly share their real-world experience and in-depth knowledge. Scottsdale Community College's graphic design program has been the best college experience so far. It has really pushed my creative abilities beyond my normal extension to design real-life application projects in a timely manner and to think of unique, creative concept ideas. I would have never thought of achieving these ideas before if it weren't for the SCC graphic design program.

What are your future plans?

I plan to take the summer off and come full swing in the fall to start my bachelor of applied science degree in graphic information technology at Arizona State University's Polytechnic campus. But for now, I'll be spending some quality time with my family for sure. Unless they get tired of me; then I'll be job hunting.

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

I would like to have a nice job with benefits and maybe a house.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

My family was my inspiration to go back to school. I wish I had listened to them a lot sooner. Graduating has boosted my self-confidence even further knowing that I have completed my academic goals at a college level. This has been a great achievement I have set for myself and for my family. Now, I can push my kids to achieve and go beyond my level of education. My parents instilled in me the importance of receiving a good education and to listen and learn when someone is offering to teach you something new.

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

The main obstacle that I faced was myself. It's hard to set aside time to study and for family. It isn't easy or perfect, but it can be done.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

There's no time like the present, so get on it and get your learn on. Inspire someone else that you know.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank my wife, family, children, friends; SCC staff and the SCC American Indian Program; the Salt River Higher Education Department and program advisor Denelle Prieto; the Salt River Vocational Rehabilitation Program and program counselor Valerie Denight; and Amy Francisco, case manager, Salt River WIA Program. Thank you all for your assistance, dedication and belief in my capabilities of successfully achieving my educational goals.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

My parents are Diane J. Johnson and Leland M. Johnson. My siblings are Shawn Johnson and Marissa Johnson. My grandparents on my dad's side are Barbara C. Johnson and Lloyd F. Johnson. My grandparents on my mother's side are Andrew "Andy" Enas and Delphina K. Wilson-Enas.

Q&A: MARIE CLARK

BY TASHA SILVERHORN
O'odham Action News
tasha.silverhorn2@srpmic-nsn.gov

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY Master of Science in Leadership

Tell us about your educational background.

I became a licensed massage therapist in 2004 and a certified yoga instructor in 2016. Then in May 2015, I started working on the last two years of my bachelor's degree in communication. Two weeks after I completed my bachelor's degree, in December of 2017, I began working on my master's in leadership.



Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

One of the most rewarding experiences for me was being able to apply what I was learning in class to my job here in the Community as a training specialist in the Human Resources Department. I got to witness my education coming to life right before my eyes. It has also helped me be successful in reaching participants who attend trainings.

What are your future plans and what do you hope to accomplish in the next 10 years?

My future plans are directly tied to the Community. I have been called to help empower the employees of the SRPMIC, which then helps us in how we serve the Community. My plans are to help build solid training programs that fully support the vision and core values of the Community.

Part of this plan includes collaborating and being involved with other departments to focus on bringing mental, physical and spiritual healing and wellness to the Community. I will continue to volunteer as a yoga instructor at the Senior Center, support and participate in wellness events for SRPMIC employees and the Community, and continue to use to my education, training and skills to help build up and empower SRPMIC employees. I want to be in a position to have a significant positive impact on the Community.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

When I first started working here in 2014, my supervisor suggested that I go back to school and earn my bachelor's degree. He reminded me that I didn't want to miss a career opportunity down the road by not having my degree. So I went home and talked to my husband, and he said that it was a great idea. Within a few weeks, my husband bought me a laptop and I began my educational journey two months after being hired. I also wanted to be a role model for my children. I am the first one in my family to earn bachelor's and master's degrees. It's important that my children, and the rest of my family, see that you can achieve goals that can influence and change your family tree in a healthy way. My older son is working on his bachelor's and plans to earn his doctorate. Having this kind of influence brings joy to my heart.

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

I think the biggest obstacle I faced was learning to manage my time, because I wear many hats. It's tough working full-time, being a parent and a wife, and working with the schedule of a family. There were times when I had to do homework in advance to attend a family event or just to make time for my family. It was important that I intentionally set aside time for homework. Sometimes the assignments were tough and became overwhelming, so communication is key when you need help with school. Talk with your professors, use the tools for student success and talk with someone who has found success as a student as well.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

Know that there are going to be challenges. When you want something, you have to work hard for it, overcome the obstacles and keep pressing forward. It's also important to find a mentor or someone to be there for you when you face those challenges. They can talk you through those tough times and won't let you quit. Know in advance that you are going to have to make sacrifices and need the support of loved ones.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I have to thank my family for all their support, especially my husband, who was my biggest support. I don't think I could have done this without him cheering me on. He was very understanding; there were many days and nights when I was working on papers and he stepped in to help with stuff at home. My family gave me space so I could focus on my schoolwork. I also have to thank my former supervisor, Nick Sachleben, for encouraging me to finish what I started. I would also have to thank my Community; I am beyond grateful that we have a Higher Education program that is able to provide the financial support so I could continue my education and have career opportunities.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

My parents are the late Mitchell Fulwider and the late Fayrene Peshlakai. My paternal grandma is the late Carolyn Stacey and my maternal grandparents are Betty Largo and Emerson Peshlakai.

Q&A: JANET JOHNSON

BY DEBORAH STONEBURNER
O'odham Action News
deborah.stoneburner@srpmic-nsn.gov

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY Bachelor of Science in Applied Management

Tell us about your educational background.

I completed my cohort courses, receiving an A.S. from Charter Oak State College and a BSAM from Grand Canyon University (GCU).

Describe your most rewarding college experience(s).

The most rewarding experience thus far has been online classes. I love it! With a busy work schedule, tapping into the internet highway with online studies has helped me fulfill a personal goal of pursuing my education. Secondly, I'm so honored to be a GCU alum and to have studied through the Colangelo College of Business.



What are your future plans?

This summer I plan to continue my studies at Grand Canyon University to obtain a master's in public administration (MPA) with an emphasis in government and policy. GCU provides a wholesome atmosphere with assistance at each step of the way. I commend them for their leadership.

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

I hope to attain personal growth, understand the dynamics of leadership, and accomplish something new I may have never dreamed of.

Who or what influenced you to go to school?

Education has always been important to me. In 2017, by chance, I received an email announcing a cohort program with SRPMIC and GCU. This was my ticket as a returning student; obtaining my paperwork came easily, as if it was meant to be. I feel I have come full circle. Throughout the years, I have devoted much of my time to my career with SRPMIC. Today, SRPMIC has provided the opportunity for me to fulfill what I started 37 years ago.

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

As I reflect back, the main obstacle was balancing work during our busy seasons and projects. This is why I love online classes. The process was so natural for me, because it provided the flexibility of completing research, reports and DQs at any time of the day or night, from 12:01 a.m. to 12 midnight. My main study hours were weekdays from 3 to 7 a.m. and on Sundays from 3 to 11:59 p.m. It takes a lot of discipline.

What advice would you give to people considering higher education?

Well, I never thought I would be stating this, as it was told to me by others older than I: "You are never too old to obtain your educational knowledge."

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

My kids and grandkids, because they didn't see me much. There are so many individuals who are to be thanked who have come across my path with encouragement and inspiring words. In addition, the SRPMIC, for providing the opportunity to pursue my education; Joyla Gates of the Higher Education program; Scott McIntosh, GCU counselor; the online instructors who taught me something new and inspiring; the online students whose sharing helped gain insight into each of our thoughts; and the 2017 SRPMIC/GCU Cohort students. With perseverance we can and will accomplish our educational goals.

Who are your parents and grandparents?

Parents: Barbara C. Johnson and the late Lloyd F. Johnson
Maternal Grandparents: Virginia Vohavi and Nallis Johnson
Paternal Grandparents: Jeanette Hendricks Johnson and Joseph Johnson
Maternal Great-Grandparents: Andrew and Lily Vohavi

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.

Types of Financial Assistance

- **Tuition & Fees**

Accredited Academic/Vocational Institutions, up to 100% Arizona Board of Regents Tuition Rates

- **Required Books & Supplies**

- **Credit Hour Incentives**

- **Childcare**

Class, study and allotted commute time



Program Deadlines

College/University

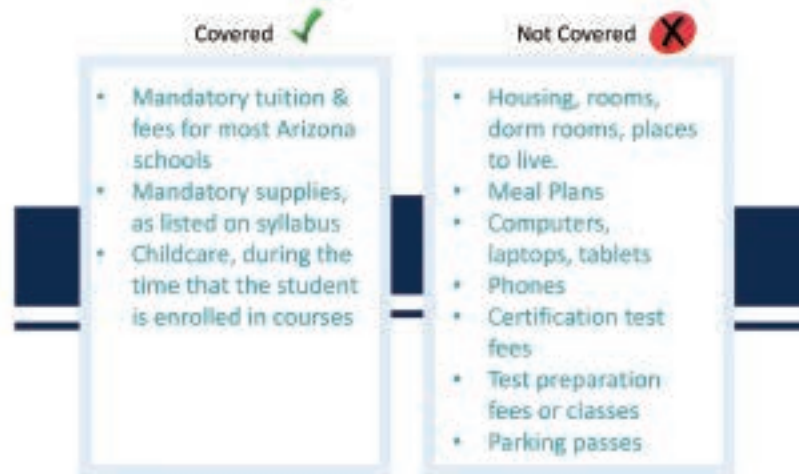
- Fall* June 30
- Spring November 30
- Summer April 30

Vocational Schools

- July 31*
- October 31
- January 31
- April 30

*Students must reapply each year every June/July

What does Higher Education Cover?



Participants of the program must be officially enrolled tribal members of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Go-Getter: Salt River High School Senior Keanna Osif

BY DALTON WALKER
O'odham Action News
dalton.walker@srpmic-nsn.gov



Keanna Osif gets things done. The Salt River High School senior and student body president stepped up this past school year and rallied others to make the end-of-the-school-year class trip to California happen and for prom at the OdySea Aquarium to come to fruition.

Earlier this calendar year, hopes for a senior class trip looked bleak and the 2019 Prom also needed planning. Enter Osif. When the support wasn't there at school, Osif found other ways. She led a fundraising charge, gathered her fellow seniors to engage and got parents involved. They hosted food and bake sales and a bingo to raise money for the senior class.

The seniors raised enough money for a multi-day May visit to Southern California, which included fun at Six Flags Magic Mountain and a stay in Calabasas. And thanks to a parent being a landowner at OdySea, this year's prom took place among the sea life at one of Talking Stick Entertainment District's popular attractions.

"At first, it was a struggle," Osif said of her senior year. "We weren't fundraising; we didn't have the support as we should have. Parents stepped in, and I (later) took the role as student class president. We still made it through."

In her junior year, Osif was

elected student body president as a senior. The role is different than the student class president, but by the end of her senior year, Osif, to little surprise to anyone who knows her, held both roles.

Osif thanks her parents, Gwen and Derrick Osif, especially her mom, for being "the biggest help ever." She also thanks Darla Thomas, Marie Thomas and Ashley Howard for all their help to the senior class and her "No. 2" and fellow student, Jonathan Perez.

"Thanks to all the parents that helped out. Without them I don't think we'd have all this luxury stuff," she said.

She encourages future high school seniors to communicate early and often with school officials, advisors and the Education Board. She said, "If you don't communicate with any of them, you are not going to get what you need."

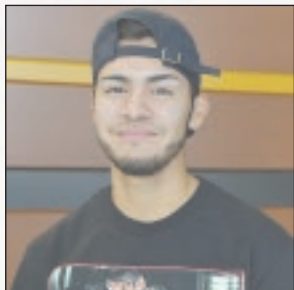
Up next for Osif is Scottsdale Community College. She wants to earn a bachelor's degree in education and become a teacher. She's well on her way. During high school, she earned her child development certificate, which qualifies her to be an assistant teacher at the Early Childhood Education Center at Salt River Schools, where she already had an internship.

Osif played sports, including volleyball for two years and basketball in her senior year after a few years as the basketball team's manager. In junior high, she was part of the school band and played the saxophone. She was on student council for three years and a member of the math club.

Her advice to students: "Don't give up. You may [need to] go through all these walls, but at the end of the day, I really enjoyed my senior year. Yeah, it was difficult, but it was worth it."



CONGRATULATIONS 2019 GRADUATES!



Aaron LaVar Makil
Chandler-Gilbert CC

Great job, Aaron! Now on to bigger and better things. Your family and Community are behind you 100%. Remember, the sky's the limit! Your family loves you



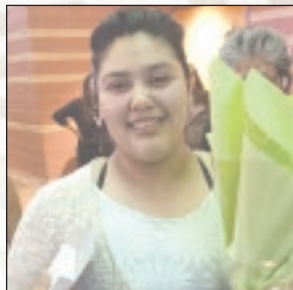
Ally Elizabeth Makil
Kerr Elementary

All right, Ally Cat! You're going to be in the first grade, great job! Your family loves and supports you.



Alyssa Nino
Student Choice High School

Alyssa, I am so proud of you. You did it! May all your wishes and dreams come true. Love you so much, Mom, Amaya, Sonny & Grandma (rip) Castro & Soos families



Amerie-Alyce Boni
SRJHS 8th Grade Promotion

Congratulations Amerie-Alyce, we are so proud of you! Keep having fun and embracing the knowledge you receive. You will go big! Much love, Mom & family



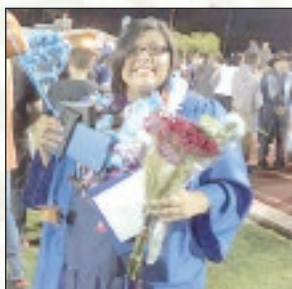
Andrea K. Noline
Grand Canyon University

Congratulations Andrea K. Noline on your graduation from Grand Canyon University, where you received your MBA, specializing in financing. In addition, you accomplished graduating with honors, Summa Cum Laude. Your family is very proud of you.



Brianna R. Ahumada
Carl Hayden High School

Congratulations to my baby sis. There is no doubt that your future will be as bright as the present. Words can't express how happy and proud we all are of you and your success.



Cisary L. Richard
Westwood High School

On behalf of the Richards, Loring and Smith families, we'd like to congratulate Cisary on obtaining her high school diploma. There are many other accomplishments she'll achieve in life; we just want her to know we'll always be there for support.



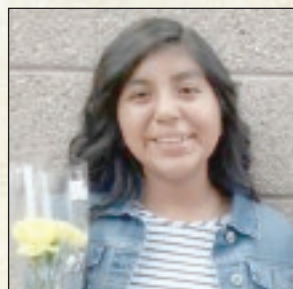
Daniel Howard
SRES 6th Grade Promotion

We will always and forever be proud of you! Congratulations on your promotion. Love Mom, Dad and family



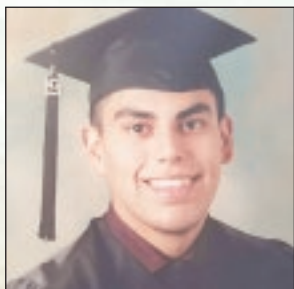
Danisha Chiago
Mountain View High School

Congratulations on your graduation, Dani! We are very proud of what you have accomplished and look forward to what your future holds. Love always, Mom, Dad and your brothers and sisters



Gracelyn Elaine Juan
Noah Webster Schools

Congratulations to our sixth-grade graduate, Gracelyn Elaine Juan! Keep reaching for your stars! We love you!



Jacob Schurz
Salt River High School

You did it, Jacob! You make your Momma & family proud! You can achieve anything you want in life, son. The sky's the limit! Love, Mom, brothers, sisters, Fatty & family



Jasmine Martinez
Noah Webster Schools

Great job, baby! You're done with kindergarten. Watching you grow has been amazing and can't wait to see what the upcoming years bring you. Mama is so proud of you.



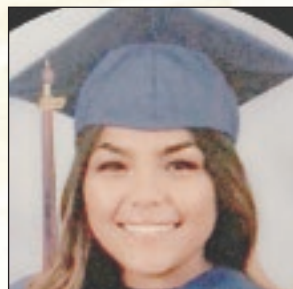
Justin Judge
Mountain View High School

Congratulations son! I am proud of the hard work and education you put forth in achieving your goal. I know you will accomplish great things in life. I love you, Mom



Justine Cooper
Chandler Prep

Congratulations, Justine. You have accomplished so much in academics and athletics. We are so proud of you. Go conquer your higher purpose in life. From your loving family.



Kirium Reyes
Westwood High School

Kiri kid, I love you, I am so proud of you for all the hard work and commitment you have put into this last year of high school. You've got the spirit, the heart and positive attitude, all of these great characteristics will lead you through every hill and valley. Rosa Cruz



Kristian King
Fountain Hills High School

Congratulations Kristian! Your hard work and dedication brought you here. We are very proud of you. Wishing you success on all your future endeavors. Love, The Ray family & cats



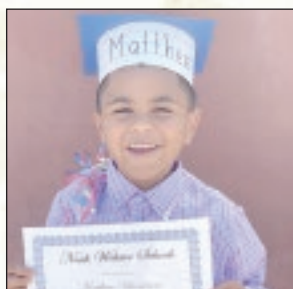
Layne Chiago
Ishikawa Elementary

Congratulations on your promotion, Layne! We are proud of all your accomplishments and love watching you grow! Keep it up! Love always, Mom, Dad and your brothers and sisters



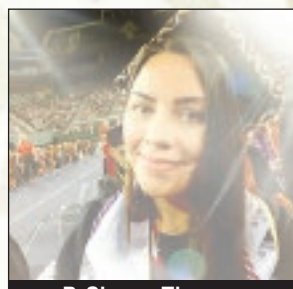
Magdalena (Maggie) Makil
Westwood High School

Congratulations, you did it, Maggie! Your family is proud of you and looks forward to see what your next steps in life will be. Reach for the stars, little lady, whatever you want, you can do it! With love from your family.



Matthew Harrelson
Noah Webster Schools

Congratulations to Matthew for having an A average all year!



P. Sienna Thomas
College of the Desert & California Indian Nations College

You just don't know how proud we are of you! Once you set your mind to something, you do it, and we love that about you. Keep reaching for your goals! Mom, Dad, Richard and Reign



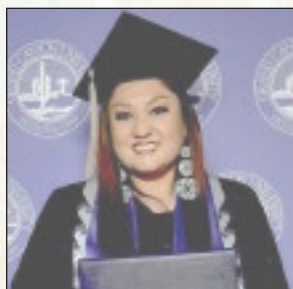
Salese Schurz
Ishikawa Elementary

Congratulations Salese! We are all proud of you. Always push yourself to do better and be better. Junior high, here she comes! Love, Mom, brothers, sisters, Fatty & family



Theresa Thomas
Cesar Chavez High School

The family would like to congratulate Theresa for toughening it out through the school year and becoming a young mother while continuing her education. We would like for you to know that we love you and support you. Now, follow the stars and continue your higher education.



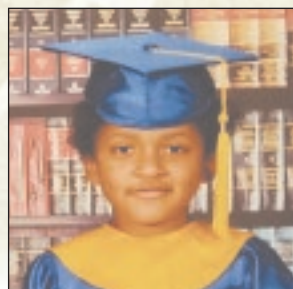
Tori Paukana
Grand Canyon University

Your dedication and sacrifices have helped you achieve your degree. We know it wasn't easy, but you worked diligently and have always did your best. We are proud of you and know that you will be successful in your life. Your family & friends



Trinidi Butler
Salt River Headstart

Congratulations Chucho, Love grandma Tootsie, Tristen and Gessaca



Angel Armijo Lewis
Lindbergh Elementary

Congratulations to Angel for graduating from Kindergarten and receiving two honorable mentions; one for most improved for the quarter and the other for excellence in reading. He strived to overcome and excel with the help of his teacher Mrs. Shuck. Love, from your family