



## Do iT With Pride!

Monday, May 3, 2021

### 2020-2021 Arizona FAFSA Challenge Winners – Congratulations U-High

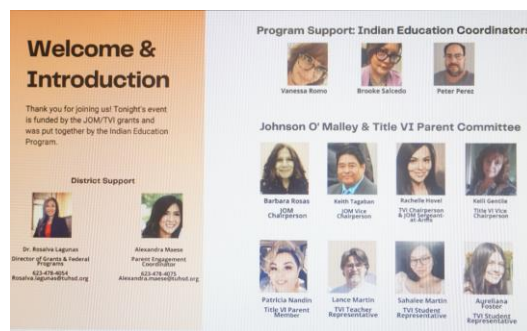
This year's Arizona FAFSA Challenge competition throughout the state of Arizona went above and beyond to encourage seniors to complete the FAFSA and grow each high school's completion rate. We are happy to announce that University High School had the highest completion rate for small schools in the state of Arizona with a 92% FAFSA completion rate. Way to go U-High! A personalized trophy celebrating this great accomplishment will be mailed to the school in early May along with three laptops to award to three current graduating seniors of the school's choice who have completed the FAFSA.

Small School		
1	University High School- Tolleson	92%
2	BASIS Flagstaff	91.67%
3	BASIS- Peoria	89%
4.	Tempe Prep Academy	85.45%
5.	BASIS Ahwatukee	85.42%
6.	Phx College Preparatory Academy	84%
7.	ASU Prep- Polytechnic High School	79%
8.	Patagonia Union High School	77%
9.	Great Hearts Academies Glendale Prep	76.1%
10.	Bioscience High School	76%




## TUHSD Annual Native American Cultural Event


For those that tuned in on April 15, the District's annual celebration of Native American Culture was a great success. The event, normally held in person, was held virtually this year due to the pandemic. TUHSD welcomed Poet/Song writer Tanaya Winders; young actor, Isaac Arellanes; and a great representation of Native American dance performances by Indigenous Enterprise. A huge thank you to Dr. Rosalva Lagunas, Director of Grants and Federal Programs, and Alexandra Maese, Parent Engagement Coordinator, for putting together this wonderful program and celebration of Native culture.



### Tanaya Winder



Tanaya Winder is an author, singer / songwriter, poet, motivational speaker and educator who comes from an intertribal lineage of Southern Ute, Pyramid Lake Paiute, and Duckwater Shoshone Nations where she is an enrolled citizen. She received a BA in English from Stanford University and a MFA in creative writing from the University of New Mexico.



### **La Joya student wins Dorrance Scholarship**

Congratulations to La Joya Community High School student, Margarita (Maggie) Esqueda, for receiving the Dorrance Scholarship. The scholarship is \$12,000 per year for up to four years, totaling \$48,000. This includes a paid trip for Maggie to go to Italy during her sophomore year. Maggie's major is in molecular cellular biology. Congratulations Maggie. Way to go!



**Margarita (Maggie) Esqueda**

### **Congratulations to Ms. Debbie McKintosh, Director of Career and Technical Education**

Congratulations to Debbie McKintosh, Director of Career and Technical Education, on receiving not just one, but two major awards recently. Ms. McKintosh not only won the Arizona DECA Administrator of the Year Award, but she also won the FCCLA Administrator of the Year award.

On the FCCLA award, Ms. McKintosh was nominated by multiple advisers, saying in part, "Ms. McKintosh is not only an effective administrator, she is a caring and supportive person who wants to see us succeed and is very deserving of Arizona FCCLA 2021 Administrator of the Year."



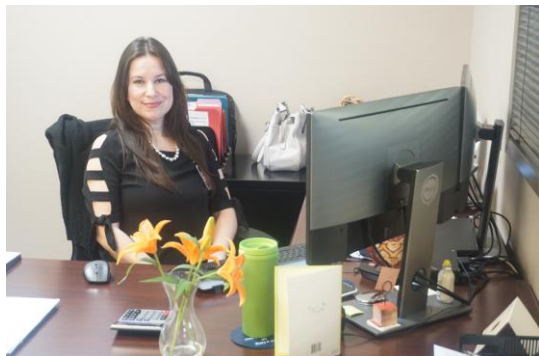
[Click here to see a video of the FCCLA announcement](#)

[Please download to hear audio clearly - Click here to see a video of the DECA announcement](#)

# In the Spotlight

## Wendy Herrera

### Benefits Manager



It's been a little over a year since Wendy Herrera began working for the district. She started at one of the most tumultuous times in public education; the beginning of the school closures due to the pandemic.

"I started on March 13, 2020," said Wendy. "It was Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, the same day that it was announced our schools were moving to remote instruction" And that was Wendy's introduction to TUHSD.

"This is my first job with a school district, but I've been in Human Resources since 1999," said Wendy. "I was an

HR Assistant to the Vice President of HR and managed payroll and benefits for 10 years at the corporate office for Cavco Industries." Wendy worked another 10 years at Poore Brothers potato chips in Goodyear doing an array of HR duties, but still primarily payroll and benefits. And in case you were wondering, "yes, I was able to taste all their kettle chip samples!" added Wendy. "I worked another year and a half at Arizona's Children Association in downtown Phoenix before coming here to work for our wonderful district."

So, what made Wendy want to come and work for our district?

"I must say it's amazing to know so many people that have worked here for so many years and that really care about our community," said Wendy. "I've heard and seen so many great things here at TUHSD and I am so proud to be a part of it." We can certainly understand and appreciate Wendy's enthusiasm for TUHSD.

Wendy is no stranger to the area either.

"I've lived in Tolleson and Avondale for 17 years and before that, I lived in South Central Phoenix, where I grew up," said Wendy.

As for her family, Wendy has two daughters who are her world. They are 12 and 14.

"They keep me busy and active," says Wendy. Both are honor roll students at their schools, Wendy added, and they are part of their choir. Wendy also hopes both girls will be going back to their volleyball and soccer sports soon.

As for her extended family, Wendy shares that her mom is half-Chinese and half Mexican from Mexicali, and her dad is from Chihuahua. Wendy herself was born in Ensenada.

"My dad brought us to Phoenix on a working Visa when I was only two years old," said Wendy. "Spanish is my first language and I feel lucky to have retained it. Sometimes it can be hard to do when you are speaking, writing, and learning in a different language all day outside of home for so many years," she added.

In her spare time, Wendy adds that her family loves going to warm beaches.

"We've been to the Caribbean a few times but lately we have been going to Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point) in Sonora, Mexico."

Finally, Wendy adds, as if a challenge to the rest of the district, "I like to say we make the best ceviche too!"



## **West Point High School Engineering Teacher, Gabi Gabaldon, receives recognition from the Air Force Association**

West Point High School's Gabi Gabaldon, an Engineering Teacher on the campus, has been named as the Chapter recipient for the STEM Teacher of the Year process by the Air Force Association (AFA). That puts her in the running for the State Teacher of the Year. The local AFA chapter recently did a presentation on the quad so that fellow teachers could walk outside and see the presentation. Congratulations Ms. Gabaldon!



Ms. Gabi Gabaldon, second from the left with certificate, is acknowledged by members of the Air Force Association - Arizona. Superintendent Nora Gutierrez, second from right, and West Point Principal, Brandi Haskins, far right, were there to support Ms. Gabaldon. Ms. Gabaldon's daughters are holding the Air Force Association's banner.



Ms. Gabi Gabaldon is recognized by members of the Air Force Association – Arizona



## Sierra Linda's Susanna Belanger receives recognition from GLSEN

Sierra Linda's Susanna Belanger, who teaches Sophomore English, AP Language and Composition, and is a Gifted Advisor, has been chosen as this year's Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Phoenix's Dr. Eileen Yellin GSA Sponsor of the Year. She will be formally recognized on May 14 at the GLSEN Phoenix's annual Sparkle Glitter GLSEN Gala. ([www.sparkleglitterglsen.org](http://www.sparkleglitterglsen.org)).

"I am honored and humbled to be receiving this award," said Ms. Belanger. "Being nominated by my peers and my students means the world to me, and I am looking forward to continuing the work of creating the safest space possible for all of my students--especially those students in the LGBTQ+ community."

GLSEN's mission is to ensure that every member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Congratulations Ms. Belanger on your well-deserved recognition.



**TUHSD Student recognitions for  
Educators Rising, FBLA, FCCLA, HOSA, AND SkillsUSA**



Career and Technical Student Organizations continued to hold Virtual annual regional, state, and national leadership and competitive conferences this year. The following students have excelled at representing their CTSO Chapter, school, and the Tolleson Union High School District.

Congratulations to the following Educators Rising, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), FCCLA (Family, Career & Community Leaders of America), & HOSA (Health Occupational Students of America) and SkillsUSA students who qualified for National or International Competitions in Business Operations, Coding, Engineering, Fashion Design, Finance, Future Teachers, Marketing, Medical Assisting & Sports Medicine Programs!

**Copper Canyon High School- Medical Assisting and Sports Medicine**

HOSA (Derick Lehman and Kelly Matthews, Teachers/Advisors)

- Destiny Camberos (12), Anahi Fuentes Reyes (11), Xareny Villarreal Flores (11), Denyse Campos (11), Ngu Tang (11), Hector D. Medrano (12) earned scores high enough to qualify via Healthcare Issues Exam
- Eric Garcia (11) and Odette Ornelas (11) placed in top 5 for Public Health Team

FBLA (Stephen Truog, Teacher/Advisor)

- Abdiel Mejia (11), PSA Video – 4<sup>th</sup> Place

**La Joya Community High School- Future Teachers, Finance, and Marketing**

EdRising (Lynette Turnbaugh, Teacher/Advisor)

- Alyana Bejar (11), 5<sup>th</sup> Place in TED Talk- Creative Lecture
- Karla Lopez (11), 7<sup>th</sup> Place in TED Talk- Creative Lecture
- Alexis S. Rivas (12), 7<sup>th</sup> Place in Children's Literature Pre-K
- Kayla O'Leary (12) and Dallanara Ruiz Torres (11), 9<sup>th</sup> Place in Ethical Dilemma

FBLA (Debi Kuehn, Teacher/Advisor)

- Roxana Del Toro Miranda (11), 1st Place in Job Interview
- Isidro Rodriguez Santana (12), 1st Place in Client Services

**Sierra Linda High School- Business Operations, Digital Communication, Fashion Design, Future Teachers\*, Medical Assisting, Marketing and Sports Medicine**

EdRising

(Karen Furkert, Teacher/Advisor) **\*First year program offered at Sierra Linda**

- Julian Rodriguez (10) and Victoria Trujillo (10), 1st Place, Inside Our Schools Presentation
- Tanya Rodriguez Inzunza (11), 3rd Place, Exploring Support Services Careers
- Amy Garcia Espinoza (12), Alan Miranda (12), Maya Ochoa (11), Arely Urias Tejeda (11) – 8<sup>th</sup> Place, Ethical Dilemma Team
- Chelsea Garzon (12) – 9<sup>th</sup> Place, Children’s Literature K-3

FBLA

(Joe Dean and Joe Offi, Teacher/Advisor)

- Kamryn Ruffin (11), 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in Personal Finance
- Gilbert Ruiz (10), 10<sup>th</sup> Place in Introduction to FBLA (NLC consolation)
- Damian Arroyo (11), Consolation in Advertising
- Eric Dunford (9), Consolation in Advertising
- Alejandra Lopez Quevado (11), Consolation in Business Communication

FCCLA

(Jocelyn Sanchez, Teacher/Advisor)

- Miguel Zazueta (12), Silver Medal in Fashion Design

HOSA (Ashley Brezovsky and Samantha Gordon, Teachers/Advisors)

- Yaritza Baltierrez (12), Ariana Ponce (12), Yanelly Guereque Torres (11) - 1st Place Biomedical Debate Team
- Deontr’e McCroskey Mangum (11) – 4<sup>th</sup> Place in Nutrition

**Tolleson Union/University High School- Marketing, Medical Assisting and Sports Medicine**

FBLA (Robert Moran and Richard Southern, Teachers/Advisors)

- Tam Nguyen (12), 4th Place in Marketing

HOSA

(Ricardo Avalos and Colin Markgraf, Teachers/Advisors)

- Amber Nguyen (12), 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Medical Law and Ethics

**West Point High School, Business Operations, Coding, Engineering and Marketing\***

FBLA (Shelley Alfieri-Brown and Wanda Moran, Teachers/Advisors)

- Loren Bland (9) and Emily Popoca (10), 1st Place in Introduction to Social Media Strategy
- Johnny Bentley (9) and Uyiosa Idahogjee (10), 4th Place in Computer Game and Simulation Programming
- Laura Nguyen (10), 8<sup>th</sup> Place in Client Service



SkillsUSA

(Gabi Gabaldon and Michael Dodge, Teachers/Advisors)

- Graciela Amavisca (10), Daniela Ramirez Mesa (10), and German Urias (11) – Gold Medal in Career Pathways Showcase: Information Technology

**\*The above West Point High School students are the first ever National Leadership Conference Career and Technical Student Organization competitors for West Point.**

### **Westview High School, Coding**

FBLA (Troy Cornforth, Teacher/Advisor)

- Florencio Olson (10), 1st Place Computer Game and Simulation Programming

**Best wishes to all students. We are proud of you and your peers for all of your hard work and amazing accomplishments this year. Thank you for representing TUHSD, your school, and the CTE program.**

## **Copper Canyon's Aztec Media shatters school record with 20 awards at the 2020 State Competition**

Congratulations to the Copper Canyon Aztec Media staff for easily eclipsing their past mark of 13 certificates by garnering 20 state awards at the Arizona Interscholastic Press Association (AIPA) State High School journalism competition this past year. The awards included the school's first wins in video production categories, along with awards for photography and yearbook design.

The final announcement capped a record-setting year under remarkable circumstances for the Aztec Media team. They earned the group's first FBLA Region medals, taking first place in photography (a mark they already passed this year with 5 Region medals and a gold in journalism), a first-place winner in the Arizona Latino Media Association (ALMA) writing competition at ASU and now the State Press Association awards for their print and video work.

Seniors **Carolina Macias** and **Maria Correa** led the yearbook along with junior **Briana Lopez**. Seniors **Jeremiah McFerson** and **Henry Grear** headed the video production team, along with sophomore **Abdiel Mejia**. Other winners and medalists were **Alejandra Beltran Felix**, **Andrew Duran**, **Victoria Montes**, **Ryan Bailon Morales**, **Lesley Nunez Ornelas**, **Thomas James Phieffer**, **Naomi Richardson**, **Anthony Rojano** and **Nayla Sanchez**. Congratulations to the Aztec Media Team!



## West Point Students place 1<sup>st</sup> in Statewide competition

Congratulations to Loren Bland and Emely Popoca from West Point High School as they placed first in the State Leadership Conference in Intro to Social Media Strategy. Career & Technical Student Organizations hold annual regional, state, and national leadership and competitive conferences. This year all the competitive conferences have been virtual. Congratulations Loren and Emely!



## Copper Canyon Aztec Media Junior, Abdiel Mejia, headed to Nationals

Congratulations to Copper Canyon junior Abdiel Mejia on qualifying for the FBLA National Conference this summer. Mejia will be one of four students representing Arizona in the Public Service Announcement video category and is the first Copper Canyon FBLA Media member to qualify for nationals.

It was the first state meet for any of the Copper Canyon High School FBLA Media staffers, and they excelled, with four students placing in the top 10 overall: **Naomi Richardson** (digital photography), **Andrew Duran** (social media strategies), **Juan Pena** (sales presentation/marketing) and **Abdiel Mejia**. This followed a region competition where five Aztecs medaled (**Nayla Sanchez**, **Alejandra Beltran Felix** and **Thomas James Phieffer** in two categories) and senior **Lesley Nunez Ornelas** won the region championship in journalism.

Mejia is a three-year member of the Aztec Media team and is one of the senior editors leading production of the 2021 Aztec Yearbook. He was a video editor last year and instrumental in launching the Aztec News monthly video announcements at the school. The national competition, held virtually this summer, is in Anaheim, California.

Mejia created a video on the risks of vaping and had to present his project to the judges along with his research into the topic before answering questions. He will compete at Nationals at the end of June, with final awards announced on July 2 at the FBLA national conference. Way to go Abdiel!



## **University High School's Edmond Yip accepted into the United States Naval Academy**

Edmond Yip, a senior at University High School, competed with a pool of approximately 15,000 seniors from around the country to receive one of the approximately 1,200 appointments to the Academy. This includes tuition, room and board, medical and dental benefits, and a monthly stipend.

At the end of his four years, Edmond will receive a Bachelor of Science degree and a commission as an officer in the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps.

Obtaining an appointment is as competitive as gaining admission to one of the country's Ivy League universities. Congratulations Edmond!



Accepted To The  
United States  
Naval Academy.

\$340,000

Edmond Yip



## **Copper Canyon students achieve the Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency**

We are happy and proud to announce that three students from Copper Canyon High School have achieved the Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency. Six hundred and sixty-five Arizona graduates earned a seal this school year.

Citlally Arizaga Diaz earned the Dance Seal. Dominique Martinez and Cassidy McDaniel both earned the Theatre Arts Seal.

To earn this honor, students had to have received a 3.0 or better in a minimum of four arts credits, completed a minimum of 45 hours of arts extracurricular activities, and completed a student-led capstone project under the guidance of a mentor in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre Arts, or Visual Arts. We are incredibly proud of all that you these students have accomplished this year!

For more information regarding the State Seal of Arts Proficiency, click on the link below.

<https://www.azed.gov/artseducation/665-graduates-earn-arts-proficiency-seal>



# Thank you TUHSD Staff!

**DON'T COUNT  
THE DAYS,  
MAKE THE  
DAYS COUNT!**

We have had a year like no other. TUHSD staff have risen to the challenges put before them time and time again. The pandemic made us rethink how we do what we do. We have all adjusted professionally and personally to continue the good work and focus on student academic achievement and our individual roles to that commitment. Your steadfast dedication to our students to ensure that learning continued, while providing necessary encouragement and resources from tutoring to social/emotional support, food, delivering items to students' homes, and so much more, have been amazing. Every person, every campus, every department went above and beyond to deliver whatever was needed is appreciated beyond words. You have made a huge difference in the lives of our students during this unprecedented time.

**THANK YOU for being our not-so-hidden gems!**

Please check the #TUHSDStrong tab on our website ([www.tuhsd.org](http://www.tuhsd.org)) for archived versions of our updates. Take care and stay healthy.

