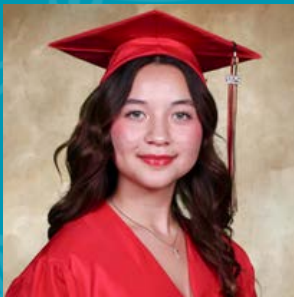
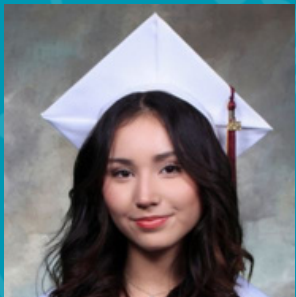
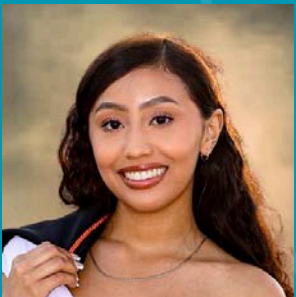
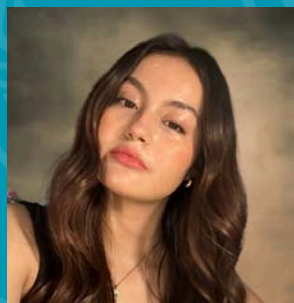
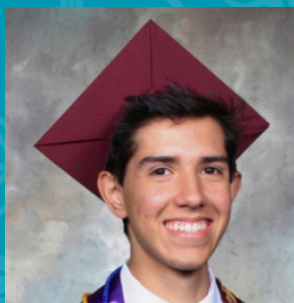
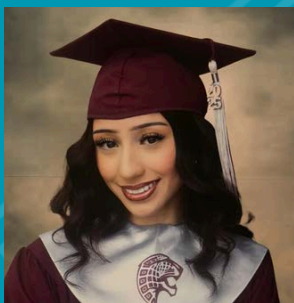




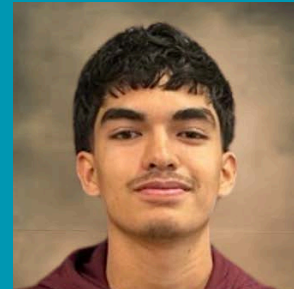
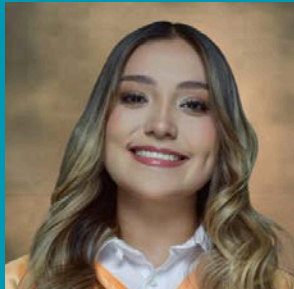
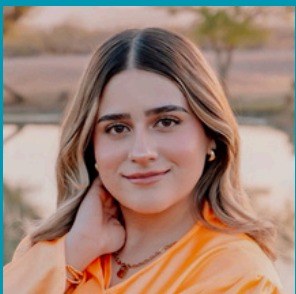
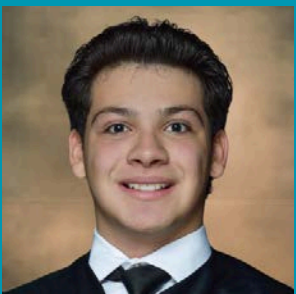
AZALAS Newsletter

May 2025

2025 Senior Scholarship Recipients



Class of 2025





Executive Director, AZALAS

The May Newsletter recognizes our recent AZALAS High School Senior Scholarship Recipients. Thanks to our generous Diamond Level sponsors, we offer 23 scholarships of \$1,500 each Spring. This year, we received 240 applications, evaluated by administrators, retired educators, and community members.

We acknowledge these 36 evaluators in this newsletter, along with scholarship recipients from Douglas, Dysart, Nogales, Sahuarita, Santa Cruz Valley, Sunnyside, Tucson Unified School Districts; Tolleson and Yuma Union High School Districts. These students can apply for additional \$1,500 scholarships for the next three years through AZALAS.

This newsletter includes insights about each recipient, their own words, and recommendations from their counselors. Snapshots of some of our recipients accepting their scholarship are included as well. The AZALAS Executive Board and Sponsors are proud of their achievements and future plans. We encourage all graduates to continue learning as education is vital for achieving their goals. Parents and teachers have supported them, preparing them for the next chapter.

Reading about these recipients is inspiring, and I am confident that our future leaders, grounded in strong family values, will make wise decisions.

Dr. Marvene Lobato

“ *A great accomplishment shouldn't be the end of the road, just the starting point for the next leap forward.* ”
- Harvey Mackay





MONSERRATH ACOSTA

Tolleson Union High School District

My culture
has taught me
sacrifice,
resilience, and
perseverance.



“My mom is my biggest inspiration. Everything I am, everything I do is because of her. She dropped me off at school every day. She made me un cafecito at night when I stayed up studying. She found it befitting that I liked the brain and validated my dream of becoming a neurologist. She told me to ignore the fact that Columbia University was full of legacies and that no school was too good for me: “No le hace que seas del barrio, sígueme!” Because of her, I applied. Because of her, I got in. Pursuing my dreams meant stepping on hers so I could pull myself over the wall and make it. My grandma’s cicatrices and my mom’s arrugas are a reminder of the pain women in my ancestry endured for me to achieve my dreams. I won’t let them down.

My culture has taught me sacrifice, resilience, and perseverance. I know I will face challenges, but because of my Mexican blood, I will remain tenacious. I will go to school in New York City and persevere. I will become a “brain doctor” (as my amá calls it) and persevere. I will be the kind of person who puts on others’ masks first instead of her own, like my mom. I will honor the women of my heritage y lograré mis metas por ellas.”

ERIKA ALARCON

Yuma Union High School District

“My Latino heritage has taught me the importance of empathy, hard work, and perseverance—values that will guide me as I strive to make the world a better place for everyone.”



“Looking to the future, I plan to pursue a career as an immigration lawyer because I want to advocate for Hispanic families and ensure they are given the opportunities they deserve. I hope to use my personal experiences as a Latina to be part of the fight that protects and uplifts immigrants, who are truly the backbone of this country. My grandparents’ stories about working in the fields resonate deeply with me now in ways they didn’t when I was younger. As a child, those stories seemed distant, but today they carry immense weight. When I think about my family’s sacrifices to provide me with opportunities, I am filled with pride and gratitude.

Ultimately, my mission in life extends far beyond personal success—I aim to leave a lasting legacy of goodwill. Whether by helping immigrants obtain citizenship or advocating for their rights in courtrooms, I want to create positive change that benefits future generations. My Latino heritage has taught me the importance of empathy, hard work, and perseverance—values that will guide me as I strive to make the world a better place for everyone.”

RILEY AMARILLAS

Sahuarita Unified District

Being Latina means having the strength and drive to push through anything.



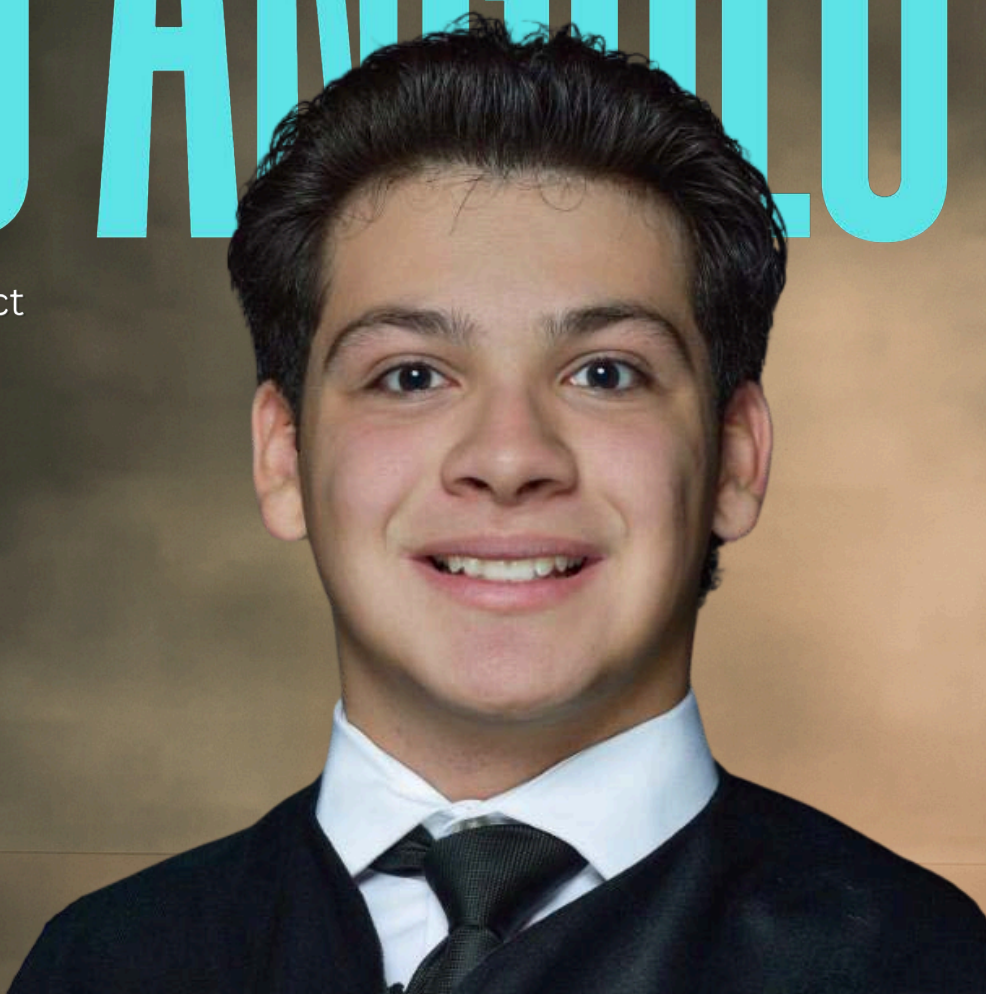
“Giving back has always been something I care about. My mom has taught me that giving back to the community isn’t just important, it’s a responsibility. I started volunteering at a young age with my mom, helping out with the Junior League of Guadalajara, soup kitchens, and the Continental Educational Foundation Art Gala, just to name a few. I’ve also volunteered at numerous NHS events, helping with blood drives, roadside cleanups, tree gleaning for the food bank, and other local charity projects. These experiences have made me even more passionate about helping others and reinforced my goal of working in healthcare.

Being Latina means having the strength and drive to push through anything. I want to take that strength and use it to become a nurse but also continue my education to become a nurse practitioner. I want to be a leader in my community, make a difference in healthcare, and inspire the next generation of Latina professionals.”

CALEB ANGUILO

Douglas Unified School District

The future holds new challenges I will accept while building meaningful change.



“Since childhood, I learned that success results from working hard coupled with dedication and showing resilience. I am an American Mexican who brings the vital traditions of family ties together with perseverance and ambition through my daily actions.

Being a Hispanic individual brings me deep pride. The experience demonstrated to me the significance of family and showed both strength and determination. I honor the sacrifices my family made so that I could receive better opportunities through everyday efforts. Through my culture, I developed a profound respect for labor-intensive work as well as determination because these strengths drive my goal to reach success. I aim to serve as an inspiration, demonstrating endurance combined with commitment for achievements of any goal.

I will bring forward these valuable lessons in life as I start college and proceed through my educational path and career afterward. My dedication to sports along with my commitment as a leader and service work will remain steadfast while being pushed forward through my passion. The future holds new challenges I will accept while building meaningful change and actively representing my culture with national pride. Determination combined with hard work enables me to believe that I will accomplish my goals and establish lasting effects in both my community and other areas.”

LILIAN ARANDA

Yuma Union High School District



Education is the gateway to life because you can lose everything in an instant, but the knowledge you obtain can never be revoked.

“On my mom’s side of her family, her parents had no formal education. As my mom and her siblings were growing up, my grandfather stopped working in the fields to work in a paper plate company from 12am-12pm, five days a week. So growing up they were told education is the gateway to life because you can lose everything in an instant, but the knowledge you obtain can never be revoked. As a smaller family, all four of them were able to complete high school, three obtained a degree, and one of them completed an associates, all have careers.

I want to be able to combine both of my families’ experiences and get a degree while improving the agriculture community. This is why I am very interested in becoming an Agricultural Engineer, because I’ll be able to give back the endless years of picking produce my dads side of the family has done, while increasing my knowledge and showing I can do both. I want to prove to myself and others that working in agriculture should not be seen as a bad outcome or a job they should not be proud of as a hispanic. At the end of the day they are the reason we have our lettuce, cauliflower, onions, cabbage, watermelons, cantaloupes and many other products on our kitchen tables.”

MARIANNE ARMENIA

Douglas Unified School District

My overall
desire to
impact the world
comes from
seeing many
wonderful and
strong people...

“Growing up, I saw many of my family members suffer through difficult experiences concerning economic and medical issues. My mother raised me alone and was always in charge of every bill, often struggling to meet the day's end. My grandparents suffer from medical conditions and would usually have to wait until a doctor's appointment was accessible in the United States because Mexico lacks many specialized physicians where I grew up. My life's goals are inspired mainly by my mother. She is a strong, independent, and hardworking woman whom I could only hope to be a fraction of the person she is. My mission is to find a stable source of income that makes me happy and helps others. I plan to pursue a career in the medical field to fulfill my mission. My overall desire to impact the world comes from seeing many wonderful and strong people struggle in my life. I only hope I may accomplish all my goals to make them proud.”

ALMA AVILA RODRIGUEZ

Tolleson Union High School District



My heritage
not only
shaped my
identity but
gave me a
mission.

“Latinos jump hurdles to prove our intelligence and value in the world. From a young age, we are placed in circumstances unimaginable to many. While some may see this responsibility as overwhelming, it fosters resilience and discipline, with a foundation of work ethic and passion for education. These qualities fuel my desire to pursue a college education and assist fellow immigrants facing language barriers in the Latino community. With dentistry being an underrepresented field for Latinos, I am committed to breaking stereotypes and proving that we can achieve any goal.

My dream is not only a dental career, but to serve as an advocate for my community. To pave the way for Latinas to dream big and believe in their potential. My heritage not only shaped my identity but gave me a mission: to uplift, empower, and inspire future generations of Latinos.”

CAMILA BOSOGGO

Dysart Unified School District




My goal is to serve as an example and mentor to others from the same background in the hope of alleviating their struggles and guiding them toward success.

“My high school education and teenage years opened my eyes to the realization that my parents came to the United States so my siblings and I would have opportunities they never had. Although my family’s background and financial circumstances have brought me hardships, I know that my parents try their best to give me the best life they can, so I see these challenges as a motivation to keep working hard and to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented to me. I want to obtain a business administration degree that will provide me with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to operate my business successfully. I created a small business in 8th grade and look forward to learning finance, management, marketing, and business operations to help me enhance my business.

Latino and Hispanic communities are underrepresented in many fields. This is a crucial issue because there aren’t many people that children can look up to and relate to. Young children often look up to people who share a common background. I know I would’ve loved to look up to a very successful Mexican woman business owner. I want to create a program that helps young Latino and Hispanic leaders around the nation achieve their dreams of owning successful businesses. My goal is to serve as an example and mentor to others from the same background in the hope of alleviating their struggles and guiding them toward success.”

KIANA BOULIER

Santa Cruz Unified School District



This resilience
motivates me to
pursue my goals
with hope and
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obstacles are
part of the
journey.

“My Mexican heritage placed in me a great sense of pride in my culture and a strong sense of responsibility to honor those before me. Growing up surrounded by Mexican traditions and family gatherings filled with traditional food, music, and stories, I developed a deep cultural connection. It is this sense of cultural pride that drives my passion for advocating for my community and supporting causes to elevate those facing challenges.

My upbringing emphasized that success is not just for the individual, but for those who have supported you all along. This idea has shaped my mission in life, where I seek to contribute to causes that uplift others, especially within minority communities like those of my culture. I aim to work toward breaking down barriers and stigmas by providing opportunities in areas like education, healthcare, and social justice so that future generations can thrive as I have.

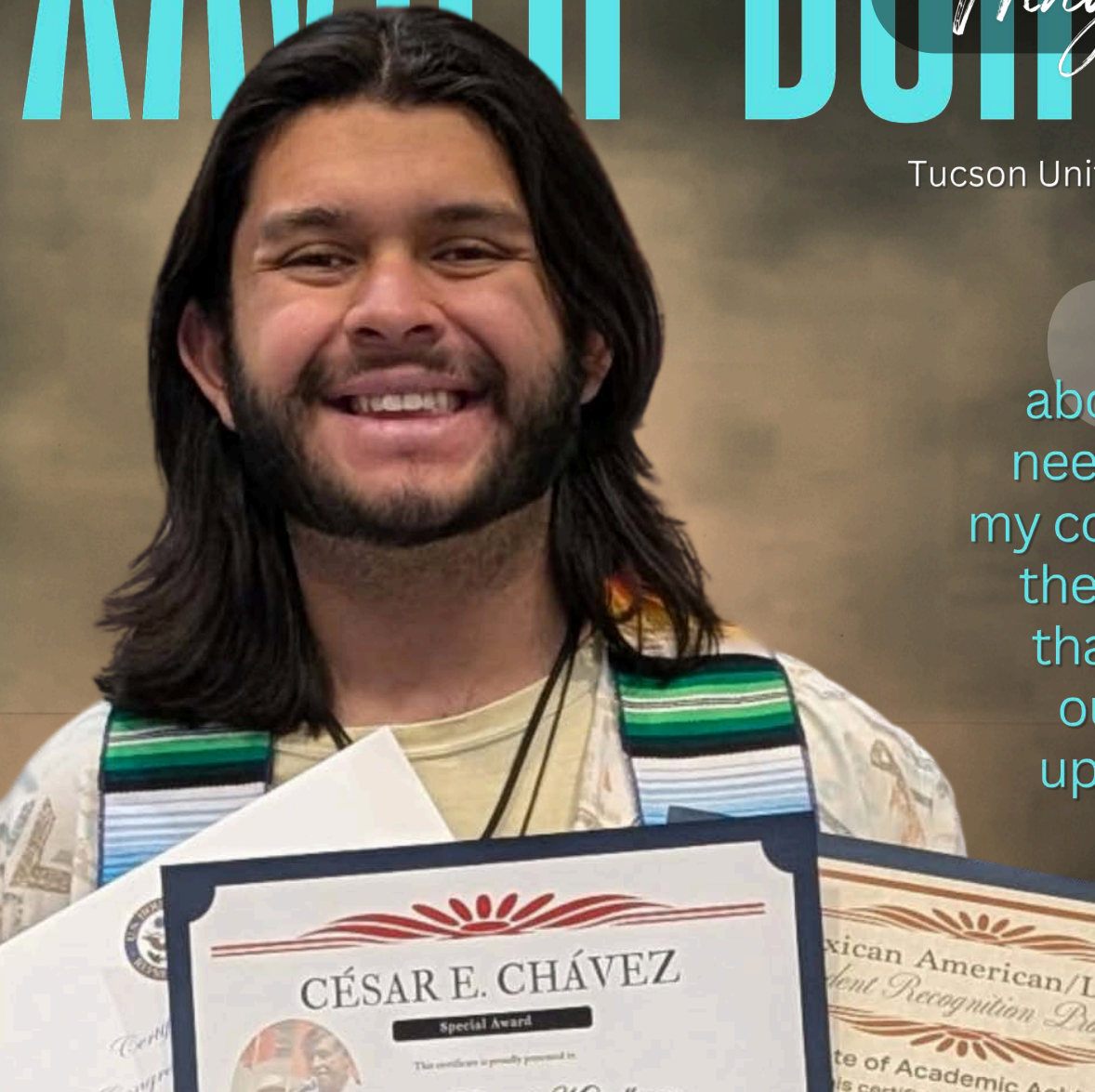
Many of my family members have overcome significant struggles, from citizenship, economic hardship, and their determination has inspired me to approach challenges with the same strength and perseverance as they have. This resilience motivates me to pursue my goals with hope and persistence, knowing that obstacles are part of the journey but it's up to me to create the ending of the story.”

XAVIER BURRIEL

Magallanes

Tucson Unified School District


I hope to bring about the change needed, providing my community with the infrastructure that will facilitate our success and uplift our spirits.



“Growing up, I would attend elementary school down the street from my nana’s house, adjacent to the middle school my mother had gone to as a child. Following this, I would go to a middle school about ten minutes further east of my elementary school, still straddled between the I-19 and the I-10 and situated directly across from a rusting trailer park. It wasn’t until I reached high school that I realized the dilapidation of the surroundings that these establishments were encompassed by, especially with their intentions of bringing up young children. Even on a somewhat rundown high school campus, I was now spending much more time beyond the I-10, and I could clearly see the disparities between the two regions. Now, I am acutely aware of the unreliable infrastructure of Tucson, and how its failing state seems to become more apparent as it reaches Hispanic and other minority communities. This injustice is one that has long been ignored, and through a career in civil engineering, I hope to bring about the change needed to address such issues, providing my community with the infrastructure that will facilitate our success and uplift our spirits.”

DEREK CAMPA

Nogales Unified School District

A portrait of a young man with dark, wavy hair and a slight smile, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. The background is a neutral, light-colored wall.

“My vision of life
is to inspire a
change amongst
Latinos so they
can prosper.”

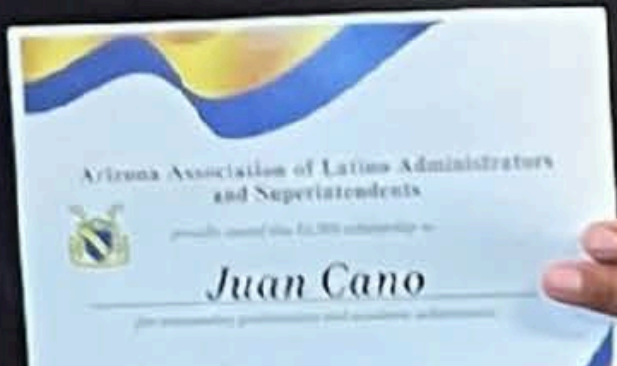
“My upbringing as a proud Chicano and as an advocate for Latino representation have forged my vision of enacting change in my community and striving for progress. Coming from an often marginalized community in Southern Arizona has presented its challenges but has also helped me redefine my perception of what I want to strive for moving forward. As an active participant in community service activities, influencing young generations to reach their dreams and aspirations has been the most rewarding part of my job.

Through diligence and motivation, my mission of improving my community has advanced but has not been completed. Through valuable lessons, while volunteering at animal shelters, migrant aid centers, and senior residences, I have connected with the many problems Latinos in my community and across the globe face. Soon, I will be studying international relations and economics in college. Based on the knowledge and experience I will acquire in my pre-professional education, I aim to apply these factors to advocate for Latino representation in the United States Congress or lead to a worldwide Hispanic impact in the United Nations. Whether embarking on a trip to address the needs of marginalized populations in Latin America or creating affordable housing opportunities in the United States, my vision of life is to inspire a change amongst Latinos so they can prosper.”

JUAN CANO

Tolleson Union High School District

With the wind
in life being
unpredictable,
I must adjust my
sails and sail
to my goal.



“Life is like the wind, its unpredictable and can blow away right away from you. Just like how my life blew away from me after I could not see my mom on a daily basis. Also, without having my dad in my life, it was me and mom for most of the time. We were super close. She always worked to give me the most and always tried to keep me happy. She taught me things about life and helped me through it all, even going to school to find my way. For the future, I believe I want to do something with cars such as a car mechanic or automotive engineer. With that goal, I must push myself to put myself out there and get to it. With the wind in life being unpredictable, I must adjust my sails and sail to my goal.”

KEYRA ESPINOZA

Douglas Unified School District

“Through my work in healthcare, I hope to encourage equality and improve healthcare opportunities for all.”

“Pursuing a healthcare career has been my dream for years. I aim to become an ER nurse practitioner and assist people regardless of their background or race. Through my work in healthcare, I hope to encourage equality and improve healthcare opportunities for all. Additionally, I want to become a role model. I aim to encourage individuals to preserve their heritage and promote the diversity that all heritages deserve. I hope to inspire people to pursue their dreams and contribute positively to society. As mentioned before, I was raised surrounded by a commitment to family. A commitment that has taught me the importance of helping others. This has not only helped me grow as a person, but I have also realized that pursuing higher education will fulfill my dreams of helping my community and positively impacting my family. Knowing I have received my family’s wholehearted support, I strive to make them proud.

My Latino heritage has instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility toward my family and community. With the unwavering support of my family, I am driven to not only fulfill my dreams but also to make a lasting, positive impact on the lives of others. As I continue my journey toward higher education, I carry with me the values of hard work, perseverance, and compassion, all rooted in my heritage, and I am committed to using them to create meaningful change in the world.”

BRIANNA ESQUEDA

Sunnyside Unified School District



I want to embrace all my skills to help communities around the world, especially when it comes to accessible technology for those in need.

"In high school, I learned to grow in an unexpected place which was the Career and Technical education (CTE) classes. I took both machine shop and drafting and design courses. This is where I developed skills in programming, CNC machining, blueprint reading, 3D printing, and problem-solving. Quickly, I became more involved in the club, attending trips, taking on leadership roles, and eventually earning presidency my 4th and final year.

One of the most transformative experiences of my life came last year when my club traveled to Lima, Peru. Our project was to deliver adjustable prosthetic legs that we machined and 3D printed for amputees. Out of the 7 students in my group, I was one of the few who spoke Spanish. This was when I realized that a skill I had never thought much of became one of the most important things I could offer. I was able to communicate with the patients, ask how they were feeling, comfort them, and really connect. Firsthand, I saw how language could close gaps and change lives. That day over 50 people walked again because of our work, but for me, the biggest impact was understanding how engineering and language could come together to transform our world. This mission resonated with our club so deeply that we returned this year, growing our presence in Costa Rica.

Now, as I look toward my future in engineering, I want to take this lesson with me. I want to embrace all my skills to help communities around the world, especially when it comes to accessible technology for those in need. Most importantly, I want to embrace language in ways I can connect, learn and build relationships that go beyond my family. My Latino heritage has given me the foundation of family and those values I will carry forward."

ALINA DEL CASTILLO

Douglas Unified School District



I am not just
crossing
physical
borders; I am
crossing
invisible ones.

“Moving to the United States came with promised opportunities, but the fact that I was still Hispanic bore a weight of expectation and not the kind that pushed me forward, but that restrained me. Hispanic Americans are seen through a narrow lens or stereotype that deems us as not intellectually capable. We were always the hard workers but never the dream go-getters. That's how my lifetime goal was formed. I wanted to prove that I could be a scholar and not just a laborer. The intersection of the identities shaped me and allowed me to refuse this stereotype. My background did not give me a reason to be less capable but to strive even more. I set my goals to become a biomedical engineer, one of the most rigorous careers, to provide healthcare access to minorities, specifically Hispanics. I want to show that someone who grew up crossing the border every day could become anything they wanted, even with the limitations.

Pursuing a career at a top institution was not just a goal but a statement. Intelligence should not be determined by geography and, much less, by race. Anyone is entitled to dream freely of becoming someone impactful. Every step I take is to reach these goals by aiming high, enforcing standards on myself, graduating high school, going to college, earning a rightful degree, and finally making a difference in a job doing what I love. I am not just crossing physical borders, I am crossing invisible ones that have tried to bring me down. I am proud to be a Mexican and will forever embrace the beauty of my story.”

MANUEL GARCIA

Hernandez

Tucson Unified School District

It is never too
late to pursue
our dreams.



“Since I was young, I have felt a passion for helping my community. Between the ages of 16 and 17, I volunteered in a group that dedicated time to the children of the orphanage Casa Hogar Nacidos Para Triunfar. Later, I participated in activities in nursing homes and at the CRIT de Teletón (for children with disabilities) through an association called Patitas de Ayuda, which focuses on therapy and assistance dogs, along with then deputy director Leonardo Sanz, as well as events in orphanages, bringing my dog Kira from the Association Doctores de la Alegría México AC. I have also had the opportunity, alongside my therapy dog Kira, to spend some time at Star Fish Adult Care Homes on behalf of Hospice in the Desert.

I am now 37 years old. I am no longer young, but I still have big dreams and goals to fulfill to improve my life, my family's life, and, I hope to God, one day the life of my Hispanic community. But for that to happen, now I am the one who needs a little push from successful and well established people in this country such as you, who share with me the vision that it is never too late to pursue our dreams.

I want to be an example of resilience, growth, and constant improvement for my children. To be a successful man who can help even more, it is necessary to prepare myself. I plan to study at Pima Community College and then finish my bachelor's degree at the University of Arizona. I will continue to engage in activism for Christian values and the rights of good migrants, those who earn their place in this country through their honest work.”

MARIAN GOMEZ

Nogales Unified School District

The sense of community and self-discovery by delving into complex systems resonated with me, influencing my academic path.



“Because of my involvement in car clubs, shows, and viewing videos on the topic, I joined my school’s automotive course. While in an automotive course for three years, I disassembled engines, performed brake services, and handled electric systems. Short circuits and engine failures taught me patience and problem-solving, skills crucial outside the classroom. My ASE Certifications were achieved through the development of my patience and my technical skills through mock-exams and practice questions

Cars are as complex as living organisms, filled with memories and experiences supporting my passion for engineering. My academic achievements and independent projects exhibit my dedication to the field, something I aim to explore in college with more independent projects and interest clubs. I hope to come back to my community, to the Chicano car culture and groups, and present my own creations and innovations. These experiences assure me that they too would praise and celebrate the individuality of all of my innovations and research to make designs sustainable too.

Summers upgrading my car built cherished memories with my brothers, furthering my connections with the car groups they are in as well as connecting me with my culture and the pride we hold for being unique.”

MIA GONZALES

Sunnyside Unified School District

A portrait of Mia Gonzales, a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a white t-shirt with a blue graphic of a stylized face and a blue graduation cap. The background is a warm, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

I hope to inspire others in my community to strive for success and to never forget where they come from.

“As a third-generation Mexican American raised on the south side of Tucson, I’ve been fortunate to grow up immersed in a rich cultural heritage that defines who I am.

I come from a hardworking family where perseverance and resilience are core values. My mother, a relentless provider, and my father, who earned his citizenship through a long and hard process, have instilled in me a deep sense of determination. Though we don’t always talk about it, I will be the first in my family to attend college. My mom often tells me, “I want you to be better than I was,” and her words have been a constant source of motivation. They drive me to excel and persist, especially when faced with challenges that may seem insurmountable.

My Latino heritage has shaped my mission in life. To give back to my community, to excel academically, and to continue the traditions of pride, perseverance, and unity that have guided my family for decades. The values passed down through the generations have not only influenced my goals but have also given me the strength to overcome obstacles and pursue opportunities that will allow me to make a meaningful impact on the world around me. By sharing these experiences, I hope to inspire others in my community to strive for success and to never forget where they come from.”

CARLOS LAGUNA

Pacheco

Tolleson Union High School District

When it comes to my Latino heritage and having an impact on the world, it's all about my character, passion, and family.

"As an 18-year-old teenager, my Latino heritage has influenced my life's goals, mission, and desire to impact the world in many ways. When it comes to my Latino heritage and having an impact on the world, it's all about my character, passion, and family.

When it comes to passion, I feel like it's one of the main and most important things to have in life. One reason is because everyone lives once, and no one knows when we're about to leave earth. So, it's all about making everything worth it no matter the situation. For example, my biggest passion is soccer and it's what I'm trying to do for a living, along with making music with my dad. I started working on this passion since the age of four. I play club and high school varsity soccer, and in this season, I'm working with the most effort to fight and achieve an NCAA Men's Soccer Scholarship. Personally, from accomplishing something big in this sport, along with doing music with my dad, it's now or never because when I say goodbye to this life, it's all done, so I must make the sacrifice to make things all worth it."

IZAK MARTINEZ

Nogales Unified School District



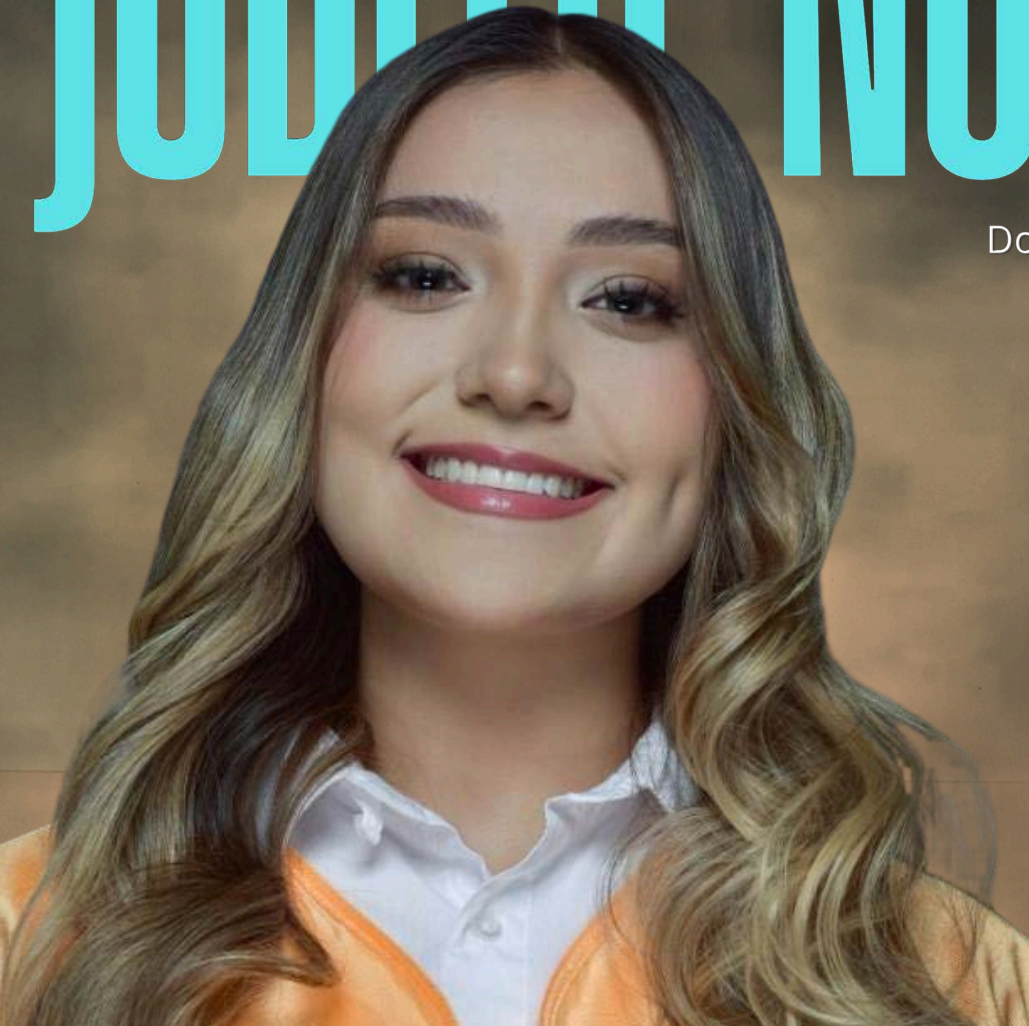
I envision building more of these bridges, combining my passion for higher education with empathy to support underserved communities in a strong American society.

“My Ita’s kitchen has always been alive with a familiar sound—the clink of her spoon in her mug of café con leche. Ita is what I called my grandmother—a nickname for abuelita in Spanish. To me, my Ita symbolizes independence. But, when I saw her frail arms tremble as she reached for her cane, I sensed the weight she felt in losing her independence. In our Mexican culture, asking for help isn’t common, especially for my proud Ita. So, quietly, I wondered: What could I build that would restore her dignity without hurting her pride? The answer came with my MESA project challenge: design something for equity and independence. There it was—I created PAAM—the Personal Artificial Assisting Machine. It was a six-axis robotic arm powered by a bracelet she could control. After months of prototyping, PAAM could lift objects as delicate as her rosary but also as practical as her pastillas (medicine). PAAM became more than a project to us; it was a bridge between tradition and technology, connecting her world to mine.

As a Latino scholar, I envision building more of these bridges, combining my passion for higher education with empathy to support underserved communities in a strong American society. My diversity has and continues to help me create devices that honor cultural values, and become an influential and courageous asset to the Hispanic community. I aim to fuse myself into AZALAS’s vision with ingenuity and compassion. To further AZALAS’s vision, I believe my role is living to serve, especially in continuing to empower Hispanic people across borders and generations to pursue higher education.”

JUDITH NORIEGA

Douglas Unified School District

A portrait of Judith Noriega, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a white collared shirt under an orange vest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

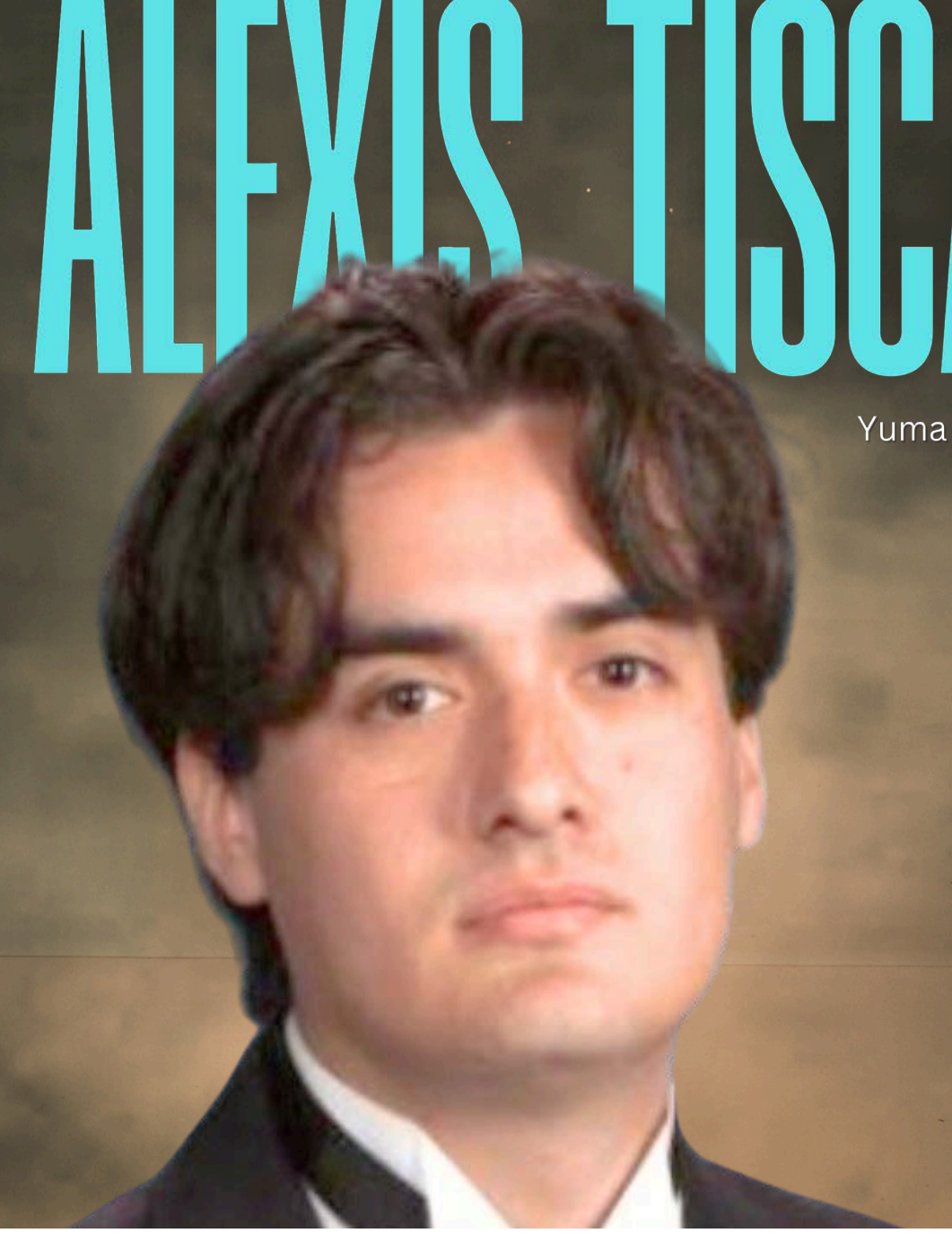
The impossible
is possible if
you believe in
yourself.

“My Latino roots have been the key source of my persona, they have shaped my life goals, mission, and desire to impact the world. Rooted in an environment of family values, determination, empathy, resilience, and generosity, my background has me visualizing my future as a thriving international businesswoman, who travels the world, visiting and observing gracious views and architecture. Later on, I fantasized about building a family in which I could pass on my values, and knowledge, and God willing share my success. For as long as I can remember, ambition has had its determination in my family for which I aim to achieve anything I set my mind to, more importantly for the future. Success is nothing if there is no one with whom to share it, for which I believe I can make the world a better place, one person at a time.

Growing up with Latino customs and traditions, taught me the importance of adaptability and hard work. My grandmother reminded me that if we put good in people and the world it will be rewarded to us in unexpected ways. My grandmother is a role model in my eyes, as she comes from a low-income village in Mexico. With all her hard work to get ahead, she demonstrated a real-life example of how much someone is capable and determined if your heart and mind is set in the right place. This lesson became the foundation of my life mission because she helped me realize my aspiration and how the impossible is possible if you believe in yourself.”

ALEXIS TISCARENO

Yuma Union High School District

A portrait of Alexis Tiscareno, a young man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

My heritage is
my strength. It
is the voice in
my heart
reminding me
why I fight, why
I dream.

“Growing up in a first-generation Latino household, I saw the sacrifices my family made to give me opportunities they never had. My parents worked endlessly, pushing through exhaustion with the hope that their struggles would open doors to success. Their toughness became my own, instilling in me a determination to pursue a career where I could serve others with the same dedication. Some of my favorite memories are of singing Amor Eterno by Rocio Durcal with my parents, our voices blending with love and nostalgia because it’s an old song that brings up things from the past, sticking inside our souls. The song speaks of deep, everlasting love, a love transcending over time, distance, and even life itself. That same love fuels my passion for the medical field.

Healthcare disparities within my community in San Luis have been difficult to overcome. I have seen loved ones struggle to receive proper medical care due to language barriers, financial hardships, and a lack of accessibility near them, as well as a system that often overlooks them. Watching their frustration, I realized that access to compassionate, bilingual healthcare is not just a need, it is a right. I want to be a nurse who understands not just the science of healing but also the cultural variations that make a patient feel truly seen and cared for. My dream is not just to become a nurse but to be an advocate, a mentor, and a source of hope for my community.”

KAYLA VILLASECA

Douglas Unified School District

A portrait of Kayla Villaseca, a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a white collared shirt under an orange jacket. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

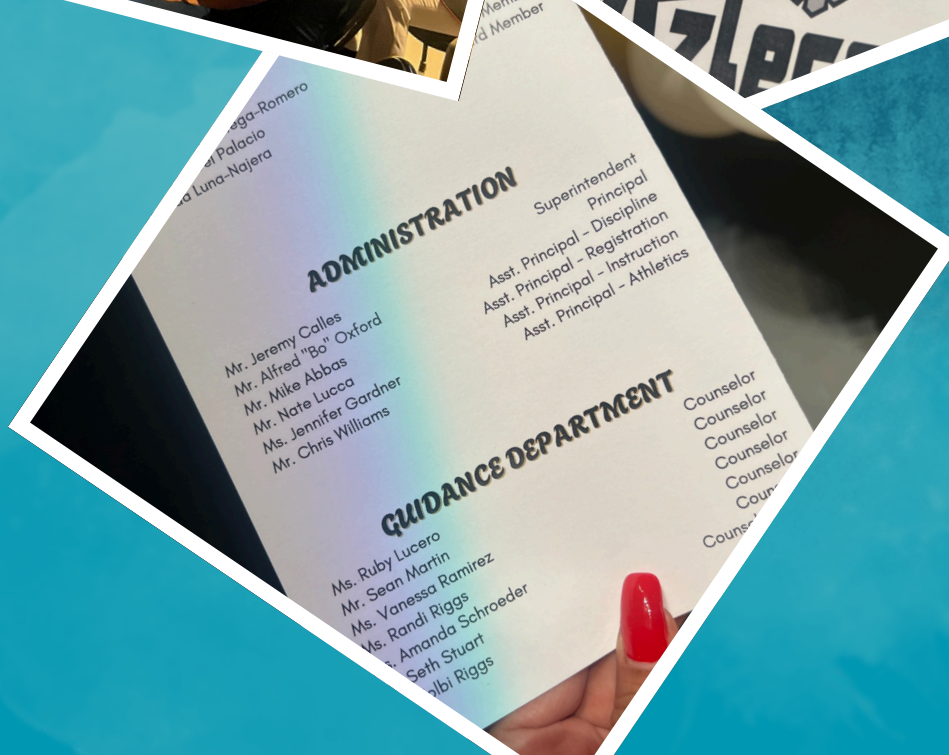
With my diverse cultural heritage, I will continue to work hard, uplift my community, push past challenges, and inspire future Latino community members to improve.

“Growing up in a Latino household shaped the person I am today, embedding morals of compassion, hard work, courage, and responsibility. The Spanish language spoken by my family, traditions passed down, and stories shared are vibrant memories infused in my childhood that would be impossible without Hispanic heritage. My Latino heritage influenced my life's goals by immersing a keen sense of perseverance, a strong sense of community, and determination.

In Mexican culture, family is extremely important. Furthermore, family first was instilled in all our hearts. This meant I was surrounded by many loving family members growing up. These embedded values of family and respect create long-lasting memories with loved ones. Both my mother and father are Hispanic and grew up in harsh conditions. They taught me to persevere through any challenges I will face. They shared stories of family members' hardships along with their own, teaching me that no challenge is too big to overcome. Education was also a fundamental tool my parents pushed upon me. As a person of Hispanic culture, I was not familiar with pursuing higher education. My family forced me to a higher standard and progressed further. They taught me to always work hard and learn as much as possible, so I have decided to pursue a career in nursing.

Furthermore, faith plays an immense role in our culture as well. Being catholic provided meaning, purpose, and comfort during difficult times. Together, these values shaped me into a determined, persistent young woman. With my diverse cultural heritage, I will continue to work hard, uplift my community, push past challenges, and inspire future Latino community members to improve.”

COPPER CANYON HS



DESERT VIEW VHS



DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL



DYSART HIGH SCHOOL



NOGALES HIGH SCHOOL



RIO RICO HIGH SCHOOL



SAN LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL



SMART HORIZONS



SUNNYSIDE HS



TOLLESON UNION HS



UNIVERSITY HS



WALDEN GROVE HS



WEST POINT HS





1988

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF LATINO
ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Ondrea Estrada
Martin Perez
Jo Etta Gonzales
Ovett Chapman
Vince Medina
Ulysses Navarette
Ciara Goulette
Natalie Barragan
Larry Martinez
Ana Samaniego
Juan Ceja
Roxana Rico
Joanne Fimbres
Patrick Layden
Marvene Lobato
Thank You
Patricia Davis
Alice Layden
Mario Castro
Marvene Lobato
Deedrick Martinez
Rose Ann Wastjer
Vanessa Alegria Rivas
Patrick Layden
Vince Medina
Larry Martinez
Jesus Perez
Jo Etta Gonzales
Ovett Chapman
Deedrick Martinez
Dagoberto Lopez
Natalie Barragan
Rose Ann Wastjer
Santosh Kumar
Lorenzo Cabrera
Gisselle Herrera
Jonathan Chavez
Vanessa Alegria R
Marco Ruiz
Thank You
Ramiro Alvarez
Natalie Barragan
Dagoberto Lopez
Elizabeth Camu
Larry Martinez
Lorenzo Cabrera
Alice Layden
Ovett Chapman
Patrick Layden
Monica Mesa
Roxana Rico
Martin Perez
Rose Ann Wastjer
Joe Quintana
Martin Perez
Bhavana Gupta
Joe Quintana
Rose Ann Wastjer
Ana Samaniego
Juan Ceja
Javier Baca
Mario Castro
Monica Mesa
Ana Samaniego
Javier Baca
Javier Baca
Vince Medina
Joe Quintana
Marco Ruiz
Jesus Perez
Santosh Kumar
Jonathan Chavez
Ondrea Estrada
Deedrick Martinez
Mario Castro
Rosalinda Rodriguez

Make it a great day!

Tracy Harris