

Congratulations CLASS OF 2025 THE GRIN



SPECIAL EDITION

GILA RIVER INDIAN NEWS || www.GRICNEWS.org

JULY 2025

2025 Chief Antonio Azul Awards Banquet

Jeston Morris

Gila River Indian News

The Gila River Tribal Education Department hosted the 2025 Chief Antonio Azul Awards Banquet at Sheraton Grand on May 9.

The scholar award is for grades 4 through 12 and college undergraduates. For each scholar award there are two honorable mentions. The citizenship award is for high school students. Chief Azul awards had 45 recipients.

"The fact is they have to be nominated for the Chief Azul award, it's not just a given. It's not a shoo-in winner," said Lance Reyna, Tribal Education assistant director, "They have to meet certain criteria such as grade point average, attendance, and they have to be recognized and recommended by somebody else."

Sherilyn Analla, Tribal Education director, was the host for the Chief Azul banquet, and provided the welcome remarks. Owen Jackson, Chief Azul nominee, provided the blessing. Chief Judge Anthony J. Hill was a guest speaker. Council Representative Duane Jackson, Jr., from District 1, was an invited speaker. Gov.



2025 Chief Azul Scholar and Citizen Awardees during the banquet on May 9. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Stephen Roe Lewis provided the closing remarks. Dinner was served at the ceremony. Pastor Miguel provided the closing prayer.

"As an O'odham and Pee Posh, you learn early on to always

be humble. You never talk big about yourself," said Gov. Lewis, "Tonight, all the Chief Azul award nominee represent not only the future but also the best of who we are as O'otham and Pee Posh, the best of who we are as Gila

River Indian Community."

"Everything that we have done as a people started out with a dream. And I know there are so many dreams in this room tonight," said Hill, "Never let go of your dreams. Nurture and feed

them and make them come true."

"One thing I will tell you, especially for high school and middle school students, is never give up. Never give up on your

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2025 Graduation Recognition Banquet

Jeston Morris

Gila River Indian News

The Tribal Education Department (TED) hosted the 2025 graduation recognition banquet at Wild Horse Pass on June 6.

According to Kristina Blanco, Administrative Assistant for TED, 110 RSVP'd for the banquet. 213 high school students and nine GED students graduated. 73 students graduated from colleges/universities. The banquet was held inside the Palo Verde ballroom.

Sherilyn Analla, Director of TED, delivered the opening remarks which was followed by Antony Gray's traditional bless-



Several graduates attend the 2025 Graduate Recognition Banquet at Gila River Resorts & Casinos - Wild Horse Pass on June 6. Jeston Morris/GRIN

ing. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis delivered the graduation banquet remarks. The student speakers include Jeannine White, Landon Martinez and Nicholas Dakota Tapia. The banquet concluded with the recognition of graduates.

According to Lance Reyna, Assistant Director of TED, the Tribal Education Department hosts the graduation banquet on an annual basis to recognize students who obtain diploma for either a GED, high school, college/university or vocational training. The banquet has been around for many years. It's growing with more students graduating.

"It's important for TED recognizes our students who, against tremendous odds, not only show

up for school but also put forward the effort to complete their educational goal," said Reyna.

Tapia graduated with a master's degree in finance from the University of Arizona. He expressed his motivation and future aspiration. "My motivation is definitely my family. They've laid the foundation for my success in college. I plan to be a financial analyst for a fortune 500 company or an investment advisor," said Tapia.

Kristen Dosela graduated with her Master of Arts in Indigenous Education from ASU. "Most of the time, non-GRIC members held those supervisory leadership positions. That really motivated me to pursue an advance degree.



2025 Graduate Nicholas Tapia shares remarks at the Student Recognition Banquet. Jeston Morris/GRIN

I am looking at ASU and GCU because they have educational leadership doctoral programs," said Dosela.

Nada Celaya, Councilwoman from District 4, expressed her view about the significant of high-

er education. "Education is very important because we live in two worlds. Education allows GRIC students to acquire linguistic register for business and formal set-

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Student Jeannine White shares remarks. Jeston Morris/GRIN

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SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL GRADUATES

Congratulations, graduates! You continue to amaze me, and I’m very proud to see so many of you earn your diplomas, degrees, and certificates. This is a time of celebration, and your milestones are worthy of the highest praise.

These opportunities are very important and your hard work is acknowledged by myself and the entire Community. The future is very bright, and I encourage you to follow your dreams and aspire to do great things.

Some of you have completed your education or learned a valuable trade, and others are still on your path to excellence. We look to all of you to guide us in the years to come.

You are creating a path for others to walk in your footsteps by embracing knowledge and higher learning. By setting that example, you will inspire a new generation of learners and future leaders.

Best wishes on your future endeavors, and good luck to all our GRIC grads!



Governor Stephen Roe Lewis

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Roe Lewis".

As the Lieutenant Governor of the Gila River Indian Community, I take great pride in congratulating all of the 2025 graduates. Which includes the Head start & Kindergarten through the College levels.

The determination and struggles it takes to accomplish this endeavor is understood by all. This is not easy, yet you finished the work and moved forward.

Thank you to the family, friends, colleagues and our angels who walked with you to the end and supported you. You have all represented the Gila River Indian Community well, by your perseverance to continue to reach for the stars. Continue to be the leaders you are and open the doors of opportunities, this is only the beginning of new chapters. Good Luck and enjoy the next chapters.

Remember the leadership and your Community are supporting you and look forward to seeing you succeed. Always keep looking ahead, but never forget where you came from.

Prayers and Blessings to all of you, stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Regina Antone".

Regina Antone, Lt. Governor
Gila River Indian Community



Governor
Stephen Roe Lewis

Lt. Governor
Regina Antone

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Chief Azul Awards
Continued

dreams,” said Council Representative Jackson.

Eleanor BrownEagle is the fourth grade recipient of the Chief Azul Scholar Award. She is from District 4 and she attends Stevens Forest Elementary School in Columbia, Md. The BrownEagle family flew in from Columbia to attend the Chief Azul award ceremony.

“I want to become a fashion designer. I am excited about tonight’s Chief Azul award ceremony even if I don’t win,” said BrownEagle, GRIC member and recipient of scholar award.

Natasha Juan won the grade 12 scholar and the citizenship awards.

“The Chief Azul award was really awesome! The award ceremony not only celebrate who you are as Akimel O’otham/Pee Posh but also recognizes your academic achievement,” said Landon



Community Council Rep. Duane Jackson Jr. speaks during the award banquet. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Recipients of the 2025 Chief Antonio Azul Scholar and Citizen Awards. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Recipients of the 2025 Chief Antonio Azul Scholar and Citizen Awards. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Martinez, AOPPYC member and recipient of citizenship award.

“The Chief Azul award was awesome. I am honored to be here. I’m very proud and grateful for this educational award opportunity. I am setting an example for my children so they can achieve the same educational goals,” said Derrith Lewis, undergraduate student at Grand Canyon University and honorable mention award recipient.

The Chief Antonio Azul Award recipients include:

Scholar Award
Eleanor BrownEagle
Elizabeth Olmos
Mya Torres
Tayva Torres
Bree’Ana Brooks
Aubrey Stevens
Hope Pardonnet

Shayla Davis
Natasha Juan
Sineca Jackson

Honorable Mention
Ethan Martinez
Ariana Lugo
Daniel Angel Valenzuela
Josiah Manuel
Emilio Castro
Sariah Soke Hull
Owen Jackson
Carlos Delgado
Caleb Lujan
Adam Dixon
Amira Quiroz
Trinity Goldtooth
Douglas Evans
Heaven Pablo-Stevens
Layla Jackson
Aliyah Jackson
Peytan Duran
Seth Enos

Derrith Lewis
Daniel Honyumptewa

Citizen Award
Justice Carrillo
Aiyana Jackson
Francis Histia
Jaydah Harvier
Moses Cardona
Devon Juan
Natasha Juan
Seth Enos
Peytan Duran
Amaira Miguel
Malanie Miles
Sayuri Jackson
Landon Martinez
Mariana Pablo
Zyana Flores



Recipients of the 2025 Chief Antonio Azul Scholar and Citizen Awards. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten classes get promoted at Gila Crossing

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

In a packed cafeteria, the Gila Crossing Community School (GCCS) promoted 31 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students in Komatke District 6 on May 29.

The parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles attended the promotion ceremony. The pre-kindergarten class had five students, one teacher and one instructional assistant. The kindergarten class had 26 students and two teachers.

The promotion began with the prekindergarten class. Maria Acosta, Pre-kindergarten Teacher and Alicia Valdez-Jay, Pre-K Instructional Assistant,



Pre-K students promote on May 29. Jeston Morris/GRIN

took their students onto the stage. The pre-kindergarten students wore their promotion caps and candy necklaces.

Valdez-Jay held the microphone and the students

sang their promotion song. The parents applauded and cheered on the students. Acosta presented each student with their promotion certificate. The pre-kindergarten class posed with a



26 students promote from kindergarten on May 29. Jeston Morris/GRIN

big smile holding their certificates. The teachers took their students back to their classroom for the promotion reception afterwards.

The two kindergarten classes were combined for

the promotion ceremony. Elizabeth Williams, Kindergarten Teacher, had 15 students and Kassandra Gonzalez, Kindergarten Teacher had 11 students. The graduating kindergarten students march up the middle aisle with smiling faces onto the stage.

The kindergarten students performed graduation song on the stage. The audience cheer and waved their hands. For the promotion certificates, both Williams and Gonzalez presented each of their student a certificate and posed for photographs.

The graduating kindergarten class posed with their certificates on the stage. Each kindergarten class return to their class-

room for promotion reception with family members and teachers. Light refreshment was provided.

"I am a kindergarten teacher here at Gila Crossing. We're celebrating our children promotion to first grade. They made beautiful progress throughout the school year. My graduating class is ready to learn and grow some more," said Williams.

"I am a kindergarten teacher. I'm elated about the progress my students made throughout the school year. We're celebrating the promotion. I'm happy to be part of this school and working in this community," said Gonzales.



Kindergarten students perform a graduation song and dance. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Sacaton Celebrates 4th Grade Promotion

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

53 fourth graders promoted at Sacaton Elementary School, in front of a packed gymnasium, on May 20.

The promotion ceremony began with the pledge of allegiance by the student council followed by welcome remarks by Superintendent Robert Lewandowski. Ethan Martinez read his Mul-Chu-Tha essay, followed by the fourth-grade class performance and a video presentation. The fourth-grade



Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis delivers remarks for the promotion celebration. Jeston Morris/GRIN

promotion certificates were presented by the teachers. Principal Stephanie Celis delivered the closing remarks.

Martinez's Mul-Chu-Tha essay reading was powerful. He received standing ovation during and after his essay reading entitled, "Riding through the times: How will grit and tradition shape your legacy." Martinez read, "I am responsible for my life and when I grow up, I'm going to learn my native language. I will sing songs and tell stories about the people in my culture."

Lewandowski delivered key highlights for the school. The Sacaton Elementary School is a state recognized school with a B ranking. It's the only school in GRIC to be ranked by the State of Arizona. Further, Sacaton Elementary School's achieved the 2024-2025 Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase School. Furthermore, over 84 percent of the students attend school on a daily basis, it's the average daily membership which has increased from last year.



4th Grade students promote from Sacaton Elementary School on May 20. Jeston Morris/GRIN

In fact, thirteen Sacaton Elementary students have perfect attendance. Leilani Patrick is the fourth-grade example.

Lewandowski praised the students' test scores. Over seventy percent of the fourth graders achieved

their national goal in reading and over 85 percent achieved their national goal in mathematics. "We are really good at mathematics here at Sacaton because over eighty five percent meant the national goal and I am very happy with the

results the fourth graders made," said Lewandowski.

Wylma Montoya-Begay, Fourth Grade Teacher, reflected on her students' progress. "As a teacher I watched my students walk across the stage. It's their promotion to the next grade

level. I believe my students did a wonderful job in fourth grade. I can see each of my student's progression throughout the school year. They worked hard and they earn the promotion. I am proud of my students," said Montoya-Begay.



Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



PRE-K



Amira Thomas
Early Education Child Care



Arabella Lucy Martinez
Sacaton Headstart



Caia R Serwit
Sacaton Head Start

Believe in yourself, you can do anything you put your mind to. You have a kind soul, what you think matters. Just keep smiling, we love you!! Love, mom & siblings

You've learned your ABCs along with making lifelong friends. Here's to new memories and a backpack full of dreams! Caia you have made us so proud, continue to shine!
Love Always, Mom, Dad, Skye and Ciarra



Cipriano Amavisca

I Reynalda Apodaca would like to congratulate my grandson Cipriano Amavisca for doing an awesome job being an 2024-2025 graduate from D6 Kumatke Head Start . We love you and are so proud of you keep pushing for the stars! Proud Grandma



Ezmia Reyna
Sacaton Elementary School

Mimi, your dad and mom are so proud of you! You have learned so much and we will forever believe in you! We are proud of your accomplishment. May you continue to thrive in your educational growth and become the best you ever.
Love you always, Dad and Mom!



Kaliyah Fulwilder
Casa Blanca Community School

I'm so proud of you Honey! I know you will continue to do amazing and be the bright star that you are! -Mom
We love you Honey! Have fun in kindergarten! - Sisters
Good job on finishing preschool! Now you're off to bigger and better things, keep learning! -Ana



Lorenz Stone
Peridot Head Start

Lorenz is very shy but always smiling. While being in Headstart he's learned to talk, say his ABC's, numbers, etc. He loves his other culture which is San Carlos Apache Tribe. He loves to watch the crown dancers.



Lucas David Jackson
Bologna Elementary

Congratulations Lucas on this first step to a bright and meaningful future.
Love Mom and Dad



Noah Ramirez
Blackwater Community School

Congrats baby boy! We're so proud of you.

Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



KINDERGARTEN



Arlo M. Pedro
Casa Blanca Community School

Arlo, My Son-Shine, we are proud of you and your achievements. It is a joy to see you grow and learn at home and to hear what you learn at school. Your whole family is proud to see you advance into 1st grade. It may seem like a small piece of the cheese cake, but it is a wonderful step in your educational advancement. We are all here for you son. We love you ! (Romans 8:37) Love Always your Family.



Elyanna Gonzales
Legacy Academy



Ivy Ramirez
Dos Rios Elementary



Josiah Miles
Gateway Pointe Elementary

Congratulations on kindergarten son, just one of MANY more accomplishments. I love you. (:



Madison Brooks
Casa Blanca Community School

Awesome job Maddy! 1st Grade here she comes! Love your family.



Naliah Miles
Blackwater Community School

We love you Nai! Congrats, we're so proud of you!



Ronin Gregorio
Blackwater Community School

Congrats Ronin, on to First Grade! We love you!
"The more you learn, the more places you will go"
-Love your family.

Gila Crossing Holds 8th Grade Promotion

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

Gila Crossing Community School (GCCS) promoted 33 eighth graders inside a packed gym in Komatke District 6 on May 28.

The promotion began with graduation processional and the pledge of allegiance by Anessa Lopez and Danina Satala. Antonio Davis performed the opening blessing which was followed by Superintendent Jim Mosley’s welcome remarks. Caleb Lujan, gold scholar, and Logan Vasquez, silver scholar, delivered the academic honor speeches. Chief Judge, Anthony Hill, was the guest speaker and Lane Enos performed traditional song. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis delivered the closing remarks. Vice Principal Michelle Covarrubias served as the master of ceremony and read the names of the graduates. The school board of trustees presented the promotion certificates to



Eighth grade promotion at the Gila Crossing Community School on May 28. Jeston Morris/GRIN

er it’s an ensemble act. It means you couldn’t have done it alone. “Your teachers and school staff helped you. Your mother, father, aunties, uncles and cousins also help you,” said Gov. Lewis.

In his post ceremony interview, Gov. Lewis stated that “Gila Crossing Community School is one of the first new schools built in the Community. It’s a state-of-the-art school and the students are getting a world class education here in Komatke District 6. We are surrounded by our culture, mountains and farmlands. We are proud of the 8th graders getting promoted to high school. They are closing one chapter and opening a new chapter in their lives. They are our ambassadors representing Gila River. They are our future leaders.”

Marlon Simpson, Science Teacher, reflected on the 8th grade promotion. “The Gila Crossing promotion ceremony went very well! The students are excited! The students really put in the work. I believe they really deserve all this promotion and celebration. They have been here for a long time. I’m happy to see them move on to high school,” said Simpson.



Gila Crossing Community School students Anessa Lopez and Danina Satala give the pledge of allegiance. Jeston Morris/GRIN

the graduates. Hill began his speech with “It’s a privilege to be here to celebrate this really special occasion. When I was asked to come tonight, I had to think back to my eighth-grade graduation 34 years ago.” Hill highlighted President John F. Kennedy’s famous speech, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Hill said, “We ask you as 8th grade graduates to think of the same thing. What can you give to the people who have come here tonight to celebrate your promotion?”

Next, Hill discussed future goals. Every time you reach your goal it’s a stop along the road of life

journey. Your next stop is 2029, that’s when you graduate from high school. 2033 is also another stop when you graduate from college. If you choose to get a graduate degree, 2036 is going to be another stop. “Always keep learning. Never give up. Never stop trying. When you get knocked down. Pick yourselves up. Dust yourself off and keep going,” said Hill.

In his concluding remarks, Hill said, “Gila River is your home. Nev-

er forget where you came from. Never forget your hardships. Never forget the people who lifted you up along the way. Eighth grade graduates, congratulations, I wish you the best of luck.”

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis emphasized Kermit the Frog’s commencement address. Gov. Lewis paraphrase Kermit’s address: Take charge of your life and your story because only you can write the chapters in your life. Your graduation is not a sole act rath-



Jeston Morris/GRIN



Jeston Morris/GRIN

5TH GRADE



Raiden Pratt
Blackwater Community School

Raiden, This year you have been very productive with color guard. You stayed on top of your grades and received the principles award. We are very proud of you and your accomplishments. Good job Raiden! We love you! Love Mom & Travis



Jeston Morris/GRIN

Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



8TH GRADE



Alianna Jackson

Here's to the upcoming High School years! We are all so proud of you & even though grandma Morning isn't here she is the proudest Gram so keep going, keep making us proud! We will be behind you every step of the way. So here's to the High School years with more accomplishments in your school work & all your sports! Love Mom, Dad, siblings Aubrie & Trini, uncle Bee & family & grandma Morning.



Armani Ruvalcaba
Sacaton Middle School

Yay...You are off to HIGH SCHOOL! We are so proud of you, Love! Enjoy your high school years, have fun and make lots of memories! Love always, your family!



Bree'Ana Brooks
Skyline Gila River

Congratulations Bree! May your hard work and determination continue to lead you to great things. Love your family.



Cienna Davis
Imagine Prep Coolidge

To the young scrappy and hungry, it's time to take a shot and fan this spark into a flame. There's a million things you haven't done, but you're smashing every expectation. Blow us all away in the next chapter baby! We Love you Enna!!



Emily Pratt
Skyline Gila River

Emily, You have come a long way from being shy in elementary/middle school, to getting in front of your peers and their families to do the invocation on your promotion day. You have made us so proud to see your courage. Your hard work never goes unnoticed. Good job Em! We love you! Love Mom & Travis



Jaszzmine M. Pedro
Casa Blanca Community School

Jaszzmine, we are proud of your achievements. YOU did it ! A whole new path into High School. You Are capable! Never doubt what you can do. Always remember the goodness of God. It was not always a good day but Always a God day. We love you no doubt! Congratulations on your success in conquering and overcoming the obstacles. Continue to strive forward and advance in your education and the goals you have set forth. (Romans 8:37) Love Always Your Family!



Jordyn Boni
Skyline Gila River

Jordyn, we are so proud of all the hard work you put in, keeping your studies first and always following your heart, to watch you pursue cheer and persevere. As you start your High School Career "please try to never grow up." Keep God First, everything else will be added



Keith Escalante
North Mountain Middle School

My son you are AMAZING!!!! You had a rough year yet, you still finished off strong! I can not wait to see what High School holds for you! You have a bright future ahead of you! Keep working hard and making Mom proud! I love you! Class of 2029!!!



Nikki EveningStar Kyytan
Coolidge Jr. High

We the family our so proud of our daughter Nikki as she promotes to High School, she is so smart and beautiful and kind!!!!

Sacaton Middle School Promotes 51 Students

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

The Sacaton Middle School (SMS) promoted 51 eighth graders in front of a hometown crowd in District 3 on May 21.

Parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles packed the SMS gymnasium for the promotion celebration which started with a pledge of allegiance by Hunter Jose and Lillyann Schurz followed by welcome remarks by Superintendent Robert Lewandowski.

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis delivered a promotion speech. Principal Don Schopp delivered the opening address and D'Rey Mark delivered the student address. Vice President & Special Advisor at ASU, Jacob Moore, delivered the keynote address. The eighth grade promotion certificates were presented



Students Lillyann Schurz and Hunter Jose recite the pledge of allegiance for the banquet. Jeston Morris/GRIN

by Schopp and Lewandowski. Middle School Teacher, Vanessa Murphy, was the class sponsor and she delivered the closing remarks.

Lewandowski highlighted class achievement: The eighth grade reading test score is 90 percent.

Schopp echoed the same sentiment. “The hardest thing to show growth is in eighth grade. Our Sacaton eighth graders not only achieved ninety percent test score but also achieved excellent school attendance,” said Schopp.

In his keynote address,



Students promote from Sacaton Middle School on May 21. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Moore discussed the kind of people to have in your life. It’s best not to have people who are always negative, haters and jealous in your life. “What you need to do is surround yourself with people who are positive, people who really care and people who are going to support you in every way,” said Moore.

Further, Moore emphasized the importance of superhero that have superpower such as Superman, Batman and Hercules. Whether it’s Greek mythology or O’otham stories, “They teach us about good, they teach us about bad, they teach us about evil and they teach us about overcoming challenging situa-

tion. I am here to tell you that you have superpower and it’s up to you to figure out how to leverage it,” said Moore.

In his concluding keynote, Moore discussed the importance of becoming a master learner. He told a short story about a famous politician who struggled with mathematics in school but he eventually passed his algebra and graduated. The teacher told his student, “I was not just teaching you math. I was teaching you how to think differently. Mathematics is something you can carry with you throughout your life. Once you become a learner, you’re always a learner. You’re a master learner if

you can learn mathematics,” said Moore.

In her closing remarks, Murphy said, “This graduating 8th class made tremendous gains in academics and athletics. It was tough learning curve but the students met the academic expectation. Our sport team made the play-off. The Sacaton eighth grade is officially promoted to high school.”

In the post promotion interview, Murphy said, “I feel proud and sad at the same time because I had these students for three years. They came in with low test score, but they made significant academic progress. I am proud of my students.”



Students Graduate from Skyline Gila River

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

The Skyline Gila River Commencement Ceremony was held at Mesa Arts Center on May 8.

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis was the commencement speaker at the 10th Annual Skyline Gila River graduation Ceremony. Zyanna Flores provided the invocation and Rain-Cloud Thompson sang the National Anthem. Jason Allison was the valedictorian, and Corine Banuelos was salutatorian. Principal Keith Brown provided the welcome remarks and presented diplomas to the graduates. Vice-Principal Pamela Chandler introduced speakers and read the names of the graduates. Thirty-nine students graduated from Skyline.

“Class of 2025 is the future of the Gila River Indian Community,” said Gov. Lewis, “I am honored to be here this afternoon to celebrate your graduation. I applaud all that you have accomplished. I am excited



Skyline Gila River Students during their graduation ceremony at the Mesa Arts Center on May 8. Jeston Morris/GRIN

for what you will accomplish in the future. I am proud of all the graduates.”

“I am so excited about this graduating class. They are so special. I am so proud of them. They have worked so hard. And they earned college credits,” said Principal Brown, “I am

very proud of this year’s graduating class.”

“I am so proud of the graduates. This graduating class were the first kiddos who welcomed me into Skyline high school. I am so impressed with them,” said Whitney Nielsen, history teacher at Skyline,

“My students touch my heart, they will always be in my heart.”

“I feel very proud. Our high school graduation was awesome, cool and exciting! My plan is to go to college and become ultrasound technician,” Jayden Benally, Skyline graduate.

“I feel excited but nervous at the same time. Our high school graduation was awesome and exciting. I am planning on going into the medical field for a neurosurgery. My favorite part of the graduation was receiving my diploma,” said Jaylen Benally, Skyline

graduate.

“Our high school graduation was cool and exciting! I worked hard to graduate. I’m happy to achieve my goal and graduate today. My plan is to attend automotive school to become a mechanic,” said Abraham Coronado, Skyline graduate.

“Today is a good day because everyone achieved their high school goal and graduated. I am going to a trade school to become an electrician,” said Jacob Guterrez, Skyline graduate.

“I feel awesome about our graduation. My favorite part was receiving my diploma. My plan is go to college to study sonography and become an ultrasound tech,” said Zarri Austin, Skyline graduate.

“Skyline graduation was awesome. This graduation experience feels awesome. I am planning on going to trade school to become a welder,” said Rain-cloud Thompson, Skyline graduate.



Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



HIGH SCHOOL



Adrian Rocha
Skyline Gila River

Keep on continuing to do your best, not for us, but for yourselves.



Amaira Miguel
Coolidge High School

Congrats Bubba! We are all so proud of you for your accomplishment. Keep reaching for the stars. We love you so much!! -Kayla, TeeJay & Ducks



Amira Lynn Perez
Insight Academy of Arizona

I am so proud of my only daughter who started online schooling in 4th grade with Arizona Virtual School, to her high school diploma with Insight Academy of Arizona. She has also earned credits towards college. I was honored to be her Learning Coach for 9 years and am ready to go to school and earn a degree for myself. Thank you Amira! Mommy loves you.



Andrena Alexis Norris
Pathway Academy Charter School

Congratulations, your diploma is your passport to a world of possibilities. I am fiercely proud of you. Your success is a testament to your hard work. Keep chasing success, I love you.



Azumi Butterfly Murphy
Gilbert High School

We are proud of everything you have accomplished in high school and we can't wait for this next journey in your life to begin. We know you will do great things in the years to come. We love you very much. Go Sun Devils! Forks up!



Bryan Lee Cardenas
Imagine Prep Superstition



Chloe Jay
Corona del Sol High School

Chloe participated in the following during her high school career: Orchestra (9) Photography (9) Corona Crew (11,12) Early Childhood Education (9-12). During her Junior Year she was a member of the F.I.N.A.L. Youth Council. This fall, Chloe will attend the University of Oregon, majoring in Education, in hopes of becoming an Elementary School Teacher. We are ever so proud of our Chloe, and can't wait to see what the future holds! We love you, Chloe! XOXO



Danai Ameelyenah

We are all proud of Danai Ameelyenah for pushing through all her obstacles in life.



David Kelley
Skyline Gila River

We're very proud of David and James Kelley for graduating high school and all of their accomplishments in basketball. They're very smart and handsome men and I'm very proud to call them my sons and all of their siblings and family are so proud as well. Right after HS they went out and got jobs and we're so excited for how far they've come and will continue to grow. I just want them to know they are loved and to always be themselves no matter what.



Dmitri Pratt
Skyline Gila River

We are so proud of you on this big accomplishment. Through all your struggles in high school, it almost seemed impossible. All your dedication and hard work paid off. Mitri we love you, and we leave you with this quote, "Whatever you choose for a career path, remember the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose." Congratulations Dmitri! You did it! -Love Mom & Travis



Donna-Jean Webb
Glendale High School



Elias Katta
AZ Compass Prep

Elias, We are so proud of you -- not just for what you've accomplished, but for the person you're becoming. Watching you walk across that stage was a moment we'll never forget. This is just the first step in a future full of possibilities, and we're excited to walk beside you on this journey. Keep pushing forward, keep being you, and know that your family is behind you always -- with love, pride, and endless support. Congratulations, Class of 2025! Love, your family



Elicia Gonzales
Manzano High School



Elijah Soke
Basha High School

Elijah has come a long way in his educational journey. From sitting with him in preschool days to overcoming life hardships he strived to make the finish line. We are so proud of him for his accomplishment and his drive to continue his education. May God continue to bless you in all you do. Love Dad, Mom, brothers and sisters and your dog Zechariah.



Emmanuel Norzagaray III

I am a happy and proud to be called your mother. I know you will go on to do better and greater things in whatever path you decide to take. Congratulations and we love you!

Congratulations

CLASS OF 2025



HIGH SCHOOL



Francis Histia
Casa Grande Union High School

Follow your dreams and get out there and see the world...



Hayden Banham
Woodland High School

You did an amazing job! I know it took a lot of hard work and late nights but you finished it off. We are all so proud of you. We look forward to what you do going forward. We all love you! -Dad



Jacob Pablo
Maricopa High School

Congratulations on earning your diploma! We're incredibly proud of your dedication and perseverance. May this graduation mark the start of a new journey filled with lifelong learning, growth, and success.



James Kelley
Skyline Gila River

We're very proud of David and James Kelley for graduating high school and all of their accomplishments in basketball. They're very smart and handsome men and all of their siblings and family are so proud as well. Right after HS they went out and got jobs and we're so excited for how far they've come and will continue to grow. I just want them to know they are loved and to always be themselves no matter what.



Jaylen P. Lewis

We are proud of you. If your Mama was still here, she would be proud of you too. Keep going and do what you most desire to do as long as you keep working hard. Don't worry about rushing. Take your time. We're always gonna be here to support you no matter what. Love you, Jay. -From All of Us



Jaytash A. Murphy
Gilbert High School

Way to go, Jay! This next chapter in your life will be your greatest challenge. We will be there every step of the way to help you achieve your goals! We love you very much. Love, Mom, Dad, Ty, Kaia, Azumi, Grandpa, uncles, aunts, cousins

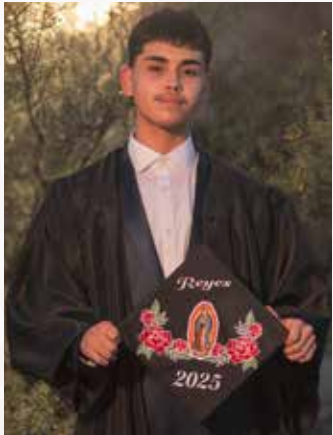


Jeremiah David Edwin Johnson
*Coolidge Alternative Program/
Coolidge Virtual Academy*

Jrrrr! CONGRATULATIONS!! You have graduated High School!! We are ecstatically proud of you! This past years many things have happened that were unexpected; testing you in many ways. You PREVAILED. You finished on what you had set out to do. Continue forward, never backward, and always remember what you learned that made you stronger and wiser. Praying for God's continued hand upon you, (Romans8:37) Love Always Your Family.



Jerry Pedro Jr.
Desert Hills High School



Jimmy Reyes
Coolidge Virtual Academy



Jolyn Leidecker
*American Leadership Academy
Ironwood*

Congrats JoJo! We are so proud of you. Can't wait to see you cheering for U of A! You have an exciting future ahead of you.



Justin Banham
Woodland High School

Congratulations Son! You put in all the hard work and it paid off for you. We are all so proud of this accomplishment and look forward to your next endeavor in life. We all love you! -Dad



Kalani A. Funiestas
Cesar Chavez High School

Congratulations Kalani!! We are so proud of you and look forward to seeing what comes next. It has been a pleasure to watch you grow and see you accomplish your goals thus far. Can't wait to see where you go from here. We Love You Baby Girl!!!! Love, Mommy & Daddy (Carol & Darren Funiestas)



Landon David Martinez
Mountain Point High School

We are so proud of your academic achievements & being a dedicated athlete, all while earning your Private Pilot License. Take pride in how far you have come, it wasn't an easy road, but here you are! You deserve all the blessings that come your way. As you continue to college at Embry-Riddle University, remember to pray & give thanks to Creator, learn as much as you can & have fun. You have family, friends, & the whole Gila River Community supporting & rooting for you! Way to go buddy! Love Always, Mom, Dad, Evan, Bailey & Phoebe.



Lillia Morning Star Martinez
Casa Grande Union High School

Congratulations Lilliy Ling-Ling on this big accomplishment. May you reach for the stars in this new journey in your life. We love you.



Lincoln Jeffrey Stone
Chandler High School

Lincoln J. Stone, Learning never stops, my love. Be proud of what you've acquired so far. Duck, dodge, bob & weave when necessary. Bask in life's inexplicable beauty as often as possible. If it all becomes overwhelming, fall back on the love and wisdom of those you trust. Whatever you do, don't panic. I believe in you always, Mom.

Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



HIGH SCHOOL



Marianna Ellyse Hernandez
Casa Grande Union High School

We are so proud of you Mari. May God continue to guide you and bless you. Remember to be kind, humble, and work hard. "God is within her, she will not fall." Psalm 46:5
We Love You
Mom and Your Siblings



Meadow Lynn Lewis
Hamilton High School

Meadow Lynn Lewis, graduated from Hamilton High School. Throughout Meadow's high school years sh go very recognized in Acrylic Nails & Nail Art, in her first week of after graduation she stared Nail School, studying her way up to receive a AZ State Board License. She also enrolled in Chandler-Gilbert Community College to study in Business Administration in August, to venture in the Nail Art Business. Meadow is half Akimel O'odham and Hopi. WAY TO GO MEADOW! CONTINUE TO REACH FOR YOUR GOALS. LOVE MOM.



Michelle L. Burnette
Desert Hills High School

YOU DID IT!! We are so proud of you- I know Dad is too! Continue to work hard and have confidence that you will succeed at whatever you choose to do in life. -Love Your Family
*Received Congressional Certificate of Recognition @graduation
*City of Gilbert Student Citizen of the Month-February 2025



Natasha Juan
Coolidge High School

Congrats on your accomplishments this year, we know it was stressful. We are proud of you always! Continue to reach for the stars, we are excited for you in your next chapter! WE LOVE YOU... from, all of us!!



Nate Weisman
Desert Hill High School

From your first steps to this milestone, I've watched you grow into a young man, ready to chase his dreams. Keep Aiming High Mijo! Love you, Mom



Nevaeh Ann Morgan
Desert Winds High School

Congratulations baby girl! We are so proud of your achievements! We can't wait to see you conquer this world! We love you so much!!!!



Phillip Rocha
Skyline Gila River

Keep on continuing to do your best. Not for us, but for yourselves.



Samiah Villareal
Betty H Fairfax



Serena Lomayaktewa
Casa Grande Union High School

Serena, High School is behind you now, and ahead of you lies a world full of opportunity, adventure, and the unknowns. No matter what comes next, always remember who you are! I'll always be here to cheer you on, every step of the way!! CONGRATULATIONS, MY GIRL. YOU DID IT and the best is yet to come. We love you, mom and your siblings!



Seth L. Enos
Coolidge High School

This is my son Seth. Seth has always been curious and determined. He worked very hard throughout his 12 years of school; he not only managed to keep excellent grades he joined various clubs and held a State Officer position. He is a true leader, and I am so excited for his next chapter at the University of Arizona. Congratulations Seth, we are so proud of you. Your friends and family love you forever.



Tristan Rocha
Skyline Gila River

Keep on continuing to do your best. not for us, but for yourselves.



Sayuri Akira Jackson
Hamilton High School

Dear Baby Girl, We are so proud of you! You made graduating a priority, and you accomplished it. This is a testament to your strength and resilience in pursuing whatever your heart desires. College marks the beginning of your new journey, where you will discover how you can contribute to the world. Remember that life is full of endless possibilities, and it's up to you to embrace them and shape your legacy for those who come after you. We are always here for you. Love, Dad+Mom, Caleb, Sinny & Colby



William Isaac Black Cloud
Wakpala High School

William Black Cloud graduated from Wakpala High School in Wakpala SD with honors. He was the Salutatorian of his graduating class. We are very proud of him and his accomplishments and his future plans.

SRPMIC hosts the 2025 American Indian Convocation at Salt River Fields

Jeston Morris
Gila River Indian News

The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC) hosted the 2025 Maricopa Community College District’s (MCCD) American Indian Convocation at Salt River Fields on May 2.

“For tonight, we are excited about hosting the American Indian Convocation here at Salt River Fields for the Native graduates of Maricopa Community College,” said SRPMIC President Martin Harvier, “The students have been working hard to get their college education. They deserved to be recognized. It’s an honor for Salt River to host this event.”

The convocation panel included Harvier, Gila River Indian Community Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, Tohono O’odham Nation Chair-

man Verlon M. Jose, Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, Pima County Recorder Gabriella Cázares-Kelly (TON) and Arizona State University Vice President of University Affairs Jacob Moore.

“We were notified that the Maricopa Community College canceled all the affinity convocations, that included the American Indian convocation,” said Mikah Claros, SRPMIC Council Rep. from District E, “We felt that our students needed to be acknowledged, not just our students, but all Native students needed to be acknowledged for their college achievement. Our Council decided to step up and host the convocation.”

“It is a good day to celebrate the higher education achievement for the Native students. It is unfortunate that the Maricopa Community College canceled the convocation,” said Duane

Jackson Jr., Community Council Representative, District 1, “I am grateful to Salt River for stepping up to make the convocation possible.”

The Pee Posh Veterans Association posted the colors for the convocation. The Maswade drum group sang an honor song for the graduates. The SRPMIC Traditional Dancers performed for the audience. Fireworks concluded the convocation.

“The contribution of tribes and tribal members are directly linked to the success of every Arizonan, said Ariz. Gov. Hobbs, “Your graduation means you’re taking the next step to move Arizona forward.”

“When I heard the American Indian convocation was being canceled, it was a slap in the face. Later I learned that Salt River is hosting the convocation, I



Several graduates are recognized during the American Indian Convocation at Salt River Fields on May 2. Jeston Morris/GRIN



Jeston Morris/GRIN

was the happiest student,” said Collin Skeets, graduate and student speaker.

“I am graduating, I am so excited. I am honored to be a student speaker tonight. I am proud to represent Gila River Indian Community,” said Niyah Joaquin, “I am graduating with an associate degree in mortuary science.”

“I am grateful to the Salt River Tribal Council for putting this convocation together. We are getting the opportunity to celebrate our college accomplishment,” said Molly Sanchez, SRPMIC member, graduate and student speaker.

“For some of us, this moment to be recognized for our college achievement is a long time coming. Maricopa Community College canceling the convocation was discouraging. I am very grateful to the Salt River for hosting this convocation and giving us



Jeston Morris/GRIN

Native students this opportunity,” said Lisa Hendricks, GRIC member and graduate, “I am celebrating my associates degree.”

“We’re invited to this convocation and it’s an honor to sing for the college graduates, said Orena Flores, backup singer for the Maswade drum group.

“To see the native graduates in their traditional attire, it’s an awesome site to see. Anytime we are invited to sing, it’s always an honor,” said Colby Afraidofhistracks, lead singer for the Maswade drum group.

Graduation Banquet Continued

tings on or off the Community. I really love the TED graduation banquet. It’s very humbling to see and hear the graduates,” said Councilwoman Celaya.

In his address, Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis said, “When you graduate, you’re not the one graduating. Although it may seem like it. But it’s your whole family that you carry on your shoulders when you walk across the stage to get your diploma.”

“Life will challenge you. Life will question who you are and what you are doing. The important thing is you have the tools to find the solution and you have the Community’s support,” said Gov. Lewis.

In his closing, “I’m so proud of every one of you.

You’ve earned your degree. This is your night to shine. This is your night to be recognized with your family,” said Gov. Lewis.

Landon Martinez, graduate of Mountain Pointe High School, shared his aspiration. “I am planning on attending the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to study aeronautical science and become an airline pilot,” said Martiez.

Jeanine White, GED graduate, said, “I realized it wasn’t about academics but rather it was about proving to myself that I can do it. Math was the hardest subject to pass and I almost quit because of it.” In her closing, “Getting my GED is more than a certificate, it’s a big achievement. It makes me smile,” said White.



Gila River Indian Community graduates are recognized during a banquet hosted by the Tribal Education Department. Jeston Morris/GRIN

Congratulations CLASS OF 2025



HIGHER EDUCATION



Alyssa Torres
Carrington College

I'm beyond thankful to have accomplished my associates degree. This journey required long hours, hard work, and dedication, but it's all been well worth it. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my loved ones and mentors for their unconditional support. I'm committed to life long learning and am genuinely excited to pursue further education in healthcare.



Andrea "Andi" Losey
University of Dubuque

Thank you to my family and friends for their support. I wouldn't have made it this far without you all!



Bobbi Gonzales
Central Arizona College



Jacqueline K. Stevens
Scottsdale Community College

I would like to thank the American Indian Program faculty at Scottsdale Community College. Especially, Ana Cunningham who was an advocate for Native American Students and had helped me throughout the years while attending Scottsdale Community College. Also, I would like to thank my husband, immediate family and co-workers who supported me throughout my educational journey. As I continue to pursue my education at Arizona State University in the Fall. I will always remember my struggles and determination to succeed!



Kristen Dosela
Arizona State University

Deep gratitude is expressed to the GRIC Scholarship Program for their support, which has fueled the educational journey from Associates to Bachelors, and now to achieving a Masters degree. A special thank you to my husband, Samuel, for his constant encouragement. To my parents, Arvis & the late Lorraine Dosela, Thank You for instilling the value of education. It is hoped that this journey serves as an inspiration to my son Benito and my siblings will see this.



Lisa Hohokimal Hendricks
Chandler Gilbert Community College

We are very proud of our Hohokimal, she always perseveres and will continue to share her strength and goodness with our Hemajkam!

Congratulations Lisa! Your hard work and dedication have truly paid off. We're all very proud of all you've accomplished. This milestone is just a stepping stone for more success to come. Wishing you all the best in your next chapter. From The Community Council & Secretary's Office



Madison Ruvalcaba
CAP/Central Arizona College

We are so proud of you, Mamas! God has definitely been with you through your education journey and everything you have achieved this far. Graduating from College then High School! We know it wasn't easy but YOU DID IT and you held on to your scripture. "With God all things are possible." Matt 19:26 Keep pushing yourself! We love you, Maddie! Love always, your family!



Malaya Sweet Pablo
Northern Arizona University

We are so very proud of your dedication and perseverance! You have overcome many challenges and continue to amaze us! See the world, learn all you can and bring it home baby!



McKenna Wilson
University of Oregon

I am so proud of my youngest daughter McKenna, as she will soon be walking across the stage to receive her degree from her dream school the University of Oregon. I know that you are destined to do great in whatever you decide to do. I love you and I can't wait to see what the future holds for you, sweet girl. Sko Ducks!!



Nicholas Tapia
University of Arizona



Rikki Marie Fine
Cypress College



Shaye Mayeda
University of Kansas

My heart is full as Shaye graduates! Her hard work and dedication have earned her an MSW and a perfect 4.0! Rock Chalk! I know she will be an amazing leader, teacher, and social worker. So proud of you! We are all proud of your incredible accomplishments, Shaye! We love you -Mom and Family.



Sunny I. Villarreal
Mt. San Antonio College

Our family is beyond proud of what you accomplished and where you're headed next! We love you and will always be here.



Victoria Baker
Arizona State University

Congratulations **CLASS OF 2025**



HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

- Michael Bohen
- Emma Youyetewa- Riveras
- Shalae Miguel
- Shea Pablo
- Cerena Apkaw
- Victoria Baker
- Steven Echeverria
- Marrilyn Galvan
- Santiago Jones
- Mirra Keeto
- Mario Molina Jr
- Krystal Rankin
- Persephone Rosas
- Majel Williams
- Jorden Norris
- Reba Manuel
- Kristen Dosela
- Yvette Carpio
- Kateri Vigil- Jackson
- Umbellina Wiltshire
- Tomasi Moustafa
- Yasmine Thomas
- Teresa Topete
- Christopher Olmos
- Jazmin Aparicio
- Miranda Antone
- Savana Salcido
- Ericka Pablo- Urias
- Tonya Kyyitan
- Quinton Young
- Soledad Alvarez
- Adriana Burrell
- Alyssa Torees
- Serina Garcia
- Trinity Manuel
- Maia Morago
- Bobbi Gonzales
- Thalia Ayala
- Jordan Arman
- Niyah Joaquin
- Jehgos Hendricks
- Judith Thompson
- Lisa Hendricks
- Alexandra Porter
- Carla French-Zeledon
- Juan Hernandez
- Megan Fahnholz
- Skye Catha
- Lashonda Garcia
- Cassandra Staley
- Ruthie Roinglero-ngel
- Frank Wolfe
- Travis Harrah
- Christopher Manuel
- Monica Archambault
- William Lewis
- Veronica Arenas
- Lilianna Rodriguez
- Malaya Pablo
- Shyanne Wesley
- Marissa Valles
- Cheerie Kisto
- Nathan Olivas
- Melody Jackson
- Daniel Broughman
- Selena Lopez
- Luzia Manuel
- Genavie Espinoza
- Elaine Peters
- Austin Lopez
- Juilen Young
- Maricella Molina Kafton
- Gabriel Figueroa
- Dominic Murphy
- Aaron Pratt
- Joshua Sanchez
- Brandon Manuel
- Charles Williams
- Sean Patrick
- Sheldon Montero Zamudio
- Meia Martinez
- Jasmine Cervantez
- Samira Rodriguez
- Castor Nish
- Samira Rodriguez
- Monica Antone
- Nicholas Tapia
- Andrea Losey
- Shaye White
- McKenna White
- Laruyn Bengay
- Ronald Juan