



# RAM COUNTRY NEWS

CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2021

## Adriana Cordova receives merit scholarship valued at \$74,000

February 19, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — Adriana Cordova was informed in November that she is a recipient of a merit scholarship from Regis University. The 17-year-old senior at Cuba High School applied for the scholarship because they offered a merit scholarship that was based on having certain grades or certain characteristics.

“[They] offered me \$72,000 for a four-year scholarship. So, \$18,000 a year to go to school there and a \$3,000 housing grant separate from the scholarship,” she said.

Altogether, the scholarship equates to \$74,000.

Cordova believes it was her high GPA and her involvement in extracurricular activities like serving in the Student Senate, science bowl, science fair, volleyball, basketball and track and field that helped her.

She said it’s a great opportunity but she has not made her final decision just yet because she still has other options and scholarships expected to

flow in by the end of this semester.

“I still have my options open but because they’re offering me so much, I’ll probably end up going there,” she said.

For now, she is heavily concentrated on finishing off the semester strong and is looking forward to graduation in May and then onto college in the fall.

“I hope to get a [college] degree in wildlife biology or in environmental science, and I want to work as a conservation officer or something similar like a wildlife biologist,” she said when asked what she plans to major in in college. “Right now, with our current environmental crisis and climate change, I would just really love to work towards a healthier planet and that’s what I want to do... to pursue with my career.”

Cordova explained her senior year was tough but it has not been that bad.

“[This school year] has been different for sure because everything has been online. We missed out on a lot, like homecoming... prom. We still don’t know if we’re going to get a

regular graduation or not,” she said.

“It’s been weird but I wouldn’t say it’s been bad. I mean there has been a lot of learning experiences, I participated in two internships because of COVID and so it’s honestly helped me to prepare for my future like working online and working as a team with other people. So, my senior year has actually gone pretty good.”

Cordova realizes there were many that helped her along the way and she is thankful for their help and guidance thus far.

“Ms. [Anna] Brown is my counselor at Cuba High School and I just love to acknowledge her because she’s been so great and [she] recommended scholarships and schools to me. [She] just really helped me out and [got] everything I needed,” she said. “I also would like to acknowledge my coach [Marty Toledo], she’s the one that wrote my recommendation letter and I think it actually really helped me get the scholarship.” 🐏



## Senior Jaquelynn Sanchez receives academic honor from the National Hispanic Recognition Program

February 12, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — The governing board of Cuba Independent School District recognized high school senior Jaquelynn Sanchez Jan. 20 for her academic

achievement from the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

Sanchez, 18, of Cuba, New Mexico, was notified of the honor in September and said the honor is mainly based on the student’s PSAT scores which

she took during her junior year.

“Your score qualifies you to apply to the program. It basically helps you get scholarships and [to] get you into colleges,” she said. “It’s an extra academic award you can receive.”

According to CollegeBoard, the National Recognition Programs create pathways to college for students from underrepresented communities by awarding them academic honors and connecting them with universities

across the country.

Sanchez expressed appreciation for the honor and said the school year is going well for her despite the challenges of remote learning and dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic that has limited mobility and social interactions.

She is looking forward to graduating

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Jaquelynn Sanchez

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## Transportation department, bus drivers continue delivering meals, safely transporting students

February 19, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — The transportation department at Cuba Independent School District remains busier than ever despite schools being in remote learning most of the school year and now open to some students who voluntarily attend in-person learning with parent permission.

Diana Martinez, transportation director, explained they have been serving students and the community since the beginning of the school year and they have not missed a beat.

Bus drivers deliver breakfasts and lunches to students on Wednesdays and Fridays, and deliver one half gallon of milk to each student on Wednesdays to ensure their students are fed and have proper nutrition.

Martinez said some bus drivers are delivering as much as 80 gallons of milk on Wednesdays along with the two meals and that is a lot of deliveries to students in the communities of Torreon, Ojo Encino and of course the entire Cuba area and outlying areas. The longest route they have right now is the bus route to Counselor and Rincon Marquez on the Navajo Nation.

This semester, bus drivers also started their bus routes for students that opt to attend school in-person. Bus drivers are running their routes safely to transport students to and from school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Martinez noted, the transported students have parental permission to attend in-person school.

“The [bus] drivers have the kids at

school by 9 a.m. and pick them up by noon. A lot of our drivers get up early in the morning, pick up the kids, bring them to school by 9 and then they’re off to deliver all their meals for the day,” Martinez explained. “[For bus drivers] who can’t make it back on time, we’ve got other staff members ready to take the kids home.”

Each bus driver picks up their own students and ensure they are the driver to also drop them off at the end of the school day. Martinez said they have it set up this way so students become familiar with their bus driver.

“We want to establish that routine for the children... they see that bus... they know their driver [and] it’s not somebody different picking them up all the time,” she said. “Some bus drivers have a bus of 10 kids, some just one, it just depends.”

Martinez explained they follow all standards and protocols of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“After every pick-up and drop off, we sanitize our buses,” she said. “We have face masks, we have hand sanitizers, we have absolutely everything we need on the buses in case of an emergency... in case a kid needs a mask... in case of anything... we have all the PPE ready.”

The transportation department has 18 buses in their inventory including a brand-new activity bus. Also, amongst the inventory will be two brand new buses that will replace older 2009 buses and Martinez said they will arrive at the end of the month.



Diana Martinez is in her second year serving as the transportation director. Prior to this post, she worked as the transportation coordinator for three years and she was also a teacher at the elementary school for 16 years.

The transportation department

has 17 employees, they include two mechanics, two bus aides and the rest of the employees are CDL bus drivers and the transportation director. 🐏



### Jaquelynn Sanchez

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in May and said she has been accepted to a few state universities but she will not know all of her acceptances or rejections until March. Despite the decisions and choices, she knows she’s definitely going to college in August and she has not narrowed down her main course of study just yet.

“I actually have a lot of interests. I don’t have any specific ones,” she said. “I’m interested in anthropology, architecture, dentistry, teaching, environmental science and biology. It’s pretty varied.

Sanchez is thankful for her teachers and her counselor for helping her get this far, particularly Olivia Casaus and school counselor Anna Brown.

“They’ve been really helpful,” she

said. “Ms. Casaus, she’s always the person I go to if I need recommendations and she’s just a really great teacher and a good mentor. The same thing with Anna Brown, she’s always helpful. I know I can count on them if I need something and they’re always very helpful and intelligent people.”

For now, Sanchez is entirely focused on completing the school year and is looking forward to graduation in May. 🐏

## Casaus, Greene advocating anti-tobacco initiative through Evolvement at Cuba Schools

February 11, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — Adriana Casaus and Jasmine Greene both juniors at Cuba High School are both leading a mission to reduce and help eliminate the use of tobacco through their advocacy with Evolvement.

According to Evolvement.org, the organization is a national award-winning youth movement empowering teens to work toward meaningful change in their communities. Since 2004, Evolvement has contributed tangible results toward restricting flavored tobacco products, reducing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and passing a tobacco retail license ordinance.

“As active participants in various advocacy campaigns, Evolvement youth have shown that their time, talent and voices can have a powerful impact on health in their communities,” the website states.

For Casaus, 16, Evolvement allows her to advocate throughout the state and to work with schools and communities to help prevent youth from having access to tobacco. She has been involved with Evolvement for three years since she was a freshman.

“When I first heard about [Evolvement], they were like, ‘you can help your school, you can help your fellow peers, you can improve your community,’” she recalled. “Personally, I was all about that and then as I got more involved with it, I realized how much they’re actually doing.”

Casaus eventually applied to be on the leadership team for the initiative. She explained there are 20 to 40 high school students across the state of New Mexico on the leadership team.

“[A lot] of school districts [are] working together to create change all across New Mexico, not just in our individual communities,” Casaus said.

Casaus explained there are many harms of tobacco use.

“Tobacco is the No. 1 preventable cause of death in New Mexico,” she said. “The harmful effects are anything from cancer and lung disease to heart disease and even the effects of second-hand smoke on the next generation – all of which are extremely harmful.”

Limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning has not deterred Casaus and her advocacy.

“Yes, we are in remote learning but

Evolvement has transitioned to be completely virtual,” she said. “We’ve been meeting with principals, with school boards across the state, and doing projects with other schools including Cuba to still keep the program going – even though it is virtual. The majority of our stuff, we do through Zoom.”

Casaus said Evolvement has many goals they are working to accomplish this school year.

“The goal is to create a healthier community but the bigger goal throughout all of New Mexico is actually to create a policy change,” she explained. “Last year, we were able to help get support throughout all of New Mexico, including Cuba, to pass the policy that all tobacco retailers need a license to sell tobacco. That just passed—that just started in January 2021. Now, we’re working on getting support to change flavored products—we’re trying to ban flavored products. The overall goal is to create a healthier community.”

For Jasmine Greene, 16, this initiative is very important to her as well and she offers her personal family experience with tobacco. Greene also serves on the leadership team with Evolvement.

“My uncles, my aunts, my father and even my brother are tobacco users,” said Greene. “That is what really concerned me.”

Greene does what she can to try and educate her family members about the harms of tobacco use but her most recent advocacy has shifted more to educating her peers. She said she personally witnessed extreme tobacco use at Cuba High School recently.

“It was primarily e-cigarettes and especially the freshman. That was the most concerning part,” she said. “I’m definitely passionate about this and I hope to set an example and be a role model to the underclassmen and the kids at the middle school.”

Greene explained approximately 90% of tobacco users start nicotine addiction before the age of 18. Long term use of tobacco can easily damage your lungs, your teeth and you can develop different types of cancer like mouth cancer.

Daniel Delgado serves as the sponsor of the Evolvement group at Cuba High School and said it’s been in existence at Cuba Schools for four years now. He explained the initiative



teaches leadership skills and it teaches students how to be advocates in the community and to raise awareness.

Delgado admits there is a tobacco use problem at Cuba Schools, in addition to vaping, and they help facilitate presentations to promote the anti-tobacco campaign in the schools.

“[Evolvement has] great facilitators that come in and do the trainings, they teach students all about different aspects of health and about eating healthy, and about keeping themselves

up and about self-awareness,” he said.

Delgado explained Evolvement is student-led and it’s the students that make the initiative successful. He said about 45 students at Cuba Schools were involved last year.

“It’s about community and it’s a great program,” Delgado said.

Delgado praised Casaus and Greene for their leadership.

“They’re both excellent leaders,” he added. 🙌



## HONOR Roll

### CUBA HIGH SCHOOL

#### A Honor Roll Semester 1

Teya Melody Barbonel (12)  
 Kailee Matea Casaus (12)  
 Adriana Maria Cordova (12)  
 Heavenly Anjel Coyle (12)  
 Victoria Rosa Crespin (12)  
 Joseph Jacquez (12)  
 Aleisha Keith (12)  
 Raymond C. Martinez (12)  
 Zoey Renee Montoya (12)  
 Julianna Sol Morales (12)  
 Tyrus Nez-Begay (12)  
 Angelo Pena (12)  
 Jacquelynn Sanchez (12)  
 Denyale Jan Sandoval (12)  
 Sylas Toledo (12)  
 Miranda Tom (12)  
 Angelica Soledad Chavez (11)  
 Sierra Miah Costillo (11)  
 Kenneth Eriacho (11)  
 Lorena Angel Gonzales (11)  
 Jasmine R. Ye Na Bah Greene (11)  
 Trinity Hernandez (11)  
 Naomi Montoya (11)  
 Shaun Anthony Morales (11)  
 Eliyana Jaden Sanchez (11)  
 Lisette Ashley Sanchez (11)

Andrea Angelique Segura (11)  
 David Evan Simpson (11)  
 Samuel Joe Toney (11)  
 Tianna Trujillo (11)  
 Santiago Miguel Casaus (10)  
 Arianna Glen Bah Cayaditto (10)  
 Talyia Tye Cayaditto (10)  
 Clayton Nash Chavez (10)  
 Reynae Duran (10)  
 Annaleise Toledo (10)  
 Cruz Leo Turner (10)  
 Payton Binion (9)  
 Savannah Jodell Casaus (9)  
 Sierra Lauren Casaus (9)  
 Sydney Victoria Casaus (9)  
 Jasmine N. Cabugnason Ga (9)  
 Mariah Audriana Herrera (9)  
 Ariana Nizhoni Largo (9)  
 Liliana Maestas (9)  
 Myranda Cristen Morfin (9)  
 John Thomas Salazar (9)  
 Katelynn Tom (9)

#### B Honor Roll Semester 1

Rachel Castillo (12)  
 David Gauna-Casaus (12)  
 Jeremiah Jacquez (12)  
 Amala LaPrincess Quelo (12)  
 Shinea Lynn Antonio (11)  
 Nathan Augustine (11)  
 Turquoise Edgewater Langley (11)  
 Davian Lechuga (11)  
 Marcus McKeever Moody (11)  
 Tyra Pinto (11)  
 Ryan Louis Velarde (11)  
 Justiss Baca (10)  
 Rick Jerry Cayaditto (10)  
 Ganalita Evelyn Lopez (10)  
 Amia Lawren Willeto Mathis (10)  
 Antonio Juan Montoya (10)  
 Adrian Mel Prieto (10)  
 Elijah Eric Trujillo (10)  
 Xavier Devon Antez (9)  
 Jasmine Mae Henio (9)  
 Tinasha Kaye (9)  
 Tiyeisha Willeto Rafael (9)  
 Lynel Ann Werito (9)

#### A Honor Roll Quarter 1

Teya Melody Barbone (12)  
 Kailee Matea Casaus (12)  
 Felicity Ashanti Castillo (12)  
 Adriana Maria Cordova (12)  
 Heavenly Anjel Coyle (12)  
 Victoria Rosa Crespin (12)  
 Joseph Jacquez (12)  
 Aleisha Keith (12)  
 Zoey Renee Montoya (12)  
 Angelo Pena (12)  
 Amala LaPrincess Quelo (12)  
 Jacquelynn Sanchez (12)  
 Denyale Jan Sandoval (12)  
 Sylas Toledo (12)  
 Miranda Tom (12)  
 Angelica Soledad Chavez (11)  
 Sierra Miah Costillo (11)  
 Lorena Angel Gonzales (11)  
 Trinity Hernandez (11)  
 Turquoise Edgewater Langley (11)  
 Naomi Montoya (11)  
 Shaun Anthony Morales (11)  
 Tyra Pinto (11)  
 Eliyana Jaden Sanchez (11)  
 Lisette Ashley Sanchez (11)  
 Andrea Angelique Segura (11)

David Evan Simpson (11)  
 Tianna Trujillo (11)  
 Santiago Miguel Casaus (10)  
 Arianna Glen Bah Cayaditto (10)  
 Talyia Tye Cayaditto (10)  
 Clayton Nash Chavez (10)  
 Reynae Duran (10)  
 Ganalita Evelyn Lopez (10)  
 Annaleise Toledo (10)  
 Cameron Trujillo (10)  
 Cruz Leo Turner (10)  
 Payton Binion (9)  
 Savannah Jodell Casaus (9)  
 Sierra Lauren Casaus (9)  
 Sydney Victoria Casaus (9)  
 Jasmine Nicole Cabugnason Ga (9)  
 Mariah Audriana Herrera (9)  
 Ariana Nizhoni Largo (9)  
 Liliana Maestas (9)  
 Myranda Cristen Morfin (9)  
 Tiyeisha Willeto Rafael (9)  
 John Thomas Salazar (9)  
 Katelynn Tom (9)

#### B Honor Roll Quarter 1

Antonio Manuel Casas (12)  
 Rachel Castillo (12)  
 Nataliya Verna-Ann Francisco (12)  
 David Gauna-Casaus (12)  
 Jeremiah Jacquez (12)  
 Jonathan Paul Ledesma (12)  
 Raymond C. Martinez (12)  
 Julianna Sol Morales (12)  
 Kenneth Odale Pinto (12)  
 Adrianna R. Prieto (12)  
 Mekaila C. Sala (12)  
 Raymundo Philbert Sala (12)  
 Cymital Antonio Toledo (12)  
 Illana Evelyn Toledo (12)  
 Xander Orion Werito (12)  
 Shinea Lynn Antonio (11)  
 Harley Binion (11)  
 Dustin Robert Bridge (11)  
 Adrianna Rose Casaus (11)  
 Latoya Ann Castillo (11)  
 Tyrus Billy Cyaditto (11)  
 Celina Jasmine Chacon (11)  
 Kenneth Eriacho (11)  
 Jasmine R. Ye Na Bah Greene (11)  
 Trinity Ulana Harrison (11)  
 Stephanie Henio (11)

Davian Lechuga (11)  
 Marcus McKeever Moody (11)  
 Damian Nicholas Segura (11)  
 Juwan J Spencer (11)  
 Samuel Joe Toney (11)  
 Tony Ray Trujillo (11)  
 Ryan Louis Velarde (11)  
 Lushanea Mazzie Willie (11)  
 Shawnquana Glee Castillo (10)  
 Rick Jerry Cayaditto (10)  
 Mateo Quincy Curley (10)  
 Antonio Sebastian Diaz (10)  
 Julian A. Gauna-Casaus (10)  
 Melyna Rayne Herrera (10)  
 Amia L. Willeto Mathis (10)  
 Antonio Juan Montoya (10)  
 Tristan James Norton (10)  
 Adrian Mel Prieto (10)  
 Kailee Simone Sala (10)  
 Tarralyn Ester Yazzie (10)  
 Freeman Hunter Davis (9)  
 Dustin Byron Graves (9)  
 Serenity Ulaina Harrison (9)  
 Jasmine Mae Henio (9)  
 Tinasha Kaye (9)  
 Alexis Marie Lucero (9)  
 Jose Aparcio Montoya (9)  
 Christopher Anthony Salaz (9)



## HONOR Roll

### CUBA HIGH SCHOOL

#### A Honor Roll Quarter 2

Teya Melody Barbone (12)  
 Kailee Matea Casaus (12)  
 Felicity Ashanti Castillo (12)  
 Adriana Maria Cordova (12)  
 Heavenly Anjel Coyle (12)  
 Victoria Rosa Crespín (12)  
 David Gauna-Casaus (12)  
 Joseph Jacquez (12)  
 Chamber Johnson (12)  
 Aleisha Keith (12)  
 Raymond C. Martinez (12)  
 Tyrus Nez-Begay (12)  
 Angelo Pena (12)  
 Jacquelynn Sanchez (12)  
 Denyale Jan Sandoval (12)  
 Syllas Toledo (12)  
 Miranda Tom (12)  
 Harley Binion (11)  
 Angelica Soledad Chavez (11)  
 Sierra Miah Costillo (11)  
 Kenneth Eriacho (11)  
 Trinity Hernandez (11)  
 Turquoise Edgewater Langley (11)  
 Naomi Montoya (11)  
 Shaun Anthony Morales (11)  
 Tyra Pinto (11)

Lisette Ashley Sanchez (11)  
 Andrea Angelique Segura (11)  
 David Evan Simpson (11)  
 Samuel Joe Toney (11)  
 Tianna Trujillo (11)  
 Santiago Miguel Casaus (10)  
 Arianna Glen Bah Cayaditto (10)  
 Talyia Tye Cayaditto (10)  
 Clayton Nash Chavez (10)  
 Reynae Duran (10)  
 Ganalita Evelyn Lopez (10)  
 Adrian Mel Prieto (10)  
 Cruz Leo Turner (10)  
 Payton Binion (9)  
 Savannah Jodell Casaus (9)  
 Sierra Lauren Casaus (9)  
 Sydney Victoria Casaus (9)  
 Jasmine Nicole Cabugnason Ga (9)  
 Mariah Audriana Herrera (9)  
 Ariana Nizhoni Largo (9)  
 Liliana Maestas (9)  
 Myranda Cristen Morfin (9)  
 Tiyeshia Willetto Rafael (9)  
 John Thomas Salazar (9)  
 Katelynn Tom (9)

#### B Honor Roll Quarter 2

Rachel Castillo (12)  
 Dustin Paul Cundiff (12)  
 Nataliya Verna-Ann Francisco (12)  
 Jeremiah Jacquez (12)  
 Jonathan Paul Ledesma (12)  
 Zoey Renee Montoya (12)  
 Julianna Sol Morales (12)  
 Adrianna R. Prieto (12)  
 Amala LaPrincess Quelo (12)  
 Mekaila C. Sala (12)  
 Raymundo Philbert Sala (12)  
 Calena Keira Sandoval (12)  
 Fernando Sandoval (12)  
 Cordellas DJ Toledo (12)  
 Xander Orion Werito (12)  
 Shinea Lynn Antonio (11)  
 Nathan Augustine (11)  
 Dustin Robert Bridge (11)  
 Adrianna Rose Casaus (11)  
 Celina Jasmine Chacon (11)  
 Lorena Angel Gonzales (11)  
 Jasmine R. Ye Na Bah Greene (11)  
 Trinity Ulana Harrison (11)  
 Davian Lechuga (11)  
 Marcus McKeever Moody (11)  
 Eliyana Jaden Sanchez (11)

Damian Nicholas Segura (11)  
 Ryan Louis Velarde (11)  
 Lushanea Mazzie Willie (11)  
 Justiss Baca (10)  
 Shawnquana Glee Castillo (10)  
 Rick Jerry Cayaditto (10)  
 Mateo Quincy Curley (10)  
 Antonio Sebastian Diaz (10)  
 Melyna Rayne Herrera (10)  
 Amia Lawren Willetto Mathis (10)  
 Antonio Juan Montoya (10)  
 Annaleise Toledo (10)  
 Elijah Eric Trujillo (10)  
 Xavier Devon Antez (9)  
 Freeman Hunter Davis (9)  
 Dustin Byron Graves (9)  
 Trent Nicholas Greene (9)  
 Jasmine Mae Henio (9)  
 Tinasha Kaye (9)  
 Alexis Marie Lucero (9)  
 Dionne Tonia-Idalia Martinez (9)  
 Jose Aparcio Montoya (9)  
 Christopher Anthony Salaz (9)  
 Ethan Chance Sam (9)  
 Gavin Wayne Undem (9)  
 Lynel Ann Werito (9)

### CUBA MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### A Honor Roll

##### Semester 1

Jaidin Leigh Chiquito (8)  
 Sofia Isabela Delgado (8)  
 Josselyn Hernandez-Mendoza (8)  
 Meadow Lyn McCauley (8)  
 Anastasia Anaya Ramos (8)  
 Hailey Ann Spence (8)  
 Marcos Antonio Casaus (7)  
 Richard Lee Lovato (7)  
 Casar Isiah Dominguez (6)  
 Autumn Kylee McCauley (6)

#### B Honor Roll

Kayla Rya Chiquito (8)  
 Santiago Jose Maestas (8)  
 Mike Anthony Salazar (8)  
 Nathaniel Lloyd Valdez (8)  
 Daisy Adelina Beyale (7)  
 Nevaeh Rose Lewis (7)  
 Cara Toledo (7)  
 Marshall F. Maestas (6)

#### A Honor Roll

##### Quarter 1

Sofia Isabela Delgado (8)  
 Josselyn Hernandez-Mendoza (8)  
 Santiago Jose Maestas (8)  
 Meadow Lyn McCauley (8)  
 Anastasia Anaya Ramos (8)  
 Mike Anthony Salazar (8)  
 Hailey Ann Spence (8)  
 Marcos Antonio Casaus (7)  
 Richard Lee Lovato (7)  
 Chermain Martinez (6)  
 Autumn K. McCauley (6)

#### B Honor Roll

Jaidin Leigh Chiquito (8)  
 Kayla Rya Chiquito (8)  
 Daisy Adelina Beyale (7)  
 Qualin Henio (7)  
 Cara Toledo (7)  
 Casar Isiah Dominguez (6)  
 Martin Daniel Herrera (6)  
 Marshall F. Maestas (6)

#### A Honor Roll

##### Quarter 2

Jaidin Leigh Chiquito (8)  
 Sofia Isabela Delgado (8)  
 Josselyn Hernandez-Mendoza (8)  
 Meadow Lyn McCauley (8)  
 Anastasia Anaya Ramos (8)  
 Hailey Ann Spence (8)  
 Daisy Adelina Beyale (7)  
 Marcos Antonio Casaus (7)  
 Casar Isiah Dominguez (6)  
 Autumn K. McCauley (6)

#### B Honor Roll

Santiago Jose Maestas (8)  
 Mike Anthony Salazar (8)  
 Dylan Ethan James Simpson (8)  
 Nathaniel Lloyd Valdez (8)  
 Jill Patryse Campbell (7)  
 Nevaeh Rose Lewis (7)  
 Richard Lee Lovato (7)  
 Cara Toledo (7)  
 Marshall F. Maestas (6)  
 Tinia Tsosie (6)



## Grace Graves is enjoying her new role as an ELD teacher

February 12, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — Grace Graves has taken on a new role as a long-term substitute teacher for the English Language Development (ELD) classes and she is really enjoying it.

Graves was previously the educational assistant in the ELD program and has been in her new role since the beginning of the semester. She primarily works with students in Grades 6-8 at the middle school.

“I basically took over the ELD and reading classes from Ms. Trish Delgado, and I went from working in a position where I was assisting in the classes to now teaching the classes,” she explained. “I’m doing the lesson plans, creating the as-

signments and grading everything. It’s been very nice, I really enjoy the Zoom meetings that I have with the students. It’s only on a weekly basis but it’s still nice to be able to interact with them.”

Although the pandemic and remote learning has made teaching and interacting with students challenging, Graves encourages her students to stay focused and to overcome the challenges to learn.

“It [still] seems to be very challenging for our students? [With the] COVID [pandemic], it’s a whole new world for these kids, they’re used to coming to school and being there,” she said. “Now that they’re home, it’s a completely different world because they’re expected to do all these other things.”

“In their home life, their chores [may] have doubled as well as the school work being different,” she

added. “So, it’s kind of hard, you take a lesson that would normally take half an hour and it takes an hour and a half because you got disconnected halfway through or you have to take the time to teach them the technology to be able to even do the lesson. It’s just harder exponentially because of the difficulties technology has caused.”

Graves said there are frequent connectivity issues with internet in the area as well which makes matters even more challenging and so some students do not have good internet service.

“[Some students] can’t turn on their cameras and so it’s hard for them,” she said. “I feel sorry for them, it’s really hard right now.”

Despite the challenges, she remains hopeful and persistent to teach the students. She hopes to help students reach their goals of



eventually graduating high school down the road and moving onto college or confidently into the workforce. 🐏

## Corn Pollen Pathway helping Navajo students from birth to college, careers

February 12, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — The Corn Pollen Pathway is a tool to help Navajo students achieve success as they continue their path to college and a career while attending Cuba Independent School District.

Corn Pollen Pathway is a plan that’s been in the works for a couple of years at Cuba Schools, led by efforts of Rose Etsitty, the counseling director of Native American students.

According to a one-page document created by Etsitty, the document states, “We believe that every child can learn, there is no limit to their potential and that by working together, we can make a meaningful contribution to their success.”

With that in mind, Etsitty developed the K-12 plan as a career readiness pathway for its Navajo students. Etsitty explained in other schools, students are provided plans and tools to help guide them as they explore their personal views and to see what is recommended or required for a high school diploma and beyond.

This plan was intricately developed

using Navajo/Diné cultural teachings and the ancient philosophy of Sà’áh Naagháí Bik’eh Hózhóó along with the usage of the four cardinal directions and its associated symbolic colors.

Etsitty explained other schools often refer to their plans as “pipelines” but she did not want to refer to it as a pipeline because if you look at a pipe, like an oil pipe or a plumbing pipe, there is pressure involved and it relies on force to move things. She said she did not want to portray the plan that way.

“In our wholistic teachings, we want to live in harmony, to walk in beauty and that is why I call it Corn Pollen Pathway [instead of] the pipeline,” she explained. “Our students would be more accepting, not only our students but our parents as well so they can be accepting of this [plan], so they can adopt it and use it as a tool, use it as a reference to guide them through their education from K-12.”

In the plan, she illustrates the modern traditional pathway that leads from birth to adulthood. The plan depicts the learning process of a Navajo child from birth when corn pollen is placed on earth where the child will

always call home.

From that stage, the plan moves to the next stage where elders and parents act as the first teachers in a child’s life. They teach the language, ceremonies and land-based teachings. Next, the child enters school, Pre-K to Kindergarten, where they are introduced to the world outside of the home and develop their second language of English.

Next, they enter elementary school, grades 1-5, where English learning development, vocabulary, spelling and writing begins. They have introductions to reading, math and science. They develop social skills and are introduced to career choices through observation.

Next, they enter middle school, grades 6-8, where they continue English learning development, social skills development and are introduced to college and career readiness, and are often assessed for proficiency in various subjects.

Next, they enter their high school years, grades 9-12, where they have a continuation and adaptation of English development and social skills development. They begin college and career planning, they take their ACT or SAT test, they work on refining their individual next step plans annually, and are assessed for proficiency in various areas.

Next, they enter college and begin

their careers which is their ultimate goal up to this point according to the plan’s illustration. Opposite of their education plan is the Navajo traditional teachings that also take place concurrently as they go through life.

“Teachings take place, such as the first words that come into our mouth, speaking the Navajo language, the Kinaaldá ceremony and even marriage and living in a Navajo traditional way of life,” she said in referring to the Navajo/Diné traditional teachings path. “All of that merges together. [It’s] a set of footprints to signify that this is where we walk in our lives and the footprints actually grow from very small to a bigger set of footprints.”

The plan also incorporates an illustration and teachings of the Navajo basket which signifies the emergence story of the Navajo/Diné.

“[The basket] has a whole lot of teaching to it,” she said. “The basket is designed having the significance of the mountains, the rainbow, the clouds, [it] has its own teachings in it that signifies life.”

The four cardinal directions are also used in the plan to signify the four directions of east, south, west and north, which represents the teachings of Nitsáhákees (thinking), Nahat’á

*CONTINUED PAGE 8/  
Corn Pollen Pathway*

## Judy Atencio, interim principal at Cuba Elementary

February 13, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — Judy Atencio is the new interim principal at Cuba Elementary School and she is no stranger to the school district.

Atencio has been working with the school district for 22 years, she mostly taught English Language Arts at the elementary level.

Atencio is from Cuba, New Mexico, and is a 1994 graduate of Cuba High School. Her children are also products of the school district.

“I have two students who graduated in 2017. I have my son who is currently a sophomore and then I have a daughter who is not in school yet,” she said.

As interim principal, she said she wears many hats but her most important role right now is to support

teachers and students.

“I’m enjoying it! Right now, my main role is supporting teachers, [helping to] get students online and having their students turn in their assignments,” said Atencio. “I do this by calling parents [and] doing home visits.”

She is also busy working to put together a reentry plan if and when the schools return to a hybrid model in March.

The new role keeps her very busy and she is very excited for this new opportunity.

“I feel that I can be an asset to the [school] district since I know the community I grew up with—many of our parents,” she said. “I’ve taught many of the students that have graduated and are currently there.” 🐏



## Anita Romero and volunteers helping to feed families through the Food Pantry

February 12, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — The Food Pantry at Cuba Elementary School has been providing food and other items to students and their families for the last four years, thanks to Anita Romero and her team of volunteers.

Romero is not just the organizer of the Food Pantry but she also works as the administrative assistant at Cuba Elementary School. She helps to organize and staff the Food Pantry every first Wednesday of the month.

The Food Pantry provides at least enough food to last a couple of weeks and they mostly consists of non-perishable food items and some dairy products that need refrigeration. Romero said it really depends on what they are provided to distribute from the Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque.

Romero explained they usually receive enough food to feed 50 families per month.

“The families consist of parents, guardians or grandparents that have students in the Cuba Independent School District,” she said. “If they have students in the elementary, middle school or the high school, they are allowed to come sign up for our Food Pantry.”

Although the food boxes are available to students and their families of Cuba Schools, they often open it up to the community members as well.

“We let our [Cuba Schools] families go through the first hour we start at 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., [then after] 5 p.m. it’s open to community members,” she said. “I can’t keep food on hand — it all has to go that same day.”

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Romero said they had to transition from hosting the Food Pantry in their school cafeteria to a drive-through method. Before, they laid out the food on tables and families simply came through and filled their boxes with food and other items.

Romero enjoys helping to organize the Food Pantry and she said she would not be able to do it all by herself and she appreciates the volunteers that

## Student Academic Advisor Tricia Delgado helping students meet academic, social/emotional needs at Cuba Middle School

February 13, 2021

CUBA, N.M. — Tricia Delgado has come, gone and came back to work for Cuba Independent School District. She first started work for the school district 17 years ago, moved away and returned seven years ago and has been in Cuba ever since.

“Everywhere I went, I was just drawn back to my home. This is home for me,” she said.

Delgado grew up in Cuba and graduated from Cuba High School. Today, she’s the Cuba Middle School Student Success Advisor or better known as the Student Academic Advisor, and she’s been in this new role since January. In her prior role, she taught technology and English Language Development classes.

“I work to help students. I stepped into this new role and now I am working to reach out to students to see what their needs are, to help them with their academic success,” she said. “When I say academic success, it doesn’t just mean their grades. I want to make sure they have everything they need to be successful in school and emotionally as well. So, I reach out to them and support their social/emotional needs and their academic needs.”

There is many things Delgado wants

to accomplish with her students but she realizes it is a balance between academic success and the social/emotional status of the students.

“I’m combining my roles. [In] my past experience, I was the social emotional school teacher at the middle school. My teaching role changed somewhat this year — all of the things that I’ve taught in the past, we combined them into something that I do now for the students,” she explained. “One of the things we hear often is that our students miss each other, so I try to connect them using technology.”

Delgado helped to initiate Zoom-Boom at the middle school to provide students the opportunity to visit with classmates and friends virtually through Zoom videoconferencing.

“We come together every week, we participate in challenges, scavenger hunts and [do] show-and-tells... wear your favorite team gear day,” she said. “We try to incorporate some of the incentive type things we do at school [but] online.”

“We just bring it all together to a place where they can socialize through technology and do it in a safe place, in a controlled space and bring some socialization together for them,” she added.

Delgado loves her job and she is happy she made the decision to return back to Cuba.

“I came back to the community that I love and the people that I love and to the students that I love,” she said. “That means a lot to me.”

Delgado said the students she has now are actually students of her former classmates when she was in school or even their grandchildren.

“That means a lot to me because it’s personal, it’s a personal feeling and it’s about community,” she said.

Growing up in Cuba, Delgado said community was a big thing and it was meaningful. She said she had friends in Cuba, in the outlying areas of Cuba and from the neighboring Navajo communities.

“Bringing it all together full circle is important to me right now in this phase [of] my career and [in] what we’re going through globally with this pandemic,” she said. “I feel like I have a good sense of what families in the community are experiencing and it’s important for me to try to reach out and provide them with some of the needs that I know they might need on a personal level.” 🐏

CONTINUED PAGE 8/  
Food Pantry

## Corn Pollen Pathway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

(planning), Iná (living) and Sihasin (assuring).

“The [four directions] have teachings to living a prosperous life,” she said. “Students can see this and use the Corn Pollen Pathway. They can apply this into whatever they are doing, whether it is homework, an assignment or life.”

Etsitty wants students to use this plan, to learn from it and embrace it.

“I want this [plan] to have a purpose. In our culture, you have to have a purpose. What is [your] goal? How are you going to get there?” she explained. “This is a guiding tool, they can refer to this [plan].”

Etsitty said this Corn Pollen Pathway is directed toward its Navajo students within the school district and she is also working to develop a plan for the Hispanic students attending Cuba Schools as well. She also explained the New Mexico Public Education Department also distributes a very general plan but it does not support students from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. 🐏

## Food Pantry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

help in the effort. The limitations of the pandemic also caused a reduction in the number of volunteers that can help as well, the number of volunteers was reduced to just five. Right now, the volunteers consist of Romero, the school principal, the nurse assistant Ms. Xiamara Marino and the custodial staff.

“The volunteers help me put it together,” she said. “I can’t run it by myself, it’s a lot of lifting and handing boxes out.” 🐏



**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE**

### Federal Programs & Indian Education

[http://cuba.k12.nm.us/federal\\_programs](http://cuba.k12.nm.us/federal_programs)

- Contact information for Navajo-speaking personnel
- Federal grant applications and supporting documents
- Indian Education Parent Committee information
- Information about what is happening on the Navajo Nation, in New Mexico and in our local communities
- Announcements for students and community members regarding college and career prep, NMPED announcements, survey links and much more.



# STUDENTS *of the* MONTH



## October 2020

Shaun Morales  
Victoria Crespín  
Angelica Chavez  
Miranda Tom  
Joseph Jacquez  
Adrianna Prieto  
Arianna Cayaditto  
Santana Marquez Kaleb  
Mary Horsechief  
Raymond Martinez

## November 2020

John T. Salazar  
Albert Mondragon  
Sierra Miah Costillo  
Denyale Sandoval  
Angelo Pena  
Cruz Turner  
Robyn Sandoval  
Dion Sandoval  
Sylas Toledo  
Liliana Maestas

## December 2020

Jasmine Ga  
Ariana Largo  
Juanna Herrera  
Teya Barbone  
Ryaquel Sandoval  
Cameron Trujillo  
Ethan Sam  
Zackariah Trujillo  
Santiago Sandoval  
Antonio Casas

## January 2021

Cresencio Contreras  
Aliyah Jake  
Fernando Sandoval  
Mariah Herrera  
Dionne Martinez  
Helene Archuleta  
Lisette Sanchez  
Dontai Gordo  
Jacquelynn Sanchez  
Trinity Hernandez



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