Scholarship Award Recipients

Advancing Young Women in STEM 2021

This year, the New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network is pleased to award Advancing Young Women in STEM scholarships to 12 incredible women. Their pictures and bios are below in alphabetical order.

Congratulations to our awardees!!

Mari Aoki was born in Bozeman, Montana and is currently an undergraduate student at the University of New Mexico pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science with minors in Mathematics and Japanese. At UNM, she is also a member of the Women's Swimming & Diving team, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and will be secretary for the UNM IEEE chapter. Her current career interests include software engineering and machine learning and she hopes to someday work in the space industry. She plans to use this scholarship to help pay for housing while at school. Between classes, clubs, athletics, and studying, she likes spending time talking with friends and learning or practicing programming skills. Mari is our first ever, two-time scholarship recipient.

Saisruthi Bandla attended high school in San Jon, New Mexico, where her interest in STEM was honed by participation in her high school robotics team. She partially credits her experiences in robotics with giving her the drive and confidence to become her class valedictorian. After graduation from high school, she enrolled at the University of Colorado at Boulder where she is currently a junior, majoring in Aerospace Engineering. Sruthi takes inspiration from her family and the past, and uses that to look forward to the future. Community service is important to her and she has participated in community food drives, fundraising efforts for a local animal shelter, and helped to educate about and inspire sustainable practices in her college community.

Arabella Camunez is an incoming senior at Arrowhead Park Early College High School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. After high school, she wants to study mechanical engineering and pursue a career in renewable or nuclear energy. She loves her STEM classes, especially math and chemistry. Her interest in STEM was further developed by her role on her school's Robotics team, which exposed her to the many parts of the engineering process. This will be her third year holding an officer position in the club. When Arabella is not doing schoolwork, she is probably practicing with her debate team, hiking with friends, or making keychains for her business, Shrinky Chains. She is very thankful for the NMOST scholarship.

Suzanne Eisenberg, a 2021 graduate from East Mountain High School, is attending the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology this fall. At first, she was unsure that STEM was for her but fell in love with it after presenting a pinhole camera project at the state science fair, where she won 2nd place in the Physics division. She's continued pursuing her passion for science in high school by volunteering with the Junior Docents program at the New Mexico Natural History Museum, which taught her how to communicate science to the public. She volunteered there for 3 years before having the opportunity to work there this summer. She also has an interest in computer science, which she's pursued through participating in Girls Who Code during the summer of 2020 and taking AP Computer Science Principles. Outside of STEM, she was Co-Captain of the Speech and Debate team at her school and was able to attend the national competition twice. She also participated in Model United Nations, INTERACT club (a rotary-sponsored community service club), and National Honors Society. She hopes to combine her love of science with her love for communication by majoring in Technical Communication and Physics in college. Her ultimate career goal is to make STEM accessible to everyone!

Violet Frazier is an incoming freshman at Rochester Institute of Technology where she will be studying engineering. She is a graduate of Nex+Gen Academy where she was exposed to several STEM programs that gave her motivation to pursue an engineering degree. This includes the FIRST Tech Robotics Challenge where she discovered her interest in programming, and the STARR program where she worked with a NASA scientist to learn how to make an effective Artificial Intelligence. In her free time she enjoys playing "Magic: The Gathering" and "Dungeons and Dragons," as well as horror tv shows and games. She is excited to begin college and explore what it has to offer.

Adreana Garcia is a senior at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) majoring in Electrical Engineering (EE) with a minor in Mechanical Engineering (ME). As a child, she showed an aptitude for reverse engineering toys and broken items around the house and took particular interest in working alongside her dad on maintenance projects. At 14, she enrolled in a college STEM course, which inspired her to enroll in a college Introduction to ME course. Adreana has already earned degrees in Photography and Media Arts, along with a degree in General Engineering.

Adreana worked as a Service Desk Technician in the Information Technology (IT) Department at her college, and was later promoted to the Systems and Applications Section where she oversaw the Science on a Sphere (SOS). She had the unique opportunity to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in setting up the sphere, debugging the datasets, training IT staff and running tours for local schools. Adreana was elated to be selected to intern at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Oak Ridge, TN. It was there that she was placed in the EE Department and absolutely fell in love with it. Adreana has also had the honor of interning with the Advanced Research in Cyber Systems Department and the Space Instrument Realization Department at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in Los Alamos, NM.

When Adreana isn't busy studying and working, she volunteers her time with the Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival, The Power of STEAM, the Summer Physics Camp for Young Women and the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). She also enjoys spending time with and loving her pets, skateboarding, reading, nature photography, crafting and learning and practicing new skills, like gardening and crocheting.

Hannah Himelright recently graduated from Las Cruces High School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Hannah is very excited and grateful to receive the NMOST scholarship. Easily absorbed in computing challenges, she looks forward to pursuing a major in math and computer science at New Mexico State University. While working toward her degrees, she hopes to assist in organizations like Young Women in Computing, aimed at encouraging female students to pursue the STEM pathway. She also plans to continue participating in Taekwondo and soccer throughout college and beyond.

BreOnna Lucero is currently a sophomore at The University of New Mexico. Even as a child, she has always been interested in a STEM career. In middle school she competed in Science Olympiad and even attended TechTrek one summer where it expanded her love for Science and Technology. She is currently studying architecture; it's been a dream of hers ever since the age of two. She plans on using this scholarship to become the next female architect.

Hannah Norberto is a 19-year-old Native American woman, affiliated with the Navajo Nation. Her clans are Kinyaa'áanii, Many Comanche Warriors, Táchii'nii, and Tódich'ii'nii. Her hometown is Sheep Springs, New Mexico. She is a first-generation college student attending the University of New Mexico studying to receive a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the honors college. She believes Native American health issues and the health care system are critical needs of the Navajo Nation. Her goal is to be remembered as a successful Indigenous woman rooted from the Navajo reservation with a PhD in nursing — a woman who dismantled her broken generational trauma and fear in order to be the role model for the Indigenous youth of the Navajo Nation. She is invested in the vision of showing how capable Native American youth are in the huge world besides being on the reservation. She is passionate about promoting Indigenous health and driving her people toward resilience.
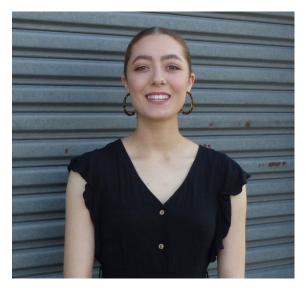
Sierra Marie Otero is a 16-year-old senior at Ruidoso High School. From a young age she grew passionate about all STEM related subjects. Through her experience and achievements in Science Olympiad, MESA, and the Tech Trek camp, her knowledge and interest in STEM only prospered. The relationships she has formed with other women in the STEM fields has inspired and empowered her to not just act but to thrive. She is determined to pursue her dream of going to medical school in order to become an anesthesiologist. Not only has she been awarded many academic achievements but has also taken part in extracurricular activities including softball, cheerleading, and is a member of the National Honors Society. Sierra is ever so grateful for the scholarship and opportunity granted by NMOST as it provides a further incentive to chase after the bright future she has ahead.

Elizabeth Randolph was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is currently an undergraduate at Grand Canyon University pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Communications. Growing up in New Mexico, she had the opportunity to engage in STEM at a young age through programs such as TechTrek NM, TARC (Team America Rocketry Challenge), NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers) Jr., and RMYC (Rocky Mountain Youth Corps) AmeriCorps. After attaining her bachelor's degree, Elizabeth aspires to enter the conservation field and work to restore ecosystems. When Elizabeth is not studying for classes you can find her rock climbing, playing guitar, or spending time with family and friends.

Simone Sena was born in Tampa, Florida and moved to rural New Mexico when she was very young. She is currently a junior at the University of New Mexico, pursuing a B.S. in Biology with a minor in Art History. Simone will be the first woman in her family to receive a bachelor's degree. After finishing her undergraduate degree, she plans on attending medical school in order to become a clinical pathologist. She loves to travel and makes it a goal to visit a new place every year. In her time away from school she likes to play golf, horseback ride, and bake. Simone is extremely grateful to the NMOST Network and their sponsors for reducing her financial burden and granting her the opportunity to share the barriers faced in pursuit of a STEM field education.