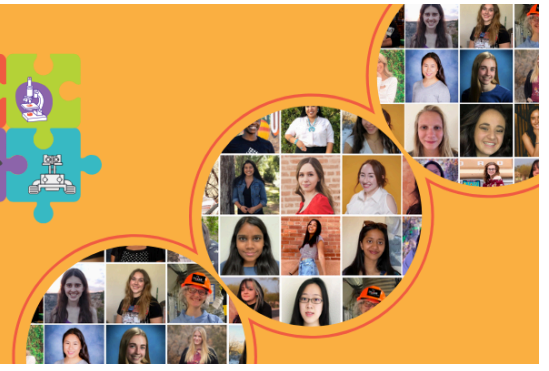


## 2024 Advancing Young Women in STEM Scholarships



Hello, my name is **Makeiyla Begay**. I am originally from Arizona and moved to New Mexico as a child. I spent a majority of my childhood working with livestock and didn't once think about a career in STEM. It wasn't until middle school that I grew a love for the STEM field and looked forward to pursue a career in science.

I am a senior in the Biology program at Navajo Technical University. I am currently in my 4th year as a student research intern in the N.E.S.T laboratory where I worked in the field of electrochemistry. I have also worked in the Biology Research Lab at Navajo Technical University, working on Cancer Research. I am fortunate to have spent all of my undergraduate working as a research intern and gaining this experience. Even

though it wasn't an easy journey I wouldn't change anything.

I plan on continuing my education into graduate school and hoping to pursue a career in Veterinary Medicine. I hope to come back to Navajo Technical University to teach students in hopes of encouraging new students to join the STEM field and helping my Native American community.



**Emily-June Bray** will graduate from Rio Rancho High in 2025. Emily is a strong leader, full of ideas for the future and always willing to take charge. After attending DECA by accident, she fell in love with the world of leadership, along with her love for animals (and sometimes people), which has driven her to pursue the health sciences field. She never had many opportunities to practice STEM because she grew up in many poor school districts with few resources for the sciences. She did, however, throw herself into any opportunity to help animals in need, and to the dismay of her parents, she brought an assortment of animals home to rehabilitate them back to health. After taking a few science courses during quarantine and an in-person class in anatomy and physiology, she decided to pursue a career in medicine. She still hasn't decided which route to take (animals or people), but she is fueled by a passion for fairness in the male dominated fields that she is considering.

Nothing will stop this stubborn mule from accomplishing anything she sets her mind to. She knows she will make a difference, no matter which path she chooses.



**Liliana Madrid Larrañaga** is from Albuquerque, NM, and is a graduate of Albuquerque High. She is currently a Biochemistry major and Public Health minor on the pre-med track at Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA. As a woman of color with profound hearing loss, she is passionate about improving health equity and strives to provide for those underrepresented in health care.

Since high school, Liliana has donated time to educating young people, specifically girls, about STEM topics. She has worked at Explora Science Museums, has been a camp counselor for Tech Trek NM, and an X Studios student advisor. On campus, she is a Peer Health Educator with Emmons Wellness Center, a

Residential Advisor, and a math tutor. Her dream career is to deliver babies in rural NM, specifically providing prenatal and postnatal care for women of color. Liliana is extremely grateful for the NMOST scholarship and the support in achieving her dream!



**Lorena Madrid Larrañaga** is an incoming freshman at the University of New Mexico as a Regents Scholar and a member of the combined BA/MD 2024 cohort. She will graduate from Albuquerque High School in May, 2024. Her goal is to become a medical doctor and serve in New Mexico to help battle the physician shortage in rural areas.

She has been interested in STEM since elementary school and wants to thank her parents for instilling a passion for the sciences and medicine early on. Lorena has participated in several STEM-related programs and classes throughout her education including Tech Trek, Girls Who Code, and MESA. She wants to congratulate the other scholarship winners for being inspiring women in STEM and is so grateful for the doors this scholarship opens.



**Maya Marquez** is a 2024 graduate from Volcano Vista High School, finishing in the top 10% of her class. In the Fall, Maya will be attending New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology to pursue Mechanical Engineering as well as minoring in Aeronautical Engineering and/or Computer Science. She has always been interested in the STEM field from a young age, but upon attending Tech Trek in eighth grade she obtained the confidence to pursue a future in the Engineering field.



In high school, Maya took Advanced Placement and Dual Credit classes that would aid her going into college. These classes include AP Statistics, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Computer Science Applications, and Pre-Calculus and Trigonometry through CNM. She also participated in the Volcano Vista robotics team, gaining the title of team captain and advancing to the first round of eliminations during the State Competition.

Using all of her knowledge and experiences, Maya aspires to find a more eco-friendly method of air transportation that also improves the capacity and safety measures. Maya is very grateful to receive this NMOST scholarship and hopes to repay the favor by bringing a brighter tomorrow, today!



My name is **Sabrina Montoya** and I graduated from Rio Rancho High School in Rio Rancho, New Mexico in 2023. I am currently attending New Mexico State University and I am studying Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Physics. I chose this field because, in my freshman year of high school, I took Aerospace Engineering. In that class, I researched the Lockheed Martin P2V-7, a military plane with many reported crashes.

I felt strongly that the crash incidents shouldn't have happened. I am especially interested in working on military planes because by improving the technology we can ensure that soldiers who use that technology will be safer and fewer lives will be lost. I want to

use my degree in engineering to help people.

Besides engineering, I enjoy art and music and am a proud member of the Pride of New Mexico Marching Band. I am so grateful to have received this scholarship to help me further my education at NMSU.



**Gianna Nilvo** is a senior at Belen High School while also finishing her associates degree at the University of New Mexico-Valencia Campus in biology. Her academic achievements have garnered her widespread recognition to include selection as a 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholar candidate, Congress of Future Medical Leaders of Excellence Award, National Honor Society, National STEM Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa International (Beta Zeta Zeta Chapter) membership, '24 Elks Most Valuable Student Award, '24 Hadley Honors Award, and the '24 Albuquerque Elks Lodge #461 Achievement Award.

Gianna conducted STEM research for 6 years exploring implications of fermented and cultured supplements on the gut microbiome of felines and canines to include dietary supplements and probiotics and also engineered a novel device and process that takes acidic waste and converts it to 100% biodiesel. Her excellence in scientific and engineering inquiry has been acknowledged

through numerous awards at Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, U.S. Stockholm Junior Water Prize, Top 30 Broadcom MASTERS, National FFA Agriscience Fair, Junior Academy of Science, Central NM STEM Research Challenge, NM State Science & Engineering Fair, Regeneron Science Talent Search, and even published her first peer-reviewed research paper at age 13 in New Mexico Journal of Science and Harvard Science Review.

She has undertaken various research internships at the Center for Water and the Environment at the University of New Mexico Engineering Department and the Air Force Research Lab Scholars Program at Space Directorate. Gianna led and participated in STEM Research Club, NM MESA, 4-H of Bosque Farms, FFA, Vet Science Team, Girls Who Code Club, and Student Technology Association. She has volunteered in her community, from assisting at church soup kitchens, veterinary clinics and animal shelters, peer tutoring, judging at STEM research competitions, to participating in STEM outreach events such as the ABQ International Balloon Fiesta STEM Night.

Gianna serves on the UNM STEM-H Center Advisory Council. She has been a member of her varsity golf team for 5 years, winning numerous accolades in 5A-division and also with Sun Country Junior PGA Golf Association. With her passion for animal welfare, she plans to attend New Mexico State University and continue her studies in animal science with a minor in equine therapy with the goal to attend Colorado State University for Veterinary Medical School.



**Allison Oñate** is a recent graduate of Alamogordo High School and a 2024 NMOST Advancing Young Women in STEM Scholarship recipient. She was active in the National Honor Society, and the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) club at AHS.

As the Athletic Training Student Aide Captain for the Alamogordo Athletic Training organization, Allison put into practice what she learned in HOSA, and developed her leadership and organizational skills. Her activities as an athletic trainer have provided insight into the practical application of scientific knowledge and honed her interest in pursuing a STEM career. She will be attending New Mexico State University in the fall for Civil Engineering. She is ecstatic to receive this scholarship as her passion for engineering

runs deep, especially as a female in a male-dominated field.



**Jolene Peabody** is from Las Cruces, New Mexico. She graduated in the top 10% of her class from Organ Mountain High School in 2024. She is planning to attend New Mexico State University to obtain her bachelor's degree in biology, and graduate with honors. She then plans to obtain her masters and eventually doctorate degree in marine biology to become an animal specialist and aquarium curator.

Jolene wants to help in conservation efforts to improve the lives of marine animals and preserve the beauty of our oceans for



generations to come. She credits her mom for always pushing her to be her best self and achieve new heights, her father for his unending support, and her younger sisters, Braily and Samantha, for always being there for her. She is very grateful for this scholarship, for the opportunity it provides to obtain her goals, and for the invitation to the Summit for the chance to meet new people!

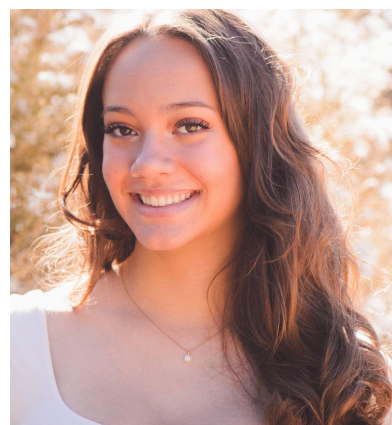


My name is **Madeline Smith-VanWinkle**, and I reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am graduating from Public Academy of Performing Arts, class of 2024. I have a 4.0 unweighted GPA, performed at Carnegie Hall in New York, was a two-time State Champion at the NMAA State Choir Championship, and have maintained a Superior Rating in all my Guitar Solo and Ensemble assessments by NMAA.

My interests include guitar, singing, piano, hiking, writing, and above all, science. I am a strong and independent woman who has always been interested in STEM and fascinated by scientific accomplishments.

Throughout my high school career, I discovered my knack for problem solving. This fostered my burning passion for Chemistry, an extraordinary subject. I will be attending UNM in the Fall to study Chemistry, specifically, the study and understanding of cancer, life-threatening illnesses, and disease through research. I want to make a difference in the world around me by furthering these scientific endeavors. I plan to improve the scientific research being done by exploring more areas that have yet to be fully grasped.

I want to expand my scientific knowledge so I can assist others and go beyond that. I am capable of finding solutions to current, pre-existing and future problems that affect human life as we know it. I am so thankful to be able to study at an esteemed university, where I can explore and advance a field I am so deeply drawn into. I firmly believe that Chemistry can change the future of our world for the better. I am deeply grateful for the NMOST Advancing Women in STEM Scholarship, which will allow me to help create a better tomorrow.



**Lauren Staples** is from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and will graduate from high school in May 2024. She will be attending Harvey Mudd College in the fall, where she will be pursuing an engineering degree and playing division 3 volleyball.

She hopes to use her engineering degree to help more young women get involved in STEM, especially in underrepresented fields, as well as work on developing more affordable housing for New Mexico in the future.

Outside of school, she is involved in club volleyball and volunteer work. She would like to thank NMOST for helping her achieve her goal of furthering her education.



**Hanna Weinman** is from Taos, New Mexico and will graduate from Taos Academy. She will also graduate from UNM-Taos with a certificate in 3D Printing. Hanna has always had a passion for science and math that has been cultivated through taking many high-level math courses and building machines.

She will study Aerospace Engineering in college and eventually pursue a PhD. Hanna is Konkow Maidu and Filipina. Her experience in this world has led to a passion for social justice and she hopes to fight for change within Native communities with her degree.

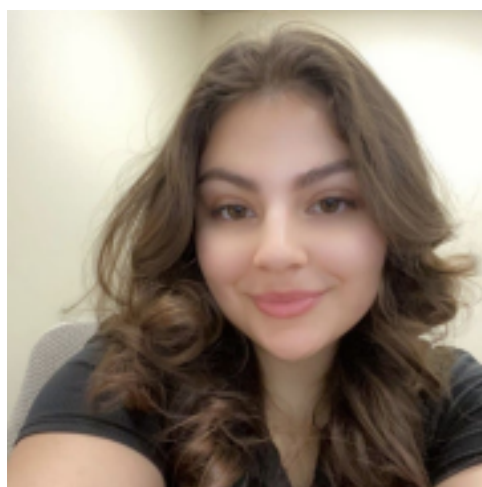
After college, she wants to show other Native students that just because there are obstacles we have to overcome, doesn't mean we can't do it. She wants to inspire Native students nationwide and

create more representation in her engineering field. Hanna is incredibly grateful for the opportunity NMOST has given her and will make the most of it.



**Olivia Cole** is from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and graduated salutatorian from eCADEMY High School in 2023. She is excited to begin as an undergraduate student in the University of New Mexico's anthropology department, where she hopes to gain the necessary knowledge and experience to excel in forensic anthropology graduate school programs in the future.

She credits her time as a New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science volunteer and Key Club president for inspiring her to pursue a career in STEM with human rights applications. Some of her hobbies include embroidery, reading, and writing. At the moment she is a volunteer at UNM's Museum of Southwestern Biology, where she helps process specimens for the Division of Mammals. She is extremely thankful for the Advancing Young Women in STEM scholarship, which will help her pursue her academic goals.



**Asia Gonzalez** is a 2020 graduate from College and Career High School, graduating with not just her High school diploma, but two degrees in Fine Arts and Health Wellness and Public Safety. After a temporary manufacturing job recommended by her grandmother introduced her to the world of engineering, she realized her passion for STEM and joined STEM Core and Hackerspace, STEM based groups, to continue her education and experiences in robotics, coding, and engineering outside of the classroom.

Upon finishing her Associates next summer, Asia will transfer to UNM to finish her Bachelors in electrical Engineering. She has always loved puzzles, problem solving, and helping people, and hopes to use her education to help solve some of the world's problems. She is grateful to everyone who has pushed and motivated her, as well as the NMOST scholarship that is helping her achieve her goals.





My name is **Amber Hagelbarger** (pronounced hey-gul-bar-gur). I am a senior at Piedra Vista High School in Farmington, New Mexico. I am completely committed to Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, and plan on participating in their dual bachelor's program. This program consists of two stacked years of prerequisites to their nursing program. Thankfully, these prerequisites count as a bachelor's in human sciences.

I plan to get my nursing degree immediately, after only two years. The best part is that I will be just barely turning 18 years old in September. A little about me, I am a complete nerd. The word "nerd" sounds almost derogatory; however, I love it. I love learning so much. Throughout my academic career, I've always

been known as the "smart kid that tries too hard". Quite frankly, I do try hard, but at no point would I ever consider "too hard" to actually exist.



**Corinna Harrower** of Arroyo Seco recently graduated as part of the Taos High School class of 2023. She is attending Montana State University and pursuing environmental engineering as her major.

Corrina hopes to be a resource in the future to help rural communities, like her own, that have suffered from environmental disasters.



**Cassidy Heath** was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over her eighteen years here, she has observed the much-needed help that this city needs. She wants to pursue a career as a paramedic to help her community. She will do this by attending the University of New Mexico in the fall. She is passionate about rock climbing, hiking, creative pursuits, and above all, Jesus. She hopes to be a light to her community, and draw other people closer to Christ. Lastly, she is extremely grateful for receiving this scholarship, and she would like to say thank you to NMOST for helping pave the way for future women in STEM.





**Sierra Martin**, a homeschool graduate from Rio Rancho, NM, is a Biology major at Westmont College, where she is a Presidential Scholar and has earned an athletic scholarship to play women's soccer. In her college freshman season, Sierra played in the National Championship Tournament and had a shot-on-goal average of 1.000. In high school, she earned the Offensive Player of the Year award at Rio Rancho High School and won the 2022 State Cup as Captain of her club soccer team. Sierra is the first female Eagle Scout in New Mexico and the 4th girl in the nation to earn all 137 Boy Scout Merit Badges, joining fewer than 500 youth in the

organization's history to complete this feat.

She attended the World Scout Jamboree with Scouts from 150 countries and backpacked the famous Philmont Scout Ranch twice. Sierra was active in the Science Olympiad throughout high school, winning the State Championship in 2019 and 2020 and attending Nationals in 2019. With over 500 hours of community service and a commitment to mentoring younger Scouts as an Assistant Scoutmaster, Sierra is poised to make a significant impact in her field and beyond.



Throughout high school, **Olivia McFaul** has been a part of a variety of groups and organizations that encouraged her interest in STEM and helped her develop her leadership abilities. Since she was young Olivia has always had an interest in STEM, cultivated by her amazing teachers, the science fair, and STEM focused summer camps.

It's Olivia's ambition to always be learning and to make an impact wherever her future takes her. She plans to continue her education after high school by studying Biological Sciences.



**Jordyn Montoya** graduated from Los Lunas High School as valedictorian of her class in 2023. She has always had a fascination with space, participating in many after school activities, even throughout elementary school. Her first dream job as a 7-year-old girl was to be an astronaut but her junior year physics teacher was the one that inspired her into finding her passion for engineering.

In the fall she will be attending Colorado State University majoring in mechanical engineering with a concentration in aerospace hoping to one day work on projects that will make the world a better place. She hopes to come back one

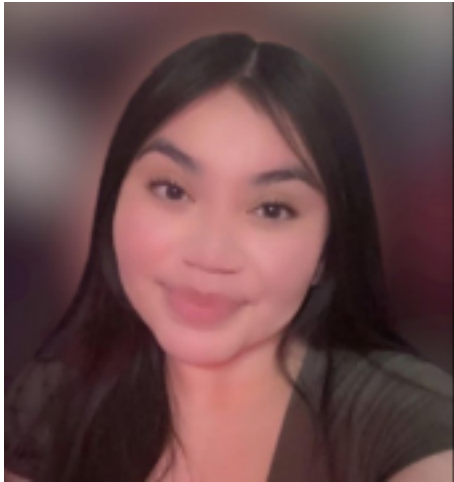
day to her home state and serve the people that have made her who she is. She is so grateful to have received this scholarship to help her in achieving her dreams.



My name is **Christina Sanders** and I was born and raised in New Mexico. I am a graduate of Eldorado High School (EHS) class of 2023 and a graduate of Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) class of 2023 with two certificates. I am now starting my first year at Washington State University (WSU) as a Sophomore studying Animal Science. Through an internship at TLC Pet Hospital, I found my desire to pursue a career as a veterinary animal doctor.

I want to thank the doctors and technicians at TLC who helped me bloom and learn more about the veterinary field. In my free time, I love to foster cats, learn dance

choreographies, and draw. I am very thankful to receive the NMOST scholarship to help me on my journey at WSU.



**Desirae Suina** Desirae Suina is from Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico, and a 2023 graduate from Santa Fe Indian School. This coming fall, she will be attending George Mason University, where she will be studying Forensic Science. Her interest in STEM came from her father, who was inspired and encouraged by his aunts to go into the STEM field. Throughout High school, she has participated in the National Honors Society and internships, which gave her the support to pursue her goals.

Desirae hopes to work with the FBI to gain more insight and bring representation when it comes to Indigenous people in the field of forensic science, as well as bring awareness to the cases involving Indigenous people in hopes of bringing justice.

In her free time, she enjoys painting, music, volleyball, and spending time with family and friends. She is grateful to receive the NMOST scholarship to help pursue her future endeavors.



**Angelica Trillo**, who graduated in 2022 from Moriarty High School, is currently attending the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. At UNM she will be studying Mechanical Engineering and Minor in Studio Art. Through both programs she hopes to use both her creativity and technical knowledge to create solutions to a variety of problems that engineers face in the world today.

Since an early age she has always been interested in STEAM and making a difference in the world. In high school she participated in Kode with Klossy where she learned to code in various languages, was a fellow with

the Council of International Affairs in Santa Fe and was a National Qualifier for National History Day in 2021, 2020, and 2019. Through her melting pot of experiences, she hopes to use all her knowledge and experiences to create a well-rounded and educated career as an Automotive Engineer after graduation.

In her free time, she enjoys reading, painting, playing video games, and going to her hometown to be on her farm. Angelica is extremely grateful for receiving the NMOST scholarship and their support in continuing to pursue her dreams.



**Rhyen Vigil** is a 2023 graduate of Peñasco High School. Alongside graduating high school, she also completed an Associate of Science in Pre-Science through The University of New Mexico-Taos. In middle school she participated in a conservation camp through the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District and in high school she held a watershed internship with River Source.

Raised in Northern New Mexico, she has always been passionate about the forest and the outdoors and is now preparing for a career in natural resource management. In the Fall, she will be attending New

Mexico Highlands University to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Conservation Management. She wants to directly influence the way that people and the natural environment coexist and thrive in New Mexico. She is grateful to everyone at NMOST for the work that they do and for this opportunity.



## 2022 ADVANCING YOUNG WOMEN IN

**NMOST**  
New Mexico Out-of-School Time  
NETWORK

# STEM SCHOLARSHIPS

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!!



**Nancy Avila Do** was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is a 2022 graduate of Eldorado High School. During the Fall, Nancy will be a student at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) with the declared major of Computer Science (CS). Through her afterschool program, the Supercomputing Challenge (SC), Nancy was able to find her passion for CS and STEM as a whole. In the future, Nancy hopes to be able to give back to those who have pushed her towards this career field and to continue to be a role model for young women in STEM. In her free time, Nancy enjoys reading, scrapbooking, singing, and playing the violin.

Nancy is grateful for the opportunity to receive the NMOST scholarship.



**Saisravya Bandla** recently graduated high school and will be attending University of California, Berkeley. She will be majoring in mechanical engineering. Her career path was inspired by her family, and she credits the NM Governor's STEM Challenge for presenting her the opportunity to learn more about STEM. In the future, Saisravya plans to use her higher education to pursue product engineering and design. She hopes to build devices to better accommodate people's needs.

Saisravya would like to thank the NMOST Advancing Young Women in STEM Scholarships for supporting students.



**Shea Binkley** was born and raised in Las Cruces, New Mexico and continues to learn and grow here in Las Cruces at NSMU pursuing a Bachelor's of Art in Computer Science with a minor in Business. Her interest in computer science and technology began with the YWiC (Young Women in Computing) summer camp at NMSU, where she had the opportunity to meet and learn from other young women in computer science. She graduated from Centennial High School in 2021 in the top 10% of her class after she spent her junior year on an exchange to the Netherlands. Now at NMSU she helps recruit for the computer science

department and works summer camps that introduce young women and men to computer science, and encourages them to attend NMSU. She enjoys being involved with her community and working with others to improve her campus's community as well. She couldn't have made this far without her family, and is thankful for being granted this scholarship to help her continue her education and pursue her dreams.



**Renee Catanach** was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico and is currently at New Mexico State University pursuing a bachelor's degree in Computer Science with a focus in Artificial Intelligence, and a minor in Spanish. At NMSU, she is also a member of CAHSI, the Computing Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institutions. She works as a research assistant for Young Women in Computing, which is an outreach program that encourages young women to join the field. Lastly, she is a Google Tech Exchange Alumna, where she attended classes taught by Google employees. In her free time, she enjoys playing sports, hanging out with friends, and traveling to new places.



**Hannah Kim** graduated from Carlsbad High School in 2021 and is currently an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. She is pursuing a degree in microbiology, and plans to continue to graduate school in hopes of working in research. Hannah has always been interested in STEM, and has actively engaged in STEM-based activities for as long as she can remember. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with her friends, reading, and watching Korean dramas. Hannah is very grateful to have been able to receive the scholarship from NMOST Network to allow her to pursue an in-depth education in STEM.



**Julianna Luna** is a fourth-year undergraduate at New Mexico State University pursuing a degree in biology and biochemistry. She plans to attend medical school and become a physician for her career. Currently, she is a BioCat for the biology department, a lifeguard for the city, and does research in the psychology department at NMSU. She is also dealing with an autoimmune disease and has made it a long-term career goal to sponsor and create programs that provide awareness and resources to students with invisible disabilities. It is important to her not only to become a physician to provide medical care but also to support programs for underserved communities such as the uninsured and low-income patients. She is grateful to receive this scholarship to help her continue pursuing her goals.





**Olivia Maass** is a class of 2022 graduate from the STEM charter school, The ASK Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She will be attending New Mexico Tech in the fall, majoring in Chemical Engineering. After deciding on the engineering pathway offered at The ASK Academy in her eighth grade year, she went on to partner in a biomedical and engineering project for the school's yearly Research In Action program. The project focused on horse prosthetics and was then presented at the Central New Mexico Science and Engineering Research Challenge (NM STEM Research Challenge). Ever since the project and the enlightening engineering classes offered at The ASK Academy, she

knew that a STEM career was the only option for her. While attending New Mexico Tech, she hopes to continue her interests of photojournalism as well as her modified car build.



**Bailey Nez** is an incoming freshman at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI where she will be majoring in Environmental Science/Studies and eventually hopes to pursue a degree in Environmental Law. Bailey is from Tocito, NM and graduated from Pine Hill High School in Pinehill, NM. While at Pine Hill High School, Bailey was Valedictorian, a member of the New Mexico Activities Association Student Leadership Advisory Committee, a member of the National Society of High School Scholars and played Varsity Volleyball, Track, Softball and Basketball. At Lawrence, she will be a member of the Women's Basketball Team and plans to be active in LUNA – the Lawrence

University Native American organization as well as other clubs. Bailey's career goal is to become an Environmental Lawyer and work on behalf of Native tribes in the protection of the environment and traditional lands.



**Catalina Sapien** recently graduated tenth in her class from Albuquerque High School where she served as Student Body Vice President. She has been involved in STEM all her life, having attended summer camps like TechTrek, and participated in clubs at school like Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA), and health related clubs such as Dream Makers and Peers of AHS Understanding Student Experience (PAUSE). She will be pursuing a degree in Biology from the University of Alabama on a full tuition scholarship, where she will be part of the Honors College and STEM MBA Program. In her free time, she enjoys dancing, reading, painting, and baking. She also enjoys being

involved in different community service and leadership organizations and plans to continue that at UA. She is very grateful to NMOST for the scholarship, and one day hopes to pursue a career in the medical field or other STEM related career.



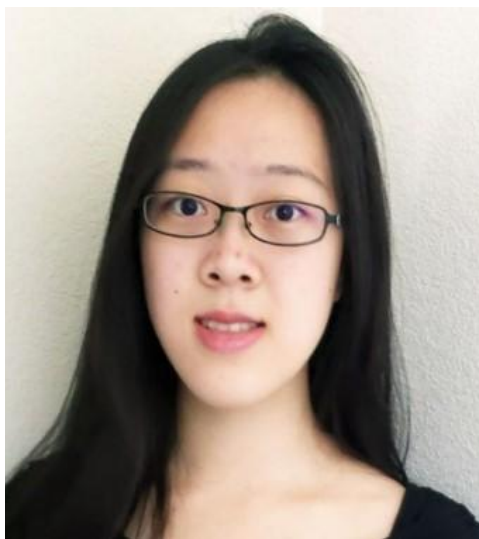
**Navaeh Silva** was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is a recent Sandia High School graduate and will be furthering her education at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. She will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. She enjoys all things STEM including classes such as math, chemistry, coding and small engineering projects. Her passion for STEM has been there since she was in elementary school when she would participate in the school's science fair. Her interest would be further developed in her junior year of high school when she decided to take on a rigorous class schedule

consisting of AP Calculus, AP Physics and AP Computer Science Principles. She enjoyed the challenge the year brought her and especially loved her computer science course. This is one of the main reasons Nevaeh has decided to pursue a degree in Computer Science starting this fall 2022. She is beyond grateful for the NMOST Network scholarship she received and will use it to continue achieving her STEM goals and dreams.



**Kaitlyn Vigil** has been involved in various clubs and societies throughout high school that have served to further establish her interest in STEAM (STEM with an art component) and provided her with an avenue to advocate for STEAM education in her community. Being an active participant in her local and statewide community through volunteering and leadership positions has provided a unique opportunity for her to share with youth the value and excitement that engaging STEAM activities can provide. Exposure to diverse STEM careers through networking and participation in STEM programs have helped her to

prepare for a career in a STEM field. She is interested in pursuing a Mechanical Engineering degree with the potential of attending medical school. Kaitlyn foresees that her interest and education in STEAM will continue to provide many diverse and exciting experiences, not only as she navigates her collegiate journey but throughout her life.



**Melody Yeh** recently graduated from La Cueva High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She will be attending Texas A&M University in the fall to study biomedical engineering, allowing her to pursue her aspirations to create medical devices and become a pediatrician in the future. Since she was a child, she had always found an interest in STEM, especially in math. Throughout high school, she had been involved in VEX Robotics, Science Olympiad, and Science Bowl, all of which further deepened her passion for STEM and growing enthusiasm in engineering. In her free time, she enjoys crocheting, spending time with friends and family, doing 2D and 3D jigsaw puzzles,

photography, and exploring new hobbies. Melody is extremely grateful for the NMOST scholarship and opportunity to continue chasing her dreams.





# 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.





## Scholarship Recipients

Advancing Young Women in STEM 2020

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 a minor in Japanese. At UNM, she is also a member of the Women's Swimming & Diving team and is one of the committee chairs for the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). Her current career interests include software engineering and mobile application development 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.

**Niveditha Bala** is a senior at Mandela International Magnet School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is a proud first-generation Indian-American. In college, she hopes to work towards a career in neurosurgery and hopes to use her career to help address disparities in healthcare and education; she is also deeply interested in programming and computer science. Through an amazing opportunity with the National Center for Genome Resources, or NCGR, she learned about prions and hopes to study them intensively throughout her educational and medical career. Some of her favorite things include reading, spending time with family, volunteering at her church's nursery, and learning new things.





**Sydney Billingsley** is a senior at the University of New Mexico. Her concentration is in Opto-electronics in the Electrical Engineering department. Recently, she has been entertaining the idea of applying for graduate school in Florida to further her knowledge and explore her passion in material science. Along with school, she enjoys running in the Sandias or the Bosque and participating in 5-10k city runs. Running is the perfect destresser after an extensive day of studying. She is extremely excited and grateful to receive this scholarship, it gives her some extra motivation for this upcoming semester.

**Jolene Fernandez** is a recent transfer student to ASU from San Juan College. She is currently a senior studying Mathematics with a minor in American Indian Studies. Jolene is Elem Pomo from Northern California and Navajo from New Mexico. Her clans are Southeastern Pomo nishli doo Ma'iideeshgeezhnii bashishchiin. Her year of traveling national and international to 17 states and 9 countries with a program called Up with People left her with numerous culturally engaged experiences and new insight into her identity as a Native person.



While traveling Jolene aimed to dispel negative stereotypes and uplift Native American representatives. Jolene's goal after attaining her bachelor's degree is to lead her career path into the STEM fields. When Jolene is not studying for classes you can find her dancing at a powwow, volunteering, or spending time with family.



**Anwi Fomukong** was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, but raised in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. She is a graduate of Rio Rancho High School and will attend the University of New Mexico in the fall. While in high school, she was a part of many clubs and extracurricular activities from Key Club and the National Society of Black Engineers, to the Associated Student Council, varsity track and field, and the Master Dance Company. She also played a prominent role in organizing her school's Black

Student Union and was a Youth Group and Handbell Choir member at her church. At UNM, she will study Mechanical Engineering with the end goal of working in the renewable energy industry or the space industry. Her interest in renewable energy came from her senior science project in which she built a model underwater river turbine to produce power in the Rio Grande River. She knows it would be extremely beneficial to others and to the planet, and would create an exciting lifestyle for her to travel around the world and implement these turbines, or other forms of renewable power, for people who do not have access to power.

In 7th grade, she attended a space camp where she had to build a five foot tall rocket with a team. Long story short, her team's rocket was the only one that crashed because the parachute did not deploy and she has sought redemption ever since. That same camp revealed to her that the space industry is not just about rockets, but powerful telescopes, satellites, and more, that also caught her attention. Whatever she dedicates her life's work to, it will be toward assisting others in need and advancing humans as a whole.

**Jessica Ganley** is a sophomore in Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University. She graduated from Sandia High School in Albuquerque in 2019. She is very passionate about giving back to the community and is in several organizations focused on STEM outreach programs, especially programs targeted towards girls! She is also on an all-female project team sponsored through her school's Women in Engineering program which has taught her a ton of technical skills and grown her confidence a lot! In the future, she hopes to use her engineering degree to pursue a career in the renewable energy field.



**Bethany Gruenig** is pursuing a future in STEM at the Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, New Mexico. She has always had a passion for robotics and was a part of R4 Robotics, and finished her last season on the team as a back to back Regional Champion. Bethany enjoys training other students in STEM subjects and spending any bit of her free-time on a laser engraver to make unique pieces for others and sometimes herself. She is grateful to receive this scholarship and will use it well to continue her education this Fall semester.



**Shayla Hillis** is 17 years old, She has lived in Las Vegas, New Mexico her entire life and attended Robertson High School. She loves to play sports in her free time and her hobbies include art and weight lifting. She plans to attend the United World College Dilijan this fall to get her International Baccalaureate with focuses in biology, chemistry, and mathematics before coming back home and attending university. She appreciates this award and is very thankful to NMOST for providing the young women of New Mexico this wonderful opportunity.



**Natalie Martinez** was born and raised in Belen, New Mexico and is currently a senior at Belen High School. She developed a passion for all STEM subjects at a young age. Specifically those that relate to the medical field. Along with her interest in STEM subjects, she is involved in multiple extracurricular activities. She plays basketball and runs cross country and track for her high school. After graduating high school she plans to pursue a career in physical therapy. Natalie is looking forward to starting the next chapter in her life and she can't wait to see what the future holds.

**Jordan Mathews** is currently a senior at Goddard High School in Roswell, New Mexico. Her experiences in Science Olympiad, NM MESA and the Tech Trek NM summer camp introduced her to the basics of engineering and her love of working with her hands. Tech Trek NM also connected her with intelligent and powerful women role models in the STEM community, as well as like-minded peers, and this has fueled her to continue to educate herself about what STEM has to offer. She plans on using this scholarship to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.





**Allison Rewalt** graduated from Centennial High School in 2019 and spent her freshman year of college as a cheerleader for New Mexico State University. She is now going into her sophomore year of Mechanical Engineering. Allison is thrilled to pursue an education in STEM and is grateful that NMOST has given her more opportunities to move mountains for women!

**Atlanta Taylor-Campagna** is completing her senior year of highschool at Bosque School. She is looking forward to starting college in the Fall of 2021 and pursuing a degree in the scientific field. She has been invested in STEM from a very young age and has always been drawn towards the sciences. She has completed 5 science courses in the last 3 years, participated in Science Olympiad for 4 years, competed in robotics across the country, and been a member of the Greater Albuquerque chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers since age 13. Outside of the sphere of academia, she rock climbs and fights for social change.



**We are proud to introduce the 2019 Young Women in STEM Scholarship cohort:**



**Antonella Riega:** Antonella Riega was born in Lima, Peru and is currently an undergraduate student at the University of New Mexico. She is working towards obtaining a dual degree in Biology and Psychology. Her love for STEM has landed her a position as an undergraduate researcher in the department of Neurosciences at UNM hospital. She is working on an honor's thesis. Her project focuses on analyzing the role of basic-helix-loop-helix (bHLH) transcription factor ASCL1 in glial cell development. When she is not working at the lab or studying for an exam, she can be found reading a book, writing or playing tennis.



**Malia Kao:** After taking an AP physics class during her junior year of high school, Malia set her mind on pursuing a degree in astrophysics at New Mexico Tech. That same year, she also decided to join the Army Reserves. Malia was recently accepted into the 5-year master's program at New Mexico Tech and is currently interning at Sandia National Laboratories as a year-round R & D intern. She plans on continuing her education with a physics PhD program upon completion of her master's. In her free time, Malia enjoys playing the violin, horseback riding and gardening.





**Ronja Steinbach:** Ronja will be attending the University of Hawaii at Manoa this fall and looks forward to studying marine biology. She has been volunteering and is now working in the Rudgers and Whitney Lab at the University of New Mexico Biology Department. Through that work, she has discovered her interest in molecular biology and fungi, and seeks to pursue those interests within marine biology. She also harbors an interest in coral reefs and their restoration with a passion for working on conservation and

future sustainability. Ronja graduated from Albuquerque High School, where she was the president of the Math, Engineering, Science, and Achievement (MESA) club for two years and was an involved member of the community. She is very excited to begin this next chapter of her life and explore the wonders that the STEM fields have to offer.



**Makayla Gates:** Makayla is a rising senior at Valencia High School in Los Lunas, where she has a 4.286 GPA and ranks 1st in her class. She received the school's Departmental Outstanding Achievement Awards in PLTW Engineering, Math, English, and Science as well as Academic Achievement Awards 2 years in a row and is a member of the National Honor Society. Makayla has been a Jr. Docent and Peer Mentor at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, a year-round Nature Guide at the Albuquerque Biopark, and a Counselor-in-Training for the UNM Center for Diversity's

Camp Rising Sun for campers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She has won multiple science and research competitions, received the Thomas Edison Innovation Award, and was inducted into the National Young Inventors' Hall of Fame. Her latest project used satellite analysis comparing growth of the fungus known to cause the sometimes-fatal disease known as Valley Fever at sites in California and New Mexico as a potential screening device for preemptive medical intervention. She recently attended a summer program for high school students at Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. After graduation, she plans to attend college, pursuing a double major in physics and mathematics and, eventually, a Ph.D. in Theoretical Particle Physics to become a professor/researcher.



**Daisy Belmares-Ortega:** Daisy is a graduate of Albuquerque High School and proud to be a first generation college student. Her journey in STEM began in the sixth grade through New Mexico's Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) program, which she continued to be a part of for seven years. MESA gave her the opportunity to explore various careers in science before making her own career decisions. Daisy found her passion and curiosity regarding flight by watching her parakeets fly, and her first flight

on an airplane caused her much excitement and delight. Daisy became inspired to study aerospace engineering at the University of Southern California beginning this fall. Daisy draws her inspiration from her parents and their journey as an immigrant family. Daisy aspires to create opportunities for all women in science in the future.



**Jennifer Johnson:** Jennifer graduated from Las Cruces High School fourth in her class with a 4.48 GPA and participated in a wide variety of different activities like: FFA, the Varsity Bowling Team, the National Honor Society, and Student Venture, to name a few. She was also a Sunday school teacher for six years and participated in about 800 hours of community service during high school. In the fall of 2019, Jennifer plans to attend South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to earn her bachelor's in Metallurgical Engineering and, later, a master's in Chemical Engineering or Materials Science and Engineering. She plans to use this scholarship towards room and board during her freshman year.

Jennifer's career goal is to engineer new or improved materials and processes to then patent.

On Thursday, September 20, 2018, the New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network awarded its first annual Advancing Young Women in STEM scholarships to Haley Hilborn, Abigail Pribisova and Katherine Anderson.

Congratulations to our awardees!!



**Haley Hilborn:** Haley is a senior at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Her path in STEM started during the Dreamcatchers Science Program by Sandia National Laboratories. There she discovered many facets of science and engineering, such as LEGO robotics programming. OST programs helped her discover her passion in STEM and develop her personality and the traits that allow her to overcome challenges today. Today, she is part of the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society

and has gained experience as a student intern through Sandia National Laboratories in Pulsed Power Engineering and Radiation Effects and Experimentation. As a Native American woman pursuing an engineering degree, she experienced a lack of representation of Native women, but through OST programs and continued support, Haley entered the world of academia and encourages future generations to seek a career in STEM.

"Although STEM programs opened my mind to my current career path, any after school program participation, even those not necessarily STEM programs, helped develop the personality traits I hold now that allow me to take on today's challenges."

-- Haley Hilborn (2018 recipient)



**Abigail Pribisova:** Abigail is a senior at Eldorado High School. She is the president of the National Honors Society and is a part of the Eldorado Music Honors Society. She identified her future career by participating in the OST program ENERGY Summer Engineering Program at the University of New Mexico. STEM no longer felt like big words that entail sitting behind a computer all day or troubleshooting robots. After her time at ENERGY she was empowered to seek out an internship with the Moses Biological Computation Lab working with Swarmie robots. During her time in OST programs she developed the courage to make the step and view herself a potential participant in the STEM world.



"[OST programs] present an opportunity in the areas of academic practical application and mature future workplace interactions."

-- Abigail Pribisova (2018 recipient)



**Katherine Anderson:** Katherine is currently a senior at the University of New Mexico (UNM). She has spent the latter half of her time at UNM studying critical plant-fungal interactions and the consequence that climate change may have on those relationships. The work she has conducted throughout her undergraduate career contributes to the growing body of research addressing and potentially solving

the forecasted global food crisis. Looking back, Katherine recognizes the effects that Out-of-School Time (OST) programs have had in shaping and nurturing her love for science. Being of mixed-Asian descent, Katherine also recognizes the importance of inclusivity in STEM, stressing how important it was for her to see people with similar backgrounds excelling in STEM fields while growing up. As an undergraduate student,

Katherine has been mentored by prominent women in their respective fields who have helped her discover her passion for ecology.

"I believe that OST programs are crucial to exposing youth to the otherwise unknown and often intimidating field of STEM. Such programs allow youth to take initiative in pursuing their own interests, outside of their school's curriculum, or can change their perspective of the STEM field by giving them hands-on experience."

-- Katherine Anderson (2018 recipient)