

INVINCIBLE SUMMER



NPC Friends & Family

November 2022

www.npcfriendingfamily.org

The Invincible Summer

In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger – something better, pushing right back. – Albert Camus

Dear Friends,

I was casting about for a theme for this fall's newsletter, when this quote came to mind. We had just had our first hard freeze of the year up here in the northland. I was thinking about the current economic situation: the rampant inflation impacting our students, combined with the volatile markets, making it difficult to award our endowed scholarships in the upcoming semesters...Honestly, I was trying to come up with a way of pushing right back. Then, a funny thing happened. She called again. She always calls, just when we need her the most. It's uncanny.

Eight years ago, my colleague, Becca, and I were trying to figure out how to use some of the very limited resources of the newly-fledged NPC Friends and Family to provide scholarships for students, aged 6-14, to attend our summer Kids' College, which Becca was coordinating. We wanted kids to experience a college setting, AND understand that, when they graduated from high school, there were scholarships out there to help them go to college.

Becca's phone rang. After learning about Kids' College from a friend of a friend, She called Becca. She does not live in the NPC service area, but as a retired teacher, She fully appreciates the power of education. After a pleasant conversation with Becca and me, She sent \$3,000.00, and every single child who wanted to attend NPC Kids' College for the next two summers was able to apply for, and win, a scholarship.

She has continued to support NPC Friends and Family, adding to her gifts to assist our NPC students with their college-related financial challenges. This time - as I was trying to think of a positive story to share - it was \$25,000.00, so we can provide more scholarships this spring, to help students through these especially trying times.

I do not know how She knows. It's uncanny. But I know that She knows how hard the world is pushing against our students right now. I also know that She knows, like so many of you who have supported us, that scholarships are, for the students who receive them, the "something better, pushing right back"...the sun that lights the sky of an invincible summer.



Betsyann Wilson Executive Director

EXTRAORDINARY BEQUEST EXTENDS A LIFELONG LEGACY

For Jon Graff, there was always a tomorrow. Many Pedal the Petrified riders will recall Jon, who was an avid bicyclist who also gave generously to sponsor the event. Jon's sponsorships covered all ride costs, and meant that all proceeds from the ride could go to student scholarships. I had the great honor of riding with him on his last Pedal the Petrified in 2018; he rode the entire 100 kilometers with metastatic, Stage IV cancer. But his story did not end there, not by a long shot. Jon continued to ride his bike around the world. He was involved in a horrific wreck in Texas in the spring of 2019, and clung to life in ICU with multiple fractures. He recovered to get back on his bike – bones knitted, but still with metastatic cancer – less than six months later. Jon did not allow cancer to dictate his journey; he resolved to live to the fullest until he simply couldn't anymore. Jon ended his life's journey peacefully and with dignity, surrounded by friends, Friday, January 29, 2021.

In October 2022, NPC Friends and Family received the balance of a legacy gift, established by Jon in the final years of his life. His bequest, totaling over \$170,000.00, will assure that his scholarships continue to support Northland Pioneer College students like these past recipients who benefitted from the Jon Graff, PhD., Fund.



Naomi Cosen



Ashlyn Dighans



Cindy Dies Owen

Naomi Cosen of Whiteriver overcame domestic violence and addiction to drugs and alcohol to earn her associate degree and go on to work at NPC, run a Celebrate Recovery program at her church, keep her church's accounts, and pursue certification in Substance Abuse Counseling. Ashlyn Dighans, a former foster child, who struggled with a number of issues, including homelessness, will graduate with her Associate of Science degree in spring 2023, and matriculate to the University of Arizona to study Equine Science, fulfilling her life's dream to become an Equine Chiropractor. Cynthia Dies chose to return to college after raising her children as a single mom. With the help of Jon's scholarship fund, she earned her associate degree from NPC and is now enrolled at Arizona State University. Her degree plan is Elementary Education with a Special Education Certificate. After graduating from ASU in 2024, she plans to teach either upper elementary or junior high, most likely in Special Education. She is currently in her third year working as a Special Education Aide.

These are only three student's stories, but it is not an understatement that Jon's ongoing support of NPC Friends and Family and Pedal the Petrified has been behind the success of hundreds of Northland Pioneer College students, through the provision of need-based scholarships. We are so grateful to him, and proud to carry forward his support for education, and his legacy of caring, commitment, and courage.

TWO NEW SCHOLARSHIPS SUPPORT STUDENTS IN DIRECT-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

Douglas Seaman, owner of Sentry Welding Supply in Lakeside demonstrated his passion for, and commitment to, post-secondary education this fall, when he provided three scholarships to NPC Friends and Family for Northland Pioneer College welding students. Applications were accepted from students at all three welding program locations in Show Low, Holbrook, and St. Johns, and I am delighted to introduce the three inaugural awardees.

Two students at the Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook each received the \$500.00 Sentry Welding Supply Scholarship. Farrell Baldwin is Salt People Clan, born for Big Water Clan. Originally from Klagetoh, Arizona, Farrell commutes from his home in Ganado to the Holbrook campus, a round trip of 102 miles, three nights per week. He began to pursue an Associate of Applied Science in Welding during the summer of 2022. When he completes his fall-semester classes, he will have earned Level I and II Welding certifications. He earned a 4.0 for his first nine credits. He still has Level III to complete, and he has sixteen credits of general education to take. Farrell wrote in his scholarship essay of overcoming poverty, depression, discrimination, domestic violence, substance abuse and health issues, and "...learning to love myself for who I was and who I am now." He plans to complete his degree in May 2024 and start his career as a welder.

Alan LeSueuer of Snowflake has been the locksmith at the Arizona State Prison Complex in Winslow since 2016. He began classes toward his Associate of Applied Science in Welding during spring 2021. Alan wrote, "I work 40 hours a week most weeks, but some weeks there are emergencies that require attention, and I'm

easily getting eight hours of overtime." Like Farrell, Alan attends his welding classes in the evenings. He reports that he is already using the skills he is learning in the Welding program in his current job. Alan aspires to start a welding business after earning his degree.

David Cummins, a student in the St. Johns Welding program, shared in his scholarship essay that he grew up living off-grid in a canvas Army tent, while he and his siblings worked with their father to build the family home. From their father, David and his siblings learned how to lay a foundation, frame a house, wire electricity, and install plumbing. They built a house that was fully self-sustaining with wind and solar power. David's experience in helping to construct his family's house led him to a lifelong love of building and working with his hands. A young father, he cares for his children while his wife works during the day, then he takes classes toward his associate degree in the evenings.

David was also awarded the inaugural White River Lodge #62 Career and Technical Education Scholarship. The Masonic lodge in Show Low emphasizes individual responsibility as well as philanthropy. They sought to support NPC Career and Technical Education students, particularly in the skilled trades such as welding, construction technology and automotive technology, through the provision of a \$500.00 scholarship. As their first awardee, David was

honored at a lodge dinner, and was able to meet his benefactors in person, and thank them for the benefit they provide to students and NPC communities. David summarized the philanthropist's role beautifully when he noted, "[Your support] makes our pursuits possible and encourages the possibility of a greater future."



Farrell Baldwin



David Cummins

PEDAL THE PETRIFIED RIDES AGAIN!

After a two-year, COVID-driven hiatus, two hundred twenty-five bicyclists from all over the U.S. participated in the tenth annual NPC Friends and Family Pedal the Petrified (PTP) at Petrified Forest National Park on Saturday, October 1, helping to raise more than \$35,000 for NPC students.

The ride, which had not been held in person since 2019, was described by participants as “breathtaking,” “exciting,” and the “trip of a lifetime.” PTP is taking on a life of its own, creating moments and memories that go beyond the ride itself. Slated as a metric century ride which is 100 kilometers, or 62.137 miles, there is no competition, no winners or losers, just 225 riders biking through the incomparable scenery of the national park. Participants can also opt for a half-metric century, or about 31 miles, after which they and their bikes are shuttled back to the ride start.

For 68-year-old Carlos Gomez, a recent retiree and veteran of both Vietnam and Desert Storm, the ride was one born of determination and youthful spirit and ended up being a truly bonding experience. Gomez took up cycling six years ago after he was diagnosed with several serious health conditions. While preparing for this year’s PTP (his third), in a stroke of bad luck, he broke his collarbone. Gomez said he has always encouraged his family to join him and this year PTP’s youngest rider, Gomez’s fourteen-year-old grandson Link Hedman of Peoria, finally took him up on it. Gomez notes they had made plans to train for the ride together, but time just slipped away from them and the training never happened. He explains, “Link ended up taking on the half-century ride ‘cold turkey,’” with no training or preparation. Gomez himself had barely recovered from the collarbone injury in time to ride in this year’s event. “I was shocked,” Gomez notes. “We were all shocked. I thought Link would maybe do five miles or so and then decide that he’d had enough. But he did the whole thing! I kept asking him how he was feeling and he would just say ‘let’s keep going.’ We were about five miles from the end when I asked him again and he admitted, ‘my body hurts, I am so tired.’” Gomez explained, “I said ok, well let’s quit. It’s ok. But Link told him, ‘I’ve come this far. I’m not quitting.’” By the time they had finished, they had completed the 50k in 2 hours. Gomez said, “Man, I am so proud of that guy!”

Cheryl Levkoff, who first rode Pedal the Petrified with her husband in 2018, supported the ride in her own way, even though she couldn’t join in-person this year. She noted, “My husband and I discovered Pedal the Petrified almost

by accident. We live in Flagstaff in the summer, and as newish cyclists in 2018, we registered to have incentive to train. Once we learned what NPC was about, it touched us deeply. We are firm believers in supporting higher education, as it can be life changing. My husband had a hip replacement in August, so we knew we couldn’t participate in the actual ride this year. Wanting to still support NPC, I pedaled around my Scottsdale neighborhood to still be part of the ride, albeit remotely. Hopefully we can be there in person next year!” On her own, Cheryl raised sponsorships totaling over \$1,000.00 for student scholarships!

Pedal the Petrified illustrates the power of Petrified Forest National Park to serve as a valuable partner to its neighboring communities. Of the 225 riders, only 168 came from Arizona, and of those, only 13 were local riders. The Cities of Holbrook and Winslow benefitted from revenue generated through lodging, dining and entertainment. The event also helps advance awareness about the region encompassing the Colorado Plateau and Arizona’s White Mountains. Pedal the Petrified is an outstanding example of how partnerships, in this case between the area community college, the Cities of Holbrook and Winslow, and Petrified Forest National Park, can succeed in connecting individuals to our national parks, while supporting academically talented, financially needy college students, and strengthening the economic vitality of the entire region.



Carlos Gomez

Cheryl Levkoff



Make a Difference – Donate Today!

NPC students are succeeding in spite of all the odds. Many are the first generation in their families to attend college. Lots of adults are coming back to school while coping with the responsibilities of caring for children or elderly parents. Most have incredible financial need and they succeed because of the scholarships made possible, and sustained, by generous people like you!

YES! I want to donate to NPC Friends and Family and help support NPC student scholarships.

Donations can be made online via credit/debit card at www.npcfriendsfamily.org by clicking the “donate” button. Donations can also be made by using this form. Make your check or money order payable to NPC Friends and Family. **THANK YOU!**

Please add my gift of \$_____ to the following:

- Eagle Fund** – Unrestricted scholarships for students in greatest financial need
- AndyVon Scholarship Fund** – For Native American students
- Arvin Palmer, Ph.D., Memorial Scholarship** – For graduates of Snowflake High School
- Charles E. Lisitzky Memorial Scholarship** – For Native American students
- Claude Millet Endfield Early Childhood Development Scholarship** – For degree-seeking students in the ECD program
- Doris Reed Nursing Scholarship** – For nursing and allied health
- Jeanne Swarthout, Ph.D., Presidential Excellence Scholarship** – For degree-seeking students with a GPA of 3.5
- Jennifer Lee Witt Memorial Scholarship** – For degree seeking students
- Jon Graff, Ph.D., Fund** – For NPC students who are university bound, career bound or college-bound
- Martia A. Smith Memorial Art Scholarship** – For all full-time, degree-seeking students
- Mary Kay Smith Lindy Scholarship for Native American Nursing Students**
- Pres Winslow Memorial Scholarship** – For high school graduates enrolled at NPC
- Taking Flight Scholarship in memory of Dr. Eric B. Henderson** – For NPC graduates going on to a university
- U.S. Military Veterans Scholarship** – For veterans, their spouses and their dependents
- VAL 153 Memorial Scholarship** – For students in Fire Science and Paramedicine (EMT) programs

What your donation looks like as tuition:

- \$68** – Provides one credit of tuition for residents of Navajo County
- \$204** – Provides tuition for one three-credit class
- \$408** – Provides tuition for one student to attend half-time
- \$816** – Provides tuition for one student to attend full-time (12 credits)



**NPC Friends
& Family**

**Begin a legacy –
Help students in need by
starting your own scholarship**

Please contact me at:

(Phone or Email)

**so I can discuss how to create an
NPC scholarship fund.**

Thank you, for your continued support and donation.

You can learn more about and also give to NPC Friends and Family at www.npcfriendsfamily.org

NPC Friends and Family is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations may be used for tax purposes.