

# GIVING THANKS



NPC Friends & Family

November 2021

[www.npcfriendsfamily.org](http://www.npcfriendsfamily.org)

## LEGACY

Dear Friends,

In my last newsletter, I shared news of the loss of our dear friend and supporter, Dr. Jon C. Graff. Consider this a loving postscript.

In homage to Jon's practice of sending photos of flowers with every email, our 2021 cycling event, once more made virtual, thanks to the ongoing pandemic, was renamed "Petal" the Petrified. All registrants were asked to post at least three photos from their rides, with one being a flower, to the Facebook group page.

Forty-six riders took part, and they shared flowers from all over the country. Jennifer Haddock sent wild sunflowers from Palo Duro Canyon in Texas. Mike and Emily Gaffney took photos of grapevines in the California Wine Country. Mike Smith rode from Easton, Connecticut to Yale University in New Haven, posting shots of colorful potted flowers on the Yale campus. Cheryl Levkoff shared Mexican Bird-of-Paradise flowers from Scottsdale, while Bill Beverage found a bee, visiting a beautiful, night-blooming Cereus cactus, during his dawn ride. Tucson rider Sarah Herr shared pictures of flowers as components in the colorful murals she found on bike trips around the city. Jamie Robinson, also of Tucson, found a lovely tile mosaic of Saguaro Cactus blossoms on her 63-mile ride. The "Bad Hombres" of Albuquerque, Steve Glass and Jim Goodding, posted wildflowers from their own "Pedal the Petroglyphs," a 27-mile ride through Petroglyphs National Monument. Opting to follow the live Pedal the Petrified route, the Cottonwood Owls bicycle club, including PtP veterans Denise DeKeuster, Andy Bailey, Chuck Combs, Jim Graham, Helen Jones, and Mark and Tina Luffman traveled through Petrified Forest National Park. Fellow event veteran, Damian Fairbanks, also chose to ride the original route and recruited two of his former students, Jessica Barajas and Faye Daniels, to join him.

To coin an oft-used Jon Graff adjective, the spirit, ingenuity,

and enthusiasm of these riders was absolutely, "delightful!" I celebrated my 58th birthday, riding 58 miles on October 4, with my good friend, Steve Buck.

We dedicated our ride to Jon's memory. From the PtP route, we headed west to Holbrook, finishing our tour at NPC's Painted Desert Campus, where a bronze plaque is displayed in honor of Jon. It could not have been a more perfect day for a long bike ride, and I had the best of company. Jon was very much with Steve and me in spirit. We will never forget his courage, grace, and resilience.



Betsy Wilson and Steve Buck

As Jon's dear friend Will Hoggan so eloquently put it, "Accordingly, he (Jon) was a bicycle 'rider' not a bicycle 'racer.' However, he did have one significant bike race he participated in. It included only three competitors: himself, time, and cancer. The starting gun went off on April 1, 2019 when he got hit by the truck in Texas. The race he had then was to heal fast enough to get back on the bike and ride before the cancer progressed to the point he was no longer able to. To his credit, he won that race!" Hoggan reflects, "In a similar vein, each of us, cyclists or not, are in a three-participant race, with ourselves, time, and death. The prize goes to the person who can do the most good in the world before time runs out."

Jon Graff won this second race as well. Because of his life and legacy, scores of NPC students, many of them the first generation in their families ever to attend college, will continue to surmount the barrier of poverty, transforming their lives, and thus the lives of their families and communities, through the enduring gift of education. To paraphrase Pope Francis, Jon knew that life is much better when others are happy because of you.

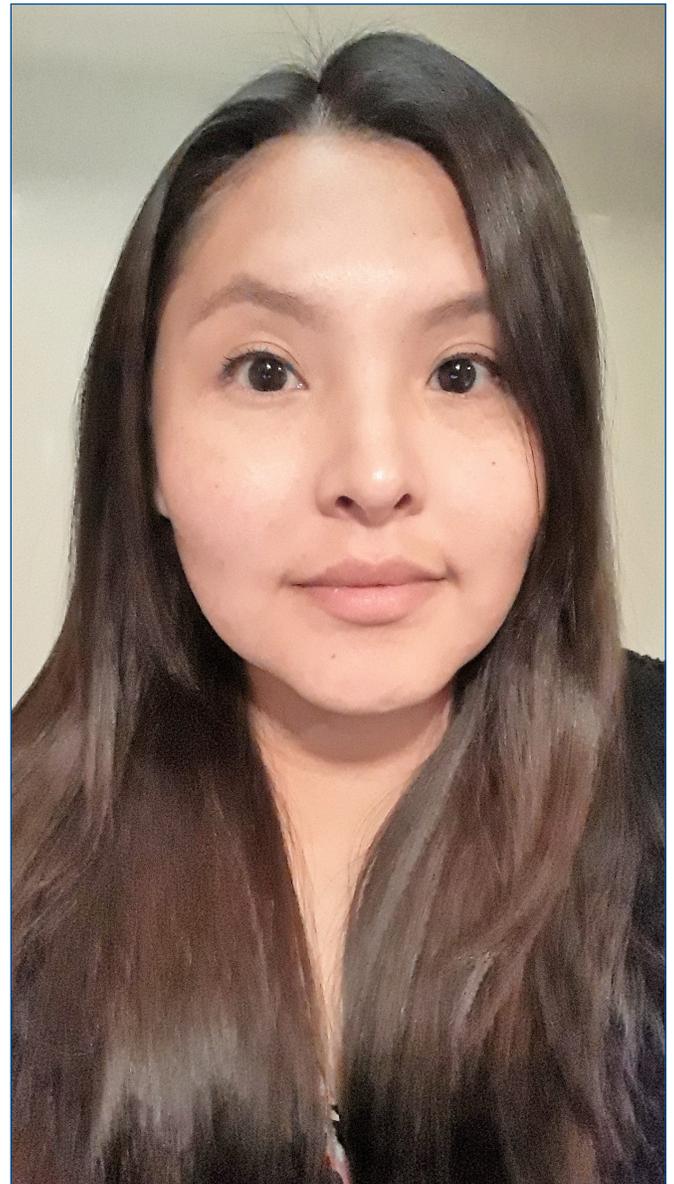
# -FALL 2021 SPOTLIGHT STUDENT - JOLIE SELESTEWA

Jolie Selestewa is a young Hopi and White Mountain Apache woman, and until just recently, resided on the Fort Apache Reservation in Whiteriver with her two small children. She will earn her associate degree from Northland Pioneer College (NPC) in May of 2022, becoming the first in her family to graduate from college. Jolie aspires to pursue Public Health Administration and to continue her education at Arizona State University (ASU). She was accepted into ASU's public health program during the Fall 2021 semester, and is now dual-enrolled at both NPC and ASU – a challenge only the most capable of students can take on. Jolie is also a member of NPC's Alpha Tau Gamma chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for community college students.

With pragmatic stoicism, Jolie takes all trials in stride. As she noted in her essay that helped her win the \$1,200.00 White Mountain Women's Club Doris Powers Memorial Scholarship, "having the responsibility of taking complete care of family and managing study time and class schedules has helped me grow into an efficient and progressive student." At mid-semester, Jolie lost her job in Whiteriver. Undaunted, she found a position as a Licensed Nursing Assistant at the Indian Health Services hospital in San Carlos, Arizona. She purchased an old RV and moved her three-year-old son and one-year-old daughter, to a trailer park in San Carlos, where she continues to provide for her family while taking classes remotely.

Service to community and service to her people is very important to Jolie. When she completes her educational goals, she aspires to return to the Fort Apache Reservation and use her knowledge to help the White Mountain Apache people improve their lives. She notes, she hopes to "not only to find a job on the reservation... but also to give back to my community through local charities, free clinics, and services [for] underdeveloped communities." She envisions the creation of an interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals who combine their resources to meet the needs of Native American people, including addressing traditional and modern views of medicine.

This is a wonderful vision, but more powerful still, is the example of Jolie Selestewa. With quiet determination, grit, and fortitude, she continues to work toward her goals and dreams. Her children will know that a college degree is desirable and attainable, and that their mother cared so deeply about them that she let nothing stand in the way of achieving one. In bettering her own life through education, Jolie will also better the lives of her son, daughter, and community. She is indeed, creating her own legacy.



Jolie Selestewa

## FORMER CLAUDE MILLET ENDFIELD SCHOLARSHIP WINNER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS HONOR

Celena Ambrose, a former student of Northland Pioneer College (NPC), and current early childhood educator with Holbrook AZ's Headstart, was recently named as one of only eleven PBS Kids Early Learning Champions nationwide. The award, established in 2018, recognizes and celebrates passionate educators who work with our nation's youngest students, from infants to second graders.



Celena Ambrose

In 2020, Celena completed NPC's Early Childhood Development program under the leadership of Faculty Chair,

Dr. Allison Landy, and with the support of the Claude Millet Endfield Early Childhood Development Scholarship. This past December, Celena was elected to the Arizona Early Childhood Alliance (AZECA), an advocacy and awareness group that furthers positive change in the field of early childhood education. Her focus on becoming an accomplished teacher has driven her to pursue her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Studies, which she will begin in spring 2022. As a PBS KIDS Early Learning Champion, she will be able to further immerse herself with other professional learning and networking opportunities to benefit the youngest students in our rural area.

According to PBS, the Early Learning Champions program represents the diverse teaching community impacting young learners today. As children move through the pandemic-impacted learning territory, they need tools and resources from educators and PBS Kids to build skills in and out of the classroom. This year's honorees were chosen for their passion and devotion to early education, as well as their desire to foster relationships with their students and local PBS stations.

Of the eleven national honorees, Celena was one of only two selected from small, rural communities. When asked how she feels about being recognized with the honor, she laughed and remarked: "It is still pretty mind-blowing to me! It feels very surreal!" She noted that she has been pleased to meet her peers among the select group of champions, reporting that, "They are all doing amazing things!"

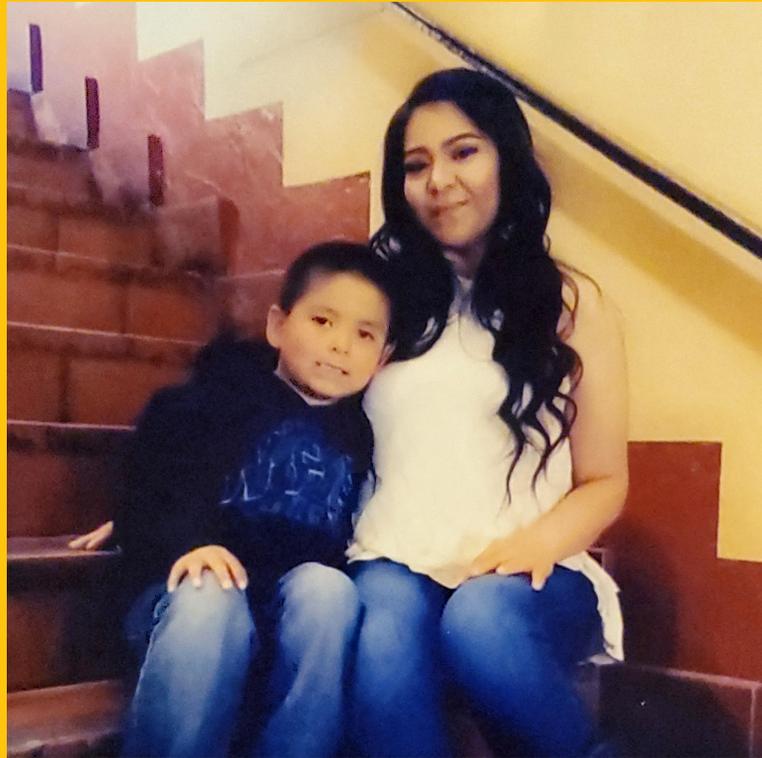
It is safe to say that there will be many more firsts for "Teacher Lena", whose talents and determination are part of many successes yet to come. She joins a dynamic group of early learning champions, and the tiny students at Holbrook Headstart are in excellent hands.

# INAUGURAL WINNER OF THE MARY KAY SMITH LINDY SCHOLARSHIP IS **EMMALISHA YAZZIE**

Our July 2021 newsletter featured a new, endowed scholarship, the Mary Kay Smith Lindy Nursing Scholarship for Native American Students. Every Native American student in this year's nursing cohort vied for this new scholarship. The scholarship review committee, which consisted of Northland Pioneer College (NPC), faculty and staff and members of the NPCFF board, all submitted comments to the effect that they wished they could have awarded every student who applied. Emmalisha Yazzie is this year's inaugural winner.

Emmalisha is a first-year nursing student from Winslow. She was inspired to pursue a career in nursing by observing family members who struggled with their health. She noted in her scholarship essay, "The elderly in my family did not understand modern medicine, they relied on Navajo traditional herbs and ceremonial healing. I wanted to know so much about how I could fix their health programs." Emmalisha aspires to build a bridge that will help her to improve the health of her people. She plans to earn her Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), from NPC in May 2023, then matriculate to Arizona State University (ASU), to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Emmalisha began her tackling the prerequisites for ADN program, which include anatomy, and microbiology. over a period of six semesters, raising her son, all the while that put her on the Dean's that she persisted through closure of NPC, working on also homeschooling her son. in a two-bedroom home, and by working as a Licensed Little Colorado Medical Center nights, full-time, and takes a classes during the day. She single mom, full-time student, assistant, "I have overcome organized and managing my



educational journey by admission into NPC's biology, chemistry, She completed these while working and maintaining a GPA List. It is noteworthy the pandemic-driven her own classes while She and her son live she supports her family Nursing Assistant at in Winslow. She works full schedule of nursing humbly states, of being a and full-time nursing this challenge by staying time."

I am so grateful to see this dedicated and diligent young woman receive this scholarship, which was established by the family of Mary Kay Smith Lindy as a legacy, in memory of her career of over fifty years in nursing. NPC Friends and Family is deeply appreciative of the family of Mary Kay Smith Lindy and are proud to play a part in helping Emmalisha Yazzie achieve her educational and career goals!

# MEET NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE'S 9TH PRESIDENT!

In July 2021, the Northland Pioneer College (NPC), family was excited to welcome our ninth president, Dr. Chato Hazelbaker. Dr. Hazelbaker was selected from a broad pool of candidates, following an extensive national search. A key feature that set him apart was his desire, not just to become a college president, but to become a college president at an institution where he could truly make a difference. In the four short months since starting the job, he has already shown himself to be a dedicated servant leader and advocate for NPC students.

Dr. Hazelbaker comes to NPC with a wealth of experience working with and for community colleges. Prior to landing here, he served as Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing at Carroll College in Helena, Montana. He also held the Chief Communications Officer position at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington and earned his Doctorate of Education in Organizational Development from the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In addition, Dr. Hazelbaker holds a Master of Arts in Leadership from Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minnesota, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana.

Chato, as he prefers to be called, has settled in the Lakeside area with his wife, Shari. Both Montana natives, they

are comfortable with the rural, small-town lifestyle. Chato has been busy, not only coming up to speed with the roles and responsibilities that come with being the president of a very unique community college, but with meeting the college family, and tribal and community leaders across the 21,000 square-mile service area. He has prioritized increasing student enrollment, hard-hit since the pandemic, and improving student outcomes, both through internal processes and external partnerships, emphasizing NPC's role as a community college. His desire to truly make a difference is well on its way to coming true, and we are excited for what the future holds!



Dr. Chato Hazelbaker.

# 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](http://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 Transportation Grant** – 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:**

- \$65** – Provides one credit of tuition for residents of Navajo County
- \$195** – Provides tuition for one three-credit class
- \$390** – Provides tuition for one student to attend half-time
- \$780** – 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](http://www.npcfriendsfamily.org)**

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