

OPPORTUNITY ARIZONA: Success through Career and Technical Education *High School Student Profiles*

Maryah Gowan

Life on the Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona can be much like the landscape. Beautiful, but also demanding and at times, harsh. On the sheep ranch where Maryah Gowan's elders live and where she spends her summers working, there is no electricity and no running water. There are no veterinary clinics or doctors nearby. An intense desire to help her family and community led Maryah to take an early interest in veterinary sciences. In seventh grade, she began studying animal science and agriculture. As a freshman entering Monument Valley High School, she began taking prerequisite classes so she could enroll in the **Career Technical Education (CTE) Veterinary Sciences** program. But life took an unexpected turn. She gave birth to a daughter, Adriana, and dropped out of school to care for her. Thanks to the encouragement of her dedicated instructors who wouldn't give up on her, Maryah learned she could enroll her daughter in another CTE program at the school, the **Child Occupation and Parenting Education (COPE)** program. COPE serves as both a classroom and on-campus daycare. Maryah could attend school and still be an engaged parent. Maryah returned to the CTE



Veterinary Sciences program, where she learned the basics of vet care, soon moving up to administering vaccinations, diagnosing diseases, even conducting minor surgeries. Maryah has been able to use her skills on the remote reservation to save some of her family's livestock. With a grade point average of 3.5, Maryah has applied for the Gates Millennium Scholarship. She hopes to attend Colorado State University to get her veterinary degree and someday return to Monument Valley to establish a veterinary clinic.

Logan Huber

Logan Huber has always been fascinated with flight. His dad was a mechanic by trade, and the desire to fix things came naturally. Logan says he has known since age 8 he would go into a science field, and he soon found he was especially interested in aerospace mechanics. In his sophomore year of high school, a guidance counselor came into Logan's World History class and described the programs at **Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC)**. Logan was immediately interested in the aviation program. Logan says he loves everything related to aircraft maintenance, and he has especially enjoyed sheet metal work. "The building of one thing from another was fascinating to me," says Logan. When we caught up to him he was working on refurbishing the landing gear on a Beechcraft Bonanza. Logan recently received the prestigious Presidential Scholars award for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) component of education. Logan says he was very happy to receive the recognition, primarily because it brings awareness to programs like the one at West-MEC. Logan hopes to be accepted into Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University upon graduation, where he will pursue a degree



in engineering in the aerospace field. While he hopes to work on and build spacecraft, he would also love to become an astronaut. Logan may end up in space someday, but today he has his career planned out and his feet firmly on the ground.

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Tori Lawrence

Tori Lawrence has wanted to go into the medical field since she was a kid. “My grandmother was an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and the human body just absolutely fascinated me,” says Tori. She got the opportunity to pursue her dream when she entered the Certified Nursing Assistant/Certified Caregiver Program provided through the **Pima County Joint Technical Education District (JTED)** in Tucson. Tori was in the program for two years, received her certifications, and was offered a job at Tucson Medical Center making \$15 an hour. Now 18, Tori works two days a week and uses her salary for tuition at Pima Community College, where she is taking prerequisite classes prior to seeking a Bachelor of Science degree at a four-year university. Tori credits her parents for encouraging her to get into the JTED program. It was no mistake, says father Rob Lawrence. Rob had worked in the auto industry in Detroit for 14 years. He says “everything went sour” when he lost his job during the Great Recession. Luckily, he found a job with an aerospace company in Tucson and the family relocated. Rob and his wife, Jan, say leaving everything behind was painful, and the experience dramatically underscored the importance of career and technical education. “We realized education is everything to our kids,” says Rob. With six children, Jan says she wishes they had known about the JTED program in time for their two oldest children to enroll, but Tori’s experience has already convinced their fourth child, Casey, to start in Health Care Foundations, a beginning JTED program.



Jared Taylor

During his freshman year at Campo Verde High School in Gilbert, Jared Taylor took a career aptitude test. It revealed what Jared already suspected—he had a strong interest in automotive technologies. Jared began searching for programs that would help him gain skills in the field. He found the **East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT)**. The EVIT program is certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, one of the few such programs in the state. Its instructors are all ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certified and students in the program receive the student ASE certification. This can put graduating students three to five years ahead of most industry schools. One local dealership hires several students each year from the EVIT automotive program, citing a severe shortage of technicians in the mechanical field. “It is an aging workforce, they’re retiring,” notes the service dealer. “Trying to find replacements is something we have to work on every day.” Jared hopes to take advantage of the lucrative job market. He is currently working as an intern servicing the vehicle fleet for Salt River Project. “After high school I want to be able to use the training I’ve learned here to take it into a fleet or garage and be able to help people with their car problems so they won’t have any hassle in their life and everyone will be happy,” says Jared. He adds that he feels secure in the knowledge that he has a plan for his life and says he is “100 percent ready for life to hit me.”

