



Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada

Student Spotlight 2023

Che-Ollin Robles, Mia Contreras and Navianna Contreras

Tucson, AZ



Having faced her own hardships in life, Isabel Lopez, a single mother of three, is determined to provide a better life for her children, including making sure they not only receive a quality education, but are in a safe learning environment surrounded by positive influences. Scholarships from the AAA Scholarship Foundation (AAA) made this goal possible.

Born in Tucson, Ariz., Isabel and her siblings were raised by a single mother on the southside of the city, an area where gangs were prevalent and negative influences had the power to derail the best of intentions.

“As much as I loved school growing up, I made some poor choices,” recalls Isabel. “I eventually found my path and became a nurse. I’ve now been in the medical field for 15 years. Being a nurse is definitely not for the faint of heart; however, I know for me, it’s a calling – it’s second nature.”

While Isabel braved the frontlines as a nurse during the Covid-19 pandemic, she worried about her children’s health and adjustment to remote school learning.

“Raising children during that time was not easy for anyone,” recalls Isabel. “Trying to keep everyone healthy, making sure my kids were able to stay on track with their education, and working to keep our household afloat financially...as the sole provider for my children, it was a scary time.”

Many of her concerns were alleviated when the children were able to return to in-person learning at Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic School in Casa Grande and she saw them blossoming in their learning environment. And with scholarships from AAA, the financial barriers Isabel faced were reduced and her children were given the chance to thrive in school.

“As a single parent on a limited income, I would not have been able to afford for my children to attend such a wonderful school without help or having to sacrifice my presence in my children’s lives by working several jobs,” says Isabel. “The AAA Scholarship Foundation has provided a much-needed resource for my family and countless opportunities for my children.”

Che-Ollin, the oldest of the siblings, became an honor roll student at Saint Anthony, where teachers took note of his respectful and well-mannered nature and his ability to easily make friends. His younger sister, Mia, also attended the school for kindergarten and first grade, while Navianna eventually joined her siblings at Saint Anthony through the preschool program.

After spending a couple of years in Casa Grande, Isabel and her children relocated back to Tucson. Thankfully, the move would not disrupt their educational progress – AAA scholarships are transferable to other eligible schools within the state, allowing Isabel to keep her children on scholarship at their new school, Saint Joseph Catholic School in Tucson.

“It was important to me that my children continue their education at a school that provides a positive and engaging environment – and that they are able to attend the same school together,” says Isabel. “Saint Joseph Catholic has been a great fit for our family. The school has a family-driven atmosphere – as well as wonderful leadership and teachers – which made the transition easier for my children.”

Che-Ollin completed 7th grade at Saint Joseph and hasn’t missed a beat. In addition to keeping up his grades, he participates in several sports, including basketball, volleyball and track. He also loves music – we are told he is quite the dancer – and is always there to fulfill his role as a great big brother to his sisters.

Equal parts silly and sweet, Mia is the middle child with a pure heart. She initially faced some challenges in school due to some learning difficulties, eventually being diagnosed with ADHD/ADD. However, her teacher provided the support she needed to work through her challenges and help her feel validated and engaged in the classroom. As a result, Mia finished out her second-grade year strong. She also joined the school’s Girl Scout troop, helping to further develop her skills both in and out of the classroom. In her free time, she loves to paint and draw – and even talks about becoming an artist or following in her mother’s footsteps to become a nurse.

Navianna, the youngest of the siblings, successfully completed kindergarten this year with support from her caring teachers who helped ease her transition to the new school. She has already developed into an excellent, task-oriented student and is always the first one to get started and complete homework at home. Like her sister, she also has developed a love for art and joined the Girl Scouts this year, allowing her to channel her caring nature and learn new skills.

“Because of those who support the AAA Scholarship Foundation, my children – as well as so many others – are able to flourish and become functioning members of society. Being able to see my children happy and growing in an environment that is right for them is priceless. Thank you for your generous gift to my family.”

About AAA Scholarship Foundation

AAA Scholarship Foundation promotes the advancement of education by administering educational choice programs. The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. More than 80 percent of these children are initially awarded AAA scholarships while living in households with annual incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they first receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and are concerned about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their children and will reverse inadequate learning, social patterns and potential lifelong negative impacts. They wish to change their children’s learning environment, acquaintances and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.

AAA Scholarships are funded in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Nevada by companies that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit scholarship organizations approved to administer these legislatively-authorized tax credit scholarship programs in multiple states. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information, or to learn how your company can participate in the program, visit www.AAAScholarships.org, or contact Kerri Vaughan at kerri@aaascholarships.org or 888-707-2465 ext. 730.