

# The Phoenix Times

*"SPREADING ITS WINGS AND SOARING HIGH"*

The Official Publication of Albuquerque School of Excellence  
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Salute!!!



The  
Real  
Life-savers

"In the Front Lines"

Feather in our Cap



SOPHIA ZHANG  
(P2)

NMMESA

Towering Above Competition

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner

(Most Technical)



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## Feather in our Cap

### Sophia Zhang bags 1<sup>st</sup> Place

by Sarah Adi

The New Mexico Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (NM MESA) in cooperation of the Sandia National Laboratories, and the Los Alamos Laboratory hosted the Towering Above Competition to challenge students in middle and high school to create a paper tower using only construction paper, scissors, and scotch tape.

Sophia Zhang, a 6-USC student from Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE) participated in the competition and won 1<sup>st</sup> place for the Most Technical (Best Technical Design) category - Middle School Division.

The contest categories for both middle and

high school divisions included the Tallest Tower, School Spirit, Most Creative, and Best Technical Design.

The judges from the Sandia and Los Alamos laboratories reviewed students' entries and interviewed the finalists virtually; winners were announced last December 11, 2020.

Sophia said that she felt a spark of excitement upon learning that she had won 1<sup>st</sup> place.

"You should always give things a shot no matter what the outcome is. It isn't about winning, but about enjoying yourself while experiencing the process," is Sophia's message to the students of ASE.

# NMPED recommends that schools hold online classes until January 18

by Camree Volk

**Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE) will continue its online classes until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January per New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED) order.**

Due to the current Coronavirus infection rates in New Mexico, as well as the current state-wide mandated orders from the New Mexico (NM) Governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, NMPED ordered all schools currently having hybrid classes to move to online learning until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January and come back to hybrid learning on January 18, 2021.

Since January 18 is Dr. Martin Luther King's Day, the ASE Governing Council on

their December 12, 2020 meeting decided with a 3-3 votes that Kindergarten - 1<sup>st</sup> grade will remain online until January 19, 2021 and with 3-3 votes also decided that 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grades will remain online school until January 19, 2021.

The middle and high schools will continue with online learning until the NM state and NMPED includes both departments in the orders.

Several ASE teachers and staff expressed their concerns with regards to the hybrid learning after the Holidays given that it is difficult to track families who may have travelled, thus, posing the risk of exposures.

Another concern raised is the staffing issues, since only a few teachers can do the hybrid program, given that some are at high risk or might be at high risk per CDC Covid-19 risk categories.

With the constant changes on Covid-19 cases leading to constant modification of state guidelines, the ASE-GC decided to hold a special meeting prior to January 19, 2021 to revisit the said decision, as well as to decide on what will be the best option moving forward with consideration of what is for the best interest of the students, as well as the safety and well-being of students, families, and ASE teachers and staff.

## ASE offers Dual Credit Program

By: Marwa Zameer

**For students to have subjects credited for both high school and college at the same time, Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE) offers the Dual Credit Program to grades 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>.**

In an interview conducted with Mr. Hakan Yanar on Monday, December 7, 2020, he explained that for students to qualify, they should be enrolled in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

The Dual Credit classes are available at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) and University of New Mexico (UNM).

Students who avail the program are not charged with tuition and other miscellaneous expenses, since ASE covers the cost.

Likewise, they can take up to six classes per semester and attend classes two days a week, in addition to their regular high

school curriculum.

Mr. Yanar further added that the school has been doing this program for more than six years now and has provided many benefits which include: providing a career pathway for students based on their interest; providing online classes at CNM, if in-person class is not preferred; and providing a faster way to finish college, since the program credits the subjects in both high school

and college.

On the other hand, if a student fails the dual credit class, the student's GPA will be affected, thus, the school gives a second chance to students who fail their classes; but if they fail for a second time, then their GPA will decrease.

The Dual Credit program is ongoing despite the present on-line platform used by ASE during this pandemic.

# The Holidays and The Pandemic

## - When Character is Vital by Camree Volk

**The Holiday season is the most exciting time of the year.**

During the Holiday season, families typically meet up and spend time with one another to celebrate the holidays. It is a time of fun, cheer, and merriment, that is best spent with family and friends. But this year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many families are going to have to spend the holidays separated.

It has been hard for everyone to be forced to be apart during the time of year that usually brings people together. This Holiday season, it is more important than ever to appreciate the small things, when so many things have been

lost.

This year, people have lost loved ones, lost their jobs, lost their ability to leave their homes, lost their ability to see family and friends, and it seems that the list of things lost never ends. The hardships that people experience right now is truly overwhelming and beyond compare.

Yet even when things seem to be going rough, it is still important to remember all the good things in life. Everybody's life is different, but there is always something to be grateful for; and the Holiday season is the best time of year to reflect and be grateful. This is also the time to be part of the solution, instead of being part of the problem. To consider options, instead of being close-minded.

Even though families cannot be physically together, there are many ways that can be used as avenues for communication. Families can communicate through various online platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Facetime, Facebook Messenger, and other video calling apps, as well as phone calls and text messaging to provide the feeling of togetherness they long and desire.

Through these online platforms, family and friends are still able to watch movies together, cook fancy meals, indulge in holiday traditions, and all other fun activities, all from the comfort and sanctuary of a quarantined home.

This December, the nation hopes to appreciate the good it has, regardless of the circumstances.

Families hope to connect with each other and celebrate the season with the help of technology.

It maybe hard, it maybe depressing, it maybe overwhelming, but a positive outlook, a hopeful attitude, and a selfless heart are the ingredients needed to overcome these trying times.

And as Bob Riley's quote says,

**"Hard times don't create heroes. It is during the hard times when the 'Hero' within us is revealed."**

## New Year, New Expectations by: Abigail White

### ***New Year's Resolution: Too Cliché?***

Typically, at the start of the new year, everybody thinks that it is the year that they turn over a new leaf and become better as a person.

To achieve this, people make a list of goals that they call New Year's resolutions. There are plenty of overused and vague New Year's resolutions such as, "work out more," or "eat better," which have lost its respective meaning overtime.

Plenty of New Year's resolutions fall through because people do not realize how much effort it takes to actually change a part of their life.

Oftentimes, people hold themselves to such high standards that when they see an opportunity for improvement, they immediately take it, often without thinking of the consequences.

It is true that there is always room for improvement, but when it turns self-destructive, it is better to just let a good thing be.

Of course, New Year's resolutions are not bad in general; rather, these New Year's resolutions offer a great opportunity to achieve something you may not have had the motivation to do in the past.

Although, a problem does occur when people try to achieve something that does not suit their lifestyle, it is unreasonable to expect something from oneself which is not actually possible.

On the contrary, there are people who can easily make a change, but soon realize that it is not as easy as they previously expected. In this case, it is common to use failure as an excuse to quit.

For instance, when someone makes a goal to work out in the morning but failed to do so because of reasons like forgetfulness, availability, and others; he or she then uses that one failure to justify quitting altogether.

Reasonably, it does not mean that just because someone failed once or did not get it right the first time, it should already result to quitting.

In conclusion, the new year comes with plenty of expectations, thus, it is important to set goals which are achievable. It is also important to stick with those goals and not give up but even more so to not become self-destructive.

Make sure that for the new year, set achievable goals that will better oneself and suit one's way of life.



# A Fighter of An Invisible Enemy – Sydney Koranyi

*"During this pandemic, I personally have grown to really appreciate my peers and solidified my belief in science."* – Mindy Mason.

Mindy Mason is a Neurosurgical Critical Care Nurse Practitioner at the University of New Mexico Hospital. She has worked at University of New Mexico for nine years.

She graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing in 2004 from University of South Alabama. She then attended University of New Mexico and earned her degree in Master in Sciences of Nursing.

Mindy has always wanted to be a nurse for as long as she can remember. She enjoys science, but most of all she loves helping people.

"Working on a Covid-19 unit is structured, meticulous, intense, frustrating, and rewarding. I believe that this is the first time that I have to think about the procedures before the patient, as this is a disease process that we do not know enough about yet," said Mindy.

She added that working with any patient who is infected with Covid-19 is sad, scary, and daunting.

She describes it as an uncharted territory or like

stumbling in the dark, although she believes that we have come light years in our knowledge since the beginning of the pandemic.

Frontline workers have to endure a lot during this pandemic as she described it. Aside from its mental

and emotional toll on them, the physical fatigue is also hard to bear.

One of the hardest parts that all medical workers are experiencing is the wearing of N95 mask for over twelve hours a day and just the full body exhaustion that comes with it. Due to the N95, the whole face gets tired, and eating or drinking becomes a struggle.

Mindy said that even through all these problems, there are still many upsides. Seeing the medical community come together and work through this global pandemic has been really inspiring. She feels that she has personally grown to really appreciate her peers and it had solidified her belief in science.

"Living through these crazy times, and fighting something without a face, I have really begun to understand the saying, 'It's like flying an airplane while building it' and come to realize that it may be a struggle, but we can overcome this if all work together," Mindy said in parting.





# My Profession is My Mission

by Camree Volk

Meet Nicole (Niki) Allcorn, a part of the Medical Evaluation Team at Presbyterian Hospital.

Nicole is a five-year certified Critical Care nurse. She works in Cardiac Critical Care, specifically taking care and helping patients recover from open heart surgeries. She is also a relief charge nurse caring to the severely ill patients in the hospital, including those with Covid-19.

When asked about what it is like dealing with Covid-19 patients, she said that her top priority is keeping herself, her family, and her patients safe.

In doing so, she wears her mask, consistently washes her hands, wears other personal protective equipment she is required to wear, and is as careful as possible while working.

Nicole graduated from University of New Mexico (UNM) with a bachelor's degree in Communication and a master's degree in Business Administration.

She said that she originally planned to find a career in the business field but switched careers because she wanted to work with people, and she enjoys nursing.

Nicole enjoys hiking, being outdoors, reading, and walking her two dogs. Most of all, she loves and enjoys playing and taking care of her 2-year-old daughter.

Her dedication to the medical field and her courage to face the uncertainties and risks of caring for patients with Covid-19 is admirable.

"Every nurse was drawn to nursing because of the desire to care, to serve, or to help" – Cristina Feist-Heilmeier



# NOVEMBER TEACHERS OF THE MONTH

## Elementary Level

### Ms. Michelle Wallin - Teya Switzer

**‘It takes a big heart to shape little minds.’** - Anonymous

Meet Ms. Michelle Wallin, a Pre-K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE).

Ms. Wallin graduated from the University of New Mexico (UNM) with a degree in Early Childhood Multicultural Education.

Her favorite quote, “What’s meant to be will always find its way,” reflects her success and recognition.

Last November, she was recognized as teacher of the Month in ASE.

This great lady loves spending time with her family, especially with her fiancé, and playing with her dogs. She also enjoys being outside and riding four-wheelers.

“I truly feel like I work with some of the best people! I feel very blessed to be a part of the ASE family,” says Ms. Wallin.

Ms. Wallin, thank you for your hard work and dedication!



## Secondary Level

### Mr. Eric Boles - Abigail White

**“When life hits the reset button, choose to do something to help someone else.”** - Mr. Eric Boles

Mr. Boles is a new teacher at ASE, having only started working here this year. As it turns out Mr. Boles is new to teaching in general, this being only his second year. But don’t fret, he is more than qualified for this position.

He graduated from Manzano High School. He then went on to graduate from both Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) and University of New Mexico (UNM).

Mr. Boles graduated with the degree in Bachelor in Secondary Education, major in Social Studies with the highest distinction, summa cum laude.

He teaches New Mexico History and U.S. History to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE).

Mr. Boles enjoys reading, playing the guitar, and mountain biking.

When asked about his time in ASE, Mr. Boles states, “I have felt extremely welcomed and I think I have landed in a good place.”

ASE is incredibly lucky to have you as a part of the staff!



## Marwa Zameer

My name is Marwa Zameer. I am the Managing Editor of The Phoenix Times (ASE newspaper).

As part of the ASE newspaper, I write news, feature, and literary articles, as well as conduct interviews and cover assigned events.

This is my second year in ASE, and I am very proud to call myself an ASE student. Last year, I had participated in the Mathcounts competition with the rest of the Mathcounts team.

I am in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and belong to the amazing class of 8<sup>th</sup> Rutgers.



I enjoy coming to school, doing sports, photography, learning different languages, writing, acting, learn new things, and spending time with my family.

I also love watching movies. Ever since I was little, I had always had an interest in watching Indian movies. I learned the Hindi language by watching Indian movies every day and finding the definition of a word by watching the action of the characters. Today, I have almost fully learned the Hindi language and am now trying to learn Tamil and Telugu.

I was born in Afghanistan and I have three younger brothers, Ghulam, Yousuf, and Sulaiman, who were also born in Afghanistan.

As a young teen, I am very appreciative of having such amazing family, classmates, and teachers.

Likewise, as a girl who come from a different culture and background, I hope that one day people will stop judging a person by their race, religion, or traits.



## Jolene Cole-Holpp

My name is Jolene Cole-Holpp. I am a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student here in Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE). I am a feature and opinion writer for the school newspaper, The Phoenix Times.

I am the youngest in the family with two brothers and a sister. I love the company of my family and friends; and I have a lot of fun hanging out with them.

My family and friends are especially important to me. They have molded me and led me to the right path in becoming the person I am today.

During my free time, I enjoy painting and sketching, as well as, doing gymnastics and skateboarding with my older cousin.

I also love playing with my pets. I have two cats named Bella and Blackie, a fish named Florence, and a turtle Petrie.

In school, my favorite subject is History. I like to learn all about the past because it is remarkably interesting and fun to learn about.

When I grow up, I want to go to college at the University of New Mexico. I am not quite sure yet of what I want to be, but my plans are leaning towards several interesting careers. I want to either be an artist, a physical therapist, or a college professor in Anthropology.

These things all interest me for different reasons. Ever since I was young, I have always wanted to be an artist and loved doing art because it is relaxing. I also want to be a physical therapist and be able to help other people.

As I said earlier, I enjoy learning about history and the past that is why I would like to become a college professor in Anthropology. But for now, I would like to just focus on doing school, staying safe, and having fun.

And as Denis Waitley's quote says, "A good life is a collection of happy moments."





# THE IRONY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND THE PANDEMIC

The Christmas Tree stands tall in Uptown Albuquerque on a quiet December day 2020. Photo by Rebecca Hernandez







## SNOWMEN ADHERE TO STATE GUIDELINES!!!

Snowmen practice social distancing as they stand between a Christmas Tree and wrapped presents at a neighborhood between Apache and Vermont in Albuquerque.

Photo by Rebecca Hernandez





## CHANGING COLORS!!!

Decorative Christmas Lights bring life as it changes colors in sync with joyous Christmas songs in a residential neighborhood at Grey Rock St., Albuquerque.  
Photo by Rebecca Hernandez





# THE SUN WILL RISE

*Written by Ericka Defazio*

## Chapter 4: The House of Ancestors

"Die?" The thought echoed in Michael's brain as Raymie started pulling him toward the elevator. He had the strange desire to laugh. "Die?" How could they die when the whole of New York was unsuspecting, untroubled, not bothered by the fact that there were two suns, not bothered by the fact that they might just vanish off the face of the earth that very same day.

Of course, Michael had his questions. They tumbled around in his thoughts, "How are we going to die? How do you *know* we are going to die? Is this a joke? Why is it so bad that there are two suns? How did it come to pass that, (and this was the most pressing of all), there were two suns in the first place?"

He knew these questions would only infuriate his supposed sister. So, he stayed silent. He allowed himself to be dragged into the elevator, dragged out, and finally, after a considerable amount of pushing, they got out into a white space.

A what?

There was spinning, endless spinning, and Michael felt as though he was being compressed. He tried to open his eyes. He could not. He tried to yell, and he could not do that either. Then, he decided it would probably be best not to yell. He felt sick, and he knew that if he opened his mouth... well it would not be pretty.

Then he felt a slam on his entire body, and the sensation of being stretched. He attempted to open his eyes. And he could. What he saw almost made him wish he had kept them closed.

The house around him was enormous. The ceilings looked about the height of seven extremely tall giraffes standing on top of a fifty-foot ladder. It made him feel as though he was a miniscule ant.

The walls were covered in a shiny, silver wrap. It looked like aluminum foil, but brighter. Many people were scurrying around, carrying more of the stuff. A harassed looking older woman with grey hair was directing them. "Justin, to the left and up, no not there... a bit farther, yes, now go get more... Ms. Conner, please pick that up and return it to the storage room, NO Ralph, you go to your mother... Oh Raymie, thank goodness, you came just in ti-

She stopped and looked curiously at Michael, peering at him under her thick glasses.

"Is this him? Not much resemblance to his mother, I am afraid, but he looks strong enough."

Then she stuck out her hand.

"Lieutenant Madison, young man, and I say, you better get working. Lots to do in these troubled times"

She shook his arm twice, (it was more like a yank, thought Michael with a grimace), and departed.

Raymie managed a half-smile, and then walked quickly toward the post that the woman had deserted. "Excuse me!" she said in a loud voice. Everybody ignored her.

"EXCUSE ME!" she shouted.

Everybody dropped whatever they were holding, their attention immediately and completely fixed on her.

"TODAY," she shouted, "WE ARE JOINED BY A SPECIAL GUEST!"

Michael slunk back, trying to become invisible, but Raymie gripped his arm and steered him toward the podium.

"MICHAEL, WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF ANCESTORS!"

**TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE...**



# Karácsonyi Nostalgia Christmas Nostalgia

(Hungarian) (English Translation)

Nagymamád süteményei a sütőben sütnék

Meleg fahéj illata az egész konyhában

A karácsonyfa magasan áll

Az izzó csillaggal az egész tetejére

A karácsonyi énekeket

Lebegve a városban mosolyogva bárki napját

Forró kókusz égeti a nyelvét és melengeti a szívét

Egy hideg téli napon

A viszkető sálad a nyakadba szúr

De hálás a melegségéért

Minden ajándék

Szeretettel burkolva

És óvatosan a fa alá

Vagy a kandalló feletti harisnyában

Kicsi és nagy

Kerek és négyzet alakú

De ennek ellenére gyönyörű

Nyugtalanul várakozik

Erre a napra jön a nagy srác

Azon a napon, amikor a Mikulás megérkezik a városba

Hófehérke szakállal

És egy almavörös öltönyt

Santa ho ho ho's

Hangos mindenki számára

A város központja ragyog

Örömmel és szeretettel a levegőben

A fa magasan állt

A dalok hangosan énekeltek

Karácsonyi filmeket ismételtettek

A család mind összegyűlt

A kandalló és melegsége körül

Nevetve és mesélve

Emlékek megosztása

És újak létrehozása

Emlékeztetés a szeretteire

És együtt töltött idők

Your great grandma's cookies are a baking in the oven

The smell of warm cinnamon all throughout the kitchen

The Christmas tree standing tall

With the glowing star to top it all

The Christmas carols

Floating through town adding smiles to anyone's day

Hot coco burning your tongue and warming your heart

On a cold winter day

Your itchy scarf prickles at your neck

But your thankful for its warmth

Each gift

Wrapped with love

And carefully placed under the tree

Or in the stocking above the fireplace

Small and Big

Round and square

But beautiful nonetheless

Waiting anxiously

For the day, the big guy comes

The day Santa comes to town

With a Snow-White beard

And an apple red suit

Santa ho ho ho's

Loud for all to hear

Town center all a glow

With joy and love in the air

The tree standing tall

The carols sung loud

Christmas movies played on repeat

The family is all gathered

Around the fireplace and its warmth

Laughing and telling stories

Sharing memories

And creating new ones

Reminiscing about loved ones

And times spent together

# WINTER POEMS by Sarah Jwary

I

Get your coats ready  
Get your marshmallows toasted  
You better keep steady  
You will want to get roasted

Light up your fireplace  
Put your socks on  
Warm is the place  
Though summer is gone

Hot chocolate for everyone  
Marshmallows swimming in a hot tub  
Nuts popping one by one  
With the nut cracker going its job

Snowflakes falling calmly  
The special feeling it brings  
Drinking hot chocolate softly  
So many wonderful things

II

What's a year without snow  
What's a time without cheers  
You won't need to plow  
But you would love to have it all year

The snow that gently falls  
The fire that always burns  
You will need to warm your halls  
This time of year returns

With all the snow  
With all the angels  
It will make you blow  
In different angles

Without winter  
Is like lunch without dessert  
So enjoy the winter  
Like the icing on your cake



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# **WELCOME 2021**

# **New Year's Delight**

**By: Beau Weaver**

**We stare into the darkness of the night,  
Occasional lights blinding the sky.  
Every other day there was a kite,  
But now there were only rockets flying high.**

**I imagine myself with the rockets,  
Reaching my destination.  
Flesh digging into my eye socket,  
And colors burst with the rocket's obliteration**

**Finally, my watch beeps,  
I look down to see that it is 12:00 A.M.  
Soon I must go to sleep,  
But still so excited I am!**

**More flashing lights surround me,  
When I suddenly realized that my parents were no longer beside me watching the sky.  
They were packing the chairs up from what I could see.  
From relief, I let out a sigh.**

Photo Credit: <https://abstract.desktopnexus.com/wallpaper/1649175/>

**ASE wishes you all A Happy New Year!**

**WELCOME**

2021

**ANNOUNCEMENTS!!!**

**- January 4, 2021**

Start of 2nd Semester and 3rd Quarter

- We pay tribute to loved ones who lost their battle against the coronavirus, contact us to share your story.
- Send us photos of your family members who are frontline workers, first responders, and/or essential workers and we will include them in the next issue.

**FOR COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS OR ARTICLE CONTRIBUTION:**

Please email Mrs. Ma. Gloria M King at [mking@abqse.org](mailto:mking@abqse.org)

**SUBJECT LINE:** The Phoenix Times (Comment/Suggestion/Article Contribution)