

4th-5th Grade
1st Prize, ART



Title: O'odham | Jewish
By: Eleanor BrownEagle

Eleanor BrownEagle
4th Grade
Stevens Forest School

ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com



**Riding Through The Times:
How Will Grit And Tradition Shape Your Legacy
by Krystal Whittier**

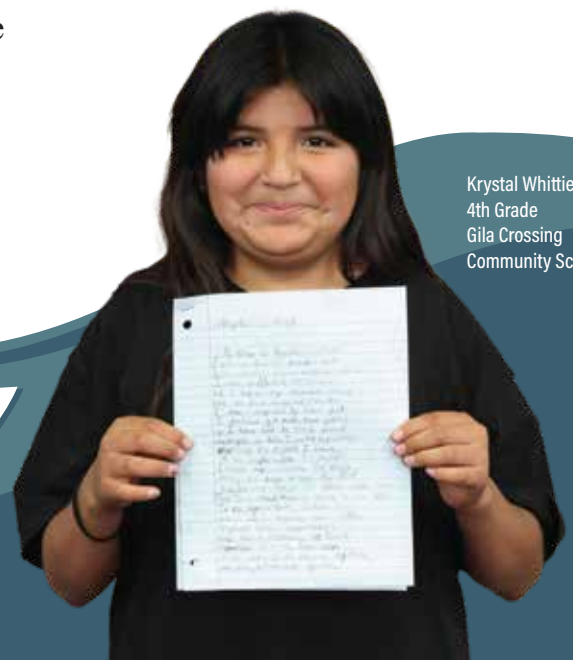
My name is Krystal Whittier. I am a fourth grader at Gila Crossing Community School. I am a Native American and I know my ancestors have had to face many obstacles. I am inspired by their grit. I believe grit means never giving up. I have had to face some challenges in my life. I wake up every morning by myself. I have to be responsible for myself. I honor my ancestors for being strong and being brave. My mom taught me how to cook Indian tacos. This is a traditional Native American dish. In my agriculture class the teacher, he is teaching us how to plant some vegetables and fruit according to Native American Tradition. Three crops that should be planted together are corn, beans and squash.

In the morning at Gila Crossing Community School we go outside for prayer. We are practicing dancing for our fourth grade banquet in may. For my obstacles I had to face my challenges by singing and dancing for my Jungle Book play on the stage in front of the whole school. Then I wasn't scared anymore because they started cheering for us.

Wherever my ancestors are, I know they are watching over me and my family.

Being a Native American is about being strong, having grit and carrying the traditions from my ancestors to the family I will someday have.

Krystal Whittier
4th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 - www.gricted.com

4th-5th Grade
2nd Prize, ART



Title: Native American/Arizona Designs
By: Alexia Carter

Alexia Carter
4th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

**Riding Through The Times:
How Will Grit And Tradition Shape Your Legacy**
by **Ethan Martinez**

Have you ever done things in the past that you can't do now? It was like I was having fun in my past doing things I wish I could do now. I was always happy, smiling and laughing and I can't do that now. You may be wondering why I can't smile now. I have been going through some stuff that is stuck in my head like abuse, not taking care of my sisters, sad stuff.

When I was little kid, about four or seven years old. I was not having a good time with my mom. I wasn't treated the way a kid should be treated when a parent loves a son. It takes time and strength to get through those times. My mom is doing better now, I can see her sometimes and spend time with her. Have you gone through something bad in your life?

As for now, it's starting to get out of my head. I am responsible for my actions at this age. I am a native of my culture and I tell myself "Do the right thing always". When I do that I will never change the person I am. I am responsible for my life now and when I grow up to be an adult. As an adult, I should know my language and learn it as a kid today. For my future, I want to remember my past of being happy, smiling, and laughing. I will sing songs, words, and tell stories about the people and my culture. When I do that I will be the perfect person I want to be for my life. I will always be that person that tells myself "I can do this".

Ethan Martinez, 4th Grade
Sacaton Elementary School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

4th-5th Grade
3rd Prize, ART



Title: Untitled
By: Alianna Garduno



Alianna Garduno
4th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

ART & ESSAY Contest Winners

**Riding Through The Times:
How Will Grit And Tradition Shape Your Legacy
by Grayson Vasquez**

I am Grayson Vasquez a student at Gila Crossing Community School.

I have had some challenges in my life. I know I must have grit and stay strong to face these obstacles and I will do that by not giving up. I am in the GNT program and I have to do projects that require a great deal of research and attention to detail. I want to do good job so that my parents and ancestors would be proud of me. We go out to play and we dance on Wednesday and also we learn our songs. I know how to cook and know how to make Native American food and when I grow up I want to pass down how to make Native American food to my family. In agriculture class I have learned that we plant three crops together, corn beans and squash.

My determination to never give up along with my native American traditions will be the legacy I leave.

Grayson Vasquez
4th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners



**Riding Through The Times:
How Will Grit And Tradition Shape Your Legacy
by Carlisia Hall**

What shapes my legacy? Learning my culture, history, and language. My mom is a culture teacher at Sacaton Middle School. She teaches me about my Pima Tribe. My legacy is to continue to carry on my traditions and learn more about my native American culture every year as I get older. I am proud and honored to be a member of the Gila River Indian Community.

I have been going to Sacaton Elementary School since I was in pre-K. Each year I have learned about my culture, and language in school and from my mom. It is important to learn and know about my culture. Learning from school and my mom helps preserve my Pima Culture Traditions. I am able to share my new knowledge with my friends and the new people that I meet each school year.

I want to become a Pima Culture teacher just like my mom in the future. It is important to me that my language does not disappear. I want to teach my future students all about my traditions and culture. When I grow up I want the family that I have to continue to strengthen my native culture.

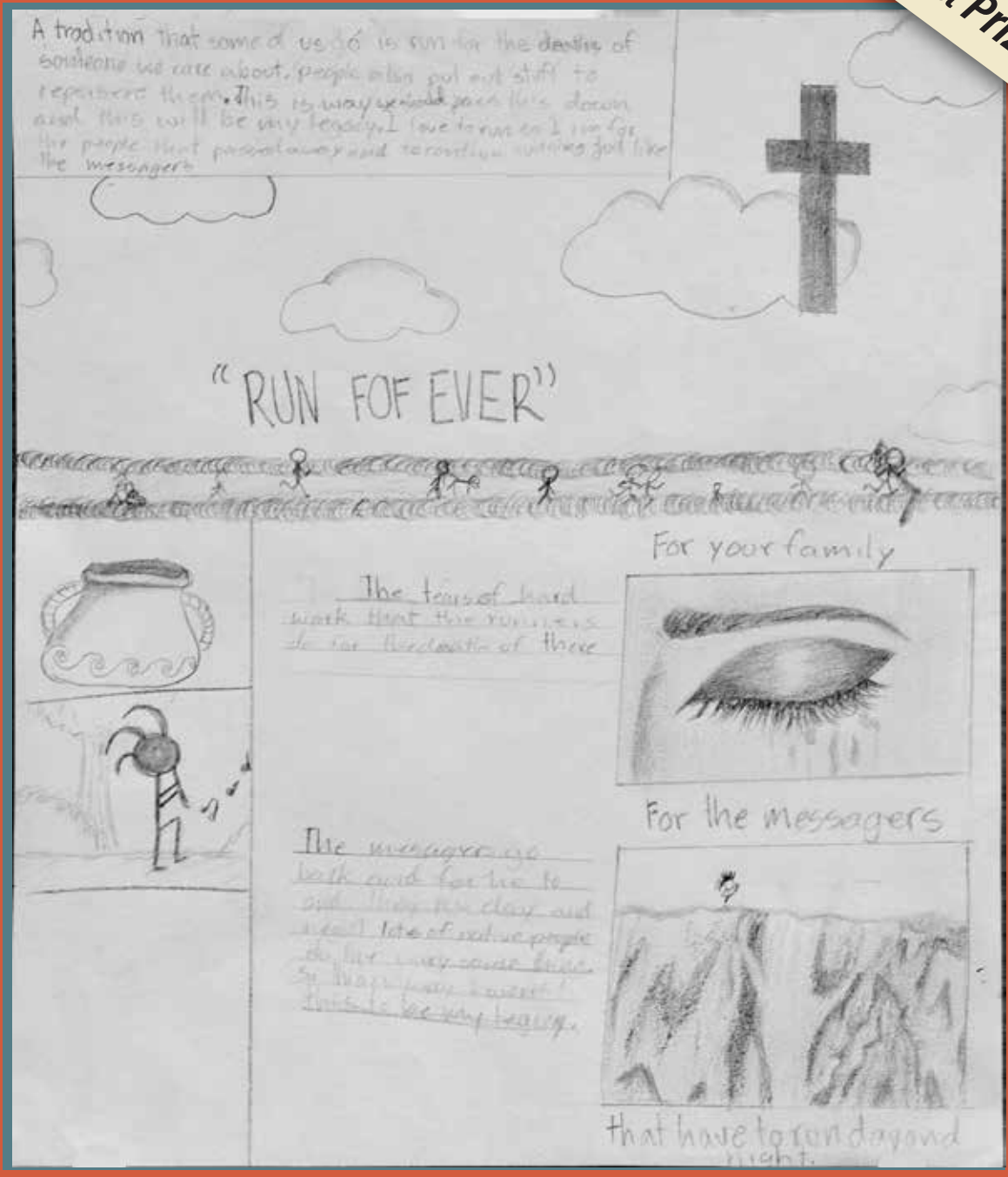
Shaping my legacy is to continue learning my culture, history, and language. Following in my mom's foot steps to be a Pima Culture Teacher is important to me and my community. Being a Pima Culture teacher is special because it is not something that everyone can do and knows. In the future I plan to go on to the university to further my education and my knowledge about my past and to shape my future.

Carlisia Hall
4th Grade
Sacaton Elementary
School



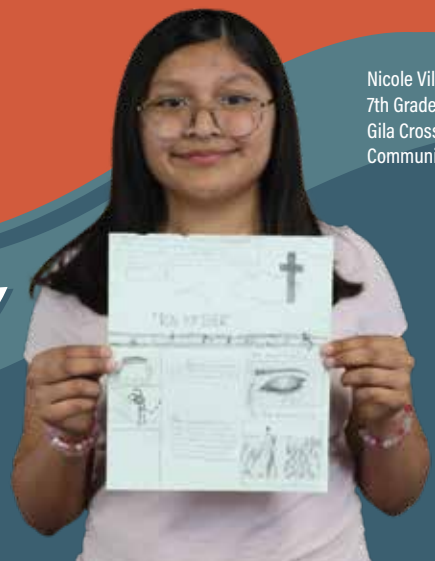
ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

6th-8th Grade
1st Prize, ART



Title: Run For Ever
By: Nicole Villegas

Nicole Villegas
7th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com

My Legacy by Zayeda Valdez

How do you want to be remembered when you are gone? I want to be remembered as a hardworking, confident, and very traditional person. Those three character traits are what I want others to think of me.

Hard work should be key in life. Without this skill you would get nowhere in life. Being a diligent person takes time. You have to learn all the basics before jumping into anything. Hard work makes you very independent and confident person because you are already prepared for the task. That's why I think hard work is an important part of life.

Additionally, confidence is a necessity in life. Being confident sets boundaries in life. It also can help with speaking up for yourself. Confidence can also make you an independent person with faith in yourself. Overall confidence should be very essential part of life.

Lastly, traditions, like songs, dancing and legends are sacred and important to my culture. My favorite dance to do is the Flower, because the flowers in the basket are supposed to be beautiful and I really like the way the dance goes. The story behind it is when a Man is dreaming about a young girl in the desert with a bright light circling around her. Ocotillo flowers circled around her like a dust devil. As the petals fell around her, she swayed side to side and tilted her basket. The man said that was very beautiful.

Most native Americans are known as unsuccessful. I want this stereotype to change so others don't see me as such. I want to be something that can get me up in life and make my people proud of what I accomplished. I want to set a good example for the next generation. Furthermore, to be a good role model for kids who've struggled in life the way I have.

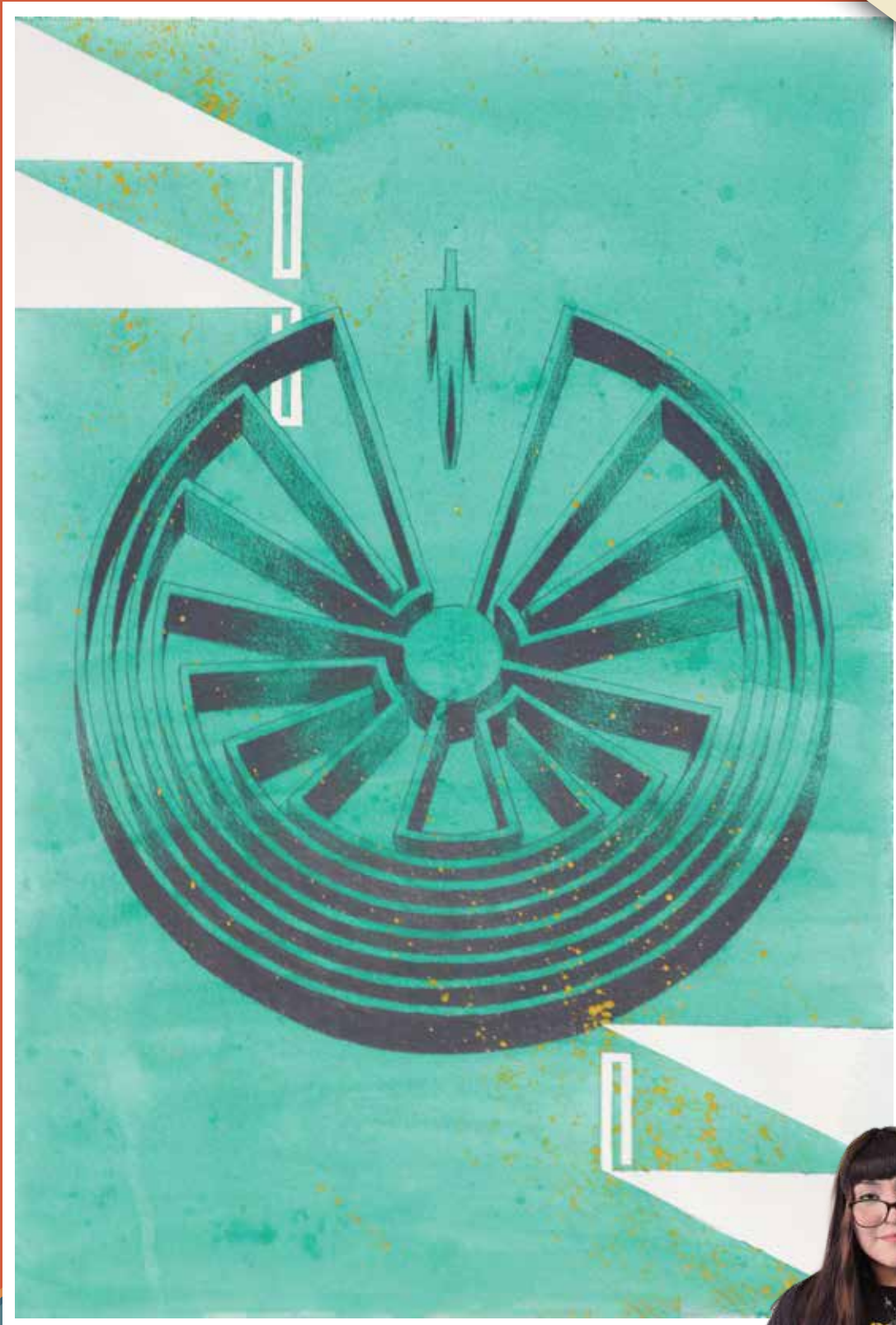
Zayeda Valdez
8th Grade
St. Peter Indian
Mission School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com

6th-8th Grade
2nd Prize, ART



Title:
Man In The Maze
By:
Anessa Lopez



Anessa Lopez
8th grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

ART & ESSAY Contest Winners

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY
TRIBAL EDUCATION

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com

Riding Through The Times by Hailey DeHerrera

How will passion and tradition shape someone's legacy? What would you do to make a good reputation? Leaving a good or bad impression can affect future generations. Drawing, dancing, and hard work will shape my legacy.

Drawing is very important aspect of my life, it's a way I express myself. As a child I learned to draw, it soon became my main interest and I fell in love with it. As I got older and more interested in drawing I improved. I distracted myself by burying my head in drawing because it's my passion. This is one of my skills I want to pass down to my children. I want them to have talent and passion that I do for drawing.

In my culture, dancing is one of the foundations of our heritage. Its a big part of my life, as I belong to a dance group. Dancing calms me and at the same time, it sends a wave of adrenaline and joy. Learning the songs and dances, including the stories to them, is the best part. I love to go out and dance for people. It's always a good time. I would love to get my kids into a group and learn the language. I want to incorporate it in their lives so they pass it on to my grandkids, then on to the future generations.

As well as dancing, hard work is a huge part of my culture. When my ancestors were alive they would run. They'd send runners to deliver messages. They were athletic and smart. They planted crops and made mud houses. They stayed strong always residing in the Gila River. My people and I are all hard working.

Drawing dancing, and hard work are three things that will shape my future. These are three skills i want to pass down for generations as my legacy.

Hailey DeHerrera
8th Grade
St. Peter Indian
Mission School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

6th-8th Grade
3rd Prize, ART



Title: Lost Traditional Drumming
By: Carlos Delgado

Carlos Delgado
7th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

ART & ESSAY

Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com



Riding Through The Times: How Will Grit And Tradition Shape Your Legacy by Addison Rhodes

My name is Addison Rhodes and I am 13 years old. In this essay we will explain Grit and tradition shapes your legacy and how important it is to our community. Grit is about your passion and determination for doing something. Tradition is something that is passed down from generation to generation in your family, and legacy is something you want to be remembered and represented for.

Grit: When I was practicing volleyball, I kept messing up and losing the ball. I messed up a bunch of times but I never gave up to perfection. I practiced and practiced till I got it right. This taught me the importance of hard work and dedication.

A tradition that my family does is we would dance in a circle on holidays or events, this matters to me because this is one of the very important things we have to do to carry this down from generation to generation. This teaches me the importance of how traditions are important to us because it's something we shouldn't forget and leave extinct for future generation.

Legacy is an important thing to learn about such as our water rights. We celebrate by using the water that we won and a day off of school. This teaches us the importance of someone who worked hard for us by giving us the water that we use today.

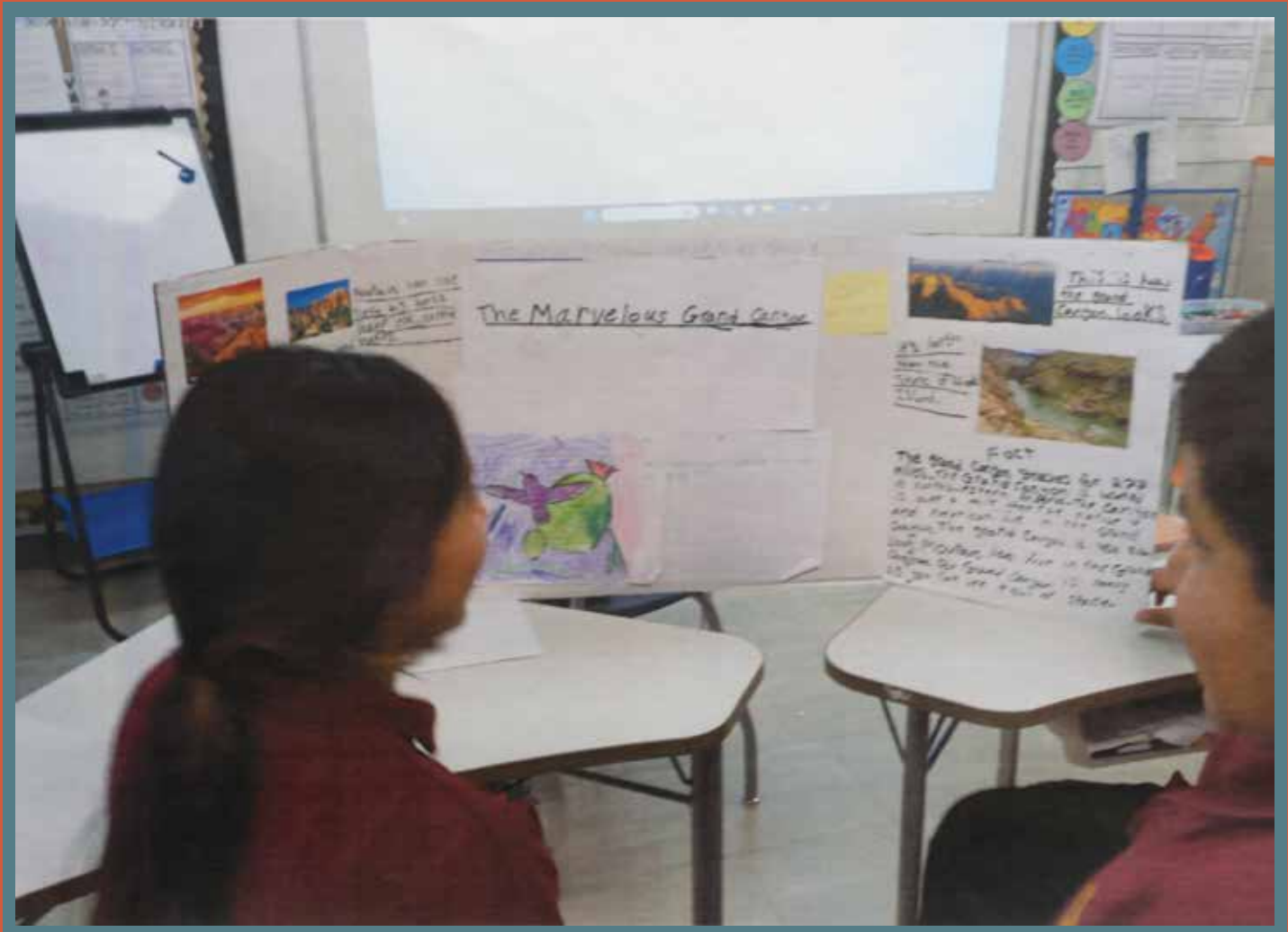
To summarize everything in the essay, grit, tradition, and legacy are what is most important to our community and culture. They show the hard work that they have shown, like people who go and get the produce for us to eat for our community.

Addison Rhodes
7th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

6th-8th Grade
Honorable mention, Art



Title: Grand Canyon Info Board
By: Ivory Soke

Ivory Soke
7th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com



How Will Grit and Tradition Shape Your Legacy? by Sarae Donahue

Grit is about never giving up, even if it's hard, tradition is something that was / will be passed down in my family and culture, and legacy is something I'll want to be remembered for.

Grit: When my baby nephew came to live with us for the first time, I was told to help watch him for my mom, even though I didn't know how to care for a baby. I learned how to make a bottle, hold him, put him to sleep, and how to feed him all by myself. This helped me learn the importance of learning something to help others.

Tradition: Each month, me and my family go visit my little sister's grave to clean it up and put new flowers. This teaches me that even if someone's not with us anymore, we should still respect and love them so they can stay within our heart. It's important to me because it gives me happiness to visit my little sister and clean up her room.

Legacy: I hope that I'll be remembered by my strength, my kindness, and my will to help others. I want the people in my community and family to remember me by how I helped people and had the courage to learn something new.

By continuing to learn more things and visiting my little sister, I believe I'll leave a legacy for my people that makes people want to learn more to help others and to never give up.

ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners



No Photo
Available

Sarae Donahue
7th Grade
Gila Crossing
Community School

9th-12th Grade
1st Prize, ART

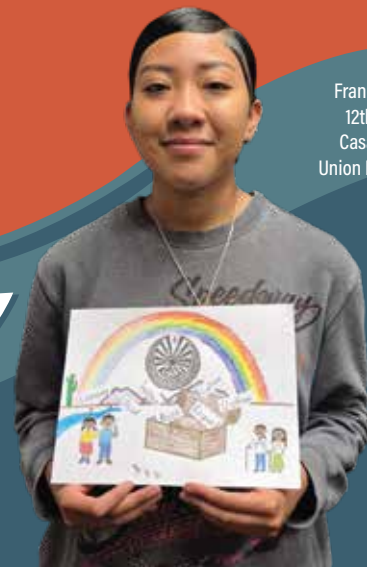


Title: Untitled
By: Francis Histia

Francis Histia
12th Grade
Casa Grande
Union High School

ART & ESSAY Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com



Shaping My Legacy by Sayuri Jackson

Grit and tradition have shaped my legacy. To understand their role in my journey, I reflect on how far I have come academically and personally. My experiences and resilience have molded the person I am becoming.

At six, I began first grade after excelling in kindergarten but faced a huge turnover of teachers and no consistency in teaching. My parents decided to have me repeat first grade. Transitioning to the Chandler School District improved my academics, but socially I struggled after leaving a supportive group of peers for a less accepting environment. The tradition of support and friendship I had experienced in my earlier years was replaced by a more challenging atmosphere. I face bullying due to my interests and appearance, which instilled in me the values of grit and resilience. What felt like a setback ultimately helped build my academic foundation and taught me to confront challenges. This grit has motivated me to persevere through tough times, emphasizing that hard work and determination are more important than immediate success.

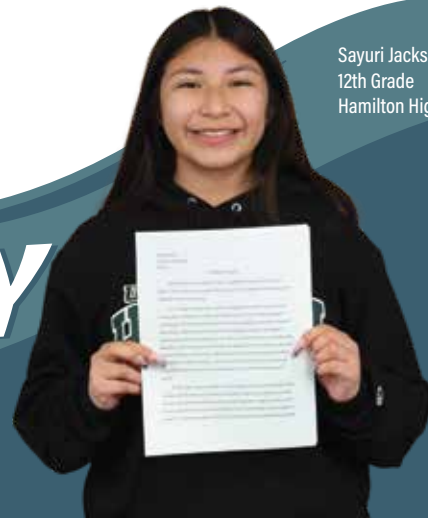
By fifth grade, I faced early puberty, leading to harassment that continued through middle and high school. Returning to school during the pandemic made social interactions even harder, but I saw high school as a fresh start, a tradition of new beginnings. I stepped out of my comfort zone by joining ROTC and its drill team, despite the risk of social backlash. My grit emerged as I refused to let others discourage me. This commitment required discipline and teamwork, pushing me through discomfort and building my confidence while honoring the tradition of resilience that my family had instilled in me.

Seeking a greater challenge, I joined the wrestling team and discovered inner strength. The tradition of perseverance and hard work in this sport taught me invaluable lessons. However, I soon realized that my biggest obstacles were harsh critics among my teammates. Wrestling taught me the true meaning of grit and enduring criticism and thriving despite it. Though I left the sport, the lessons on overcoming hard times and making tough choices strongly shaped who I am today.

After this challenging chapter, I decided that I wanted to graduate with my original class, Class of 2025. Transferring to a credit recovery school in my junior year reflected my commitment to reclaim my education, an important tradition in my family. Each challenge fueled my determination to complete assignments and earn credits on time. Grit became my ally, helping me through late nights and tough subjects. Graduating isn't just about academics; it's a testament to my resilience within the traditions I uphold, and a chance to shape my legacy. Every obstacle became a stepping stone for strengthening my belief in determination and inspiring others to turn hardship into opportunities.

I have shown firm grit and determination throughout my childhood and high school journey. These challenges have shaped my values and work ethic. Discipline, courage, and balance are now central to my identity. My legacy is built on the tradition of resilience, reminding me that every obstacle is an opportunity for growth. Each challenge I face contributes to the foundation of my future, where hard work and determination define who I am and the legacy I am to leave.

Sayuri Jackson
12th Grade
Hamilton High School



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com

Leadership and Legacy by Shayla Davis

As young person, we aren't heard from a lot. We are silenced because we don't have the same knowledge, wisdom, or maturity as the adults at the table. Instead, our seat is taken by someone older. I want to be able to give youth a seat at that table. This is where modernization and traditions meet. My goal is to establish my legacy as a youth, as a leader and to extend it to the future.

When I was younger I did not have much knowledge about my traditions and culture. I only started learning when I was thirteen and joined the Akimel O'otham/Pee-Posh Youth Council. I learned about myself and the person I wanted to become. As a youth council member, I was noticed as a young leader of the community. This is where my passion for youth leadership came from and is something I want to promote throughout the Gila River Indian Community.

Not many youth like stepping out of their comfort zones and taking healthy risks. My personality consists of quietness, shyness, and social skills that aren't very developed. I still want to take on the task of speaking out for youth and helping my community. I want to show youth that you don't have to have confidence or an extroverted personality to be a leader. Leadership comes in all forms and I want to be an example of that. I want to be a positive role model in the community for our youth so they can take full advantage of all of the opportunities we are given and excel in their future.

I am goal-oriented and future-driven. My grit pushes me to do well in school, in my extracurriculars, and in my community. I will graduate high school, I will go to a university, I will become a pediatrician, and I will come back and serve my community as they are doing for me. Practicing and sharing my knowledge of our traditions will help to connect with adults and elders of the community. Not only can youth bring perspective, gaining a perspective is important to us as well. Learning to listening to elders is beneficial to us to keep of traditions alive and to continue them for generations. It is vital for youth to know because we are the future, so that we can carry that with us and keep our himdag strong.

This is how I will be able to establish my legacy, by using my resources, connecting with others, and uplifting and encouraging youth. I want to build on my name and carry a positive reputation everywhere I go. I want to be an inspiration to our youth who might be too scared to speak or not believe in themselves. I had so much support throughout the community and I want to be able to give that back to others who need the stepping stool. This is my legacy, I have only just started, just you wait. The future is coming.

Shayla Davis
11th Grade
Imagine Prep
Coolidge



ART & ESSAY
Contest Winners

520-562-3662 • www.gricted.com