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MESSAGE FROM MAYOR KELLER AND DIRECTOR SANCHEZ

Dear Albuquerque Residents,

For 39 years, the City of Albuquerque has joined Albuquerque Public Schools and the A Senior I Know committee in asking school-aged children in grades 1-5 to spend time learning about an important senior in their lives and then telling their story.

The A Senior I Know Essay Contest is an intergenerational activity that helps youth recognize the value of the older adults in their lives and showcase the importance of these relationships. During the pandemic, it became a great way to keep up a connection across generations, while helping develop writing skills.

We applaud the young writers who submitted more than 900 essays, during a pandemic no less! The collection showcased here are the best of the best in each grade category as selected by our esteemed judges. The stories are at turns funny, moving, poignant, and profound. They stand as testaments to important relationships that have impacted each student in a unique way.

Congratulations to these winners and thank you to the seniors in our community who take the time to pass down wisdom and support our City’s youth.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY M. KELLER, MAYOR, The City of Albuquerque

ANA M. SANCHEZ, DIRECTOR, The City Of Albuquerque Department Of Senior Affairs
ESSAY CONTEST
JUDGES

Ginger Grossetete
In 1981, I attended a workshop at the National Council on Aging annual conference that included information about a project whereby elementary students wrote compositions about seniors they knew.

I thought the idea had great potential and decided we could turn it into a contest in our local elementary schools. “A Senior I Know” was born.

The contest was launched in 1982 and was very well received. Thousands of students have participated in the contest over the years and we have received numerous comments from teachers thanking us for providing the opportunity for their students to participate in this wonderful community project.

The success of this project has been personally gratifying to me and I look forward each year to reading the amazing stories written by the winners.

Let’s hope the contest continues for another 36 years.

Ginger Grossetete, Founder of “A Senior I Know” Essay Contest.

“I can tell how much they love this person and that they are written from the heart.”
—Barbara Crawford, 2021 “A Senior I Know” Judge

Judy Koskovitch
I taught 1st Graders in APS for 33 years. Each year was delightful! Reading and creative writing were my favorite “delights!”

Watching those children realize they could read and write... PRICELESS!

Being able to continue seeing this “magical happening,” by judging these “Senior Essays” for over 16 years, is a great joy for me!

Suzanne Slankard
My name is Suzanne Slankard. I have lived in Albuquerque, NM for over 40 years.

I worked as a teacher, administrator, educational consultant, and clinical supervisor at UNM in special education for a total of 39 years.

I worked at the elementary and middle school grade levels teaching both regular and special education.

I was certified as a reading specialist in New Mexico.

I taught Title 1 reading as well as special education
students who were gifted and who had learning disabilities. My friend, Ginger Grossetete, invited me to be a judge.

My favorite memory is taking group of students from Cochiti Elementary School to compete in Future Problem Solving at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.

Marge Peters
I moved from Florida to Albuquerque 33 years ago and was employed by APS for 22 years. I taught kindergarten, third, and fourth grades, which entailed the full grade level curriculum.

I met Gay Blech when she taught at Oñate and was involved in this contest.

She knew I would be interested in helping with it if ever the need arose.

My most memorable year teaching was the year I taught a third grade in which I had two visually impaired students and a German only speaker.

Elizabeth Wertheim
I first came to New Mexico in 1954 to attend UNM and, except for a few years that my husband's job took us elsewhere, have lived in my joyfully adopted state since.

Though not a teacher, as many of the other judges have been, I was an English literature major and am an avid reader.

Because of this, I have an interest in how creative writing skills are being nurtured in our school children.

It was a pleasure to be a judge for this fine project.
Sue Fickle
I have been a judge for the “A Senior I Know” Essay Contest for 20 years.

I do enjoy getting the perspective of the students on what they think comprises “Senior Citizen” as I am in that category.

The stories are interesting, enlightening and in many cases amusing. I am a retired teacher, counselor and administrator from APS, and will look forward to judging in the future.

Kathleen Church
Volunteering as a docent after my retirement from high school administration, I discovered what joy elementary school children are.

Now, as a senior myself, it is a pleasure to share for a moment the descriptions written by the children about their special grandparent or other admired older person.

I came to Albuquerque as a college student, and we have raised our children and retired here.

This project is both fun and rewarding to be involved in now.

Barbara Polka-Chenoweth
I am a rookie at judging this composition contest. Sue Fickel, a dear friend from church, asked me to partner with her this year.

Prior to moving to Albuquerque, I was a substitute teacher and taught 5th and 6th grade in Michigan, where I was raised. I also taught 2nd grade in Houston. In 1983, I was hired as a Cognitive Language Development teacher working with kindergarteners and 1st graders in Albuquerque. Later, this program became Early Childhood Literacy.

Eventually, I worked with 1st graders as a Reading Recovery teacher.

Before retiring after teaching for 36 ½ years, I worked with K-5 students in my role as a reading interventionist.

Carl Sagan said, “One of the greatest gifts adults can give—to their offspring and to their society—is to read to children.”

It touches my heart to see my 15-month-old grandson looking at his board books concentrating on the pictures as he turns each page. He loves his books and having them read to him.

Linda Cummings-Olmoski
I taught elementary school for 31 years. I began judging the “A Senior I Know” essay about eight years ago.

Some writings are funny, some sad, but all are from the heart. I feel privileged to be part of this worthwhile project.

“Some writings are funny, some sad, but all are from the heart.”

—Linda Cummings-Olmoski, 2021 “A Senior I Know” Judge
Carole Christensen  
I grew up in New Mexico and graduated from UNM in 1960 with a BS in Elementary Education. So I have lived in Albuquerque for 60 years. I taught 6th grade at Aztec Elementary School for 3 years.

At that time 6th graders were still a part of the elementary school system. As a result, I taught all the subjects. I volunteered at my children’s schools as a classroom helper and a library assistant.

I have always enjoyed working with children. Watching them grow and develop is very rewarding.

Marilyn Ortman  
I taught elementary school in APS for 22 years.

About 10 years into my teaching, one of my students won the contest and I remember I was so proud of her. Unfortunately, Marilyn has retired from the project effective this year, but the Department of Senior Affairs and Ginger Grossetete would like to thank Marilyn for her dedication since 2002 as a judge for this contest.

“When I retired, I jumped at the chance to be a judge for the contest and I have enjoyed doing the judging ever since.”  
—Marilyn Ortman

IN MEMORIAM

Merilyn Humphries-Fish  
February 9, 1935—January 31, 2021

Merilyn served as A Senior I Know judge for 23 years. Merilyn earned a bachelors degree in art education from Wright State University in Dayton OH and later attended The University of New Mexico where she earned her masters degree in special education.

A Senior I Know founder and friend of Merilyn, Ginger Grossetete stated “She was always enthusiastic and looked forward to participating these many years”.

Thank you Merilyn for your many years of dedication to this wonderful program.

“I’ve been pleased to serve as a judge in the Senior Essay Contest, evaluating the essays about seniors written by young students. Their loving and compelling words were a joy for me to read.”  
—Merilyn Fish
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: my mema

Born in Shawnee, Oklahoma at age 3, she moved to Bryan, Texas. She played out side and liked fish. She lived a simple life of a small town mema. was a tomboy and could play round robin baseball better than any of the boys.

She married at age 18 and is still married to my Bubba. They moved to New Mexico in 1976. She's bedazzled with my children and enjoys hiking with me and my sisters. Mema loves most people unconditionally. She helps in the community several days a week.

I love my Mema.

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Raquel Reedy, Superintendent

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Camden Weatherspoon
Grade: 1st Age: 6 M/ or F:
Teacher: Mrs. Christine Parsons
School: Montessori One Academy

Title: My Grandma

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Raquel Reedy, Superintendent

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: The senior I know is my grandma, Victoria. One of the things I like about my grandma is she can play the recorder.
Title: ____________________________________________________________

and helps me with legos and sometimes with work. She is retired, she is sixty four. I pack clothes and my nightlight and computer.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: _______________________

and headphones

and watch movies

and eat popcorn

when I sleep at her house. She helps me

with math. When we

watch movies, she
Title: Let me have candy.

We stay up to 10:00 or 11:00. I wake up at 5:00 in the morning and get five hours of sleep. Then she takes me.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: to get pancakes.

The end.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: My best friend Nani I love her so much!
I'm writing about my Nani. She is 80 years old but she is still full of life. She loves to smile, laugh, and watch cartoons with me. During the holidays we like to bake cookies. I like spending Christmas with her. She likes looking at the Christmas tree like I do. We like opening our gifts.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: _My grandma____________________

I call my grandma Nani. She cooks all the time for me and my family. My favorite meals that my grandma cooks are steak veggies and mashed potato. My grandma is 62 years old. My grandma used to be a reservation agent with an airline. She is from Argentina. She teaches me how to speak Spanish. I know how to say hi bye water and a lot more. My grandma’s name is lily. She has a dog named Chikie. Chickie is all so from Argentina. Chickie is so cute. My grandma and grandpa are moving to Florida. So I am going to be super sad. But they are going to visit a lot. I am so happy that they are going to visit. I love going to their condo, but I can not wait to swim in the sea. my grandma’s family lives in new jersey. my grandma was 12 years old moved to the U.S.A. She is so nice. She helps clean the hose a lot. at my grandma’s place in Florida me and my brother are going to have bunkbeds. I am excited to sleep in a bunkbed.

I love my grandma my grandma loves me.
Title: The Best Grandma

My grandma is the best grandma in the world. She is my dad's mom.

She special that my grandma lives near our house and she uses to go to her house a lot. It's neat that she never moved in more than fifty years and that my dad is still at same house. At Grandma's house, I like to see her special things. I like to play with her old toys that my dad played with when my sister was born. Grandma took me to sleep over at her house.

My grandma works really hard and I like to help her work cutting down trees and feeding her sheep. My sister do things with Grandma. I sometimes help her with cares because she works.
Title: (The Nicest Grandma, continued)

very hard to choose one to give to the recycling place.

Grandma never gives our birthdays and she always gives us a present. She takes us to school.

That’s good because then we are on time.

My grandma is kind.

I wish everybody could have nice grandma like mine.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Karmen Yepa
Grade: 1  Age: M or F
Teacher: Ms.
School: E.G. Ross

Title: Senior I know

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Scott Elcer, Superintendent

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Karmen Vepa
Grade: 4
Age: 10
M or F: M
Teacher: Ms. Brewer
School: E.G. Ross

Title: Senior I Know
Hi, my name is Karmen. My grandma takes me to get ice cream and to go to parties. We like to play board games and color together. My favorite thing about my grandma is her fun jokes. I love my grandma very much.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Julianna B.
Grade 2nd Age 7 M or F
Teacher: Miss Swoboda
School: Shepherd

Title: My Grandma’s Life.
I have a grandmother. She is nice and call her Grandma. She
short, she taught me how to bake sugar cookies.
She makes them from scratch, whenever she bakes a
cake, she lets me decorate it. When I go over
to her house we watch movies together. Our
Favorite Movies to Watch is Peter Pan and
Lassie. She has a collection of her Favorite
Places in a form to go on the “To
is Sante Fe, she has a special Rock in the river
where she likes to swim. She has two dogs
named Coco and Sonja. Coco is a Papillon
and Sonja is a Pomeranian. Gum and takes her girls with
her every where. She has two sisters named
Linda and Esther. My Grandma has three kids
named Richard, Vanessa and Myrtie. Whenever I
Want to go over I always welcome. She
always cooks dinner for us. She always invites us
ever. She likes for me to help her Planting in
her garden during the Spring time and help water
her trees to keep her garden pretty.
Title: Me and my gramma.

My gramma lives on an island in Maine.
My gramma was born in Maine, where she also went to school. On summer vacation she went to Cliff Island. When she had my mom and my one aunt, she had to get a job. Now she works on a lobster boat. She hauled two pound lobster traps! The most interesting place she ever went to was an island 500 miles south of the north pole. Now we go to the beach on Cliff Island together with my mom, but not this year.

Because of Covid, my gramma scattered in the spring, fall and winter, but she gets a living by mowing lawns in the summer. In winter, spring and fall, she washes TV and eats not very tasty food.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: Papa and I
My papa is really fun and helpful. I like to play with him. I like to help him. He brings us to the playground. Also, he brings us to the ice cream parlor. He likes to swim. He likes to wash people's cars. He likes to read. He is my favorite grandparent.
I love him!
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: Mimi
My Mimi is awesome. She is 61 years old and she went to surgery on her spine from a fall. Now she's getting better. Her name is Elizabeth. She is married to my papa and his name is Mike. My Mimi makes the best spaghetti and meatballs in the world. She is always cleaning the house. Whenever my mom and I go over, if smells great. I can't wait till she is fully healed so she can play soccer with me again. She is the best Mimi ever. I love her dearly and I don't know what I would do without her. I hope one day I grow up to be just as Godly as her.
The senior I know is Grandma Dorothy. My relationship with her is great because she is wise and kind and is an incredible person. She's also a huge GB Packers fan! A challenge grandma Dorothy has overcome is the Great Depression, plus her little sister died in a car crash. She is inspirational because she is turning one hundred! My great grandma Dorothy has overcome a lot in her long life. My favorite memory is when we celebrated our birthdays together on the same night. When we did that, she was turning ninety-eight! That is my favorite memory with her. She lives in Green Bay in an apartment in her back yard. She has sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title:
Fish. That is where she lives.
Grandma Dorothy is the most amazing senior I know!
Title: The Magic Pepper

Every time I sleep at 9:15, I dream that there is a number turning into a chili pepper. That's because I am sleeping at my grandmother's house. She is from Korea, which is all the way across the world. Hami means grandma in Korean. Hami has a green thumb. She can grow chili peppers so well and have the magic.

Hami likes K-pop even though she is a senior citizen. K-pop started in Korea and is big in Japan on YouTube. When I am at 9:15 on Wednesdays, we do K-pop back in Korea! Hami says it's a new kind of music. Every day we draw something different in a water color. Hami says, "It's held at the peppers that my Hami grows but I like Hami!"
Name: Tycho Baca  
Grade: 2  Age 7  M/F  
Teacher: Helen Baca  
School: Homeschool

2021  
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: The Magic Pepper

Every time I sleep at 9166 I dream that the number 1 turns into a chile pepper. That's because I am sleeping at my Hami's house. She is from Korea which is all the way across the world. Hami means Grandma in Korean. Hami has a green thumb and she can grow chile peppers so well it must be magic.

Hami likes K-pop even though she is a senior citizen. K-pop started in Korea and I play it for her on Youtube. When I am at 9166 on Wednesday we do art. Back in Korea Hami was in art school. Every day we draw something different using watercolors.

My Hami moved to New Mexico to help take care of me. I am starting to learn Korean thanks to her. I don't like the peppers that my Hami grows but I love my Hami.
Title: The Most Beautiful Grandmother in the World

The senior I know is Bertha Hickman and she is the most beautiful Great Grandmother in the world. You've got to meet her because she is awesome! I admire her because she is very nice and her food is good. The hard thing she had to overcome was the loss of her son. The things she likes to do for fun is going fishing, games, and collecting figurines and rocks.

I wish you could meet her because she is awesome. She is awesome because every time we go to her house, she lets me play on her computer and cooks me food. She lets me watch on her tv and lets me play outside. She also lets me lay in her bed when I'm tired of playing outside.

I love going to her house because she is nice and her food is good. I like her macaroni and cheese and her biscuits. I also admire her because she allows me to come over to her house. The last time we went to her house we had a party. I'm ready to go back to her house.

The sad thing is she had to go through losing her son. I hope she's feeling better about the loss. I hope that she does not have to go through it again. I wish I could meet him.

She likes to play games on her computer and go fishing when the weather is warm. In her storage shed there are a lot of fishing rods. She also
likes to collect rocks. When she goes fishing, she collects seashells. She has a lot of figurines in her house that she collected.

The first thing that I love about my favorite senior citizen is the figurines in her house. The second thing that I love about my favorite senior citizen is how she always cooks for me when I ask. The third thing that I love about my favorite senior citizen is that she lets me lay in her bed.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: April Janes
Grade 3rd Age 9 M or F
Teacher: Ms. Swoboda
School: Shepherd Lutheran

Title: My Grandpa's Life

My grandma was born in Spokane, Washington. I was born to mountains, rivers, lakes, and big trees. When she was little, she played king of the mountain. Old Witch Hazel, and statue. They played those games on the church steps. She had brothers and sisters. One time when she was 4 and her sister was 5. They went outside to play and decided to make mud pies. They got eggs from the chicken coop and mixed them into the mud. They got in a lot of trouble with their mom and dad because they used real eggs. When Grandma was thirteen, they moved to a farm. It was very cold and she girls lived in a bus because there was only a root cellar, no walls. The first day they built a big room out of firewood for the walls and the floor. They had a pot belly stove that they built to keep the room warm. Their bathroom was an outhouse outside. For the first two weeks they went into the mountains in the middle of winter and cut down trees. They went with her dad to the mountains to get logs. A truck drove the log home. Great grandma taught them how to use an axe to cut firewood. They were only 12 and 14 years old. The fire kept them kind of warm but there was still a half inch of ice on the inside windows. In the spring time they got cows. Pigs, chickens, goats, and horses. Grandma learned how to milk cows and feed baby calves. The kids and Grandpa Pete built the house, she barn and the airplane hangar.

Grandpa grew up and had kids. Their names were: Hannah, Sarah, Mary, Adi, Lyla, Peter and Paul. She got married to Grandpa Bye.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Luke Boyd
Grade: 3rd
Age: 9
Gender: F
Teacher: Jena Sullins
School: Georgia O'Keeffe

Title: My Neighbor

The senior I am writing about is my neighbor John Kailey. I know John by walking his dog. John is tall, has blue eyes, white hair and a nice smile. He is funny and often has a joke or a riddle for me. He used to ride his bike a lot and would always ask my dad to fix it. When I was seven, John challenged me to swim across our neighborhood pool underwater. It took me all summer, but when I did he gave me a big mint chocolate ice cream. When John hurt his back, I told him I could walk his little dog, Jo Jo, and take out his trash. It is important to help neighbors. John has a hard time walking now and I know that it hard. I like John because he always says kind words to me and my brother and really everyone else. John is a good neighbor.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: Uncle Sean's Story

I am choosing to write about my uncle and his name is Shaun. I chose to write about him because he is a very important person in my life. He is very sweet, kind and loving. He is also giving. He is paralyzed from chin to toe. He is in a wheelchair and he cannot move. But he does not let that ruin his life which makes me so happy. He says that you can't go back in life so he learned a lesson. I'm so happy because he has a positive attitude and is positive and kind to others.

My uncle always wants to play a chess game with my brother. They always play board games and I move the pieces for him. My uncle is always trying to help me solve my problems.

One thing that inspires me is my uncle says that you need to be aware in life, that is the one thing that caused his accident. It inspires me that he does not get angry and take it out on others. He says you could be walking and fall into a big hole so you need to be aware.

My uncle needs help getting up in the morning and he has a caregiver that helps him take showers. My uncle is so special, I love him so much. He is the best uncle in the whole universe.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: The Best Qua’ah

I admire my Qua’ah so much because he loves me, I love him, and he fought for our country. Tommy Canyon is my Qua’ah. Qua’ah is Hopi for Grandpa. My Qua’ah is a fun, creative, and exciting guy. Some hard things he had to overcome was that he had to learn English in school and when he was in the military he had to be gone a lot. He likes to be outside and do a lot of hunting.

Tommy Canyon is my Qua’ah and he is Hopi. The word Qua’ah is how to say Grandpa in Hopi. My Qua’ah is my mom’s father. He was born in Arizona. My Qua’ah lives on the Hopi Reservation. Tommy Canyon speaks both Hopi and English. My Qua’ah goes to a lot of Hopi ceremonies. Another thing that I think is cool is that I can experience a lot of my Hopi side all because of my mom and my Qua’ah.

My Qua’ah is cool and he has an exciting imagination. Before my Qua’ah goes hunting he needs to know how he is going to find the elk, deer, or whatever he is hunting. Then he needs to imagine how he is going to cook the meat. Some of the people that my Qua’ah met at work became his hunting friends. I think that it is cool that my Qua’ah get to meet a lot of people at the store that he works at.

My Qua’ah had to overcome a lot of hard things in his life. My Qua’ah had to learn English in school because he only spoke Hopi. When he was in the military he had to be gone a long time for his job. My Qua’ah was not able to be there when my mom was born because he was working in the military. Recently my Qua’ah had to stay away from my So’oh, my Grandma, because she had COVID-19.

In his free time my Qua’ah likes to be outside. My Qua’ah likes to go hunting during hunting season. My Qua’ah like to just sit outside and be in nature. His favorite thing to do is watch the hummingbirds. Tommy likes to take care of his garden and his field. He grows corn, squash, watermelon, beans and tomatoes.

What I love about my Qua’ah is that he loves me. When I was a little boy my Qua’ah would sing Hopi songs to me so I would fall asleep. Most of all my Qua’ah always makes time for me. That is why I
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Liam P. Ringenoldus
Grade: 3rd  Age: 9  M X or F_
Teacher: Mrs. Rodgers
School: Sandia Base Elementary

Title: The Best Qua’ah
chose my Qua’ah for my “Senior I Know”.

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Scott Elder, Superintendent
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: My grandma

My grandma's name is Merlin. She is 69 years old. My grandma lives in India. I call my grandma Nani. Before I was born my Nani came from India to Albuquerque to take care of my mom. The flight was 17 hours long!

When I was born my Nani came to the hospital and gave me a soft blue dog named Spunky. He is my favorite soft toy and I sleep with him every night. Every day in the evening she would give me a foot massage. They made my arms and legs strong. In the morning she would always give me Cheesy Egg. When I started to crawl she would give me Patched Egg. Then one day something funny happened. When my grandma stepped outside the backyard door to give my pet dog water, I locked the door and she was stuck! She had to climb through an open window to get back in the house. It was hilarious.

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Scott Elder, Superintendent

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools
Title: ___________

A few weeks later we went to Hawaii. My grandma bought me float with crabs on it. It was my favorite float. We rented a resort for one week. When I was 4 we went to the San Diego Zoo. We saw a lot of animals. When I was 7 my grandma was going to come to visit us but because of covid she couldn't. She still calls me every day. Just recently she got a new puppy. His name is Buddy. He is a Labrador. I love my grandma and will never forget about her. I miss my grandma a lot. She makes the best banana pancakes.
Kaylee Walker
Ms. Byers
Sandia Base Elementary
5th grade
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: Grandma Gina, My Special Senior

A senior I know is my grandma, Regina Jaramillo, and her nickname is Gina. Grandma Gina is seventy-three years old and lives in Isleta Pueblo. She has two children, John and Tricia, and seven grandchildren, Fox, Leighann, Mikayla, Juanita, Taylor, Lane and myself. My grandma’s favorite foods are posole and oven bread, but she also enjoys Almond Joy and Juicy Fruit as her sweet treats. In my grandma’s free time, she likes to relax and play Word Jam on her phone.

Grandma Gina is retired from Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), Bureau of Indian Affairs. There, she worked as a Library Technician for almost 20 years and often worked late hours to keep the library open for students that lived on campus. My grandma also worked at Albuquerque Area Office and Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos, Inc., as a coder in finance, where she entered invoices into a computer. When asked who my grandma’s favorite grandchild is, she said Tahi! Grandma and I like to watch movies, eat, and relax.

Grandma Gina’s most memorable moment in history was when John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. My grandma was in high school at the time and heard the sad news when she was in P.E. class. Grandma’s personal memorable event happened on July 16, 1970, when she married my Grandpa Johnny, who was from Jemez Pueblo. Grandma Gina’s proudest moment was October 1, 2010, when I was born as a special birthday gift to my mom! In December 2010, my grandma retired from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and that was her greatest accomplishment.

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
Scott Elder, Superintendent

Sponsored by: City of Albuquerque, Department of Senior Affairs and Albuquerque Public Schools
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: My Grandma

My Grandma is so nice. We have daily video calls. We talk about books together. I also ask her how her day was. Whenever she visits, she brings us cookies she made. She is very kind and generous. She gives us really cool gifts. Normally she comes for the holidays, but in this crazy time she calls us virtually. That is why I love my Grandma!
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Isabelle Sebastian
Grade: 4  Age: 10  M. or F.:
Teacher: Gemma Petersen
School: La Conquistadora Academy

Title: My Grandma

My story is about my grandma, Linda Harwood. My grandma is 78. She always makes my family delicious food when we come over. Her potato soup is very good! The special things that we do together are bake cookies and play a board game. She taught me to make gingerbread. Her family once owned a farm. I wonder what it must have been like having a farm.

My grandma married James Harwood. She lives very close to me, still only three minutes away. Her dog, Boe, is very wild. My grandma is from Iowa. She makes the best strawberry cake! Her backyard has lots of birds. Her husband, also my grandfather, grows tomatoes. I think I have one of the best grandmas ever!
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

A Senior I Know
By Zinnia Dumm

Do you have a great aunt who lives halfway across the country from you? Well, I do. She is my aunt Adair. I love her so much. I picked Aunt Adair for my Senior Citizen I Know essay because she's artistic, kind, and really fun to be around.

First, my Aunt Adair is artistic. She wears clothes that look like a butterfly, colorful and flowing. Her house is filled with art such as pottery, landscapes, and watercolors. But her favorite is abstract paintings because she likes the colors. This is why I think she is creative.

Second, my aunt is kind. She makes me happy when I am sad. She listens to me. She invites us over to her house and laughs with us. One time, she invited me and my sister Posey to stay overnight with her. There, we played board games with her and drank tea out of a cow teapot. I felt happy when she was kind to me.

Lastly, she is fun to be with. She tells great stories. She always tells lots of jokes such as, "WHY DIDN'T THE SKELETON CROSS THE ROAD? BECAUSE THEY HAD NO GUTS". Also, she takes us to visit new places and buys us cool t-shirts. One of my favorites places was when we went to Sedona where we explored the shops in town.

As you can see, my Aunt Adair is amazing! I wish I could see her more. She's very creative, always kind, and one of the most fun people I know.
Title: My Grandpa

My Grandpa is a great person. He used to be an artist, football player and he used to be in the Air Force. I love going to visit him and my grandma in Arizona but this year we couldn't because of Covid-19. My grandpa still did fun stuff with me though. He sent me some art supplies and started giving me lessons through FaceTime. My grandpa is really funny but he can also be kind of "lazy" says my mom and grandma. He loves football so much that he wants, "to increase his internet speed because of the TV" we asked him why because he already has a higher speed than us and we have four computers running all one day, he said It's because he likes to keep all three TV's on so he doesn't miss anything in his football games. Now we joke about it. But luckily my grandma said she was able to talk him out of it.

One of my favorite things about my grandpa is his art. He can do some amazing things with a paint brush and paint or a pencil and paper. He likes water colors but he really enjoys sculptures. He gave me lessons on water colors and sent me some. He also got me a watercolor book that teaches me different brush techniques. Now if I have a question about any type of art he can help me. He sent me watercolor brushes, paper and a pallet box. Then he showed me how to use each one and how to blend different colors.

I want to be like my grandpa when I grow up. I want to be able to do amazing art and help our country to be a better place like he did.
Title: My Grandparents

One thing I learned from my Grandparents is they are really nice. They're also so positive they have trust in God. They know and they go to church (which is good by the way). They are good friends of mine. My grandmother doesn't have work so she takes care of her house and my grandpa works somewhere. I think he has a workshop. They know a lot about God so they teach me about him and his story. They go to church to learn about God and if you want to learn the truth I think I'm getting tied up in it. One thing that was interesting was heaven and hell. Heaven is a happy place where God and angels live but you can only go there if you're good and hell is a trial place where the devil rules and bad people go there. What I think my grandparent would try to tell me is to be good so bad things will happen.
illian Brown

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andia Base Elementary
The senior I know is my grandpa, Truman Badonie. He was born in Tohatchi, NM. His birthday is on February, 11, 1959. He will be turning 62 next month. He has two siblings, a brother and sister. His brother has passed away. My grandpa was raised by his grandmother, Evelyn Badonie, when he was two years old. His mother passed on from an illness. He never knew his father. His mother, Loretta Badonie, was a caretaker. His grandmother was a homemaker. A homemaker is who takes care of the home and takes care of the livestock.

My grandpa Truman completed high school but never went to college. He helped take care of the livestock with his grandmother. In high school my grandpa did not have any internet or electronics. His favorite subject was math because he likes working with numbers. Truman participated in rodeo. In rodeo he did bull riding, saddle bronco, and team roping. He was very good in each of his events which helped support his grandmother. Aside from going to school and rodeo events he had daily chores, which were herding sheep and taking care of livestock. My grandpa woke up early in the morning, to let the sheep out and graze. As well as, feeding the horses and rounding up the cattle by giving them vaccine, branding, and ear tagging. My grandpa Truman continues to do his daily chores to this day.

My grandpa currently works at Ch'oooshgai Community School in Tohatchi, NM, as a facility maintenance staff. His most greatest accomplishment is his current job, because he can provide for his family and livestock. In conclusion I admire my grandpa, because he knows a lot about livestock, he is a hard worker and has great horsemanship skills.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Kiarah Braziel
Grade: 5th  Age: 10  M or F X
Teacher: Sherry Heworth
School: The Montessori Elementary School

Title: Grandpa with the Cowboy Hat

My grandpa is very special to me because he always lets me know that he loves me. He has impacted my life by teaching me about the sense of family, and that family always cares for each other. My grandpa is very wonderful because he is always there for me, no matter what. Plus, he always loves me for who I am.

Growing up in New York, I always looked forward to my grandpa's visits from New Mexico. When my grandpa would arrive in New York from Albuquerque, he always stepped out of the taxi wearing a cowboy hat and cowboy boots! When he reached my front door, he would scoop me up in his arms and give me a great big hug. Then, he would let me wear his cowboy hat and his cowboy boots, so that I could play "horsey" around the house.

My grandpa is a very kind hearted man, with a full head of long silver hair that shimmers in the sunlight. His eyes are hazel, with a bit of emerald green that changes color. Back in the day, his hair was as straight as a horse's mane with a little curl in it. His feet were too large for any shoes to fit. His body was as flexible as a rubber band, and his legs were as fast as "The Flash".

My grandpa inspired me, when he taught me that it's okay to be different. Just like when he travels everywhere, wearing his cowboy hat and his cowboy boots. In fact, he told me that our differences are what makes us special. My grandpa is an example to follow, because he is always himself, and he is a brave individual.
Title: The Best Boppa Ever

Our elders might be the oldest people we know, but they reward us with some of the best memories we could hope for. My Boppa has created so many memories for me. When I think of my Boppa four words come to mind: silly, generous and thoughtful, and charitable.

My Boppa is always trying to be silly. One morning while I was at his house eating breakfast he said he won a competition in New York for making french toast. He said the judges jumped out of their chairs and said, “This is the most exceptional french toast ever, Gregory!” Also, whenever I am trying to concentrate on something, he tries to tell me a joke or tickle me. The silliest thing he says is when we watch Nebraska football games. He starts with, “Back in my times I was the best Quarterback in Nebraska.” Mind you, my Boppa is 5’5!

My Boppa is also very generous and thoughtful. He works hard to get my siblings and I wonderful gifts, and he ALWAYS makes me my favorite ice cream when I stay over at his house. Boppa knows that I enjoy my talks with him, so whenever I spend the night, he makes an effort to take a walk with me so he and I can discuss what is going on in my life and in the world.

Finally, my Boppa is super charitable. He believes in helping children, and works hard so that children do not have to pay to get support after losing someone they love. This year for his birthday, rather than getting something for himself, he wanted us to give to charity. My boppa shows me how important it is to be someone who helps others.

My boppa is someone I look up to. He teaches me to be a little more silly, generous and thoughtful, and most importantly, charitable. He is someone I always enjoy spending time with, and I love him very much.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Name: Isabel Giron
Grade: 5 Age: 10 M or F
Teacher: Sarah Young
School: La Cueva High School

Title: My Papa

Papa Zapp is my grandpa. He lives in St. Marys, Kansas. I want to write about him because he is always trying to do things for people. He always makes me happy with his jokes and songs.

Papa was born in Bakersfield, a sunny town in California on July 13, 1957. As a child, he tried to be a good boy. With his brothers, he played baseball, wiffleball, swam in the summer, did homework and went to the park and rode his bike. When he was sixteen, his family moved to Payson, California.

Papa got married in 1979 in Powers Lake, North Dakota. There, in Stanley, North Dakota, my mom was born. In North Dakota, Papa worked at a Diesel Repair Shop. In 1985, he moved to Kansas, where he and his family lived in a rented apartment. He then moved to Idaho for six months, then moved back to Kansas where he now lives in a nice, big house.

In 1985, Papa started a gas station. At that time, his family had a cute bird named Twinkles. One time, Twinkles was in its cage while Papa was working on...
Title: **My Papa (continued)**

Papa did not know this but bad gases were coming out of the car. Papa, after a while, noticed that Twinkles was dying. Then Papa realized that poisonous gases were coming from the car. Papa took Twinkles and saved it. Twinkles had saved Papa and Papa had saved Twinkles. The gas station closed in 1991. Grandma and Papa now own Zappa Health Food Store which they opened in 1999. They also own a laundromat next door to their shop.

Now Papa swims in summer, makes people happy and has people over whenever, especially my cousins. I love my dear Papa very much and love spending time with him.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: My Auntie Evelia

We walked into Auntie Evelias garden and heard the sound of her friend playing "Here Comes the Sun" on his electric guitar. We jumped over the red, green and orange flowers I could hardly see the head through some flowers that were taller than me. Auntie Evelia even decorated the fence with bright yellow and beautiful fabric. My Auntie Evelia danced to the music.

Evelia Colora is my great aunt. She loves to make art, grow plants, and make music. She also has a dog named Tupac who escapes from the yard very often. She pays for some of my activities like karate, violin, and swimming. She is even an award-winning author. Sadly, I could not interview her because she is in rehab. She does not last long because she tends to escape. She doesn’t call us when she escapes and we usually have to learn that she escaped from a family member. I don’t know why or how she escapes.
2021
A Senior I Know Essay Contest

Title: My Auntie Evelia

Name: Harlow H.
Grade: 5
Age: 11
Gender: M
Teacher: McClellan
School: Manzanola Mesa
Title: My Auntie Eve, a Pt. 2

She also likes to dance and sing, and she even knows Spanish. She has friends that are great musicians and artists. Whenever I go to her house, she shows me all of her art and I usually explore the jungle that is her backyard. She was also a school teacher and loves to tell stories. All of her art has something to do with her family. She is about 80-year-old now and still loves her crazy garden parties. Usually, her musical friends go to the parties and play songs for us. We dance around and sometimes get into a bad patch in a deep part of her garden and revealed a glass table with pictures of all my family members within it.

She is an amazing lady I admire that she loves wildlife and she is not scared to do anything. She can be a bit wild at times, but I love her for that.
Title: The One And Only Pop

Charlie Bursi, otherwise known as “Pop” or my grandfather. He was born on December 1st, 1951. He had no siblings. His dad was a butcher while his mom was a housewife and sometimes built airplanes.

His school was very different than ours now. There weren’t electronic devices. Communication was through letters or direct contact. Communication was slower making it harder to contact people.

In school Charlie’s favorite subject was math. He was super good with numbers. This was helpful for him because he ended up being a computer programmer and that allowed him more success in his job. In high school, Charlie wanted to work in the army until one day he was hit in the ear by a football and lost hearing in one ear. This blocked Charlie from being able to join the army.

When Charlie was younger he would mow lawns in the summer for extra money and did yard work. Charlie’s first job was delivering groceries. He would wear a white store apron and deliver groceries on his bike to people in his neighborhood where his dad worked. He went to college then attended a computer school so he could become a computer programmer.

He married a woman named Teresa who was the love of his life. Charlie and Teresa had 3 wonderful kids named Laura, Linda, and Lisa. Charlie felt like marrying Teresa and having 3 children was his greatest accomplishment ever. When his kids grew up, all of them got married. He has 6 amazing and cool grandchildren along with 2 granddogs.

Charlie is an amazing person! He always takes time to spend with his family and grandkids. He is the best grandpa a grandkid could ever want. I hope one day I will be like him. This is what I admire about Charlie!
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# THE WINNERS

## GRADE 1

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<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reilly Garcia</td>
<td>Shephard Lutheran Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karmen Yepa</td>
<td>EG Ross Elementary</td>
<td>Ms. Brewer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heidi Rivera</td>
<td>Montessori One Academy</td>
<td>Ms. Watkins</td>
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<td>Tomás Griego</td>
<td>La Conquistadora Academy</td>
<td>Ms. Vu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Brady</td>
<td>Mimbres School UNM</td>
<td>Mrs. Garcia-Roads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camden Weatherspoon</td>
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<td>Sandia Base Elementary</td>
<td>Ms. McLean</td>
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<td>Griffir Wascoe-Bauman</td>
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<td>Miranda Wheelock</td>
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<td>Liam Ringenoldus</td>
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<td>Mia Noelder</td>
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<td>Tahi Toya</td>
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<td>Mrs. Stoltenberg</td>
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<td>Amelie Mutidjo</td>
<td>SY Jackson</td>
<td>Mrs. McCallon/Mrs. Balthaser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zinnia Dumm</td>
<td>Griegos Elementary</td>
<td>Ms. Sauer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isabelle Sebastian</td>
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## GRADE 5

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<td>Isabel Griego</td>
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<td>Ms. Yung</td>
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<td>Noah Keilbarth</td>
<td>Double Eagle Elementary</td>
<td>Ms. Finnegar</td>
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<td>Kiarah Brazial</td>
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<td>Autumn Badanie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beckett Cobb</td>
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## ART WINNERS

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<td>Izabella Delgado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophia Ciecarelli</td>
<td>Sandia Base Elementary</td>
<td>Mrs. Hudson</td>
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DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR AFFAIRS

2021 A SENIOR I KNOW ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Contact
Angel Montoya
acmontoya@cabq.gov
P: (505) 764-6475
W: cabq.gov/seniors

Citizen Contact Center: 311

Left: Second Place Winner, Sophia Clecarelli