



# Chimacum School Matters

*News from Your Chimacum School District*

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## Chimacum graduates 55 in the Class of 2021

It was a beautiful June day for Chimacum's Class of 2021's graduation at Memorial Field. The outdoor ceremony felt like a bit of normalcy in the midst of the pandemic.

Valedictorian Solana Gonzalez spoke of the reality they all shared, "Dreaming of our own senior year—friendships, dances, graduation—so, who can blame us for feeling hurt, disappointed, even betrayed, when the time finally rolls around and it's nothing like we expected?... This year of isolation and fear for our safety and loved ones has gone by and taken all of these memories that could have been with it, for reasons completely out of our control."

"It is okay to let yourself feel this pain," she said. "You deserve the time to mourn for any unrealized expectations and time that may have felt wasted or stolen when you've been told all of your life that it should be great... We will each have our own distinct process of responding, feeling and moving forward from the pain that inevitably makes its way into our lives. You are not broken, you are not foolish, and—above all—you are not alone... Whatever hurt this tumultuous year and any years past may have caused you, acknowledge it.



**Megan Golden, Lee Burnside, Kenny Avocato and Eva Casey pose just before graduation. The Character Strong banner below was designed by Lee and Kenny. Many thanks to the Friends of Chimacum Schools for sponsoring it!**

Feel it. And embrace the strength and courage that got you through it because life is going to continue on... It is these peaks and valleys that give life nuance and interest, so savor them and know that the low points are temporary."

Salutatorian Jason Pina admitted, "Even before high school, the responsibility to strive for success

plagued me. I often would drift asleep to the same recurring nightmare... I knew where it was coming from, because I had felt it countless times both awake and dreaming: A worry that something was wrong with my grades...the impression of failure... I understand how insane it makes me sound, but I also know that many others in this room have had similar nightmares, albeit less hysterical maybe. I share this dream, so that you may understand that the pressure held on students to excel can have these adverse effects in other aspects of their lives... It has taken the entirety

• Continued inside



# Grad speeches: Overcoming challenges

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of (my) life to finally understand that those grades are not the most significant aspect of myself, and more importantly, they do not define my self-worth.”

He added, “If this pandemic has taught me anything at all, it is what truly matters is human connection. I still put immense effort in my academics, but I have found that I am at my best when my focus is on the people around me... We as human beings have the incredible ability to connect with one another in deep, meaningful ways, and we cannot let the relationships we develop crumble apart in favor of our pursuits. In fact, these relationships are what make our pursuits worthwhile.”

Faculty-elected speaker Kalista Jackson said, “It doesn’t matter who we were in high school...everyone now has an opportunity to grow and change into the person they want to be...if we all stay where we’re at right now, life will pass us by.”

She added, “If this year has taught us anything, it is that every single graduate here is resilient in a time of uncertainty. We can say that we lived through a significant moment in history, while still turning in that chemistry assignment. The world stopped, but we kept going—and because of that we are unstoppable... After the pandemic, any bit of normalcy we can get is a privilege... Simple pleasures are more appreciated now than before.”

After thanking family and a friend for being there for her, Kalista said, “I would not be where I am today without pushing myself to stay strong in the face of adversity. So, thank you, me! And everyone should feel the same because none of us would be here if we didn’t push ourselves to be here.”

Elected by her class to speak, Madisyn Johnson said, “We are here on this day celebrating what we have been waiting for these past four years... We may not have been able to have a standard countdown senior year because of COVID, but we did it. We made it to this day, the day we start our

new beginnings... Reminiscing on the past, while your new beginnings are coming, is something we all do.”

Class of 2021 president Morgan Liske recalled three rooms of tiny kindergartners, “This is how we started and now we will end as one. We have walked through the years and the memories have blended into a blur passing us by... The truth is I don’t actually remember most of those memories, the ones I do are very little things that didn’t impact me very much. But I know things happened because there’s picture evidence.”

Morgan said, “My Grammy passed away a few months before I started high school. The past four years I’ve tried to look for pictures with her in them, but she’s not in any of them. She was always the one behind the camera, capturing the events I don’t remember happening. She knew how important they’d be... These pictures we will keep and cherish forever, because at some point, it is all we’ll have left. No matter what the memory was, you will mourn it at some point... So keep taking those pictures. Take them of the silly moments, the sad moments, the exciting moments, and all of the moments in between. That way, you can look back on those pictures and relive those moments, so you can remember.”



Photo by Sheila Carstensen

**Tanner Carstensen is one of the two grads who plan to go into the service. Tanner has set his eyes on the U.S. Coast Guard. Jordan Pomeroy has chosen the U.S. Navy.**



## Comments/questions?

**Dr. David Engle**

**Acting Superintendent**

**360.302.5896**

**or Art Clarke, Assistant**

**Superintendent of Operations**

**360.302.5895**

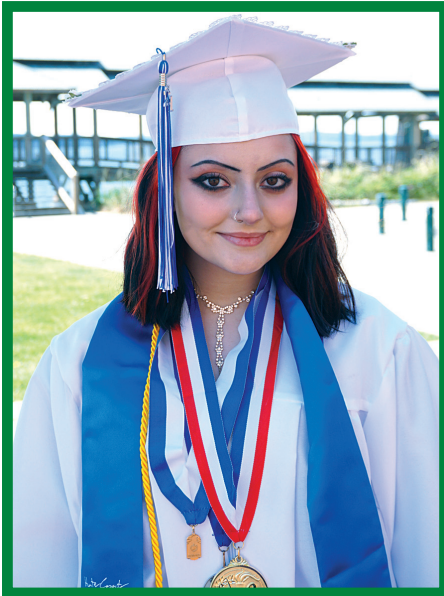
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**Banners honoring the Class of 2021 lined Chimacum Schools’ fence.**

# Gonzalez and Pina are at the top of the Class of 2021

★ Valedictorian ★



**Solana Gonzalez**

**4.0 grade point average**

**Also earned an Associate of Science**

**\$13,100\* in scholarships**

**University of Washington**

**Studying neuroscience**

**Community service hours: 333**

**Elizabeth and Al Gonzalez, Chimacum**

*\*subject to change*

★ Salutatorian ★



**Jason Pina**

**4.0 grade point average**

**Also earned an Associate of Arts**

**University of Washington**

**Community service hours: 80**

**Jason Pina, Sr., and Rebekah Blandino,  
Vancouver, WA**

**Class song**  
**“I’ll Always Remember  
You”**

**“Hannah Montana”**

*Written by Mitchell Allan Scherr and Jessica  
Alexander*



**Class flower**  
**White and blue roses**

**Class motto**

**Behind us are memories,  
beside us are friends, before  
us are dreams that will  
never end.**

**Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.  
Live the life you have imagined.**

*—Henry David Thoreau*

Many grads decorated their mortarboards for the big day. Clockwise from front left, Hailey Brakeman, Koral Smith, Brigitte Palmer and Caitlyn Boyd.



Marissa Fetterman took a moment to sign a friend's yearbook. She's been in school with 13 of her classmates from kindergarten through graduation. They are Jessica Breitweg, Tanner Carstensen, Hunter Cerna, Paris Elliott, Julian Fahrenschon, Megan Golden, Solana Gonzalez, Andrew Good, Hailey Haralson, Reiley Johnson, Zoe Justis, Gavin Lawson and Asa Olson-Wailand.

**Congratulations, Class of 2021!**

Jesse Watson is heading to Washington State University, with \$71,500 in scholarships, to study computer science. With \$86,000 in scholarships, Amyiah Fisher plans to study criminal justice, specializing in psychology, at Seattle University in the fall.



**More graduation news inside!**



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**Editor: Sandy Hershelman**

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***What's next for the Class of 2021?***

**Grads awarded \$251,509**

- 40 percent of the 55 graduates are continuing their education. ★
- 8 are going to a four-year college or university. ★
- 14 head to community college or vocational school. ★
- 2 are going into the military.
- 6 Running Start students received an associates degree, as well as a high school diploma.
- 10 graduates were awarded \$251,509 in total scholarships, including renewables; \$115,956 was for their first year of schooling. Of those totals, our local community gave \$102,600; \$62,269 for their first year. This excludes military signing bonuses.
- 12 were National Honor Society members. ★
- 18 had a 3.5, or higher, grade point average.
- 12 were Washington State Honors Award recipients.\* ★
- 14 attended Chimacum for all 13 years of school. ★
- 4,842.75 total community service hours, grades 9 through 12. (4 logged 200+ hours of community service, 3 had 150+ hours, 7 had 100+ hours.)

**Running Start**

Running Start allows students to earn both high school and college credits by taking college courses. Degrees earned by graduates in the Class of 2021:

**Olympic College**

*Associate in Arts-  
 Direct Transfer Agreement*

Amyiah Fisher  
 Hailey Haralson  
 Annie Herington  
 Jesse Watson

**Peninsula College**

*Solana Gonzalez  
 Associate of Science*

Jason Pina  
*Associate of Arts*

\*They were among the top 10 percent of students graduating this year in the state, as determined by an index of grade point averages and SAT/ACT college entrance exam scores.