

## Celebrating the Success of Manson Graduates



### Elida Leyva: Educator, Inspire Development Center

Elida and her family have lived in Manson since immigrating to the U.S. in 2007. "It was a pleasure to live in this calm, serene, agricultural town. Manson was a safe and beautiful place for my parents to raise their six children." Elida felt the Manson residents were supportive and she cherished the sense of peace the community provided. "I am spoiled by a community that values its youth and provides a clean, safe and supportive environment. In this small town, parents and teachers are responsible for students' education and they all work cooperatively to accomplish this goal." After graduating in 2012, Elida attended Wenatchee Valley College and Eastern Washington University where she earned an Associate's Degree in Applied Science-Transfer (AAS-T); Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's Degree in Children's Studies with a triple minor in Applied Developmental Psychology, Sociology and Spanish. She is currently employed by Inspire Development Center in Pasco, WA, an agency that serves seasonal, migrant and rural economically disadvantaged families. "To qualify for my current position with IDC, I was required to have a BA degree in Early Childhood Ed and be bilingual." Elida is currently a preschool teacher who works with three to five-year-olds whose family income is at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. She works closely with parents, a school readiness liaison, early learning mentor coaches and specialists. When thinking back to her days at Manson High School, Elida strongly feels all of her teachers made a difference in her life. "The most influential teachers were Mrs. Heather Teague and Mrs. Jennifer Koth; they significantly impacted my life by making a great contribution to my academic and personal growth." Elida says that, "Mrs. Teague was one of my biggest supporters, the first teacher to welcome and support me when I was adapting to the American school environment. She led me to academic success.

Mrs. Koth was my role model; she helped me improve my English reading, writing and communication skills." Other staff members served as motivators and made a positive difference in Elida's life. "My journey through high school would not have been as meaningful without the entire MHS staff. It's thanks to them that I graduated from college—they set me up for success!" Elida wants students to never let a language barrier stop them from reaching their full potential. "Believe in yourself and all that you are capable of."

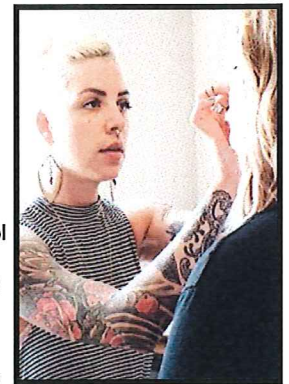
### Efrain Escoto: Owner, Efrain's Trucking & Excavation

Efrain was born and raised in the Lake Chelan Valley. In high school, his favorite activities included weight-lifting, soccer, FFA and shop, but once summer hit, he was always outdoors whether for work or exploring the back roads on his dirt bike. After graduating from MHS in 2013, Efrain attended Washington State university for a year, studying Criminal Justice. "In my heart, I knew that it wasn't what I wanted to do, so I decided to pursue a career in trucking and I enrolled in Driver Training Solutions School (DTSS) for one month." After completing DTSS, Efrain passed the Washington State Driver's tests for permitting, pre-inspection and driving. From there he was hired by Tunnel Hill Granite in Chelan as a truck driver. "I started in 'the pit' crushing gravel before working my way up to the trucking department. Once I was there, my responsibilities included delivering material to job sites. I learned how to interact with different people and adjust to the circumstances or situation on the fly so I could better help my customers." In May of 2017, he started Efrain's Trucking & Excavation where he learned a lot about being a business owner. "There is a lot of math in owning a business. It was a subject I disliked in school and it came back to bite me, but I had to learn it quickly." He has since learned the enjoyment of being his own boss. "Each day brings a new adventure; when I am subcontracted for bigger jobs, I get to haul everything from dirt or gravel to asphalt grinds. When excavating, I get to dig foundations for new homes and roads, or test holes for Geotechs to determine soil stability." Efrain reflects that Mr. Kevin Amsden really helped him reach his full potential. "He pushed me to do more than I thought I could and how to make every minute count. Knowing it's my name on the line fuels me to do the best I can to deliver excellent service." He encourages current students to, "never be afraid to ask questions or admit you don't know something. Keep pursuing your goals so you can lead by example."



### Ashley Leffler: Owner/Artist, Lady Wolf Studio

Ashley grew up on a 40-acre pear orchard in Manson, where her parents farmed the orchard. Ashley was an outdoorsy child, running barefoot and riding tractors. She was always encouraged to explore her interests and talents. "I really appreciate growing up in a small town and everything it taught me about hard work and appreciating what you have. I loved every square inch of the land I grew up on and have awesome memories tucked all over the hills of Manson." After graduating from Manson in 2005, Ashley began her post-high school education at Central Washington University but had to leave for health reasons. Later down the road, she went to school to become an esthetician to specialize in skin care and completed her training in Los Angeles, becoming a Cosmetic Tattoo Artist. After obtaining her license, Ashley worked in a spa for over four years where she did facials, waxing, tinting and other body care services. "After waxing a million eyebrows, I became fascinated with the art of cosmetic tattooing, specifically eyebrows." From there, she did research and traveled for training back to LA and fell in love with cosmetic tattooing. "I knew I wanted to focus on it in a big way, so I became a licensed cosmetic tattoo artist, left my job and opened my own studio." Today, Ashley owns and operates her own business on Queen Anne in Seattle called Lady Wolf Studio where she specializes in realistic eyebrow cosmetic tattooing as well as waxing services. "My passion is restorative work like giving people back eyebrows that have been over-tweezed, lost to chemotherapy treatments, or alopecia. When she reflects upon her years at Manson High School, Ashley recalls the mentorship of her basketball and volleyball coach, Mrs. Desiree Phelps. "Dez helped me out of my shell; I was a shy kid and she helped me cultivate my confidence and instilled the idea of working as a team, which has stayed with me and now permeates every aspect of my life." She was also impacted by her English and guitar teacher, Mr. Ron McClure. "Mr. McClure pushed my boundaries; he stuck a microphone in front of me and got me singing and playing the guitar. He believed in me fiercely and that fire eventually helped me believe in myself." She reflects that these two people helped her unlock her potential in areas she never knew she had. "They gave me that gentle, little shove I so very much needed." Ashley advises current and future Manson students that they don't have to know exactly what they want to do with the rest of their lives. "If you know what you want to do, that's cool; just know life changes. It's not an organized grid, so you'll change too. I've changed directions tons of times and each twist and turn helped guide me on a new adventure."





## Phillip Thomas: Logistic Engineer, Goodman Manufacturing



Phillip's family moved to Manson when he was a year old. Phillip loved playing in the orchards and the lake and spent his time in the Manson School District involved in band, student government, math team, knowledge bowl as well as playing golf and baseball. "One thing I really enjoyed about Manson was that I could try as many activities as I wanted and always learned new things. The faculty supported all my endeavors and encouraged my growth at every turn." After graduating in 2006, Phillip attended Brigham Young University in Utah where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He is currently attending Colorado State University to obtain his Master's Degree in Engineering Management. After graduating from BYU, Phillip began working as a logistics engineer for Goodman Manufacturing, a large HVAC manufacturer in Houston, Texas. He has been employed there for five years and leads a small engineering team that designs logistics systems and analyzes ways to improve efficiency in their supply chain. "I learn things all the time, work with smart people and spend most of my day problem solving." He is currently receiving certification in project management. When reflecting on his past, Phillip remembers Mr. Frank Phelps, the technology teacher at MHS at the time. "He took me under his wing and taught me about IT/computers, knowledge I've used over and over again in my career." Phillip also salutes Mrs. Kelly Bell and Mrs. Kamie Kronbauer who taught him science and mathematics and the basic skills needed for engineering. "Mr. Ron McClure taught me to utilize my creativity and Mrs. Cindy Simmons, Manson community librarian, encouraged my love for books, something I've carried with me ever since I was a kid." Phillip would

like to share with current and future Manson students that, "Dreams are important, but true success is a result of hard work. True success is more than getting what you want; it is obtained when you improve yourself and give of yourself to others. After all, family is the most important thing in life."

## Justin Henley: Programmer, Laserfab Inc.

Justin Henley had a challenging upbringing and a complicated high school career. A troubled youth, more often than not, Justin had a difficult time conforming to the norms of high school. Justin found himself using drugs and his struggle worsened; however, there was one person whose unflinching belief in him never swayed. That person was Justin's shop teacher, Mr. Kevin Amsden. He took shop classes with Mr. Amsden in middle and high school and found his passion. "Once I ran my first weld, Mr. Amsden told me that I was going to weld." Immediately after graduation in 2000, Mr. Amsden arranged an interview for Justin with Kelly Iron Works in Chelan and helped him secure a job that would become a career. "I walked in with a box of my welds and walked out a year and a half later with job training and experience that I still use today." However, life for Justin was still not easy. "My drug use became an addiction and I couldn't get out of bed to go to work one morning." That day, he called a friend in Ohio and a week later boarded a Greyhound Bus for Cincinnati leaving the drugs behind him. "I lived in Ohio for a year and became the assistant manager of a store. I had to get out of the small town and see if the big city was for me, but no matter where you go, there you are." So Justin returned to Washington and secured a job with Morse Steel Service that used to be located in the current Pybus Market in Wenatchee. There Justin worked his way up from a truck loader to become lead press brake and plate roll operator. In 2007, he became certified in Drafting Technologies by taking night classes through Wenatchee Valley College. In his eight and a half years with Morse, Justin managed to learn how to operate and maintain every piece of equipment the company had, sometimes with little or no training. "Not being one to function well in a classroom setting, I taught myself and gleaned knowledge from anywhere I could." Justin moved to Moses Lake with Morse Steel and eventually took a position with Laserfab Inc. where he is currently a CNC programmer. Justin makes the programs for their CNC lasers and designs the flat patterns for their press brakes to service Laserfab's biggest customer, Genie Industries. He also trains laser and press brake operators. In his spare time, he has a side business (JH Concepts) doing design, drafting and metal fabrication with his own CNC plasma table. When reflecting on MHS, Justin recalls some of the teachers who impacted on his life. "Mr. Brad Soliday was a great teacher who was always good at connecting with students and staying on their level. I'm not sure if he still tells the story of the C.W.P. field trip to the jail when one of his students knew a person in every wing." Justin has known Mrs. Sue Neff since kindergarten and says, "She was always supportive and believed in me." Mr. Rolf Korsborn, Mr. Ron Pinkerton, Mr. Mike Dewey and Mr. Joe Teague also hold a place in Justin's heart. "I've gone back a couple times to visit Mr. Amsden and his students. I've learned that if you have a direction and a passion, you can succeed. I grew up poor and, to me, the Internet is an amazing tool and you don't need to pay \$50,000 or even \$5,000 for an education. There are free programs out there if you have the time and drive to do the research. When you grow up like me, there's always going to be plenty of people telling you what you can't accomplish. Don't listen to them (even if it's your own voice). Only listen to those who tell you you can." Justin is happily married and has a fifteen-year-old daughter named Monica.



## Christina Guerra: CMA, Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH)

Born and raised with four siblings in the Chelan Valley, Christy was involved in sports, Apple Blossom and was senior class president at MHS. While in high school, she had the opportunity to take a Certified Nursing Assistant course that sparked her interest in the medical field. After graduation in 2011, Christy attended Wenatchee Valley College and Eastern Washington University. She locked down her career path and attended the Healthcare Training Center in Spokane where she earned her CNA certification. "I worked as a CNA doing in-home care and later got a job at the Lake Chelan Community Hospital. I decided to further my education and attended Carrington College in Spokane and became a Certified Medical Assistant." Working as a CNA helped Christy realize how much she loved caring for others. "After earning my CMA, I was offered a position with CVCH as part of their Outreach Team that provides medical services at Migrant Camps in Wenatchee and Chelan." The Outreach Team soon led her into a position as CMA with CVCH. "As CMA, I am one of the first people a patient sees. I take their vital signs, draw blood, assist in procedures, perform EKGs and do a lot of paperwork." In reflecting on her time at MHS, Christy recalls Mrs. Patti Stracener. "Patti was our GEAR-UP advisor and took my class on many college visitations. She spent endless hours tutoring us and ensuring our class was successful." She also remembers Steve and Dawn Vaughn. "I met them my senior year; they simply wanted the best for me and became like second parents." Mrs. Shana Beazley, Christy's volleyball coach was also a stand out. "Shana pushed me to do better because she knew what I was capable of." Mrs. Heather Teague was more than just a teacher to Christy. "She became an amazing friend and has always walked along side me through good and bad times and has continued to support me in life." Christy says, "What you do NOW matters in your future; don't give up. There's more than one way to get where you want to be. I am so thankful to be back where I was raised. I get to give back to the community that gave so much to me."



Manson School District  
PO BOX A  
Manson, WA 98831

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MANSON, WA 98831

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Manson, WA 98831  
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