



## Celebrating the Success of Manson Graduates

January 2015

### Laura (Cross) Reiter: Civil & Environmental Engineer

After four years as a Manson Trojan, in 2008 Laura attended the University of Washington and became a Husky. There she obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering. As she had realized her love for math and science while at MHS, Laura chose to pursue a career in engineering. "Engineering is a program that allows you to capitalize on your technical skills to improve the natural and built environments that surround us every day." With an engineering job, no job training is necessary. "Typically it is advantageous to obtain an internship during your undergraduate education to gain some real world experience, but all of my job training happened on the job while I was getting compensated," Laura stated. Laura is currently a Staff Engineer for RH2 Engineering, a regional engineering consultant based out of Bothell, WA. Laura lives in Idaho where she works remotely reporting to the Portland, OR office. With the help of a project team, she uses 3D modeling computer software to design infrastructure, create construction drawings, write contracts and supervise the construction of her projects. "I work on large projects that affect the public, such as water, sewer and storm transmission pipes, pump stations, reservoirs and tanks, wastewater treatment plants, roads and bridges." While a student at Manson High School, Laura says that Mrs. Neff and Mrs. Kronbauer were instrumental in setting her up for success in college. "Between the two of them and their college in the high school classes, I started the UW with 28 credits which allowed me to enter at a higher-level math course than other freshmen," said Laura. "The other perk was I never had to take an English class in college (which for an engineer is a huge blessing!)" With regards to our current Manson students, Laura advises, "Don't be afraid of challenges!" She states that you can get college paid for by others through scholarships. "You can pursue a degree and career that may seem difficult at first, but if you work hard and don't sell yourself short, you will succeed. College is an investment in yourself."

Laura inspecting and field measuring a sewer lift station



### Cynthia Sanchez: Immigration Paralegal, Global Justice Law Firm

A 2007 Manson grad, and another University of Washington alumna, Cynthia obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Spanish. She is currently a paralegal at Seattle's Global Justice Law Firm where she focuses on family immigration, removal defense, asylum, U Visas, naturalization and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Cynthia's tasks vary daily and include working with client intakes, assisting attorneys with case issues, fact checking and trial and bond preparation. In addition, Cynthia prepares motions and forms for immigration court, ICE and the Department of Homeland Security. While a student at Manson High School, she found outstanding support from Mr. Ken Nelson and Mr. Ron McClure. "These two amazing teachers helped me create a well-thought out foundation for where I am today. They provided me with guidance, motivation and most importantly they believed in every single vision I had for my future." She adds that both teachers inspired and challenged her academically and helped her hone her critical thinking skills in and outside of a classroom setting. Cynthia's favorite motivational quote by Edward Rickenbacker states, "Think things through—then follow through." She adds, "I believe it is fundamental to think about our actions before they occur and to understand the possible consequences." When she was a student at Manson High School, she spent a lot of time thinking about her future. "I was aware that every decision I was making was creating my pathway. Today, I am walking on a very well-built path that is a result of the decisions I have made." Cynthia is currently preparing to attend law school to pursue a degree in social justice with a specialization in critical race studies. Lastly, Cynthia's advice to current Manson students is, "keep your eye on the horizon, push on your edges and go outside your comfort zone, and always have patience with yourself and the world."



### Juan Ortiz: Crab Fisherman & Long-Liner, Northern Leader Fisheries

Immediately after graduating from Manson High School in 1995, Juan was hired as a Pacific Cod long-liner on a boat out of Dutch Harbor. After three months, he had learned all the positions and duties onboard and rose to the position of Deck Boss. About a year ago, while fishing on the Bering Sea, Juan and his crew were caught in a hurricane where 50 foot swells and 120 mile per hour winds tossed their boat like a toy in a bathtub. As Deck Boss, Juan was out in the storm securing the gear when he was tossed into the anchor and lost consciousness momentarily. Luckily, he and his crew weathered the storm and no one was critically injured. In addition to long-lining in Dutch Harbor, Juan also fishes for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay and crabs in Half Moon Bay near San Francisco. He spends three months in California in the winter, five months in Dutch Harbor and a month and a half in Bristol Bay. Five years into his fishing career, Juan decided to attend Wenatchee Valley College in his "down time" where he pursued the courses needed to become an x-ray technician. At the time, there was a three-year wait to enter the program, so Juan continued fishing. He now intends to finish two more years fishing and crabbing to complete 20 years in this profession then pursue a career as an x-ray technician in the Wenatchee Valley. With regards to his education at Manson, Juan said, "Kevin Amsden was one of my favorites. He was always in a great mood and had a lot of shop skills which I use on the fishing vessels." He added, "When I was a sophomore, the Mogan Family took



me into their home and treated me as a son. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Dan, Candy, Michael, Paul, Chris and Angel Mogan for teaching me a great work ethic and for the person I am today. Thank you Mogsans! I love you all." Juan's advice to Manson students is to, "Take what the great staff at Manson gives you and apply it towards your future. Manson High School made me the person I am today." Be sure to catch Juan and his crew on the show, "Battle of the Bay," airing on the Discovery Channel in January.



## **Aaron Morehead: Hazelwood Elementary School Teacher –Auburn School District**

After graduating from Manson High in 2005, Aaron attended Central Washington University. After a year, he decided to transfer to Spokane Community College, but after struggling to find a path that he was passionate about, he decided to take some time off of school. After a brief break, he re-enrolled at Tacoma Community College and completed his associate's degree in Arts and Sciences. Aaron then enrolled at Evergreen State College in Olympia where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts. Next, Aaron pursued his teaching certification through the University of Washington where he is currently two quarters away from completing his Master's Degree in Education. Aaron is currently a first and second grade math teacher in Auburn at Hazelwood Elementary School where he teaches four mathematics classes daily. With regards to Manson staff who helped Aaron along his way, Aaron wants to thank Mr. Kevin Medved, MHS Assistant Basketball Coach during Aaron's high school career. "Without Coach Medved's guidance, I feel that my full potential in high school would not have been met. He taught me that there is much more to learn from sports than simply winning and losing. I credit Coach Medved for teaching me the importance of teamwork, hard work and staying positive." Aaron also said that Mr. Brad Soliday, MHS Social Studies teacher, was integral in his choice to become a teacher. "He inspired me to take ownership of my learning, which is what I try to do for my students. I want students to enjoy the process of learning."



## **Miguel Valencia: Student Ambassador for Ronald McNair Achievement Program, Washington State University**

While Miguel is still attending WSU, his commendable achievements while in college are worthy of mention in this year's flyer. The fall of 2010, Miguel entered WSU where he is currently completing dual majors in Criminal Justice and Spanish and a minor in Political Science. He will graduate this May and continue his education in graduate school the next fall. He is currently applying to Masters and Doctoral programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice. When he began WSU, Miguel went through yearly training through the Ronald McNair Achievement Program to become an Ambassador of the College of Arts and Sciences. With his training, he became knowledgeable about the different majors within the university, learned key points to speak about to prospective students and about the many resources accessible to students on the WSU campus. Now an official Ambassador to the College of Arts and Sciences, Miguel serves as a liaison at all recruitment and retention programs on and off campus. "I also take part in planning events that are designed to meet the needs and interests of students at Washington State University," Miguel said. During his 2014 spring semester, Miguel studied abroad in Madrid, Spain to complete his Spanish major. He added, "Whenever I see Manson High School students, I always tell them to make sure they study abroad once they get into college." In addition to these endeavors, Miguel is also the Vice President of his fraternity, Alpha Phi Sigma and is involved in the National Honor Society for Criminal Justice Studies. When asked about the people who helped impact his future, Miguel replied, "There were many teachers and staff members at Manson High School who helped me reach my full potential. I thank Mrs. Heather Teague, Mr. Phil



Fournier, Mr. Dean Morehead, Mrs. Kami Kronbauer, Mr. Brad Soliday, Ms. Tara Janet, Mrs. Christy Libbey and Mrs. Sue Odorizzi, all of whom helped me step out of my comfort zone and always encouraged me to do better. I would like to give a special thanks to Mrs. Patti Stracener who always went out of her way to help me, especially when applying to college." Miguel would like current Manson students to always be hard working and dedicated students. "Don't be afraid to take risks and try something new because doing so is what will carry you far in life."

## **Kari Robinson: Attorney, Alaska Institute for Justice specializing in the Alaska Immigration Justice Project**

Kari Robinson, a 1984 Manson graduate, currently works with the Alaska Institute for Justice through their Alaska Immigration Justice Project (AIJP) which is a non-profit agency that provides immigration legal services for all immigration applicants, including citizenship, permanent resident status, work permits, family petitions, and for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. Kari has worked with this company since their opening in 2005. Kari is committed to ensuring that all survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking have access to critical legal, medical and support services to enhance their safety. She has worked with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault since 1987 and was director of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault's Legal Advocacy Project (LAP) for fifteen years before starting her current position. As director of LAP, Kari provided legal consultation, technical assistance and cutting edge legal training on best practices for legal advocates with similar programs state-wide. For over 25 years, she has worked at domestic violence shelters in Alaska and Washington and with homeless families. In 2006 Kari received the American Marshall Memorial Fellowship and traveled to Europe for three weeks to meet with leaders from other countries. A rigorous Fellowship, she was introduced to political, economic and social issues in Europe including violence against women as a global human rights issue. In April 2007, Kari received the Beyond the Call of Duty award from Alaska's Violent Crimes Compensation Board and in 2004 the Advocacy Role Model award from Victims for Justice. Kari received her B.S. with distinction from the University of Washington in Women Studies and Sociology in 1988 and her J.D. from Seattle University School of Law in 1993, where she was a Washington Women Lawyers Scholar award recipient. Kari moved to Alaska in 1993. In 1996 she left a private family law practice to work for the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Legal Advocacy Project. She has taught classes at the University of Alaska Southeast on Women's Issues in the Law. She has several published law review articles. Kari is married to Ed Farley and has a 14-year old son, Kyle Farley-Robinson, who enjoys playing the piano, hockey, salmon fishing and hiking. Her sister is Sue Neff, a fabulous teacher with the Manson School District.



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