



Manos de Dios, Hands of God Ministries

May 2017

***Providing host families for Native students
and advocating for LIFE***



Riscilla graduates from Desert Christian High School



Congratulations, Riscilla! We are so proud of you! I've told this story many times, but it bears repeating. When you first said you would like to go to school in Tucson, we started asking God, "How do we go about bringing some teenage girls to Tucson to go to a Christian school?" In my prayer time I had a vivid image of you, Riscilla, as a mature, beautiful Apache young woman graduating from high school. You were confident, proud and well-educated. You had plans for your future education and were off to start a successful life. AND HERE YOU ARE! I felt as if God was promising this future for you Riscilla, and He has been faithful. I know it has been hard in many ways...leaving your family and friends on the Reservation, attending a highly academic



Dennis, Riscilla & Lucy at Desert Christian High School's graduation ceremony, 5.26.17

school, and adjusting to living with three different host families! But you have worked hard and are to be commended!

We love you and can't wait to see what God has planned for you in the coming years. Keep your eyes on Jesus and He will guide you every step of the way!

**Love,
Lucy (for Dennis, too)**

Inside this issue:

Riscilla's success story	2
Thearsa's 8th grade promotion	3
ProGrace training	4
Heartfelt thank you	5

Riscilla's Success Story...by Dennis



Riscilla at her 8th grade promotion from American Indian Christian Mission School May 2013.



Riscilla with her family: mom, brother, grandpa & sister (Drelyn) at her high school graduation.

All too often we measure our successes by the completion of something that had/has a positive response or ending. Not so if we are serving our Lord. Success is decided by His terms and His conditions. I think our being successful in His eyes is for us to be obedient.

Lucy and I are blessed to be able to be obedient to God's calling on our life at this time (bringing Apache students to go to school in Tucson.) We have the blessing to see Riscilla be successful as she graduated from Desert Christian High School, and to be attending Northern Arizona University (planning to study pediatric nursing) in the fall.

Riscilla has many success stories. She will be the first of her family to graduate from a four-year university. She was able to rise up to the challenges of going to a school with higher academic levels than she had in the past. She also accepted the challenges and succeeded in adapting to a new way of life, and was able to resist and overcome setbacks and negative comments from peers on the Reservation. This is to name only a few of the obstacles she faced in the past four years.

Facebook post from Riscilla May 26th, 2017...

The amount of love and happiness I feel right now is amazing. I'm so thankful for everyone who has made it possible to let me come to school in Tucson! The amazing people I've met and adventures I've been on. Four years at Desert Christian has kicked my butt, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. I can't wait for college and what is going to happen! I DID IT!!!

We have known Riscilla for about seven years and have seen her grow and mature into a wonderful Christian young lady, and we are so proud of her. She is a part of our life and family and we will remain right beside her as she faces her new set of challenges. Those will include obtaining additional funding for her room and board at NAU, helping her furnish her new dorm room and making sure she stays on track even though she will be some 200 miles away.

This was her "such a time as this" and we were blessed to be a part of it.

Way to go, Riscilla! Enjoy your accomplishments, the summer fun, and the new transition this fall!

Love, Dennis (for Lucy, too)



Tina & Ron: Riscilla's host parents who guided her through her senior year!

Thearsa's 8th Grade Promotion....by Lucy



Thearsa wore a traditional Navajo dress, moccasins and jewelry for her 8th grade promotion ceremony

The Headmaster of Desert Christian Schools, John O'Hair, explained the difference between "promotion" and "graduation." Graduation is the end of something such as your secondary education. Students graduate from high school and then have a wide variety of choices of where to go next: college, military, trade school, employment, etc. Promotion is what happens at the end of 8th grade. Students are 'promoted' from middle school to continue their education at the high school. In this case, Thearsa was promoted from 8th grade to being a freshman at Desert Christian High School. Praise God!

We watched her as a timid 6th grader learning how to function at Desert Christian Middle School, adapting to life in Tucson and thriving (along with her younger sister, Naomi) in a loving host home with Sharon and Dan.

Thearsa enjoyed playing on school sports teams throughout middle school and then added wrestling to her athletic endeavors! Thearsa struggled in some classes, but Desert Christian staff plus volunteers and paid tutors assisted this young lady in meeting the academic challenges of Desert Middle School's curriculum.

Eighth grade found Thearsa living in a family apart from her younger sister, Naomi, for the FIRST time in her life! The girls missed each other terribly and hugged vigorously when they were re-united on 'sleep-over' weekends. But, all agreed that Thearsa and Naomi both matured as they learned to face life independently.

Thearsa has always been polite and helpful and she continues to have a pleasant, adaptable attitude. She loves God, prays beautifully and counts on Jesus to guide and protect her.

Thearsa considered going to school on the Reservation or even going to an Indian Boarding High School, but thankfully she (and her mom) have agreed that Desert Christian provides the best in the way of education and future preparation. They are both so grateful for this opportunity for Thearsa to be able to continue her education at Desert!

Teacher's blessing verse for Thearsa: "And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6"



Thearsa with her host family: Erin, David, Clara and Ned



Eleven family members traveled from Whiteriver for the ceremony, many wearing traditional Apache camp dresses!

Facebook post from Thearsa... *"Thank you to my grandma Benita for making my dreams come true at my graduation! Thank you to my auntie Sue for letting me borrow jewelry from her and being here for me. Thank you to my grandma Mary for attending and taking time out of her day to see me, along with auntie Roella, Deklay, Carla and of course my two beautiful sisters Tierra and Noiz. Thank you to my mom Yosh for letting my sister and me live in the city where she isn't there to help us when we need her. Also a big thank you to Dennis, Lucy, Sharon and Dan for supporting me all 3 years. Thank you to everyone who has been by my side through the hard times in my life. All I can say is Thank you and may God bless you 100 fold. I love you and good night."*

ProGrace....by Lucy

I recently attended a conference in Tucson put on by an organization called ProGrace. They beautifully de-politicized the pro-life vs pro-choice debate, presenting a third way to respond that is rooted in the Gospel. (For info go to: ProGrace.org) They offer a training course for churches who ‘desire to think, talk and act more like Jesus would in the abortion issue.’ The churches are equipped with:

- a theological approach to think through the issue in a new way
- training to engage the community in a grace dialogue
- a plan to build bridges and be a safe place of acceptance and support for women facing unplanned pregnancy.

During the conference we constantly asked ourselves, “How would Jesus respond to the woman in an unplanned pregnancy?” We re-read John 8:1-11 (the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery). Thinking in terms of the woman, we noticed many things: Jesus protected the woman from the angry mob, He equalized the sexual sin with all other sin, He did not condemn the woman, He gave her dignity by waiting until they were alone to command her to ‘go and sin no more.’ We were reminded that when talking with the women we encounter who are in the midst of an unplanned pregnancy, “There but by the grace of God go I!” We are all guilty of sin. And Jesus equates lustful thoughts with adultery and anger with murder. So we are all on the same plane. “Please fill us with Your grace and Love, Jesus!”

Immediately we (Pro-Love Tucson volunteers) found applications for our sidewalk advocacy work (outside of Tucson Women’s Center, Tucson’s only remaining abortion clinic). We were reminded that it is so important to communicate our care for the WOMEN (not only the unborn babies they are carrying). Extending non-shaming conversation, resources to help meet tangible needs and a grace-filled listening ear is our method of operation. When asked, “Are you pro-life?” we can respond that we are actually ProGrace! In essence “we believe all life is created by God and He has a plan in an unplanned pregnancy for both the woman and a child to THRIVE.”



Lucy volunteers as a sidewalk advocate outside the local Planned Parenthood office or Tucson Women’s Center weekly.

Heartfelt Thank You!....by Dennis

God has called Lucy and me to do a variety of things over the past 15 years or so. Through all those years He has blessed us with His presence, grace, support, safety, provision, direction and....(I could go on and on). We were and are still being blessed; it is not because of what we do, it is because He is a great and gracious God.

Over the past four years we have been blessed with the opportunity to bring four young girls from the Apache Indian Reservation to enroll them at Desert Christian School here in Tucson.

At first it seemed like an impossible task to take on. That is when the blessings started to flow. The mothers/family members of these girls trusted in us and allowed the girls to go. Then, we had to find host families for them, another major hurdle overcome. Lucy and I agreed to cover their tuition if funds could not be raised and to provide funding for all their sports fees, extra medical costs, school supplies and any expenses that would arise. As of this date tuitions have been covered by scholarships and donations through the Arizona Tax Credit program. Manos de Dios supporters have more than generously contributed to the other expenses associated with having teenage girls living in host family homes for four years. Another big and serious hurdle has been overcome. Getting the girls to acclimate to desert living, staying with host families they previously did not know and providing transportation to and from the Reservation during vacations and holidays, and again I say "major hurdle overcome." I could go on and on, but you get the picture.

At this point I want to say (again) thank you to God for all the blessings that He provides for us through our Manos de Dios supporters. Lucy and I can't thank our team (yes – it is a team effort) for all they have done and the sacrifices they have made in order to help these girls grow into the wonderful young ladies they are. The host families, financial supporters, prayer warriors, teachers, counselors, family members and friends that have played a part in this mission of love can't be thanked enough.

Because of this desire to help, we (all of us) have changed lives in a positive way and in ways we may never know for these girls and who-knows-who else.

We say thank you again for your support in so many ways and we are extremely happy and proud to be able to share the joy in the growth of Drelyn, Thearsa, Naomi and the girl-of-the-year, our first graduate and soon to be off to college - RISCILLA!

Manos de Dios Ministry contact info:

520.404.5045 (Lucy: voice or text)

520.245.2039 (Dennis: voice)

GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org

Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to:

Manos de Dios, NFP

2914 N Indian Ruins Road, Tucson AZ

85715 or made on our website:

ManosdeDios.org



**Lucy and
Dennis
celebrate
Thearsa's
8th grade
promo-
tion!**



Jennifer and Yosh meet! Jennifer and her husband, Eric, along with their 8th grade daughter, Dayna, will be hosting Naomi next school year. Yosh, Naomi's mom, is so grateful to meet Jennifer and to know that Naomi will be in a great home!