

Former Gallup student brings excitement to learning

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
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Honored by local Elks lodge

Mercedes Bischoff received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks Lodge 1440 Jan. 12.

The story of the honor goes back to Bischoff's years growing up in Gallup. In 2017 she applied to become a National Elks Legacy Scholar in order to receive scholarship funds. She won and chose to attend Gonzaga University in Washington State.

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But she didn't forget her home town. Bischoff used to attend Sacred Heart Schools and her mother taught at Del Norte Elementary School, where she herself taught as a substitute for one semester.

In August, while thinking about the problem of students disengagement due to remote instruction, she came up with an idea to inspire them.

She decided to create and distribute kits that included science projects, puzzles and books, arts and crafts projects to stimulate the minds of the students who had disconnected from Zoom and email instruction styles, "to instill that passion for learning."

She applied for a Cornerstone grant from the Elks in October and started reaching out to the schools in November with kits put together with her sister Camille.

On Jan. 12, she was honored at a kit giveaway by BPOE, Lodge 1440 and continued distributing those kits that were not picked up throughout the week.

She estimates she gave out around 50. Each one included "a book, an activity, and a mask, and a backpack.

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