

2021 Mono Lake Committee Scholarship

essay by Chyann Andrews



Looking out at Mono Lake I can't help but think of my ancestors, everything from the peaceful scenery to the comfort of knowing my ancestors are watching over me and protecting me. When you ask, why places like Mono Lake matter, it's because it holds history, from the very first people to the modern day, all the way down to when my great grandparents were but little children running through the sagebrush. Mono Lake tells its story of how it came to be and we tell that story to all who venture to our little town of Lee Vining. Looking out at Mono Lake makes me think about my people, gathering the kutsavi in their baskets and gathering pine nuts in the fall. It also makes me think of my people around the country and what all of us have had to endure; such as genocide, the pipeline dilemma, and the Indigenous women who go missing and are murdered almost every single day. Mono Lake inspires me to be a strong young Native American women who will put her people's best interests before her own, to gain equality that we so rightfully deserve. My success would be achieving an All-Tourney medal for volleyball, which is a high honor within my family because we are very sports-oriented, with winning medals and awards and going all the way back to my great grandfather, which if you've eaten at Bodie Mike's there's a picture on the wall with him and my great uncles (his brothers) with the team. My other successes would be receiving a certificate for Exemplary Mathematics Achievement, Honor Roll, and the Principal's List. My hardships would be being one of very few Native American students at Lee Vining High School and not having as many opportunities as other schools with more Native students as well as my peers.

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essay by Leonel Galindo

Mono Lake is lake where you find peace and quiet. A place where all of your worries go away, a place like no other. As I am writing this essay the birds are chirping, the sun is steaming, the only overpowering sound of the waves hitting shore. Mono Lake is a special place that should stay the way it is, this is a place like no other a place people come to relax to get away from all the stress they may have. My relationship with Mono Lake is a great one. For about one year I had the privilege to live right in front of it, right below Mono Inn. Every morning as I would get up I would look outside of my window and have spectacular view of the lake. Having the chance to live in that house made me realize how beautiful mother nature actually is, all of the sunsets and sunrises made me appreciate this little town a lot more. One thing that I am really grateful for is how inspired living down there made me before we moved to that house. I was at my all-time lowest. Nothing was helping me. I was so unmotivated to do anything. Once we moved into the beautiful home next to the lake it opened my eyes and helped me see the beautiful things in life, and by doing that it not only helped me mentally but also physically. My school grades were going up and

many things in my life were going my way, because of the way Mono Lake motivated me. It helped me achieve many of the goals I had in my life. Whenever I felt overwhelmed by school and my emotions, I could always look outside and enjoy a beautiful view. For example by me getting my grades up it helped me achieve one of my life time goals being accepted into a four year college. Sitting here on the ground looking at the beautiful view while reminiscing about all the good times I had in this town makes me realize how time passes by so quickly. Living in Mono Lake has shaped me into the person I am today, it taught me that I should never give up on myself and there's always room for improvement. It taught me to take a minute to stop and enjoy what life has given to me. This why places like this matter. We need places like Mono Lake to remind us all that even at our lowest, we still have something to look forward to. Not only was it the lake that had a huge impact on me but most importantly it was the community that helped push me and helped me see that anything is possible and because of this Mono Lake will always have a special place in my heart.