

4 STHS students stand out among their peers

Publisher's note: *Four seniors from South Tahoe High School were honored as Young Women of Distinction on Jan. 11 by Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe. The following is what their principal had to say about each young woman at the lunch.*

By Ivone Larson

Jocelyn DeLeon: As a calculus student in Mr. [Dave] Mason's class, Jocelyn DeLeon states, "It may be hard to believe, but math is actually fun! It is the best feeling ever when you do a long and hard problem and at the end you get the answer right." With a remarkable 4.0 gpa, her passion for school goes far beyond mathematics.



Hannah Green,
from left,
Willow Nelson,
Jocelyn
DeLeon, and
Alana Mosca.
Photo/Provided

As an AVID student since the seventh grade, Jocelyn has been actively involved in academics, extra-curricular activities and community service. Her outstanding academic record has earned her numerous ski passes at Sierra-at-Tahoe, a

President's Award at South Tahoe Middle School, several Golden State Student awards, and was the winner of the Soroptimist's Ann Frank 8th Grade Write Off.

She participated in cheerleading, competing at the state level in Las Vegas, ran track and field, and though she has never taken dance lessons, is trying something new this year by performing with the STHS Dance Team. In her spare time, Jocelyn volunteers at Barton Skilled Nursing Facility, volunteers for the Forest Service and currently serves as Generation Green vice president.

In her sophomore year, Jocelyn had the opportunity to go to a small village near Guadalajara, Mexico, for a month with a family friend. Seeing how little the people had and how they lived was life changing. She says, "I got to see where my family is from and I learned to appreciate all I have because my family has worked so hard to be where we are today."

Jocelyn has taken the initiative two years in a row to attend the Women in Engineering Awareness Day sponsored by the Society of Women Engineers, as she plans to major in math or engineering and minor in Spanish. Jocelyn has applied to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly Pomona, San Diego State, Sonoma State, and Santa Clara University, but Saint Mary's College of California is her first choice due to its small class size, high value of community service, and Catholic affiliation.

Jocelyn would like to honor her mother because, as a single parent working at Barton Hospital in housekeeping, she has done so much for her brother and herself. She is the definition of a hardworking, loving, caring, and responsible human being.

She says, "My mom has shown me how to be strong and inspired me to do well in school, so that I can someday live a better life than what she did. My main goal is to work hard to make my family proud."

Jocelyn hopes to pursue a career that she truly enjoys and to be able to help out her family financially. She is extremely proud to be the first generation to go to college.

Sue Channel, her AVID teacher, says of her, "Jocelyn is an extraordinary young woman who is determined to succeed. She manages rigorous AP and honors courses all while staying calm, gracious, maintaining a sense of humor and a close network of friends. I love the way she is so positive about the important things in her life: her family, her friends, her achievements. It is a pleasure to have her in class."

Jocelyn, not only are you the pride of your family, you have made your teachers, your school and your community proud. We wish you the best in all your future endeavors and look forward to seeing you inspiring the next generation to pursue their dreams of higher education.

Hannah Green: Hannah Green's mom has influenced her life greatly by providing her the opportunity to spend her summers in Japan with her grandparents. Her love for Asian life and culture is apparent in her pursuit of the Japanese language and culture, as well as her visits to other Asian countries, including Korea and China. Hannah has applied to UC Berkeley, UCLA, and UC Davis, but her first choice is UC Berkeley where she plans to major in math and Japanese, a passion she gained from parents who are instructors in those subject areas at Lake Tahoe Community College. She hopes to use her studies to become a translator and interpreter for an engineering company.

Hannah has been very active while attending South Tahoe High School and has participated in Friday Night Live, National Honor Society, tennis, and track. She has been on the Honor Roll, is an AP Scholar, and made the All State Academic team for tennis. With a 4.5 GPA, she has a very promising future. Her favorite class is mathematics, and the reason her father is not able to attend today is that he will be her linear

algebra teacher and the class begins any moment.

Hannah spends her free time either singing soprano, having sung with the Blue Ribbon Choir, connecting with friends online, or reading in Japanese. She is especially fond of "Manga", a type of Japanese comic. She hopes to someday reside in Tokyo where she can use her academic talents, as well as spend time shopping in the world-renowned Harajuku Station area.

Bridey Heidel, one of Hannah's favorite teachers, says of her, "Hannah Green is an exceptionally sweet, young woman. She has poise, manners, and an absolute sense of who she is; in fact, I cannot imagine Hannah compromising herself in any situation. Although reticent to speak in front of others, I know that with her friends she is charismatic and from what I hear, could even be called hyper – which is a bit unbelievable – but I think this is because she and her friends share a love of all things Japanese, particularly the make-up and fashion of Harajuku girls. If you can get Hannah talking on this subject, she suddenly becomes anime herself – her eyes widen, her conversation quickens, and she is truly in her comfort zone. It is not often that our quieter students receive such accolades, so I was thrilled to hear that Hannah Green is being celebrated by the Soroptimist. She is deserving of great applause, and I join you as she receives it."

Hanna, although you are considered to be quiet and reserved, your accomplishments speak very loudly for you. On behalf of our community, best wishes in reaching your dreams and *domo arigato!*

Alana Mosca: This young woman's goal in 10 years is to be in a career helping people as an OB or ICU nurse. Alana Mosca doesn't feel a need to stay close to home, which is evident in the list of schools to which she has applied, including Westminster, University of Portland, University of New England, University of Arizona, and has already been accepted

to Northern Arizona University and her first choice, Gonzaga.

Alana keeps busy by working at both Raley's and the Beacon Bar & Grill, playing club volleyball and playing on the South Tahoe High School volleyball team. She was the captain of her volleyball team in her junior year, volunteers for beach clean up, and assisted with the Soroptimist fundraising event for volleyball.

Although English is her favorite subject, she has gained national fame for her extraordinary photography skills taking first place in the Congressional Art Competition. Currently, her photograph hangs in Washington, D.C., for all to see.

Alana closely connects with two individuals in her life. First and foremost, her mother for always being there for her no matter what and feels she wouldn't be anything without her, and second, Girlfriend, her yellow Lab. Girlfriend, who has been Alana's companion since second grade, is her confidant and companion. Alana declares she doesn't know how she will live without her Lab in college. Well, it looks like she will need to teach Girlfriend how to Skype so they can stay in touch.

Frank Kovac, her English teacher, states, "Alana exudes confidence in herself and compassion for others. I have seen her in many different arenas: playing volleyball with intense competitiveness and focus, at the scorer's table correcting game officials, and in the classroom leading – yes, leading – high-level discussions. I have also seen Alana interact with adults and peers demonstrating a sincere caring and love for others. She is a tremendous human being, and one Aldous Huxley would be proud to call an Alpha!"

Alana, with your incredible talents and your caring personality, you exemplify the change we all want to see in this "Brave New World!"

Willow Nelson: Willow Nelson loves science, especially

advanced placement biology, as genetics fascinate her. She has applied to various top schools but hopes to go attend UC Berkeley or UC Santa Cruz. With a 4.22 gpa, any top school would be lucky to have her as a student. Although unsure of the specific science path at the university, she is considering majoring in entomology, natural medicine, or marine biology. She aspires to study abroad in hopes to research the impact of oil spills on marine life, or discover how a bug's life cycle affects its surrounding environment.

Willow enjoys learning, as evidenced by her numerous hobbies and interests, including pencil drawing, scratchboard, playing the flute, playing soccer, and most of all, losing herself in a good book. She is a member of the Generation Green Club and has been a member of the National Honor Society for over three years. In her spare time, she tutors, babysits and volunteers for the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. Willow has been named athlete of the season, made first team defender for girls' soccer this year, and made the Nevada All State Academic Team in her freshman, sophomore, junior years and is optimistic she will be honored this year also. Having played since just 4 years old, Willow hopes to continue playing soccer throughout college.

Willow claims, "I am a hard worker and will stop at nothing to achieve my dreams."

Willow attributes her successes to her mother and father who made every effort to give her and her brothers the best life possible. Her mom's influence on her life has been great, as she had to drop out of school to support herself, yet she has achieved and succeeded at the highest level. Not only did her mother raise her children while going to school, she is now working on her master's degree and hopes to graduate the same time Willow does. Congratulations on working on your educational goals together!

Math teacher Nancy Dalton states, "As a genuinely caring and

compassionate person, Willow is a delight to teach. She manages her demanding rigorous schedule with her athletic endeavors quite remarkably while maintaining her positive attitude and respectful behavior. Her determination, coupled with her dedication in every facet of her life, shows through in all her activities both in and out of the classroom. She is a role model to her peers and leads by quiet example. She is quite deserving of this recognition as she truly is a Young Woman of Distinction.”

With its green rolling hills, Ireland is calling Willow to her shores. As a future keeper of our environment, I can't imagine a better place for Willow to spend her years, and am grateful to know the future of our world is in such capable hands.