

LTCC graduation – the ultimate Coyote howl



LTCC class of 2017 graduates throw their mortar boards in celebration June 30. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

While graduations are a time to celebrate accomplishments, they are also the demarcation of new beginnings.

And so today begins a new chapter in the lives of 151 students who on June 30 said farewell to Lake Tahoe Community College.

“Take a piece of Tahoe love and spread it across the planet and the planet will be better for it,” Lake Tahoe Community College President Jeff DeFranco told the graduates Friday night.



Steve Leer says, "I'm very excited about this moment" as LTCC board President Karen Borges hands him his diploma. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Sitting on the soccer field under a setting sun, it was mostly a time to look forward – not back; to think about the future, of pursuing dreams, tackling challenges and being true to themselves.



Family and friends show support with cameras and signs.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

“Passion plus purpose equals success,” DeFranco said.

Keynote speaker Jamie Anderson spoke of how it can be difficult to be your best when there is so much chaos going on.



Jamie Anderson, center, enters the stadium flanked by Vice President of Academic Affairs Michelle Risdon and President Jeff DeFranco. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“Don’t be afraid of outside judgment,” the snowboarding Olympic gold medalist said.

Anderson grew up with her eight siblings in Meyers and is still very much part of the community. Her younger sister, Summer, was among the graduates.



Maura Jones and son Ryder accomplished a lot together.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Mark Williams, faculty senate president and music instructor, said he had struggled to find anything new to say that hadn't been said at some other graduation. So, he broke into song – and at the end it was the students who gave him a standing ovation.



A few hundred people listen to the graduation speakers June 30. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Ten of those receiving associate of arts degrees had a 4.0 gpa. Twenty-six had grade point averages between 3.65 and 3.99. Seventy-eight of these AA degree earners also received a transfer degree, which guarantees them entry as a junior at a California State University this fall.



Jose Martinez approaches board President Karen Borges and college President Jeff DeFranco. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Also honored at the graduation were the 38 students who completed a vocational certificate program.

Diversity was evident with the reading of each student's name as they crossed the stage to receive their diploma. Not all were of traditional college age. One woman held her young son. Four who could not attend were part of LTCC's incarceration program. Six flags from countries other than the United States flew in recognition of the international students graduating.