

Carlos Molinar



It is my honor to introduce Carlos Molinar as our next Courage Award recipient.

Teddy Bear - This may not be the first impression when you see Carlos, a wrestler and football player at Tempe High. But this is how his Aunt Jessica describes him, because, behind that strong exterior, is a young man who is known for giving big hugs to remind you that he's there for you. What makes this gesture more moving, is the love that Carlos continues to give in spite of the loss he has endured.

With no question, 2020 has been a hard year for all of us, but for some, the ongoing pandemic has brought greater hardship and greater damage. For Carlos, the pandemic brought on a loss that none of us would hope to face. In his Fall semester, Carlos' mother tragically passed away due to COVID-19. Having lost his primary parent and losing his job as a senior, Carlos's aunt and uncle ensured that he would complete high school as they welcomed him to their home. And while this speech was being written, Carlos and his family also lost their grandmother. Something that has brought much heartbreak, especially to his aunt.

True to his nature, Carlos has been able to bring comfort to his family while also seeking their support. This is evident as his aunt has plenty to share about why they love him so much and how they are so proud of him. "Carlos is a hard worker, thoughtful person and good cook" says his Aunt Jessica. She continues by saying that, "when I need a hug, he's always there to greet me when I come home." Carlos' culinary teacher and Courage award nominator, Ms. Oeschler (whom Carlos calls Ms. O) can attest to his cooking skills in her class. But beyond his cooking abilities, Carlos' work

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ethics shine in the classroom as he would ask his teacher every day, “Ms. O, what help do you need today?” He does what doesn’t have to be done and he spreads positivity and encouragement to his peers at the same time. This may not be too surprising as Ms. O is his favorite teacher and culinary is his favorite class. Who doesn’t like good food? Simply put it, Carlos is a doer as Ms. O will share and even in the face of adversity.

But this is just one part of the story. For what has not been mentioned, is that prior to his mother’s and grandmother’s death, Carlos endured multiple injuries doing what he loved, playing football and wrestling in high school. This led to multiple injuries and physical rehabilitation that made him unable to play at times. Nevertheless, this did not deter his motivation and drive to support his teammates as he always made a point to attend their games and cheer them on. As an athlete, one may think that Carlos couldn’t always finish the season, but as a teammate, without a doubt, he always did. In an appropriate analogy, coming from a culinary teacher, Ms. O gives a smile as she states that, “when life gives him lemons, he makes lemonade.”

To that point, Carlos is determined to graduate high school this year. While he would love to return to campus in-person, getting there will not be feasible as he now lives in Apache Junction with his aunt and uncle’ family. But not one to sit around, Carlos finds way to stay physically active by doing chores around the house to help his family which also promotes his love for weight training.

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Carlos would like to thank his aunt, uncle and two older brothers for being there for him and helping him in doing his best when he has needed it the most.

So, while Carlos may have been born to be an athlete, he has also become is an inspiration to others. Therefore, on behalf of the City of Tempe, it is my honor recognize Carlos Molinar with a 2021 Courage Award.