

Yanahara Taylor Quevado



I would like to introduce to you a young woman named Yanahara Taylor Quevedo. Yanahara is an inspiring and energetic 6th grade student at Kyrene Traditional Academy. Yanahara has an uplifting and positive personality that matches a radiant smile.

Though she has such a sunny disposition, she has faced obstacles and tragedy. In the spring of 2020 during the first wave of the pandemic, there was an accident at home and Yanahara's mother died. Even more devastating, Yanahara and her brother were at home and witnessed the accident.

Yanahara's mother was very involved and the foundation of their family. When Yanahara's world was turned upside down, she did not have the safety, the routine and security of school, or close friends to fall back on. Yanahara and her brother moved in with their aunt and uncle and their 5 children in a three-bedroom house, while grieving not only the loss of their school community, but most importantly, the death of their mother. Yanahara wishes she could tell her mom that she loves her, and say, "thank you for taking such good care of me for the first 10 years of my life". For most people this would have been the cause of a fundamental change in behavior and social connection.

However, Yanahara started this school year ready to prioritize her education and focus on moving forward. She has a drive, such that many could only dream of having. With all that Yanahara has overcome, she is most proud of herself for overcoming grief and depression. Yanahara describes her feeling of being down as "this big grief

Yanahara Taylor Quevado



wave was on top of me”. She told herself to keep going and never give up. She says, “I now feel normal again and can do anything. I got my fun vibes back”.

Yanahara is inspired by her aunt Karla, for working hard every day and doing her best for all seven children. Karla encourages Yanahara to be kind others, work hard and stand up for herself.

Yanahara demonstrated her commitment to school by being one of the few 6th graders who were willing to record a short video discussing what Kyrene Traditional Academy means to them. She volunteered her time and infectious energy to share her positive feelings about her school. When we were in person, teachers would always find themselves the recipient of a hand drawn picture, or a caring and thoughtful note. Even with all of the adversity she has faced, she still showers the people she cares about with love and kindness.

Yanahara would like to give many thanks to all her teachers for helping her learn so much and get through her classes. She would also like to thank her brother, Javin, who is “the best dude in the world”. She says she never wants him to say he will give up. Yanahara says, “I know I’m going to do great and dab for everyone”, as she expresses a gesture of triumph and playfulness.

Yanahara, on behalf of the City of Tempe, and in honor of your strength and perseverance, I am proud to present you with this 2021 Youthfest Courage Award.