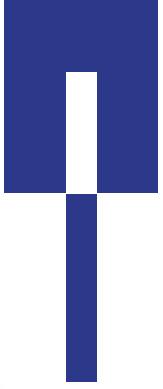


STUDENTS FIRST

CLASS OF 2023 EDITION

GRADUATION & PROMOTION



A Class of Extraordinary 1,482 Graduates, P



THE graduating and promoting students of the Class of 2023's journey was like none before in the school district's 35 years history.

It was of extraordinary resilience.

These public school students survived super typhoon Yutu in 2018 and, its immediate aftermath, the havoc it brought to classrooms and school facilities, and the community, in general.

Two years later, the first recorded instance of person-to-person spread of the 2019 Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) in the United States shuttered in-person learning: it reached the shores of the Northern Marianas in March 2020.

The Commonwealth's public school students have to navigate learning with back-to-back challenges.

Education leaders and the community rallied around to support the continued learning of its nearly 10,000 public elementary, middle, and high school students.

'You Have A Bright Future'



Dr. Alfred B. Ada
Commissioner of Education

I am proud of each of you and the resiliency you have shown throughout all the challenges and uncertainties. Each of you have amazing stories to tell and each of you are ready to tackle new challenges, accomplish bigger milestones, and make many more memories.

What you have accomplished is tremendous milestone.

To our middle school promoted students, as you enter the next chapter of your life, my advice to you is to be flexible in your thinking, seek to learn something new, and diversify your experiences. When you stop learning, you stop growing as a person. Treat every experience as a learning experience.

To our high school graduates, you are entering a new phase in life. You are on the cusp of greater personal freedom, navigating life's choices as adults that are increasingly becoming available as we grow mature.

My advice to you is to be flexible in your thinking, seek to learn something new, and diversify your experiences. When you stop learning, you stop growing as a person. Treat every experience as a learning experience. The learning experiences that I had in these past few years as your PSS Commissioner helped shape my thinking on how to address learning, health, and safety in our school district. Can you imagine what would have happened if we were not flexible in adapting to change like we did throughout the typhoons and pandemic? As we have seen during this past year, the problems are going to get more and more complex, and we will need people like you to be creative and improvise new solutions to these complex issues.

My wishes for you, Class of 2023, are:

- I wish each of you all of the success that you dream for yourself.
- I wish you the courage and good fortune to someday find work that you feel passionate about rather than settling for one that neither challenges, nor fulfills you.
- I wish you a sense of satisfaction and self-worth that comes from using some of your talents and some of your energy to help others who are in need.
- I wish you the wisdom to hold onto the love of family and friends on both the good and bad days.
- I wish you the perspective to forgive yourself and learn from the mistakes which are inevitable.
- I wish you the strength to never give up, because by not giving up, you will always have a chance to accomplish whatever you want to do in life.
- Finally, and probably the most difficult, I wish that you live every day in the present, appreciate each and every day of your life. When you live in the present, your days will eventually turn into memories worth looking back at- memories that will be your source of encouragement to keep pushing forward.

Class of 2023, you have a bright future in this new and challenging world.

We are very proud of you, and we will be rooting for you as you navigate your own journeys

Your Public School System is proud of you.

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Quotes

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y Resilience: Promoted

With the support of the Board of Education, it affirmed the Public School System's direction for growth and its characteristic of resilience and its leaders' commitment to innovate and improvise during hardships and challenges

The PSS has successfully graduated 747 high school seniors who are now pursuing college education, join the United States Armed Forces, or explore the workforce for career opportunities.

There are 735 eight-graders who are now entering high school by the new school year.

It is a celebration of defying challenging and difficulties, both Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada said.



'Learning shaped you in a remarkable person you are today'

Today, we come together to celebrate your graduation and promotion— milestones marking years of dedication, resilience, and perseverance. You've gracefully navigated the seas of academic and personal growth.

Your journey as middle school and high school students is reflection of your strength and perseverance, demonstrating fortitude, tenacity, and most notably, consistency. Consistency in your dedication to learning, in your friendships, and in the unwavering spirit with which you've tackled every challenge.

Now, you stand on the brink of a thrilling new chapter.

As you transition into the next phase, carry these traits with you. Embrace challenges as opportunities to build character and strength. Remember, it's perfectly okay to not know all the answers immediately; the journey of learning, of growing, and of becoming, is not a race, but a path marked by consistent effort and determination.

Remember your Public School System, with the support of your Board of Education policymakers, has equipped you

with a foundation of knowledge and skills, both academic and personal, that will serve you well in the years ahead. The challenges you've overcome have all contributed to shaping you into the remarkable individuals you are today.

To our high school graduates, as you venture into new territories - be it further education, a career, or service – I urge you to immerse yourself in every experience. Embrace every challenge, savor every success, learn from every setback, and let each step on your journey be marked by the strength of your heart's commitment. This approach ensures not only a fulfilling journey, but also a life lived to its fullest potential.

To our eight grade students, we salute your resilience, we celebrate your achievements, and we eagerly anticipate the remarkable successes you are destined to achieve.

On behalf of the 18th CNMI State Board of Education, congratulations, Class of 2023. Your journey, taken wholeheartedly, has made us immensely proud.



Antonio L. Borja
Chairman, 18th CNMI
Board of Education



Quotes





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Tinian Senior High School graduates 41



AFTER being pushed back following the threat of typhoon Mawar, the Public School System has officially begun the Class of 2023 graduation and promotion activities on May 27.

Forty-one Tinian High School seniors are now going to college and or join the military in a ceremony that gathered everyone in the island community together.

Education leaders and students themselves described the Class of 2023 as the most “tested” batch: having to go through a super typhoon, the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of typhoon Mawar, which led to the rescheduling of the commencement program that was initially set for May 22.

This year’s class valedictorian is Ryan Michael Achacoso Nuera. Nuera is also the recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award which was presented by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.

Nuera was also presented with the special BOE Award for his service as Students Representative to the policymaking and governing body of the Public School System. Nuera was appointed last year.

Class salutatorian and Commissioner of Education Academic

Excellence Award recipient is Saim Ali. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada was joined by interim Federal Programs Officer Jacqueline Che and interim Instructional Technical and Distance Education Program Director Lorraine Catienza in presenting the award.

Joining Nuera and Ali in the top 10 are: (10) Gio Palmitos Vergara; (9) Jun Jie Luo; (8) Christian Carlo Libut Sanchez; (7) Chad Andrei Llanora Acollador; (6) Ismail Imran Veri Hossain; (5) Guillermina Rose Cruz San Nicolas; (4) Hazel Anne Pablo Mabansag, and (3) Isa Liana King Reyes.

Valedictorian Nuera is also the recipient of the Governor Award.

Students Ciara Gabrielle Barcinas Santos is the Lt. Governor’s Award recipient.

The Mayor’s Award was presented to salutatorian Saim Ali.

The Outstanding Female Graduate Award was presented to Isa Liana King Reyes.

Principal Liz Perzinski and Vice Principal Nikita Mendiola presented the Principal’s School Leadership Award to Hazel Anne Pablo Mabansag.

The PTSA Award recipient is Chad Andrei Llanora Acollador.

Proud

In his speech, Valedictorian Nuera said he is proud of his class for their strength and resiliency to succeed.

"I am filled with gratitude, awe, and admiration for each one of you. We have endured hardships that have tested our spirit, but it is through these challenges that we have truly discovered our strength, resilience, and unwavering determination. Our class went through a super typhoon, a pandemic, and many other things, yet we stand here together, and I just want to say I'm proud of each one of you," Valedictorian Nuera said.

He expressed his appreciation to his TJSHS teachers and staff who were his "guiding light...providing us with knowledge, wisdom, and unwavering support."

"Through the relentless storms and trials we faced, a literal typhoon, your dedication to our education never wavered. Whether it was the aftermath of super typhoon Yutu or the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, you worked tirelessly to ensure that we continued to learn and grow. You showed us that education knows no boundaries, and for that, we are eternally gratefully," said Nuera.

He honored his fellow graduates "for turn(ing) obstacles into stepping-stones, setbacks into comebacks, and challenges into opportunities."

Nuera also praised salutatorian Ali for being dedicated and hardworking. "I know. You will soar to even greater heights in the future."

He honored his tita Japie and his parents for their unwavering support, conditional love and belief in his abilities. "Thank you for taking care of me and raising me to the person I am today.."

Class Salutatorian Ali said he is filled with a great sense of happiness and accomplishment. "To be able to stand here today and claim that we have earned the right to do so, my peers and I have worked very hard over the past four years. It was by no means simple, and there were many times when I worried that the covid-19 pandemic, which has impacted us all, would prevent me from crossing the finish line. But those difficulties have just enhanced the sweetness of this moment."

Ali acknowledged everyone "that have made a positive impact" throughout his educational journey.

"I discovered through my high school experience that education is a process that starts at home and continues through school, the workplace, and the rest of the world. Education cannot be accomplished or measured in a single day, a single test, or a single year. It's a lifelong

journey that builds on success in the early stages of learning to create a foundation for learning later."

Ali thanked "Grandma Daria Cing for being my mentor when I first arrived in the CNMI in 2013... (from) starting to learn English...to assisting me to finish my schoolwork every day. Those experiences laid the foundation for my current academic success".

Ali said he would not have achieved great things if not for his parents: "Thank you Mom and Dad for the love. Today I look at my life and realize that I achieved great things because of your prayers and good counsel. I have seen the importance of having parents who believed in me before I even knew my own goals. Your good actions and positive words are forever engraved in my heart. Cheers to the greatest parents on earth. To a mom who would do anything to ensure I was comfortable and to a dad who did everything to provide the best he could, I will forever cherish you guys."

New generation of leaders

In his address, Board of Education Chairman and Tinian representative Antonio L. Borja said the graduating class of 2023 is the next generation of leaders.

"I challenge all of you to comeback to Tinian after what you have experienced in the real world, share what you've learned...Tinian needs you," BOE Chairman Borja said.

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada advised graduates to be "flexible in your thinking, seek to learn something new, and diversify your experiences."

"Class of 2023, you have a bright future in this new and challenging world. Embrace the opportunities. We look forward to seeing where your adventures will take you, and how each of you will make a difference," Dr. Ada said.

Vice Principal Nikita Mendiola was voted as keynote speaker of the graduating class.

Mendiola encouraged her graduating class to "listen and follow directions, be honest, respect the rights of others, and never stop learning".

"Now that you're adults, I want to encourage to still think of the words and use them to remind yourselves that you are in control of your own destiny and your success," Mendiola said.



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Francisco M. Sablan Middle School promotes 141 to high school



Caleb Jack L. Sablan is this year's class valedictorian. He received the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and BOE Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja.



George Samuel D. Vinuya is class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Award which was presented by Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna.

1 41 of Francisco M. Sablan Middle School are moving into high school during its promotion ceremony May 30 at the Koblerville gymnasium.

Known as the “Napu Riders of 2023”, Principal Cherlyn Cabrera Osung described the promotes as “supertyphoon proof, pandemic-proof, storm-proof, power-outage proof, and, waterproof”. Napu is a term for “ocean wave”.

The promoted class of FMS chose their theme, “We paddle through the waves, always ready for a new beginning”.

Leading the 141 promoted students is Caleb Jack L. Sablan as its class valedictorian. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Board of Education Academic Excellence Award. BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and BOE Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja presented the award.

Named second top promoted student is George Samuel D. Vinuya, who received his salutatorian and Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award from Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna.

The Excellence in Leadership Award was presented Jude Solidum Burgos. Principal Osung and Vice Principal Catherine Acera-Cabrera presented.

Eleven academic subject awards were also announced yesterday. Four of these other academic excellence, subject awards for Science, Language Arts, Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies, and Fine Arts, went to class valedictorian Sablan.

Four of the awards – Excellence in Physical Education, Mathematics, Fine Arts, and Project Lead the Way/Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – went to the class salutatorian Vinuya.

Three awards – excellence in the subject of computer literacy III, Chamorro Language and Heritage Studies, and Social Studies - went to Jared May L. Famularcano.

Daniel Sano received the Distinguished Middle School Leadership Corps Award for Leadership Excellence, for his “commendable conduct in the performance of outstanding service as the commander of cadets” and for “distinguished performance and outstanding leadership”.

The popular Jared Clint Villagomez Manahane received the “Napu Spirit Award” for “exemplifying amazing school spirit and citizenship” and “a true Napu Rider who rides the wave to success, commitment and perseverance, when no task was too big, and no effort too small”.

Worked hard for it

In his address, class valedictorian Sablan paid tribute to his promoted peers.

“Class of 2023, we made it. We completed three whole years of middle school, and we are now going to high school. We did it even though there was a global pandemic that affected our way of life. Congratulations everyone.”

It was on his eight grade that Sablan found out that he was in the running for the top honor. “That was when I decided I wanted it. I worked hard for it, pushed myself for it, and became ambitious for it. All my



hardwork paid off," he said. "No reward will ever make me happier than the journey I took to achieve it. My journey from the first year I attended FMS to now has made me way happier than finding out that I was valedictorian."

Sablan thanked his parents, Jack and Pon Sablan, for providing him with all the needed support, and his aunt and grandmother for everything.

He paid honor to his friends, teachers, classmates and school leaders for helping him accomplish his goal.

Tough journey

Class salutarian Vinuya acknowledged that despite all the disasters they faced, they are ready to move into high school.

"It is indeed an amazing and tough journey. Despite all the disaster in life, we stood still, we are flexible to any disaster, and we are ready to face the next challenge of our life—and that is high school", said Vinuya.

Being a "napu rider," said Vinuya is a great feeling because this a place where knowledge, wisdom, memories, and unforgettable experiences were acquired".

"We learned not only the academics but lifelong learning skills and helped us how to be responsible, persistent, and a good team leader. Serving as active member in various clubs shaped me to become a better version of me," Vinuya said.

The class salutarian dedicated his success to his parents and sister. "I know I kept this as a surprise to you. Please stand up and be recognized for being so supportive of me and FMS. I'll be trying my hardest in high school so I can be more successful and make you proud."

Milestone

This year's batch of promoted students, like their peers from all of Saipan, Tinian and Rota public schools, must experience the challenges of learning caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

For nearly three years, the PSS delivered uninterrupted learning and instruction through online learning.

"We have endured a profound disaster. But we did it all together. Today, we are celebrating a tremendous milestone; my dear promotes, each one of you earned an individual milestone,

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada said.

"Three years ago we have to close our schools to ensure we and you are all safe. We have to establish protocols, procure masks and hand sanitizers and implement strict sanitations. You learned while socially distanced."



The Excellence in Leadership Award was presented to Jude Solidum Burgos by Principal Cherlyn Cabrera Osung and Vice Principal Catherine Acera-Cabrera.





Community members from Saipan, Tinian and Rota paid tribute to the Marianas High School Class of 2023 on Tuesday afternoon at the MHS gymnasium, which was filled to capacity.

359 seniors graduate from Marianas High School



MARIANAS High School on May 30 celebrated 359 graduating students during a commencement ceremony of the largest public school in the commonwealth.

After graduation, most of the students will pursue college – about 70 percent attending community college or university. Less than 10 percent of the high school graduates will join the U.S. Armed Forces, and about 20 percent are exploring career opportunities, Marianas High School said.

Class valedictorian is One An and recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award. He received the award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja who was joined by Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja and Board Members Maisie B. Tenorio and Andrew L. Orsini and BOE Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora Borja Miura.

An will be attending the University of Pennsylvania and will double major in Logic Computation & information and will major in mathematics.

Class salutatorian is Brigit Len Yumul Tabuena. She was also presented with the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award by Dr. Alfred B. Ada who was joined by Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna.

Tabuena will be attending Bowdoin College in Maine majoring in biology.

Joining An and Tabuena in the top 10 are: (3) Amena Zhai Mahmud, who will be attending Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and will major in secondary education; (4) Jaehoon Son will be attending Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania majoring in computer engineering; (5) Anastasia Danilovna Shamanaeva; (6) Sydney Lim will be attending Washington University in St. Louis Missouri and will major in either neuroscience or biology; (7) Carson Lin will attending Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania

and will double major in computer science and engineering; (8) Angel Ren will be attending University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and will major in pre-pharmacy; (9) Katie Eun-bi Choi will be attending Ohio State University and will major in data analytics, and (10) Yiwen “Wendy” Zha will be attending Washington University in St. Louis.

Several department content area awards were also announced yesterday. The recipients are: Anastasia Danilovna Shamanaeva and Zenn Ichiro Enriquez Tomokane (Language Arts Award); Zenna Ichiro Tomokane and Melva Toweisa Mafnas (Language Other Than English Award); One An and Carson Lin (Mathematics Award and Science Award); Brigit Len Yumul Tabuena and Mylan Elise Goodwin (Social Studies Award), and Kyle Onet Macairap Salcedo and Zahan Khazah Mettao Hossain (Physical Education Award).

The MHS Male Athlete Award was presented to Dylan Michael Mister and the MHS Female Athlete Award went to Kina Neisuupi Pua Rangamar.

The JROTC Award recipients are Sidney Lim and Shaina Heart Asuncion Dimalanta.

The Career Technical Education Award went to Mercedes Diana Lyn Paras Cabrera and Zahan Khazah Mettao Hossain.

Other awards

The Governor’s Leadership Award was presented to Zenn Ichiro Enriquez Tomokane, while the Lt. Governor’s Leadership Award went to Mary Grace Potian Caras.

The Saipan Mayor’s Citizenship Award was presented to Mark Edhrem Nimes Alvaro.

The CNMI Youth Congress Stole was given to Zenn Ichiro Enriquez Tomokane as the graduating youth congress senator.



The Top 10 graduates of Marianas High School: L-R: One An, Brigit Len Yumul Tabuena, Amena Zhai Mahmud, Jaehoon Son, Anastasia Danilovna Shamanaeva, Sydney Lim, Carson Lin, Angel Ren, Katie Eun-bi Choi, and Yiwen "Wendy" Zha. They were joined on stage by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, BOE Member Maisie B. Tenorio and Andrew L. Orsini, Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora B. Miura, Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada, Associate Commissioner Eric Magofna, MHS Principal Jonathan Aguon and Vice Principals Melanie Sablan-Rdiall, Preston Basa and Romolo Orsini.

The Outstanding Female Graduate Award was presented to Anastasia Danilovna Shamanaeva.

The Principal's Award went to Zhen Yu Dong "Steven Dong".

The Dolphin Award was presented to AJ Johnny.

'Follow your passion'

Class valedictorian An advised his fellow graduates to follow their passion— and not goals.

"I have some advise for everyone after trying really hard in high school. I am essentially your trial rat in a way. I would like to tell everyone that contrary to what everyone thinks that goals such as trying to be valedictorian is unwise. It's a label that I'm grateful for, but the real value some from everything that happened in between," An said in his valedictory remarks.

"And realistically, the dopamine rush we get from achieving goals is temporary and often meaningless in the end; however, when you follow your passion, every single moment is what you want, not just in the end.



So I would advise everyone where ever they're in life to follow their passion, not goals".

He added, "If I just wanted to be a valedictorian, that would have been pretty miserable, but I tried my best to treat every day as part of my passion, making life more bearable. And eventually, what you wanted also follows."

He thanked everyone who helped him succeed. "Besides my wheelchair, which did indeed help me get here, I would like to thank all my teachers..."

An thanked his grandparents and his mother for being supportive all the way.

Fun, challenging

Salutatorian Tabuena in her remarks said her high school journey was fun and challenging both emotionally and mentally.

"It was really something to get to this position, but the journey was so much fun and challenged me emotionally and mentally," Tabuena said.

"We aren't the perfect graduating class, but we did our best. Not only did we strive to enjoy every moment, but we were also flexible and resilient through anything: the pandemic, all the storms, all the challenges," she told her graduating peers.

She thanked her friends, classmates and groupmates and her MHS teachers and school leaders for all support.

To her family, she is grateful for reminding her of what love feels like.

"Thank you for always reminding me to eat, taking me out to celebrate the littlest things, and being there through the craziest cries," Tabuena said in honoring her family.

Tabuena also extolled the graduating class to make a difference. "I believe that you all guys are worth so much and that all of you could contribute to making a difference in anything you want or would like."

"There are probably things you wish you did or did differently in high school. So while you're aware of them, do what you've always wanted to do if you still can," she said.



The valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Award recipient tGregorio Joseph Magofna Rodriguez received the award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.



Mary Devine Esteves Amog is the class of 2023 salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada presented the award and assisted by Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna.

80 Chacha Oceanview Middle School students are promoted to high school



McKelly Mariana Ada Reyes is the recipient of the Principal's Award.

8 0 Chacha Oceanview Middle School were promoted to high school in ceremony on May 31.

Interim Principal Carla Sablan described the promoted eight grade students as academically competitive group. Most of the promoted students are members of the Youth Advisory Panel, National Junior Honor Society, Chamorro Language and Heritage Studies group, athletes, and multiple gold medal winners of this year's University of Guam's CHamoru language competition. These eight graders help bring all of PSS schools' medal tally of about 38 medals in various competition categories. The annual Inacha'igen Fino' CHamoru is the largest competition in the Marianas that promotes the Chamorro language.

When the new school year starts on August 22, the promoted students will attend Kagman High School, a feeder school to Chacha Oceanview Middle School.

Class valedictorian and recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award is Gregorio Joseph Magofna Rodriguez. BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio presented the award.

Mary Devine Esteves Amog is the class of 2023 salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada presented the award and assisted by Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna.

The leadership award was presented to Anastacia Remarii Minor.

Santiago Lucas Seman received the lanceru spirit award.

McKelly Mariana Ada Reyes is the recipient of the Principal's Award.

Ten subject awards were presented to four students: English language arts and science were presented to salutatorian Mary Divine Esteves Amog; math and leadership corps went to the class valedictorian Gregorio Joseph Magofna Rodriguez, social studies subject, and physical education, business mass, and woodshop went to Tina Marie Dela Cruz Kaneshi, and Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies was presented to McKelly Mariana Ada Reyes.



Subject awards

The presentation of ten subject awards was another highlight to the promotion ceremony.

Two subject awards – English language arts and science were presented to salutatorian Mary Divine Esteves Amog.

Subject awards for math and leadership corps went to the class valedictorian Gregorio Joseph Magofna Rodriguez.

The social studies subject, and physical education, business mass, and woodshop went to Tina Marie Dela Cruz Kaneshi.

The subject award for Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies was presented to McKelly Mariana Ada Reyes.

‘Like a basketball’

Valedictorian Rodriguez described his middle school journey like playing a basketball.

“Basketball is more than a sport. Basketball taught me self discipline, teamwork and perseverance. I have had my fair share of trials and tribulation during my journey through middle school. From navigating through new halls of a new school to navigating through myself as I continuously evolve as a student and individual; ‘stress free’ has become a foreign friend,” Rodriguez said. “We are all undergoing change- physically, and mentally; and just like in basketball, we are all just trying to improve in our position.

He also acknowledged remarkable individuals who have paved the way and guided him in his middle school success: his COVMS educators.

In honoring his teachers, Rodriguez is reminded of his mother. “My mother herself was an educator for over a decade, and I grew up witnessing a of her hardwork, late nights and early mornings go unseen. Teachers help mold tomorrow’s leaders and for that, we are eternally grateful.

He also thanked his sisters – Nana and Leilei – for their unconditional

willingness to help him.

And of his parents sacrifices, Rodriguez said he is thankful. “Through their sweat I am fortunate to have the luxury of prioritizing my education with no worry.”

Step closer

Class salutatorian Mary Devine Esteves Amog described for her classmates and peers their promotion as a step closer to the realization of their journey to succeed in life.

“To most of us, this day is a step closer and the beginning of a chapter in the journey of our educational lives, because we have to admit, our sixth, seventh and eighth grade journeys have not been easy,” Amog said. “We’ve weathered many storms along with the challenges to exist a hundred percent online in order to gain an education.”

She added, “We came back on campus slowly, but it was like starting a new school year over and over again.”

Amog thanked Raven Fital for composing their class of 2023 promotion theme: “The greatest rewards come after the hardest battle”.

“As straight forward our theme is, let your everyday battles continue to challenge you, let it take you all somewhere. Your battles should be taken as a starting point for further achievements, because your reward or rewards in the future create new opportunities to continue growing and learning with which you will carry out for the rest of your lives,” salutatorian Amog said.

She dedicated her award to her family. “Thank you for your continued support since I’ve started by education. I know me being up here has made you proud, and I will continue to make you proud.”

“To my lolo and lola, you have been the foundation of our successes as a family. You have given you children the wisest of wisdoms to carry over us, to your grandchildren.”



The 80 promoted Chacha Oceanview Middle School students perform to their families, friends and the community during the culmination of their promotion ceremony last Wednesday at Saipan World Resort. (MV Photo)



Kagman High School graduates 139



Class valedictorian Richard Carl Dela Cruz Lacson and his family are joined by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, BOE Member Maisie B. Tenorio and Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora B. Miura.



KAGMAN High School class of 2023 got their moment of a lifetime, finally taking centerstage of the cavernous American Memorial Park amphitheater outdoor stage and to cheers of a proud community.

The proud KHS family of educators, led by Principal Ben Jones and Vice Principals Shirley Norita and Francisca Bondoc, hugged each of the 119 graduating high school seniors as they walked across center stage on May 31.

The proud "Ayuyu Class of 2023" were joined by education leaders comprised of Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio and Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora Borja Miura.

Local elected officials were led by Governor Arnold I. Palacios who graced and celebrated with the Ayuyu family.

Graduating top of the class is Richard Carl Dela Cruz Lacson valedictorian and recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award. He received the award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio and Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora Borja Miura.

Lacson will attend University of Washington in Missouri's pre-med program.

Class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award is Kiyokazu Ma'gas Suzuki Gonzales. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada

Class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award Kiyokazu Ma'gas Suzuki Gonzales and his family. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna led the PSS leadership team in presenting both awards.



The top 10 was presented on May 31. They are: valedictorian Richard Carl Dela Cruz Lacson, salutatorian Kiyokazu Ma'gas Suzuki Gonzales, (3) Nanaka Joyeria Watanabe, (4) Jude Dominic Litulumar (5) D'annahlei Vifika Magofna Rodriguez (6) Jessica Nicole Tellei Pineda, (7) Xinyi Ni, (8) Zyron Altoveros Espiritu Santo, (9) Elicia Bernadette Mendiola Cabrera, and (10) Juneya Neiyongischigh Quitano. They are joined on stage by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, BOE Sec/Treasurer Gregory Pat. Borja, BOE Member Maisie B. Tenior, Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora Borja Miura, Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna, among others.



Governor's Leadership Award recipient Taisha Lia De Brum Sablan and her family is joined by Governor Arnold I. Palacios.



Lt. Governor David M. Apatang through chief of staff Henry S. Hofschneider presented the Lt. Governor's Leadership Award to Xinyi Ni, who is joined by her family.

KHS 119 Class of 2023 are introduced to the public at the American Memorial Park's outdoor stage.





Two students received the Principal's Award. They are Jarren Selbart Mendiola and Atekapi Smith.

and Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna led the PSS leadership team in presenting the awards.

Gonzales will sign up for the United States Coast Guard Academy.

Joining Lacson and Gonzales in the top 10 are: (3) Nanaka Joyeria Watanabe, who will attend the prestigious Sophia University and will take up International Business; (4) Jude Dominic Litulumar, Boise State University, major in Environmental Science; (5) D'anahlei Vifika Magofna Rodriguez, Boise State University, major in Molecular Biology; (6) Jessica Nicole Tellei Pineda, Northern Marianas Colleges, major in Human Rehabilitation; (7) Xinyi Ni, Northern Marianas College, major in Criminal Justice; (8) Zyron Altoveros Espiritu Santo, Northern Marianas. College, major in Criminal Justice; (9) Elicia Bernadette Mendiola Cabrera, Northern Marianas College, major in Nursing; and (10) Juneya Neiyongischigh Quitano, Boise State University, major in Molecular Biology.

Other awards

Governor Arnold I. Palacios presented the Governor's Leadership Award to Taisha Lia De Brum Sablan.

Lt. Governor David M. Apatang through chief of staff Henry S. Hofschneider presented the Lt. Governor's Leadership Award to Xinyi Ni.

Principal Jones and Vice Principals Norita and Bondoc presented Jarren Selbart Mendiola and Atekapi Smith with the Principal's Leadership Award.

The PTSA Award was presented to Lee Andy Camacho II.

The Mayor's Award was presented to Jazlyn Joy Castro Mafnas.

Nobet Joseph Zhu Hocog was the recipient of the Male Athlete of the Year Award.

Outstanding group

Class valedictorian Lacson, in his address, regarded his class of 2023 as a group of outstanding individuals.

"I am honored to receive the distinction of valedictorian, especially with a class composed of countless outstanding individuals".

He asked his fellow graduates what is it that they really want now that they are moving on to the next chapter of their life.

"To tell you the truth, I have always fantasized the idea of being the valedictorian of my graduating class. If you were to ask my twelve-year-old self what to include in this once-in-a-lifetime speech, he would've filled at least five pages of papers in the blink of an eye. But, as I wrote this, my mind could not write down a single word. We as individuals are so quick to establish what we want and, therefore, get caught up in chasing those dreams that we don't stop for a second to think about what we really want," Lacson said.

"Failing to consider what it would feel like when you had accomplished what you set out to do. Just a few days ago, I was determined that I would become a chef after making shrimp fried rice. So with this, I would like to ask my fellow graduates, and even members of the audience, to ask themselves, "What do you truly want?" After you have established that, that is when you can run after that ambition with full force," he added.

In paying homage to his school, he said the Ayuyu (coconut crab) is solitary nature but "is antagonistic to the tight-knit community of KHS". "The family-like relationship present in this school is truly one in a million. It is a component of this school that I greatly admire and grateful for."

"I would give thanks to the school—no, the community that has instilled these life-changing values in me for the past four years. I will continue to be a reflection of the school from which I was derived," Lacson humbly said in his remarks.

Lacson dedicated his award to his parents and family "for always believing in me and my dreams."

Bittersweet

Class salutatorian Gonzales described high school graduation as bittersweet. The first half of his address was in the vernacular language.

"It is with great honor that I stand here today before each and every one of you. I honestly wasn't expecting it. Until this moment, everything they said about how fast high school was really went in one ear and out the other. As I stand here and realize that this is going to be my last moment, last day, last everything as a highschooler, all I can say is that this is bittersweet. But I'm glad I really did and was able to truly enjoy high school."

He dedicated his recognition by praising his parents. "I am extremely lucky and eternally grateful to my parents and am delighted to publicly share that my brothers and I were all raised decently. A home felt like a home and coming back to it every day after being out for a while was always so relieving. Our home was filled with abundant, unconditional love, our mom Charlene sacrificed working and stayed home to raise all of us and impart enduring, lifelong values of respect, tolerance, self-love, hard work, and determination; our dad continues to steward us as best he can to date filling in for our mom as he too navigates with us, further expanding from our Mom's work and instilling in us the lasting skills of grit, resilience, and never giving up no matter the adversity."

He recognized his two older brothers' impact in his life – "for interjecting by actually teaching our Dad something: As strict as he is having been raised by Nang Lucia and Gramma Mary and Grampa Fred as the eldest child, he actually learned to compromise and agreed to tone down his lion discipline and allowed us to "enjoy life"...but only within the reasonable boundaries of responsibility, honesty, safety, and care all the time. Because of this I enjoyed my high school years."

He joined his classmates in honoring their parents and the educators of KHS.

"I join my classmates, the KHS Class of 2023 to take this time to salute and honor our parents and guardians, grandparents, siblings, mentors, teachers, counselors, and entire KHS staff for positively and meaningfully shaping us one way or another to succeed and achieve in our own special ways."

Tanapag Middle School promotes 109



Class valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Excellence Award recipient Raiana Sofia Ferdous, her parents, with Board of Education Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.

ONE hundred nine eight grade students of Tanapag Middle School are moving into high school at the start of the new school year.

On May 30, Tanapag Middle School held its promotion ceremony for these students at the school's sprawling grounds.

Board of Education Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja expressed optimism that these promoted students are ready to enter the next grade level.

"I hope you all are ready for the next school year," said BOE Secretary/Treasurer Borja, speaking on behalf of the policymaking and governing body of the Public School System.

Principal Hilda Rios said the 8th grade promoted students are "today's stars". She told students not to forget to honor their parents, teachers and everyone who were part of their educational journey.

"Thank your parents, your teachers, your school, your Tanapag community and everyone else that helped made your life different. Thank you for being patient and understanding," said Principal Rios.

Class valedictorian is Raiana Sofia Ferdous. She is also the recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award, which was presented by BOE Secretary/Treasurer Borja and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.

Salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award is Cody Eilers Gamboa. He received the award from Associate Commissioner for

Administrative Services Eric Magofna, who led the key management of the school district.

Jayne Ross Vargas was the recipient of the Principal's Leadership Award. He received it from Principal Rios and Vice Principal Felisa Brel.

Eleven subject awards were also announced during the promotion ceremony.

Ferdous, the valedictorian, received the excellence in mathematics, English language art, Chamorro language and heritage studies, and leadership corps.

Gamboa, the salutatorian, received the excellence in computer and physical education/health.

Student Jhack Deniel M. Guiao was the recipient for excellence in leadership corps, Carolinian language and heritage studies, social studies, and science.

Nava Abricia Falig is the recipient of excellence in art.

Manage to surpass

Valedictorian Ferdous paid tribute to the resiliency of the promoted 8th graders.

"As we reflect, the three years we've spent here in TMS have been astonishing with many obstacles barreling our way. We started our very first school year during the pandemic and that came with all sorts of problems for everyone. We even had cohorts for a brief period during our time in the 7th



Salutatorian and Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Awardee Cody Eilers Gamboa and his parents is flanked by the Public School System key management team: Associate Commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna, Senior Director Dr. Rizalina Liwag, Federal Programs Officer Jacqueline Che, Human Resource Officer Lucretia Borja, Finance & Budget Director Arlene Lizama, Special Education Program Director Donna Flores, Media & Communications Coordinator Rande-Jo Barcinas-Manglona, Parental Engagement & Community Coordinator Liela C. Yumul, Head Start Director Lathania Angui, Instructional Technology and Distance Education Director Lorraine Catienza, State Infrastructure and Technology Director Jessie Tenorio and Middle Schools Principal Representative and Dandan Middle School Principal James Sablan.



Principal Leadership Award recipient Jayme Ross Vargas is flanked by Principal Hilda Rios, Senator Corina Magofna, House Vice Speaker Joel C. Camacho and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez.

grade. And in 8th grade we all faced struggles but managed to surpass it and promote today," Ferdous said.

"In the end, we are thankful we got to end this year almost right, aside from that little typhoon scare, but regardless, we are relieved we got to start and end this school year right," she added.

Ferdous thanked her family and friends "for giving me amazing support, and lifelong advice that I will always listen to and be grateful for."

"Today, we all can close this chapter of our lives as we will all move on to greater things. These school years here in TMS have shown us that we can move forward from hardships no matter how big or small it may seem. And with every new chapter comes hardships, and we know as Tatagas we will be able to prevail regardless of the situation," said Ferdous.

Care and helped received

Salutatorian Gamboa opened his remarks by thanking his family – for the support he received throughout his educational journey.

"I, Cody Gamboa, thank my dad, mom, aunt, uncle, and cousin for all the times they cared and helped me throughout my entire life," he said in his address.

In thanking his TMS teachers and school staff, he said: "We thank you all for preparing and happing us into the respectful, healthy, high achieving and self-directed students we are today," said Gamboa in his salutatorian address.

Gamboa thanked his homeroom teacher and other subject teachers who made his learning exciting and fun.





BOE Vice Chairman and Rota Member Herman Atalig to the promoted students spoke on behalf of the policymaking and governing body of PSS.



Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior High promotes 27



Class valedictorian Genaro Gonzales Mejia III delivers his address during RHI's promotion ceremony on June 2 in Rota.



Class salutatorian Kylee Dee'ara Manalang Manglona delivers her address.

ROTA'S Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior High School has promoted 27 eight graders to high school on June 2.

Held at RHI's cafeteria stage, the promoted students are called the "legendary group". Despite class size they still succeeded to "make history", the students, their class advisers and school principal D. Tanya King themselves acknowledged.

The school is named after Rota's first Commissioner of Education, the late Dr. Rita Hocog Inos.

Rota's elected leaders, municipal to legislative leaders, were united

to how their support to the promoted class.

The promoted class of 2027 chose the theme, "The meaning of life isn't to live forever, but do something that will", a quote from American rapper Juice Wrld or Jarad Anthony Higgins.

Topping the promoted class is Genaro Gonzales Mejia III who is the class valedictorian and recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award. He received both awards from BOE Vice Chairman and Rota Member Herman Atalig and Chairman Antonio L. Borja.

Kylee Dee'ara Manalang Manglona is the class salutatorian and

Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award. Dr. Alfred B. Ada presented the award together with Senior Director Jackie Quitugua, Senior Director Dr. Rizalina Liwag, Federal Programs Officer Jacqueline Che, Instructional Technology and Distance Education Director Lorraine Catienza, Human Resources Officer Lucretia Deleon Guerrero, Finance Director Arlene Lizama and Office of Pupil Transportation Director and acting Associate Commissioner Shawn San Nicholas.

Principal's Award recipient was Kylie Manglona. He received the award from Principal D. Tanya King.

Nine subject awards were presented during the promotion.

Valedictorian Mejia received subject awards for English Language Arts, Science, Computer, and Physical Education.

Brynn Annalise San Nicolas Atalig received the subject awards for Social Studies and Leadership Corps.

Katrina Shanyev Tacud received the subject award for Mathematics and Chamorro Language and Heritage Studies.

Danie L. Malaborbor received the subject award for Career Exploration/ Fine Arts.

The mayor's award was presented to valedictorian Mejia by Mayor Aubrey Hocog, who was joined by all of Rota's elected officials.

Most Improved Award recipient was Chasitey Masga.

End, beginning

In his address, valedictorian Mejia said their transition into high school is the end of their middle school life and the start of a new one.

"As you all know, today marks the end of a chapter in our lives for us 8th graders, and is the beginning of a new one," Mejia said.

He looked back at the experiences he had to encounter as he started his junior high school.

"It was a big new change and atmosphere for me because I was leaving elementary school and going on to my next academic journey junior high... Unfortunately, just as I started the school year, the pandemic became a big problem, and we had to wear masks all the time...we switched back



Mejia, the class valedictorian, celebrates with his parents and siblings.



Manglona, the class salutatorian, is flanked by Commissioner Alfred B. Ada, Senior Directors Jackie Quitugua and Dr. Rizalina Liwag.



Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada addresses the promoted students.



Sinapalo Elementary School educator Mack James was the keynote speaker of the promoted class of RHI.

and forth between in-person and online classes, never knowing what will be coming up next. It was really complicated," recalls Mejia.

"Despite those challenges, we managed to make it through middle school and it was all because of the endless support from our teachers and the school staff," adds the class valedictorian.

He thanked his family "for being there for me, listening to my complaints, giving me advise, encouragement, tough love, and supporting me when I am feeling down."

Mejia also thanked all his teachers and mentors for their "support and guidance through our middle school years".

'\$10 for every A'

Class salutatorian Manglona was a shy middle school student.

"Before I entered RHI I was an extremely shy person, yes I'm still a bit shy but I can say I'm slowly growing out of it all thanks to those people who have supported me since the start," she said.

Her family "pushed me to do well in school".

"Thanks, Papa Charles for giving me \$10 for every A that I received. I low-key think it's the reason that I am able to make this Salutatorian speech today," Manglona said as extended "special thanks to my parents who have always supported me in everything I do, even though technically, it is their responsibility".

She thanked her homeroom teachers for "their guidance and life-long lessons".

To her friend "for making my junior high years unforgettable," adds Manglona.

As they transition into high school, Manglona said she is confident that her junior high classmates will continue to come out stronger.

"We are about to enter the next chapter of our lives. There's no doubt that we will make mistakes and form different opinions about many things, but I am confident that despite whatever obstacles and challenges come our way, we will come out stronger. Please know that although I will no longer be experiencing high school with you all, I am always rooting for each and every one of you."



Principal D. Tanya King proudly presents her Principal's Award recipient Bryan Cabrera.



The Top 10 of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior High School's Class of 2023 were announced on June 2. They are: (valedictorian) Jermaine Chloe Baltazar Yalung; (salutatorian) Kaitlyn Amber Indong Balgoa; (3) Ilaiza Ayala Camacho; (4) Glenda Sophia Camacho Valdezco; (5) Amber Nicole Atalig Mendiola; (6) James Ralph Nuqui Emata; (7) Shaniyah Marie Rangamar Cabrera; (8) Kate Ramiro Manglona; (9) Jaselle Isa Flawau Manglona and (10) John Kent Dela Cruz.

39 graduates RHI, honors parents



Valedictorian Yalung is also the recipient of the Governor's Leadership Award which was presented by chief of staff for the lieutenant governor Henry Hofschneider and Barbara Sablan, special assistant for women's affairs.

DURING their June 2 graduation ceremony held at the Rota Round House in Songsong Village, the 39 seniors belonging to Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Senior High School's Class of 2023 honored their parents for not giving up on them

"We are so honored and blessed to have you in our life and want to extend our deepest gratitude for your guidance throughout our 4 years of high school. It has been a challenge to face the previous school years and despite the recurring obstacles we had to face, you were always there for us – with us. We made it to where we are now because of your love and support," RHI's Class of 2023 said in their message.

They are called the "Originals" because of their "individual originality" and "their belief that they are always original when it comes to their individuality, style, ideas, and point of view," according to their advisers Armi Atalig, Vivian Atalig, Crystal Calvo and Joycelynn Atalig.

Principal D. Tanya King said she can attest that "in my 40 years as educator, the Class of 2023 is truly the original: resolute, inquisitive, talented, and intelligent."

Rota Round House, situated a few feet from the shoreline, was a different site from a week earlier. These high school seniors took it upon themselves to clean and spruce up their graduation venue, which was littered with debris caused by the ferocious winds and inundation of super typhoon Mawar, which struck the neighboring island of Guam on March 24. Their graduation was originally scheduled on May 31.



Graduating class valedictorian and recipient of the Board of Education Academic Excellence Award is Jermaine Chloe Baltazar Yalung, who received the award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and Vice Chairman Herman Atalig.

Yalung will pursue higher education at Boise State University.

Kaitlyn Amber Indong Balgoa is the class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Award. Balgoa was presented with her award by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada, who was with Senior Director Jackie Quitugua, Senior Director Dr. Rizalina Liwag, Federal Programs Officer Jacqueline Che, Instructional Technology and Distance Education Director Lorraine Catienza, Human Resources Officer Lucretia Deleon Guerrero, Finance Director Arlene Lizama and Office of Pupil Transportation Director and acting Associate Commissioner Shawn San Nicolas.

Balgoa will pursue a military career by joining the United States Coast Guard.

Completing the top ten are: (3) Ilaiza Ayala Camacho, who will be pursuing Bio Environmental Engineering while serving the United States Air Force; (4) Glenda Sophia Camacho Valdezco, who is enlisting the Coast Guard and eventually enter the Coast Guard Academy; (5) Amber Nicole Atalig Mendiola will enlist in the U.S. Air Force, pursue career in aviation and engineering; (6) James Ralph Nuqui Emata will join the U.S. Air Force; (7) Shaniyah Marie Rangamar Cabrera will pursue higher education; (8) Kate Ramiro Manglona will “take a break after high school to scout for opportunities”; (9) Jaselle Isa Flawau Manglona will relocate to Oregon to pursue a degree in computer science; and (10) John Kent Dela Cruz Clitar will take up a degree in business management with the Northern Marianas College.

Future plans

The rest of RHI’s Class of 2023 had everything planned out after high school.

Aaron Seb Ogo will attend a trade school for mechanics; Anderson Asarin will pursue a military career; Jacques Barcinas will join the military; Anthony Barcinas II will join the workforce and explore future pathways; Nestor Catbagan, Jr. will join the workforce; Lucas Jose Manglona will join the workforce; Robin Joe Camacho will join the military; Mark Crisostomo will pursue higher education; Christiana Ina Atalig will pursue business management degree; Andres Jose Santos will enlist in U.S. Coast Guard; Sean Gabriel Macugay will join will join the police academy; Tyric Christopher will join Rota’ firefighting department; Nadia Jade Arriola will pursue a bachelor’s degree in business; Michael Jan Cantil will explore career opportunities; James Atalig “plans to live life worth living”; Ambrosio Alubia, Jr. will attend NMC to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education and work had to become a social media influencer; Hana Nicole Balaan will explore various career interests and pursue college; Tammy Fernandez has already enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and as aerospace medical, continue major in nursing and degree in business; Mamet Clayton Manglona will enlist in the U.S. Air Force; Jaroy Manglona will enlist in the U.S. Army, Tye Jordan will attend NMC; Landen Draje Atalig will pursue career in the airline industry; Vander Myers is preparing for his Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to enlist in the U.S. Coast Guard; Jayveka Lziama will join the workforce; Saige Hanna Ogo will pursue a entrepreneurship degree in college; and Isabel Elehna Manglona will pursue high education with a major in history.

Glenda Sophia Valdezco is the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor’s Leadership Award which was presented by the lieutenant governor’s chief of staff Henry Hofschneider and Special Assistant for Women’s Affairs Barbara Sablan. Rota officials, including Mayor Aubrey Hocog, Senate Vice President and educator Donald Manglona, Senator Paul A. Manglona, Senator Dennis Mendiola (not photographed), and municipal officials also joined in the presentation of the award.



Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and RHI Principal D. Tanya King presented to BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja and BOE Vice Chairman Herman Atalig the graduates for certification for having been meet and completed the required units for graduation.



A very emotional RHI Principal D. Tanya King was surprised when she was presented by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Senior Director for Curriculum and Instruction Jackie Quitugua with the Distinguished Public Education Award for her 29 years services as educator in various capacities to include classroom teacher, school counselor and school administrator. King, also a former elected Board of Education member of Rota, is retiring next month.

Grades don't define you

In an out the classroom, class valedictorian Yalung is active. She is also a perennial first place winner in many state-level competitions.

But for her grades do not matter at all.

"It is fine if you are not number 1, or number 2, or number 38 or number 39 in the class. Grade doesn't matter," Yalung said in her impromptu address.

"It should not be a reason for you not to go out there and not set the world on fire" in a nod to their theme, "Go Forth and Set the World on Fire".

Yalung told her classmates to pursue their dreams and do not let others dictate their goals in life.

"All hardship and struggles are worth it because of all the result and struggles we make. At the end of the day, you are on your own person. You make your own trajectory. You cannot let the other person dictate what you want for your life," said Yalung

She paid tribute to her parents for their continued love, hard work, and sacrifices. Her parents are Marni and Jennifer Yalung.

Roller-coaster ride

Salutatorian Balgoa described her high school journey like a rollercoaster ride but meaningful.

"My high school year has definitely been a rollercoaster ride filled with wonderful memories. I landed many positions that have opened countless opportunities for me to grow as a leader and a person," Balgoa said.

She believed in her fellow graduates that they will succeed in life.

"You all have the potential to be someone great and I know one way or the other, you will make many meaningful impacts to this world whether it is big or small," Balgoa said.

She added, "It doesn't matter if you're the valedictorian, the salutatorian or part of the top 10. What truly matters is what you do after high school. What matters is the person that you will become as you start your life. As the years go by, no one will remember what position or ranking you held in high school. What people will truly remember is the life and achievements you accomplish after high school".

In her honor

Rota holds a special place in Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada's professional career, the education chief told the graduates.

This is birthplace of his mentor, the late Commissioner of Education Dr. Rita Hocog Inos.

"In 1998 she appointed me as vice principal. I told her, 'I am not ready yet'. But she believes in me. She told me I was ready. If not you, who?," said Dr. Ada in quoting the later commissioner of education.

"I want to thank her in heaven. And I want you to thank your lucky stars who continue to believe in you."

The education chief told the graduates that "there will always be people that will continue to admire and believe your abilities and capacity to succeed."

"I have Dr. Inos to thank for believing in me. I am here now, and I will continue to make sure that RHI students will be served and become champions," said Dr. Ada.

He added, "My point is, I have mentor. It was that small words of wisdom – 'you can do it' – that made an impact. I am here no, 30 years later. Serving all of you, Class of 2023."



Rota Mayor Aubrey Hocog, joined by elected Rota officials including Senate Vice President Donald Manglona, also an educator, presented the Mayor's Award to valedictorian Yalung.



The Rota Municipal Council members Jim Atalig, Frederic Manglona and Jonovan Lizama presented the 18th Rota Municipal Council's Most Improved Award to Sean Gabriel Macugay (mali lang ang pangalan sa plaque). Rota Mayor Aubrey Hocog, Special Assistant for Women's Affairs Barbara Sablan and Lt. governor Chief of Staff Henry Hofschneider looks.

Tribute

Before the Class of 2023' turning of tassels, Dr. Ada and Senior Director for Curriculum and Instruction Jackie Quitugua called RHI Principal D. Tanya King on stage for a surprise tribute.

Both district leaders presented the RHI principal with the Public School System Distinguished Education Award for her nearly 29 years of service.

Principal King is retiring from the school system. She started working as school counselor, classroom teacher, vice principal and principal.

"It is an honor to really present this award to a very admirable, caring, committed and loving individual that have served our communities, that have served our PSS family, that have engaged our family in the island of Rota," Quitugua said.

Commissioner Ada said the school district will witness and honors a chapter in the education of the island of Rota.

"We are forever grateful," the education chief said in presenting the award to retiring RHI Principal King.

The Class of 2023 during Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Senior High School 12th commencement exercises on June 2 at the Rota Round House.



Ysharei Sanje, Reese Tolentino are DMS top promotees



Class Valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Excellence Award recipient Ysharei Sanje is joined by her mother, Arlene Lizama, PSS budget and finance director, as she receives both awards from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig and Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat. Borja.



Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada presents the Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award and salutatorian award to a beaming Reese Kaeley Tolentino. (Marianas Variety Photo)

YSHAREI Sanje and Reese Tolentino are the top 8th grade students of Dandan Middle School which held its promotion ceremony on June 5.

138 eight-graders are now moving into high school.

Principal James Sablan said the promoted “Class of 2027” are destined to be resilient by being adaptable to the environment. Like Tottots in the forest, they have survived super typhoon Soudelor and Yutu, the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic challenges, and school challenges like peer pressure, projects, and assignment deadlines”.

With these group of promoted students, “our future in the CNMI is promising,” Principal Sablan assures community members.

Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja agrees, describing the promotes “not only brilliant but resilient”.

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada said each of the promoted student has a story to tell and will be entering high school “ready to tackle new challenges, accomplish bigger milestones, and make many more memories”.

Sanje is the class valedictorian and recipient of the Board Education Academic Excellence Award. She received both awards from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, BOE Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.

Tolentino received both the class salutatorian award and the Commissioner of Education Academic Award from Commissioner of Education Dr. Ada, who was joined by Senior Directors Jackie Quitugua, Dr. Rizalina Liwag, and Dr. Yvonne Pangelinan, Human Resources Officer Lucretia Deleon Guerrero, Finance Director Arlene Lizama, Head Start Director Lathania Angui, Instructional Technology and Distance Education

Director Lorraine Catienza, Media and Communications Coordinator Rande-Jo Barcinas-Manglona, and State Infrastructure and Technology Officer Jesse Tenorio.

Eight subject awards were also presented during the June 5 promotion. These are awarded to students who received the highest average grade in academics and character in a particular subject area during their 6th, 7th and 8th grade. For students who are recipients of the English Language Arts and Mathematics subject awards, they must be on or above grade level as per STAR Assessments.

Class valedictorian Sanje received six of the subject awards: English Language Arts Award, Mathematics Award, Science Award, Social Studies Award, Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies Award, and Career and Technology Award.

The Physical Education Award was presented to Billie Pangelinan.

The Leadership Corps Award was presented to Vinora Rabago.

Other awards

The Male Athlete of the Year Award recipient if Christopher Cruz, Jr, and the Female Athlete of the Year is Ayanna Stole.

The Leadership Award recipient is Angelina Camacho, who was honored for “exhibiting leadership qualities and has proven to lead the class in positive ways”. DMS grade level teachers chose the recipient.

Kian Gozun is the recipient of the Most Improved Award.

The Tottot Award, honored for demonstrating tremendous effort, significant positive attitude, behavior, attendance, and academics, was presented to Jeremiah Roberto.



Subject award recipients Ysharei Sanje (English Language Arts Award, Mathematics Award, Science Award, Social Studies Award, Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies Award, and Career and Technology Award), Billie Pangelinan (Physical Education Award) and Vinora Rabago (Leadership Corps Award) are joined by their subject teachers.



The Male Athlete of the Year Christopher Cruz, Jr. and Female Athlete of the Year Ayanna Stole are joined by Principal James Sablan and Vice Principal Reo Arriola and the students' teachers and coaches.



The Tottot Award recipient is Jeremiah Roberto, who is joined here by DMS school teachers.

Flew high

In her address, class valedictorian Sanje shared the podium with her classmates by honoring their hardwork.

"As the class valedictorian, it is my greatest pleasure to stand before you to deliver this speech. Our constant nights of studying, last minute assignments, and mental breakdowns were all for this moment. We defied the gravity of stress and flew high like Tottots," Sanje said.

Their middle school years at DMS taught "us more than just students".

"Our relationship grew stronger. We had to endure many obstacles and challenges whether it be personal or academic. However, we did not let it overpower us, we embraced them as an opportunity. Instead of avoiding all of the hardships we faced, we learned to live with it by uniting together, embracing differences, and learning from each other...these bonds are what make us more than just a school, but a family," she said.



The Principal Leadership Award recipient Angelina Camacho is joined by Principal James Sablan and Vice Principal Reo Arriola.



The Most Improved Award was presented to Kian Gozun by Principal James Sablan and Vice Principal Reo Arriola.



Lian Brien is congratulated by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada after receiving her certificate of promotion.



Jared Marion Ortiz smiles after receiving his certificate of promotion.



Student Alina Salas proudly celebrated her promotion with parents, Lorraine Catienza and Augusto Salas

Sanje said her deepest appreciation to her parents and family "for providing me with everything that I needed to become successful".

She thanked her DMS teachers for their encouragement "to try my best".

To her friends, Sanje said she wouldn't be "standing here today without the support of all of you".

"Whenever I look at this award, I will only be reminder of the incredible journey we've been through together. Congratulations to everyone who had made this far. Thank you DMS. Thank you for the memories."

Proud

Salutatorian Tolentino, in her address, said they are "all promoting proud".

"We are surrounded by people that have been with us throughout all these years in middle school. We are promoting today proud, as we are setting a new milestone in our lives. A milestone that marks the beginning of a new chapter".



The 31 graduates belonging to Da'ok Academy's Class of 2023 proudly displays their certificates, trophies and medals following their commencement ceremony in the afternoon of June 5th at the Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.



Da'ok Academy graduates 31

THIRTY-ONE high school seniors of Da'ok Academy have graduated on June 5 at the Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

Education leaders described the Class of 2023 as a resilient group whose "passion and curiosity will make them ready to explore after-high school opportunities."

Principal Christine Tudela said, "together we faced the odds through many challenges and changes...but your determination created built hope, and gratitude that gave you grace to stay

focused."

The recipient of the Governor's Leadership Award is Ryan Anfernee A. Quitano.

The Lieutenant Governor's Leadership Award was presented to Lenelle Rylie D. Bansil.

The Mayor's Award was presented to Nathan J. Bauleong, for most service hours and volunteerism.

The Outstanding Female Graduate Award was presented to Anita S. Perez.



The Governor's Leadership Award was presented to Ryan Anfernee A. Quitano, and his mother NMTECH Chief Executive Officer Jodina Attao, Governor's Special Assistant for Administration Oscar Babauta, Da'ok Academy Principal Christine Tudela, Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew Orsini and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.



The Lieutenant Governor's Leadership Award was presented to Lenelle Rylie D. Bansil by the lieutenant governor's Chief of Staff Henry S. Hofschneider. Bansil is joined by her family, BOE officials Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew Orsini and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.

The Against All Odds Award, which was presented by the Office of the U.S. Congressional Delegate, was presented to MJ David.

Awards

All 31 Class of 2023 received several medals for various academic awards.

Anita S. Perez, Outstanding Female Graduate Award and Youth Leader Award; Canfrancia Fitial, Resilience Award and Most Improved Achieve Lexile for English Language Arts class; Chad K. Escaner, Shark Voice Award and Most Improved Achieve Lexile for ELA class; Chelsea Mae S. Lorenzo, Youth Pride Award; Devin Luke R. Aldan, Achieve 3000 Highest School for February CNMI PSS wide, Most Improved in ELA, and Most Improved Achieve Lexile; Dominic S. Peter, Trailblazer Award; Ginalynn P. George, Shark Core Award; Hamina Akter, Shark voice Award and Principal's Award; Ignacio D. Palacios, Achieve 3000 highest Score for January CNMI PSS- wide, Biology Academic Excellence, Math Improvement Award, and Most Improved Achieve Lexile; Joaquin Angel A. Deleon Guerrero, Shark Core Award; Jose Kaipat, Shark Voice Award; Lenelle Rylie D. Bansil, A Honor Roll in Language Arts, Future Journalist and Youth Leader Award; Markole J. Taneza, Achieve 3000 Highest Score for April CNMI PSS-wide, Aspiring Historian in NMI History, Overall Excellence in Social, Emotional Learning, Most Improved in Physical Education Most Improved in Chemistry and Resilience Award; MJ David, Achieve 3000 Highest Score for May CNMI PSS-wide, Overall Excellence in SEL, Athlete Award, and Shark Voice Award; Nathan J. Bauleong, A Honor Roll in Language Arts, Helping Hand Award, Math Mentor Award and Youth Leader Award; Nicole E. Bauleong, A Honor Roll in Language Arts, Chemistry Academic Excellence, Future Scientists/Researcher, and Math Improvement Award; Peter John A. Aldan, Youth Leader Award; Rosa O. Salle, Achieve 3000 Highest Score for March CNMI PSS-wide; Math Improvement Award and Shark Core Award; Ryan Anfernee A. Quitano, Youth Leader Award; Serafin Rily T. Amirez, Most Improved in US Government; Simkap Lightitsar R. Wabol, Most Improved in US History and Future Rapper; Taisei Jesus N. Desebel, Jr., Best in Career Technical Education, Math Excellence Achievement, Most Improved in ELA, Physical Education Academic Excellence, Youth Leader Award, and Most Improved Achieve Lexile; Trevon C. Lieto, Shark Voice Award; Tristan Patrick O. Manglona, Achievement Vocabulary Acquisition and Knowledge, Academic Excellence Award in US Government, Shark Core Award, and Shark Award; and, Xavier Jacob S. Sumor, Shark Voice Award.

Pilot Career Pathways

This is also the first time that Da'ok Academy has implemented career pathways – career courses – implemented in partnership with educational institutions that students have signed up for while in high school and, upon completion, are career-ready after high school graduation.

These are the Northern Marianas Technical Institute's Construction Laborer Pathway, Marine Time/Merchant Pathway, and Entrepreneurship Pathway.

Four graduates are pursuing construction-laborer careers after completing and certified under NMTECH's Construction Program. They are Xavier Sumor, Nicole Bauleong, Taisei Desebel and Trevon Lieto.

Five graduates are ready to be deployed as Marine Merchants crew. They are certified under the Western Pacific Mariners. They are Anita Perez, Tristan Manglona, Simkap Wabol, Canfrancia Fitial, and Landon Delos Reyes.

"Being a mariner is calling. They knew it. They were drawn by the call of the sea," said Capt. Michael Bacher from Western Pacific Mariners,.



The Against All Odds Award of the United States Congressional Delegate's Office MJ David by District Director Paula Bermudes-Castro. David is joined by his mother and Da'ok Academy Principal Christine Tudela, Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew Orsini and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.



Da'ok Academy's Trailblazer Award was presented to Dominic S. Peter.



Da'ok Academy's Resilience Awardees are Canfrancia Fitial and Markole J. Taneza.





Da'ok Academy Principal Christine Tudela welcome the community during the June 5th commencement exercises for her Class of 2023.



Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada praised the graduates for their "resilience and for beating the odds."



The Outstanding Female Graduate Award is Anita S. Perez



The Da'ok Academy graduates who also completed the PSS Career Technical and Education Program's Entrepreneurship Program are Devin Aldan and Serafin Amirez. They are joined, among others, by PSS CTE Director Dr. Jessica Taylor, Da'ok Academy Principal Christine Tudela, Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew Orsini and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.

Principal Tudela was joined by PSS Career, Technical and Education Program Director Dr. Jessica B. Taylor in presented the graduates who completed the entrepreneurship program: Devin Aldan and Serafin Amirez.

Transformation

BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja described the success of Da'ok Academy graduates as "transformation".

"We are inspired by your journey and excited for your bright future," said Chairman Borja. "This marks a significant milestone of your remarkable journey. Like Sharks (the mascot of Da'ok Academy), you've navigated through turbulent waters with courage and resilience, demonstrating that your past does not define your future."

"You have transformed challenges into stepping stones, a testament to your strength and the tenacity of the Shark spirit," he added.

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada the 31 Da'ok Academy graduates are "ready to make your own imprint".

With the "amazing stories of success" as these graduates pursues higher education, the military, vocation or joining the workforce, "it reaffirms my believe that our future is in very good hands."

"We look forward to seeing where your adventures will take you, and how each of you will make a difference. From the bottom of my heart, well done Class of 2023," Dr. Ada said.

Principal Tudela have some parting words for her graduates: "As the future of our Marianas, continue to represent and share your cultural heritage, reach your highest potential goals, honor and practice respect, and continue learning each day and participating in any community service-learning opportunities, even if you have to create that opportunity for yourself and others".



The Mayor's Award was presented to Nathan J. Bauleong.



Anita Perez, Tristan Manglona, Simkap Wabol, Canfrancia Fital, and Landon Delos Reyes are the five graduates who also completed the certification program for merchant marine which was done in partnership with the Western Pacific Mariners. They are joined by Captain Michael Bacher and PSS officials that include PSS CTE Director Dr. Jessica Taylor, Da'ok Academy Principal Christine Tudela, Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Vice Chairman Herman Atalig, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew Orsini and Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.



The subject award recipients for Team E: Adrian Mallari Lubao, Best in Social Studies, Best in Physical Education and Best in Career Technical and Education-Agriculture Award; Nagi Maria T. Tenorio, Best in Math, Best in Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies, and Best In Science; Roman Joseph Dionn A. Bautista, Best in English Language Arts; Tasi Willy Reyes, Best in MLSC; and Fiona Lao Zhu, Best in CTE Computer Literacy. For Team F: Joh Peter Quidato, Best in Science Subject and Best in Middle School Leadership Corps Awards; Kaye Anne O. Costales, Best in Social Studies; Kelly Lina, Best in Math; Rhian Courtney G. Alfonso, Best in CCLHS; Aron Dale Blanca, Best in ELA; Princess Elaine Capangpangan Lopez, Best in CTE Computer Literacy and Best in CTE Agriculture.

Hopwood Middle School promotes 212 to high school



ON June 6, Hopwood Middle School has promoted 212 eight grade students to high school.

This is the largest number for any group of promoting and or graduating students belonging to the Class of 2023 for the Public School System.

Principal Victorino Borja said this year's batch of promoted students succeeded any obstacles "through resiliency and determination and with the support of their family, friends, and the staff of Hopwood Middle School."

Class valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Award recipient is John Peter Niniano Quidato. He received the award from Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, and Member Maisie B. Tenorio.

Class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Award was Adrian Mallari Lubao. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada presented the award.

Principal Borja and Vice Principals Karen Manuel and Benjamin Seman announced the recipients of 18 subject awards, divided in two teams.

Quidato, the class valedictorian, received the Best in Science Subject and Best in Middle School Leadership Corps Awards under "Team F".

Lubao, the class salutatorian, was "Team E's" Best in Social Studies, Best in Physical Education and Best in Career Technical and Education-Agriculture Award recipients.

For Team E, the subject awardees are: Nagi Maria T. Tenorio, Best in Math, Best in Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies, and Best In Science; Roman Joseph Dionn A. Bautista, Best in English Language Arts; Tasi Willy Reyes, Best in MLSC; and Fiona Lao Zhu, Best in CTE Computer Literacy

For Team F, the subject award recipients are Kaye Anne O. Costales, Best in Social Studies; Kelly Lina, Best in Math; Rhian Courtney G. Alfonso, Best in CCLHS; Aron Dale Blanca, Best in ELA; Princess Elaine Capangpangan Lopez, Best in CTE Computer Literacy and Best in CTE Agriculture.



Class valedictorian John Peter Niniano Quidato is congratulated by Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, and Board Member Maisie B. Tenorio.



Class salutatorian Adrian Mallari Lubao is presented with his award by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada.

First, last

It came as a shock for Quidato being class valedictorian.

“Two days ago I received the news of me getting valedictorian. I was shocked. Which also meant I had 2 days to write this speech, but I was able to finish it with the help of my family and from our vice principals. This will be my first speech and last assignment,” Quidato said.

He congratulated his fellow promoted students for making it through “a pandemic, online class, exams, and Leadership Corps.”

“I am proud to be part of Class 2023,” he added.

Quidato particularly noted how competitive and consistent the Class of 2023. “We’ve represented Hopwood in many of our extracurricular activities or clubs. I’m proud of what our clubs accomplished during our stay here in Hopwood.”

He thanked his mother “for being a big part of my journey.”

To his friends, “for cheering me up and making me laugh every day going to school.”

He praised his Hopwood classroom teachers “for being patient with us and preparing us for high school.”

Growth

Class salutatorian Lubao credited Hopwood for all the support he received in his middle school journey.

“This school and the experiences have made me the person I am today and I can only be grateful to have those memories to hold forever,” said Lubao.

“It seems like we just started 6th grade yesterday and now we’re promoting to high school. I’ve learned so much over the years and I can only hope for the best for us in high school,” adds the class salutatorian.

He thanked his family, teachers, and friends for “all the support” in his academic journey.

“Thank you again for all the support and see you all in high school,” he said.

Modular classrooms

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada announced during the promotion ceremony that they have already signed the contract that will officially begin the construction of 20 modular classrooms. These classrooms will be ready for use by the August 22 opening of the new school year.

Hopwood suffered the most from the onslaught of super typhoon Yutu, destroying several school buildings and classrooms.

“(O)ur leaders are now doing it very best to ensure that we get our 20 temporary classrooms as soon as possible and eventually renovate our buildings to provide adequate facilities for our students and staff,” Principal Borja said.

Full renovation and construction of Hopwood will take place next year.



The Female Athlete of the Year is Chelsea Mae Duremdes Sonoda. PSS Athletics Director Nick Gross presented the award.



The 8th grade promotes of Hopwood perform their class song, “I Lived” by One Republic.



The Male Athlete of the Year is John Peter Niniano Quidato. The award was presented by the Public School System Athletics Director Nick Gross.



Principal's Leadership Award was presented to Andri James Hechanova Sonio by Principal Victorino Borja and Vice Principals Karen Manuel and Benjamin Seman.



SSHS' Class of 2023 Top 10: (1) Jessie Lynn I. Reyes; (2) Aisha Erica M. Lansangan; 3) Jasmine Jaylyn C. John; (4) Marion John R. Sayas; (5) Adrian Jay A. Manalang; (6) Leeza Marie M. Ngitiyeb; (7) Michael Jermain Junya S. Peters; (8) Andrea Rose T. Ramos; (9) Dianna Marie P. Catigan and Alpha Joyce F. Sagun; (10) Alyssa Rae D. David; and honorable mention is Andrew Bailey A. Sunderland.

Saipan Southern High School graduates 138



SIPAN Southern High School celebrated the graduation of its Class of 2023 on June 6 with 138 seniors moving on to college, exploring career opportunities or join the United States Armed Force.

Principal Vince Dela Cruz, in his remarks, paid tribute to his school community including the graduating class. "Our school has been winning every year. It has been a tradition for us. We have the winningest in outrigger, volleyball, badminton, and others."

"The point is we make these activities available to our students because the more students participate, the more it is healthier for our school," Principal Dela Cruz said. "The Class of 2023 is no exception. We have outstanding students, most competitive students, and high achieving students."

Topping the Class of 2023 is Jessie Lynn I. Reyes, who received both the valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Excellence Award from BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, Member Andrew L. Orsini and Teacher Rep. Dr. Dora B. Miura, who is also a faculty of SSHS.

Class salutatorian and recipient of the Commissioner of Education Academic Award is Aisha Erica M. Lansangan, who received the award from Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada, who was joined by his key management team.

Completing the top ten are: (3) Jasmine Jaylyn C. John; (4) Marion John R. Sayas; (5) Adrian Jay A. Manalang; (6) Leeza Marie M. Ngitiyeb; (7) Michael Jermain Junya S. Peters; (8) Andrea Rose T. Ramos; (9) Dianna Marie P. Catigan and Alpha Joyce F. Sagun; and (10) Alyssa Rae D. David.

Honorable mention is Andrew Bailey A. Sunderland.



Class valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Award recipient Jessie Lynn I. Reyes and her family are celebrated by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, Secretary/Treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, Member Maisie B. Tenorio, and Member Andrew L. Orsini.



Class salutatorian and Commissioner of Education Academic Excellence Award recipient Aisha Erica M. Lansangan and her mother are joined by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and some of PSS' key management: L-R: Lorraine Catienza, Lucretia Deleon Guerrero, Dr. Yvonne R. Pangelinan, Arlene Lizama, Rande-Jo Barcinas-Manglona, Dr. Rizalina Liwag and Shawn San Nicholas.



Other awards

The Governor's Award was presented to Jessie Lynn, the class valedictorian.
The Lieutenant Governor's Award was presented to Adrian Jay A. Manalang.
The Mayor's Award was presented to Julius Torres.
The Principal's Leadership Award was presented to Jasmine John.
The Manta Spirit Award was presented to Alika Celis.

Gold Award

The SSSH Presidential Gold Award was presented to 28 high school seniors. They are Jessie Lynn I. Reyes, Andrew Bailey A. Sunderland, Aisha Erica M. Lansangan, Jasmine Jaylyn C. John, Marion John R. Sayas, Adrian Jay A. Manalang, Leeza Marie M. Ngitiyeb, Michael Jermain Junya S. Peters, Andrea Rose T. Ramos, Dianna Marie P. Catigan, Alpha Joyce F. Sagun, Alyssa Rae D. David, Queenie Marie G. Malinay, Kamille Christabelle C. Razon, Jeselle M. Falalimpa, Esther Y. Wang, Jerriz M. Castro, Reef Jason S. Cabrera, Jia Hao Chen, Joshua A. Viloría, Bheatrix Allyson C. Ramirez, Jasper Junio T. Saures, Diviane Neline Dilbung T. Tudela, Bobbie Jean R. Ayuyu, En H. Chi, Anthony K. Villagomez, Elijah Joshua D. Garcia, and Julius Edrine L. Torres

Silver Award

42 students are recipient of the Presidential Silver Award. They are Jhan Arewhy S. Valienta, Rumiko Magdalena G. Ichihara, Mhel Jay I. Viloría, Maesha A. Dela Cruz, Ron Angel A. Patricio, Judy Ann L. Anedor, Christina Ngelkes A. Atalig, Chariz D. Pasaylo, Lana Antonia A. Sunderland, Natasha Marie White, Brandies Alexis Matsumoto, John Benedict N. Kintol, Isaiah Crispin R. Sablan, Jane Min Jin, John Lloyd P. Tuquero, Eddie William T. Sablan, Cristine Joy S. Fernandez, John Paul L. Garcia, Shailyn Mae D. Albay, Hombre M. Hocog, Neriah Nicole P. Lumbad, Zoya Brianna Neibwilpi T. Rebueng, Jun D. Li, Frankye Francesca A. Ada, Matz Zhander G. Catindig, Ana Maria Taisacan, Somaia Akter, Cleon Otto R. Pacho, Niralyann Ann M. Cabrera, Jociv C. Tuquero, Elyna Collete N. Deleon Guerrero, Mechaella Faye S. De Ramos, Alexander P. Guevarra, Josephine Nicole F. Villagomez, Deveney Ann Kirsten M. Castro, Chelsea Nicole R. Soriente, Kathryn Tionie S. Sablan, Rachel Ann L. Ramon, Alfonso S. Taitano, Forres Trevor T. Pangelinan, Shirley Feng, and Mitch Karl R. Sayas.

Plans

The senior exit survey for the Class of 2023 disclosed that 50.4 percent or 57 students are pursuing a 4-year college degree.

34.5 percent or 39 students will be attending a 2-year college program.

5.3 percent or 6 students are going to attend vocation/technical/trade school.

24.8 percent or 28 of the graduating Class of 2023 are going to "work full time".



Governor's Leadership Award recipient is class valedictorian Jessie Lynn I. Reyes. She received the award from the Governor's Special Assistant for Administration Oscar M. Babauta.

42.5 percent or 48 students will "work part time."

4.4 percent or 5 students will proceed with "apprenticeship" program.

23 percent or 26 students are joining the military.

8 percent or 9 students preferred "other" or didn't indicate their after-high school plans.

Community

Class valedictorian Jessie Lynn Reyes said the community contributed to her success. "Thank you to everyone I've ever met in my life...I am standing here today because of you guys. You've taught me that the community builds the person."

"Throughout these 12 years you've likely gone through many ups and downs. I don't think I'd be who I am now without my downs. Wondering if all I'm doing is good enough, asking myself am I good enough, and if waking up in the morning was really worth it. I wondered what's the use of school and learning geometry. But as I stand at this podium today. It was worth it. To see you all here today. To see everyone I love in one place makes me realize that it was all worth the blood, sweat and tears. Graduates, I want you all to look around at your friends, to the teachers who've taught you, and into the crowd at the people who've come here today just for you. Now I want you all to look at me. Brothers if no one hasn't told you yet or if you've," she said.



The Lieutenant Governor's Award was presented to Adrian Jay A. Manalang by Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang himself.



The Principal's Leadership Award was presented to Jasmine John by Principal Vince Dela Cruz and Vice Principal Arisa Sakai Peters.

She thanked her family for their support. "I hope this one achievement will show how hard I've been working all my life and that everything I do has a reason."

She thanked her teachers and SSHS "for making a difference in my life."

Surprise

Salutatorian Aisha Lansangan kept it a surprise to her family and friends that she was graduating number two in the Class of 2023. "I wouldn't have been able to do it without the people who helped me along the way. I'm sorry to those I kept this from you, I wanted to surprise you guys... You guys pushed me to be a-try hard and school would be one dull, depressogenic place without your presence. Thank you for supporting me throughout my journey and sticking with me even during the lowest points of my life. To those of you who will still be in high school, good luck on your last year, and I'll be watching over you."

She thanked her school club Interact "for giving me the opportunity to help my community."

To her family, she expressed her appreciation. "Thank you to my family in the Philippines who unfortunately aren't here today. I miss and love you all so much."

She thanked most especially her mother, Salip Maerilyn Mohammad. "Thank you for everything, you are my inspiration, my hope, and so much more than words can describe."

Life's lessons

BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja, in his remarks, said the Class of 2023's theme, "Wherever. You go, go with all your heart" is about lesson in life. "It is your guiding principle throughout your time at Saipan Southern High School. It's an enduring lesson that encourages us to fully invest in every endeavor we undertake, to infuse our actions with passion, and to lead our lives with purpose."

"Life's vast ocean awaits you. Approach it as a Manta Ray would- with strength, grace, and a heart full of determination. You are our future leaders and innovators," Chairman Borja added.

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada advised the graduating students "to be flexible in your thinking, and seek to learn something new, and diversify your experience."

"When you stop learning, you stop growing as a person. Treat every experience as a learning experience. The learning experiences that I had in these past few years as your PSS Commissioner helped shape my thinking on how to address learning, health, and safety in our school district. Can you imagine what would have happened if we were not flexible in adapting to change like we did throughout the typhoons and pandemic? As we have seen during this past year, the problems are going to get more and more complex, and we will need people like you to be creative and improvise new solutions to these complex issues."



The 28 promoted students at Tinian Junior High School are introduced to the public.

Tinian Junior High School promotes 28



TINIAN Junior High School recognized 28 students at their annual 8th grade promotion ceremony.

Held the school cafeteria on June 7, the promotion into the ninth grade of these

The school's promotion is the last for the Public School System, and Principal Lizabeth Perzinski described it as "saving the best for last."

"We are saving the best for last, and we are giving you our best today," Principal Perzinski told the Tinian community.

Alicia Wen L. Teope is class valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Award recipient. BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja presented her the award.

Mercy Anne Christian is salutatorian and Commissioner of Education Academic Award recipient. Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada was joined by Senior Directors Jackie Quitugua and Dr. Rizalina Liwag, interim ITDE Director Lorraine CatiENZA and Pupil Transportation Director Shawn San Nicholas in presenting the award.

Completing the top 10 promoted TJHS students are: (3) Juris Gian G. Cabarles; (4) Dakota Dailene M. Sandbergen; (5) Xing Yi-Iris Lin; (6) Jireh Anna C. Cruz; (7) Alexia Josepha S. Pangelinan; (8) Ysabella Jzel F. Lenteja; (9) Prescot Evan B. Manglona; and (10) Janna Mikaela B. Mapeso.

Seven subject awards were presented during the promotion ceremony.

Class valedictorian Teope received four: subject awards for Mathematics, Science, Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies, Career and Technical Education.

Christian, the salutatorian, received the subject awards for Social Studies, CCLHS, and Leadership/Physical Education.

Juris Gian Cabarles was subject award for Language Arts.

Long way

During her remarks, class valedictorian Teope said her class gone through "success, failures, and lesson together.



Class valedictorian Alecia Wen L. Teope with her proud parents is joined by BOE Chairman Antonio L. Borja.



Board of Education Chairman Antonio L. Borja congratulates Alicia Wen L. Teope, class valedictorian and Board of Education Academic Award recipient.

“But let’s face it. We’ve just begun writing our own lives. Each step we take in life is just like an author writing multiple pages which soon will become a chapter. As we move forward, our stories will be filled with aspirations, plans, goals, and many more, and I urge you all, that as time goes by, as you’ve written those pages, those chapters, that you would make those aspirations, plans, and goals a reality. Take the path you want to travel through. Whether it is a calm walk by the beach, or a tough hike to the top of a mountain. You are the author of your own story,” said Teope.

She added, “And so now, Class of 2027, I want you to continue to write your own story. Let’s pick up a pen and start writing what comes next. Let’s make our own dreams our reality. I would also like to quote, as you continue to write each page of your own story, “When things get hard, stop for a while, and look back and see how far you’ve come. Don’t forget how rewarding it is”.

Teope honored her parents for all the “sacrifices to give me the best educational experience no matter how hard/difficult life is”.

Board of Education Chairman Borja praised the promoted students. He said the Tinian community celebrates with their parents.

“As you stand on the threshold of a new chapter, remember, success is not merely a destination, but a journey of courage, growth, and persistent effort. Every leap, every challenge conquered, brings you one step closer to your dreams,” Chairman Borja said.

He added, “(W)e salute your resilience, we celebrate your achievements, and we eagerly anticipate the remarkable successes you are destined to achieve. Embrace your Stallion spirit, leap forward with

conviction, and remember, every step you take, every leap you make, is your journey to success.”

Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada is optimistic of the future of the promoted students.

“Class of 2023, you have a bright future in this new and challenging world. Embrace the opportunities. We look forward to seeing where your adventures will take you, and how each of you will make a difference. We are very proud of you, and we will be rooting for you as you navigate your own journeys. On behalf of your parents, family, educators, and the entire PSS Family, we congratulate you on your promotion,” said Dr. Ada.

“As Winnie the Pooh states, “I always get to where I’m going by walking away from where I have been.” With that being said, keep moving forward students and eventually, you will reach your dream destination,” he added.



Salutatorian Mercy Anne Christian is presented with the Commissioner of Education Academic Award from Dr. Alfred B. Ada.



Salutatorian Christian with her parents and some of PSS’ key management led by Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada.



The Top 10 promoted students: (1) Alicia Wen L. Teope; (2) Mercy Anne Christian; (3) Juris Gian G. Cabarles; (4) Dakota Dailene M. Sandbergen; (5) Xing Yi-Iris Lin; (6) Jireh Anna C. Cruz; (7) Alexia Josepha S. Pangelinan; (8) Ysabella Jzel F. Lenteja; (9) Prescott Evan B. Manglona; and (10) Janna Mikaela B. Mapeso.



PSS Celebrates 11th Year of Educational Technology Program

ON May 18, 2023, the CNMI Public School System hosted its 11th commencement ceremony of the Educational Technology (EdTech) Training Program. The event celebrated a total of 104 participants who completed the rigorous training program. Ed Tech instructors, school administrators, PSS Key Management, and members of the Board of Education were present in the celebration. PSS leaders shared messages of pride for the hard work and commitment of all Ed Tech participants from both the private and public schools to grow as professionals and embrace the role that technology plays in supporting learning in the 21st century.

EdTech is a year-long training program that consists of five 45-hour certification courses that explores topics around technology to support teaching and learning. Participants explored the diverse suite of Google tools to support teaching and learning, discussed the importance of empowering students to be proactive digital citizens, and examined student-centered applications to produce a variety of products such as multimedia presentations, infographics, and dynamic videos.

The first course, Google Apps for Education, equipped participants with the necessary skills to effectively leverage Google's suite of productivity tools to enhance teaching, learning, collaboration, and productivity tailored for educational settings. The next course, Digital Citizenship in Schools, challenged educators to demonstrate appropriate uses of technology to students, make informed decisions regarding student technology use in the digital age, and incorporate the elements of digital citizenship into their lessons. Participants developed a strong understanding of how to navigate the digital world responsibly and safely and acquire practical skills to apply in their digital lives. Next, the Student Tech Products course engaged participants in using a variety of online resources and tools to develop high-quality products and effectively communicate information with others. The newest course of the program, Instructional Design with Technology, equipped educators on how to effectively integrate technology into instructional practices and design engaging, effective, and technology-enhanced learning experiences that meet the needs of diverse learners in today's digital age. Participants had the opportunity to apply their learning through hands-on projects, collaborative activities, and the design of technology-integrated instructional materials. In the final course, Advanced Computer Applications, participants explored various software programs and tools and learn how to apply them to solve complex problems, enhance productivity, and efficiently accomplish tasks while producing professional-quality results. The program culminated with a Service-Learning Project in which participants designed and facilitated a professional development session on various technology tools for their peers.

Participants Testimonials

The most memorable learning experience was when I had to use iMovie to create a short film. I did a film on culture and arts and got to meet a couple of navigators and canoe carvers. Overall, this was such an awesome experience and the tools and skills obtained from this program will definitely be a benefactor in my future endeavors.

FRANCISCO CASTRO

Special Education Teacher Aide,
William S. Reyes Elementary School

I am now confident in teaching my 21st century students using educational technology. This experience is memorable to me because when I enrolled in this course, the only thing that I know is the Google apps. Now, there is a lot of educational tool and apps that are helpful in learning. Technology makes our work easier and more engaging for us educators and especially for the students. This course helps me grow professionally and allows me to give a quality education that every student deserves.

RELLY ANN S. ADA

Classroom Teacher, Koblerville Elementary School

The Ed Tech Program supports my teaching objectives and improves the individualized learning of my students. The Ed Tech Program also gave me a personalized learning experience that advances my professional development as a teacher by providing flexible curricula, individualized coaching and support, personalized projects, collaborative learning, and ongoing professional development opportunities.

MARIA CARLOTA R. SIMEON

Classroom Teacher, Mount Carmel School

The Ed Tech program has helped me grow professionally by showing me new resources and teaching approaches to use in my classroom. I have been able to engage my students in more meaningful and fun projects because of the resources shown to me through this course. I am thankful to be able to meet standards through projects my students enjoy.

JESSICA EBERHARDT

Classroom Teacher, Saipan Community School

Ed Tech has helped me a lot as an educator. Each course provided me with different technological resources that I can use in my field and reinforced what I was already familiar with. I enjoyed doing the assignments where I had to create lessons, infographics, posters, etc. that I would present to my students when I teach my lessons.

LALAINÉ JOANNE SANTOMIN

Special Education Teacher, Tanapag Middle School

I am glad that I decided to join this program because the learning outcome is tremendous. Personally, being a part of this program, I have gained so much knowledge in the technology realm and all the assignments helped enhance my hands-on skills. Everything I learned became valuable and beneficial for me because I was able to apply what I have learned in our school and my profession.

ELIZABETH CASTRO

Administrative Services Manager, Brilliant Star Montessori School

Ed Tech Program is an awesome program that I recommend all teachers to take. It has given me the opportunity to learn so much about technology and the different tools that are available for us as educators to use. This program has helped me discover new tech tools online that are free and also how to properly use the google products. Gamifying my CCLHS assignments and activities have helped my students improve their reading and writing skills in Chamorro. Thank you to all our instructors for the guidance, patience, and understanding. It was an awesome experience of learning for me!

CARMEN SAN NICOLAS

Chamorro Immersion Teacher, Tinian Elementary School