



Congratulations to the Class of 2020!



Due to public health concerns, this photo was created in Photoshop by Ron McCoy Photography using individual images of each student.

Meet the Graduates: Tucson Waldorf School Class of 2019

During normal times, Tucson Waldorf School would be proud to invite you all to the graduation of this new class of students; however, this year is not normal. Due to public health concerns, the ceremony will be closed to family only. TWS still hopes you will join us in celebrating this class! Please read on to learn about this year's graduates.

Drake Ambagis

Drake was born in Hawaii and attended Malamalama Waldorf School before coming to TWS in Grade 5. His brother, Addo, graduated from TWS in 2018. Drake could not pick a favorite block because he liked them all, but his favorite play was *Much Ado About Nothing* and his favorite field trip was to the Medieval Games. His Grade 8 project is on blacksmithing, specifically forging. Drake will attend University High School in the fall. During the stay-at-home order, Drake stayed busy with homework, yardwork, forging, and playing *Dungeons and Dragons*.



Jaiden Avi Gassen

Born in Tucson, Jaiden attended TWS from kindergarten through Grade 2. He moved to Florida for three years and returned to TWS for Grades 6 through 8. Jaiden's favorite block was geometry, his favorite play was *The Princess Bride*, and his favorite field trip was to Peppersauce Cave. The topic of his Grade 8 project is cooking. He will be attending Ironwood Ridge High School in the fall. When asked how he felt about having to be home for the last two months of school, he said that it was sad, and that online school was more stressful than regular school.



Benjamin Hurwitz

Ben was born in Wisconsin. He attended Canyon View Elementary School before coming to TWS in Grade 3. His sister, Simone, is in Grade 4 at TWS. Ben's favorite block was perspective drawing, his favorite field trip was hiking on Mt. Lemmon, and his favorite class play was *The Princess Bride*. His Grade 8 project is on magic. Ben will attend The Gregory School, and he hopes to become a lawyer one day. His feelings about the stay-at-home order are that "being in quarantine sucks but it has its upsides. I am able to focus on things I want to learn such as skateboard tricks (after school, of course)." He is also glad that the extra free time allows him to learn at an accelerated rate.



Enya Noor Illegems

Born in Tucson, Enya has attended TWS since kindergarten. She has three sisters who graduated from TWS: Eva ('14), Lara ('15) and Sedona ('19). Her favorite blocks were history and perspective drawing, her favorite class play was *The Princess Bride*, and her favorite field trip was to the Grand Canyon. Her Grade 8 project is on photography. Enya will attend Salpointe Catholic High School, and she would love to be an actress one day. She is sad that the pandemic caused the Grade 8 trip to be cancelled but is hopeful that it can be rescheduled.



Nico Simone Johnson

Simone was born in Tucson and has attended TWS since she was in the Quail's Nest. Her sister, Ruby, graduated from TWS in 2018. Simone's favorite block was physics, her favorite play was *The Princess Bride*, and her favorite field trip was to the Grand Canyon. Her Grade 8 project is on upcycled clothing and the effects the clothing industry has on our economy. She plans to attend City High School. During the stay-at-home order, Simone made masks to donate, cooked, talked to her friends and went on walks.



Ravyn Rae Pradier-Youssef

Born in Maryland, Ravyn has attended TWS all her life. Her favorite block was the study of the Renaissance, her favorite class play was *Much Ado About Nothing*, and her favorite field trip was to the Medieval Games. Some of her favorite memories include the drive to the Grand Canyon, the Harvest Festival of 2018, the Medieval Games, and many more. Her Grade 8 project is on electromagnetic fields. Ravyn will be attending Clarsburg High School in Maryland and is looking forward to meeting new friends. She stayed busy during the stay-at-home order by spending time with her pets, taking long dog walks, doing schoolwork, and enjoying screen time.



Olivia Ray

Olivia was born in the Bahamas and has attended TWS since Grade 1. Her favorite block was the one on Islam, her favorite field trip was to Ravens-Way in Grade 4, and her favorite play was *The Arabian Nights*. Olivia's Grade 8 project is on cognitive psychology. She will be attending Catalina Foothills High School in the fall. Some of her favorite memories include going to Wynter's office and spending time together as a class. She feels that missing the last months of school has been pretty upsetting.



Maximilian Romero

Born in New York, Max has attended TWS since Grade 6. His brother, Antonio, is in Grade 6. Max's favorite block was the physics, his favorite play was *The Princess Bride*, and his favorite field trip was to the Grand Canyon. His Grade 8 project is on aquaponics. He plans to attend University High School. Max says of missing the last two months with his classmates that he is "very sad the end of our last semester was cut short" and he is just hoping they won't also lose the summer.



Ayden Fox Sorensen

Ayden was born in Tucson and, with the exception of Grade 1, has attended TWS since kindergarten. He has two siblings at TWS, Maxx (Grade 6) and Lotus (Grade 3). His favorite block was physics, his favorite play was *The Princess Bride*, and his favorite field trip was to the Medieval Games. Ayden's Grade 8 project topic is the history of electricity. He plans to attend Catalina Foothills High School in the fall. He hopes to one day have a realty business doing home remodeling. During the stay-at-home order, Ayden spent time relaxing, doing woodworking projects and building a remote-control car track in his back yard.



Ana Wesley

Born in New York City, Ana attended St. Thomas in Connecticut and Escuela Micael, a Waldorf school in Argentina, prior to coming to TWS. Her favorite block was any history block, her favorite play was *Much Ado About Nothing*, and her favorite field trip was to the Medieval Games. One of her favorite memories is playing capture the flag at the Grand Canyon. During her time at home during the stay-at-home order, she stayed busy doing schoolwork. Her Grade 8 project is on Bonnie and Clyde. She plans to attend Salpointe Catholic High School in the fall.



Bethany Zashin

Bethany was born in Tucson and has attended TWS since Grade 7. Prior to coming to TWS, she attended Orange Grove Middle School. Her favorite block was astronomy, her favorite play was *The Princess Bride*, and her favorite field trip was to the high ropes course. During the stay-at-home order she has kept busy with the online classroom and animation. Her Grade 8 project is on animation. She plans to attend The Gregory School and hopes to be a lawyer one day.



Irene Richardson

Ms. Richardson studied Comparative Religions at Bard College in the beautiful Hudson River Valley of New York before moving on to earn her M.S. in Waldorf Education. Prior to joining the TWS Grades faculty in 2012, she carried a class from first through fourth grade at the Waldorf School of Princeton.

Initially drawn to Waldorf education through the rich artistic curriculum and story traditions, in her time as a class teacher, she has found that her work is truly sustained by the relationships she builds with the extraordinary children,



families, and colleagues in our community. In addition to growing every day through her teaching, Ms. Richardson continues to develop herself through musical and artistic practice, and an ever-deepening love of literature.

After graduation, Ms. Richardson will be moving with her wife and 2 year old to Philadelphia, where her daughter Lydia will be able to grow up down the street from family. Once there, Ms. Richardson will be taking a third grade class at Philadelphia Waldorf School. When reflecting on her time spent with the TWS class of 2020, she says, "one of the great privileges of my life has been to watch this group grow up from little children to bright, interesting, quirky, fascinating individuals. Even better, while I've gotten to watch them grow up, I've also grown up along beside them." This graduating class is the first she has taken all 8 years.

Contact

3605 East River Road, Tucson AZ 85718
520.529.1032

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A person
Is a person
Because of other people

Xhosa proverb