



Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada

## Student Spotlight 2021

### Maya Macias Phoenix, Arizona



U.S. Army Veteran Robert Macias and his wife Lydia have been married for 25 years and are the proud parents of three children, including two adult sons and their daughter, 12-year-old Maya Macias. Although Maya was always a good student behavior-wise, a move to a new state coupled with a learning environment that fell short of engaging and challenging her, the Macias family found themselves searching for educational options for their daughter. A tax credit scholarship from the AAA Scholarship Foundation (AAA) made it possible for her to attend a school where she could increase her academic performance and grow her self-confidence, enabling her to become an engaged and ambitious student.

The Macias family moved from California to Phoenix several years ago and Maya enrolled in her local public elementary school. The oldest two Macias children had attended public elementary and middle school in California with no issues, so Robert and Lydia assumed that Maya would be getting the same level of education as her brothers in their new community. But they soon learned that not every school is suited to meet the needs of every child.

At first, it appeared that Maya was doing well in her new school. However, the move from California to Arizona had been a hard adjustment for her and she became shy and introverted, especially in school. Because Maya was not disruptive like some of her other classmates, the teachers regularly reported on her good behavior in class and Robert and Lydia were under the impression that she was continuing to develop the academic skills she would need to further her education. Unfortunately, they soon learned that she was falling behind in math and reading and not performing at the top of her capabilities.

“As we began to look into ways we could help, it became clear that Maya needed to be in a school that would help her open up and become more engaged in learning, and even challenge her,” says Robert.

While researching options in their area, they found St. Jerome Catholic School. They loved the community-like feeling and challenging academic programs that the school offered and felt that it would be a good fit for Maya. However, being able to afford the tuition presented a challenge for the family. Thankfully, the school connected them with AAA and they were able to receive a scholarship for Maya to attend the school, easing their financial burden and giving them hope for their daughter’s future.

Maya began attending St. Jerome in the fifth grade, and the teachers worked with her one-on-one to catch up academically. The school’s family-like environment made Maya feel more comfortable in her surroundings and as her

self-confidence grew, she became less shy and blossomed both in and outside of the classroom, even getting involved in sports activities such as softball and swim team.

Now in the sixth grade, Maya's parents can see a significant change in their daughter – both at school and at home.

"Maya has become a much more confident student," says Lydia. "The knowledge she comes home with daily fortifies that the decision we made to put her in a private school was the right one."

Even when faced with challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic – including Robert being furloughed from his job for several months in 2020 – the family had a peace of mind knowing that they could keep Maya in a school she loves.

"There are not enough words of appreciation that we can express to the AAA Scholarship Foundation and its donors for the profound impact this scholarship has had on our daughter and us," says Robert. "We thank you for helping Maya be the best person she can be, while learning in a safe environment that is preparing her for the future."

"You have given our daughter not only academic confidence but self-confidence," Lydia adds. "She sees herself making strides and achieving goals and that is something that was made possible by you. I encourage companies to continue to support these scholarships because there are a lot of families out there who desperately need the help for their children. You really are making a big difference in our lives and for so many others."

#### **About AAA Scholarship Foundation**

*AAA Scholarship Foundation promotes the advancement of education by administering educational choice programs. The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. More than 80 percent of these children are initially awarded AAA scholarships while living in households with annual incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they first receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and are concerned about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their children and will reverse inadequate learning, social patterns and potential lifelong negative impacts. They wish to change their children's learning environment, acquaintances and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.*

*AAA Scholarships are funded in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Nevada by companies that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit scholarship organizations approved to administer these legislatively-authorized tax credit scholarship programs in multiple states. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information, or to learn how your company can participate in the program, visit [www.AAAScholarships.org](http://www.AAAScholarships.org), or contact Kerri Vaughan at [kerri@aaascholarships.org](mailto:kerri@aaascholarships.org) or 888-707-2465 ext. 730.*