

## Proactive health efforts aim to halt COVID-19 spread

■ PATRICK SHELBY  
Managing Editor

SUNNYSIDE — Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences second year medical student

back from spring break and we all had to stay home and learn about it," Turner described. "It was really interesting because COVID-19 effects the respiratory system



Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE** — Addie Turner, 25, a Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences second year medical student, volunteers with the Yakima Health District during the COVID-19 drive-thru testing in the United Methodist Church parking lot on Wednesday, June 10.

Addie Turner, residing with family in town, does not want people to forget that they can make a difference in preventing the spread of the virus.

"... I know that testing is really important. It's like the number one way you can make a difference, so that's also why I wanted to volunteer," Turner explained as she used a blob of hand sanitizer on her gloves prior to picking up the registration clipboard.

The 25-year-old student realizes how important COVID-19 testing is and volunteered to help others as Yakima Health District and members of the Washington National Guard activated a free community COVID-19 drive-thru testing area at the United Methodist Church parking lot on Wednesday, June 10.

"We were actually studying respiratory systems in the spring when this all started. We came

primarily. So, we spent a lot of time talking about everything we needed to talk about but then also COVID-19."

About 30 vehicles entered the 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. event, 906 E. Edison Ave., where a team of six guardsmen in full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and three who

were in direct contact of administering the swab test wore a respirator.

Yakima Health District (YHD) Spokeswoman Lillian Bravo reported the county saw 1,000 new cases of the virus in the span of a week. As of Monday evening, there were 5,611 confirmed cases, up 579 since June 10.

Yakima County is one of only three counties remaining in Phase 1. Benton and Franklin Counties are waiting for approval from John Weisman, Secretary of the state's Department of Health to move to the next phase.

To prevent COVID-19 from spreading across county lines, DOH urges people that it's important to stay close to home. Officials continue to remind residents staying home is still the safest way to keeping healthy, but if

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Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

**ROSE OF RESILIENCE ILLUMINATES THE CLASS OF 2020**— Granger Spartan Xochitl Chavez beamed brightly as she gathered her rose at Granger's Flower Ceremony on Friday evening, dressed to impress. Granger tradition is that seniors pick a flower – this year, roses were chosen – and present them to someone who helped them graduate. See photo coverage on Page B1.

## Valley graduates uncover silver lining

Final hurrah as seniors finish year strong

■ ELIZABETH SUSTAITA  
Reporter

**LOWER YAKIMA VALLEY** — As the academic year of 2020 draws to a close, Grandview, Granger, and Zillah High Schools have said farewell to their seniors by unconventional though necessary means via virtual graduation and parades to maintain social distancing guidelines.

**GRANDVIEW HIGH SCHOOL** Grandview High School released a pre-recorded

graduation video complete with speeches from Principal Kim Casey, Class Speaker Ryan Harvey – GHS social studies teacher – Salutatorian Christin Alvarez, Valedictorian Rocco Parrish, and Superintendent Henry Strom.

In Alvarez's speech, she mentions how distinguished the Class of 2020 is due to the students' hardships and challenges they've endured due to being born near the 9/11 terror attacks, Great Recession, and now, a

pandemic. She reassured the class, "We find the glory in our obstacles," a reference to French poet Moliere.

Parrish was "at a loss for words" during his speech, but he found his voice, "Let's talk about the memories that cannot be taken away from us," as photos from school highlights were presented. "We are 2020 strong."

The Greyhound's graduation ended with a photo slideshow of the 245

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## Sunnyside schools strategize reopening

District advisory meetings will discuss approach

■ ELIZABETH SUSTAITA  
Reporter

SUNNYSIDE — State Superintendent Chris Reykdal announced on Thursday, June 11, that all schools across the state of Washington will reopen their doors in fall for the 2020-2021 school year and on Friday, June 12, Governor Jay Inslee issued a proclamation outlining the state's plan to safely reopen schools following the Safe Start phased approach.

Reykdal convened with over 120 representatives from across the state to consider how to reopen schools where ideas such as a split or rotating schedule with or without social distancing and concepts of phased-in opening approaches were discussed.

Ultimately, districts will have to construct a reopening plan following the health and safety guidance from the Department of Health, the Office of the Governor, and the Department of Labor and Industries to fit local context.

The guidance plan for reopening schools has provided a path that schools, educators, and families can prepare for in the coming months, according to Inslee.

With Yakima County remaining in Phase 1 for the foreseeable future, an autumn opening seems daunting.

The Sunnyside School District has been working behind the scenes since the Governor issued the statewide school closures on March 13, according to Superintendent Kevin McKay.

The superintendent expressed how the school districts realized early on the possibility that the COVID-19 spread may continue throughout the summer and have an impact on the next school year, even though he would like students to return to the traditional environment they are used to.

"Most of our work has been internal, meaning it's within the school district and we are going to move that

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## Sunnyside High School therapist breaks mental health stigma

■ PATRICK SHELBY  
Managing Editor

SUNNYSIDE — Avalon Valencia, Class of 2010 Grizzly alumni and now a school-based mental health therapist with partnered with Comprehensive Healthcare and Sunnyside High School,

recalled in her pursuit of becoming a first-generation college student was that she could have benefited from talking to someone about the anxieties she was feeling only a decade ago.

"People don't realize that anxiety is exhausting, or they do realize it, but they think,

well, that's just a part of life, Valencia described. "Just like we go to school to learn... therapy can help to learn things about what we feel."

She believes the integration of mental health into Sunnyside High School has assisted in reducing the stigma associated with treatment.

When the program started a few years ago, Valencia observed how students were apprehensive at first about being out in the waiting area and having classmates see them and not really knowing why they're sitting in the counseling center.

"After a while, I would hear

them telling one another, 'Oh, that's my therapist,' not even my counselor," she noted. "I go to therapy." They would bring people over to me directly and we would get them enrolled in services."

According to Valencia, their

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