

SUN SHINE

Student Profile:

Tabitha Lucero – Future Botanist

Life came at Tabitha Lucero pretty fast. A new baby on the way meant she'd have to reprioritize her entire life—and unfortunately completing her high school diploma was not at the top of the list.

Now at 30, Tabitha made a long-overdue trip back to the classroom to finish her GED. She was referred to the Durango Adult Education Center where Navigator Tim Birchard encouraged her to participate in the Colorado SUN college transition program, which is designed to help students who have left the education system return with the skills and confidence needed for college.

“Tim was great in helping me get back on track,” said Lucero... “So much had changed in the years I had been away from school; it was a bit overwhelming—we never had computers in the classroom when I was in high school before... Now you do everything on them.” One of the best classes I had through the College Connection program was the computer lab,” said Lucero... We learned to access e-mail and research topics on the Internet.”

Along with computer skills, Lucero worked on study skills, Algebra, and integrated reading, writing, and career exploration. While fairly strong in reading and writing, Tabitha particularly benefited from the math instruction, where she advanced two levels.

But Lucero's story isn't just about how she gained academic and computer skills. Lucero noted that when she returned to school, her goal was to simply finish her GED “and get out of there.” While Lucero had thoughts of going into the drug and alcohol counseling field, it was her love of the outdoors that prompted Birchard to help her explore other opportunities. “Tim took the time to sit down and draw out several career paths on the board and show me the possibilities—far more than I ever imagined.” While she has not formally declared her major yet, she has her sites firmly fixed on botany and thinks she'll be far happier. She credits Colorado SUN for helping her stay on course.

“Really, if it weren't for Navigators like Tim, I would have just rolled through, finished my GED and that was it,” concluded Lucero. Tabitha is now working on getting a summer internship with the Forest Service, hoping to either work with children or help build campgrounds and trails. She plans to enroll in Pueblo Community College next fall.

-end-

