



MINUTE FOR MISSION

Christmas Joy gifts have helped Menaul School change lives for generations

Gary Lucero Jr., a sophomore at the Presbyterian-related Menaul School, has 20/20 vision that sees the promise of the future and the richness of the past.

He looks forward to the year 2020 when he will graduate from Menaul, a racial ethnic secondary school, and envisions himself well prepared to enter college and young adulthood thanks to his time there. He also looks back on years past and sees the impact of the school on his family members. His family's history on the Albuquerque campus began more than a century ago.

"A lot of my family has gone there, so there's a very big legacy, and that is important to me," Gary says. One of Gary's maternal great grandfathers, Jose I. Candelaria, a 1916 Menaul graduate, became pastor of Albuquerque's Second United Presbyterian Church. In addition to serving at Second, Candelaria helped start several congregations in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

Joe Candelaria, Gary's grandfather and a 1950 Menaul graduate, worked for many years as a public school industrial education teacher. Menaul honored him with the Harper C. Donaldson Outstanding Alumni Award this year, citing his commitment to the values that Menaul seeks to instill through Christian education.

Two of Gary's paternal great grandparents, Ofene Garcia, a 1934 graduate, and Carlota Romero, a 1937 graduate, met at Menaul and later married. Both were active in the Presbyterian Church throughout their lives.

"I come from a caring family, and they have done things to help the church and the school, and I am very proud of that," he says. Gary has 28 relatives who attended Menaul, and his family continues its commitment to both the church and the school.

"Menaul School has made an impact on our lives, and we are beyond grateful for the opportunity to have our son attend such a wonderful place," says Gary's mother, Joanne Lucero.

While appreciative of the legacy he inherited, Gary also sees how the Menaul experience is shaping his future. "The small classes help a lot, and the teachers and the coaches are very supportive," Gary says. "I love it here." Gary is a high-achieving student and is on the track and basketball teams.

Today Menaul students are beginning new legacies. Most come from homes where neither parent has attended college, and many sacrifice to send their child to the school because it sends nearly every graduate to schools of higher learning.

Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will help Menaul open the doors of opportunity for more students to begin their own legacies. Half of your gift will go to help Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges train future leaders for our church and society, and the other half will go to help past and present church workers and their families who are in critical financial need.

Please give generously.

Let Us Pray

Empowering God, we give thanks for young people who strive to fulfill the potential you have given them. May our church nurture them, encourage them, and listen to them. Bless them and bless our future. **Amen.**