

MPCC opens up college opportunity for girls

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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Alondra Almanza, left, and Rosalia Torres recently took their last finals of the semester through Mid-Plains Community College. (Jan Schultz | The Imperial Republican)

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Alondra Almanza and Rosalia Torres are able to honor their Hispanic heritage and attend college at the same time, thanks to Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC) Imperial Extended Campus.

Hispanic tradition dictates that girls remain living at home until they get married, Rosalia said.

Having college classes close by make it possible for Alondra, of Wauneta, and Rosalia, of Imperial, to live at home while carrying a full load of classes.

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Both girls graduated from high school last spring, Alondra from Wauneta-Palisade and Rosalia from Chase County Schools (CCS).

Both chose MPCC because it's close to home, and because they could "start out little."

"I didn't want to move and find a job," Alondra added.

"We're very family oriented," Rosalia said, "and I can be at home with my parents. I'm also used to CCS, which is a little school."

Alondra is the daughter of Marcela and Gabriel Almanza. She has two sisters.

Rosalia is the daughter of Lucinda and Leonel Torres. She has one brother.

Both girls, who are friends, are majoring in early childhood education—Alondra with the goal of teaching preschool and Rosalia wanting to open her own day care.

"I always loved children," Alondra said. "I have a baby sister in preschool and she's very smart." Before she attended preschool she spoke only Spanish, but now is fluent in English and speaks it at home all the time.

Rosalia said she loves children. She teaches a class at Imperial Bible Church, and "If you're sad they will cheer you up. They make you see the world in different ways."

The girls are taking Intro to Early Childhood Education, Expository Writing and Intro to Sociology at the Imperial campus, and biology and a lab at the McCook Campus.

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They both also work. Alondra works weekends at Wauneta Crossroads. "I used to work during the week, the night shift, and it was killing me. I'd go home and do homework and go to bed really late."

Rosalia works in the produce department and as a cashier at Imperial Super Foods. As for juggling work and classes, "It's not that difficult, but then you add in church during the week and weekends, and it can be a bit stressful, but it's OK."

Both girls received scholarships through MPCC to attend classes, and Rosalia also obtained another scholarship. She said CCS High School Counselor Trent Herbert helped her "a lot" in finding scholarships and in deciding to attend college.

The friends are the first in their families to attend college.

They're determined to reach their goals to work with children.