

# Polynesian dancing links journalist with family's roots

Enthusiastic writer  
inspired by Ann  
Curry

Sharon Heigh  
The Student Press

Aspiring journalist Maria Hechanova leads her life with dedication, spirit and exceptional passion.

As a participant in a variety of extracurricular and scholastic organizations – such as the National Honor Society, Spanish Honors Society, Ka'ea Mauna Lani (a Polynesian dancing troupe), swimming and newspaper staff – Hechanova's days are filled with activity.

As a young woman immersed and nurtured in American and Polynesian culture, Hechanova strives to achieve a balance between the two diverse lifestyles.

"I feel my parents are raising me well and are doing a good job to teach me to be a well rounded person," said Hechanova.

Born in De Ridder, La., to first-generation U.S. citizens from the Philippines, Hechanova expresses the rich culture of her mother's heritage through traditional Polynesian dancing.

Ka'ea Mauna Lani helps Hechanova keep in touch with her family roots, as well as express herself in an entirely unique way.

As a member of this dancing troupe, Hechanova rehearses and performs stylized dances from the exotic locations of Samoa, Tahiti, Tokelau and New Zealand.

"Through my Polynesian dancing I'm able to keep my culture alive," Hechanova said. "It keeps me open-minded and I like being a part of a big loving group of people who appreciate art."

In Glendale, Hechanova plays an integral role



Maria  
Hechanova

in Ironwood High School's student newspaper, *The Eagle's Eye*. It is in this environment that she showcases and shares her talent for advertising management, as well as reporting the latest school news.

Hechanova's favorite style of journalistic writing is feature writing, and she is looking forward to contributing to a productive year as the feature editor for *The Eagle's Eye* in the 2003-2004 academic year.

"When I write a feature story, I'm able to find out more about people, not just look, but deeper under their skin," Hechanova explained. "I'm judgmental at first, but reporting has taught me to explore the whole individual."

One of Hechanova's greatest role models is renowned news reporter and anchor-woman Ann Curry.

Hechanova said she admires Curry's work ethic, journalistic values and distinctive story inter-

pretation.

She added that Curry provides a very personal inspiration to Hechanova because they share similar ethnic backgrounds.

"It's nice to see an Asian face (on the air); it makes me believe I can achieve my goals," Hechanova says.

Hechanova's enthusiasm and assiduous working attitude is exemplified through her daily thought and actions.

Friend Mike Linsey said, "Maria has this unstoppable drive and unbelievable potential to be a world class journalist."

As a teenager with extreme motivation Hechanova is successful at everything she cares for.

"I don't do anything half way; I try my best and always give 100 percent," Hechanova added.

**"I don't do anything halfway; I try my best and always give 100 percent."**

## Student impresses peers with originality, lip piercing, desire to stand out from others

Rajchel's  
professional  
aspirations are vast

Brian Indrelunas  
The Student Press

Elizabeth Rajchel stands out from the masses in many situations, often receiving compliments about her originality. Even among fellow journalists at the ASU Summer Journalism Institute, her lip piercing and vintage retro clothing style physically distinguish her from her peers.

However, being different doesn't bother Rajchel. In fact, the Arcadia High School senior enjoys being unique and delights in having found her own identity after years of following the crowd.

"I used to be the type of person who fit right in with the crowd," she explained. "Now I look totally different from that, and I like it. I like standing out from people."

Accordingly, she

remembers her freshman year of high school as one of the low points in her life.

"I was just trying to fit in with everyone, and it was a terrible year," she said.

Conversely, she considers her junior year, which she completed just before attending the Institute, to be the high point of her life

**"Life is short. I guess experience as much as you can."**

because she says that she changed a lot and also learned more about herself.

"I'm a little more comfortable with myself than I was," she adds.

Currently, school and her work at the Arcadia Animal Clinic dominate her

weekdays, leaving just a few evening hours for homework and social activities.

On the weekends, however, Rajchel immerses herself in the local music scene, often frequenting concerts. She enjoys listening to "the whole genre of rock, but mainly punk, indie and ska."

While Rajchel does have specific musical preferences, she generally considers herself to be very open-minded.

"Life is short," she said of her approach to life. "I guess experience as much as you can."

Her open-minded attitude clearly manifests itself in her professional aspirations and interests. She has previously considered working as a veterinarian, firefighter and astronaut, but now her primary interest is journalism.

"Journalism seems like the right job for me because I



Elizabeth  
Rajchel

want to be the first to know what's happening," she explains.

Still, again standing out from many of the other Institute participants, Rajchel has not yet worked on her high school's newspaper staff.

Next year will be her first year on staff, as she attempts to gain experience and confirm her interest in journalism as a career choice.

However, even if she doesn't enjoy journalism as much as she thinks she will, Rajchel still plans to work in the field of communications.

She cites advertising as her second career choice because she also enjoys the visual arts, as evidenced by her involvement as secretary of her school's National Art Honor Society.

"I like to think of it as my foolproof plan," she said. "If one doesn't work out, the other will."

That flexibility is another of the many ways that Rajchel brings a unique flavor to both the Institute and her community.

## Animal lover, honors student anticipates successful journalism career, fun on the way

Ambitious teen  
plans to make  
a difference

Heather McCune  
The Student Press

As a little girl, Lindsey Rae Castro already had high dreams, expectations and aspirations of changing the world. Although her career ambitions have changed as she has grown, Castro is still on a path to make a difference in the world.

Castro, 16, is an Arizona native. She was born on May 1, 1987, in Miami, Ariz., to parents Sanna and Daniel Castro. Sanna works as a crisis counselor and case manager, and David is a senior technician at Phelps Dodge Mining Corp. She also has an older sister named Ashley, and the entire Castro family resides in Globe.

Castro has attended the elementary, middle and high schools in Globe. Castro currently attends Globe High School, where she is involved with numerous clubs and activities, which embody her multidimensional personality.

Castro's interests vary from her love

of music to her love of knowledge. Castro's expansive CD collection, band clothing and posters of her favorite bands personify her love of music. Some of her favorite bands include AFI, Audioslave, CKY, Deftones, Finch, HIM and System of a Down. Castro is also a self-proclaimed "band geek,"

who is actively involved in marching band, concert band and pep band at her high school.

Castro also shows her scholarly side as a member of Speech and Debate, NHS and her school's newspaper, while maintaining an overall GPA of 3.95.

In school, her favorite subject is math, while her least favorite is Spanish.

Some of her academic accolades include being named in both the "Who's Who Among American High School Students" and the "National Honor Roll" for two consecutive years.

Outside of school, Castro is a very outgoing person who loves to laugh

and hangout with her friends. She loves to read both novels and comic books, as well as watch funny movies.

"My favorite movie is 'Nightmare Before Christmas.' I want to marry Tim Burton because he's an artistic genius," Castro said.

In addition to all of Castro's extracurricular activities, she has a spunky, upbeat personality, and she is always wearing a smile on her face. Castro enjoys telling jokes and doesn't mind being the topic of the entertainment.

Castro is also an animal lover, and has had two pets in her Globe home. The first was her hermit crab named Herman. Herman is no longer with us, yet Castro says, "his spirit will always live on! I love you Hermy!"

Castro's other pet is her dachshund named Sadie, who she enjoys to play with at the end of the day

Castro's future looks bright because of the excellent start she has taken

"I'm really looking forward to my future in journalism, but whatever I do, I know I will have a fun time on the way."

## Linsey beats dyslexia to excel in prestigious journalism institute

Amidst gads of  
autobiographies,  
Linsey would like to  
write his own  
someday

Matt Sotelo  
The Student Press

Seventeen-year-old Michael Linsey has a passion for autobiographies. From Michael J. Fox to Tom Brokaw, his bookshelf is full of self-written life stories, and someday he may write his own.

With an eventful childhood and a promising future, the Desert Vista High School junior will have several stories to tell and more than a few chapters to write.

Hailing from Grand Rapids, Mich., Linsey has lived a well-traveled life. He moved to the Buckeye State of Ohio when he was only three months old and has made his home in such places as Cincinnati, Columbus and Indianapolis.

"Adjusting to school systems in different states is difficult," Linsey said.

As a young child, Linsey had to overcome the reading disorder known as dyslexia. Because of his dyslexia, Michael has developed an "emotional connection" with the movie character portrayed in "Forrest Gump".

"As a kid Forrest had to battle through similar difficulties [as mine]," he said.

"There is a constant message of hope across the movie and that's what I think life is all about."

At Desert Vista, Linsey frequently attends student council meetings and the Coffee Society, a club that meets to discuss current world issues.

"I like to stay aware of current issues at home and around the world," Linsey said. "That's why I'm attracted to journalism."

Linsey has wasted no time making his mark on the journalism program at Desert Vista. He was news editor as a sophomore and co-editor-in-chief as a junior, a position he will retain next year.

Although he is proud of all of his newspaper articles, two pieces stand out from the rest. "I wrote a feature profile on an FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) student with just an

unbelievable array of extracurricular involvement," Linsey said. "He was just a really wonderful and really cooperative to interview."

Linsey also wrote a hard news piece outlining problems with his school district's budget.

"I loved this story because it required a lot of in-depth investigation and reporting," he said. "I used a lot of magnitude in it, and I think it really sticks out because of it."

With a plethora of extracurricular activities, Linsey also keeps up with a rigorous academic schedule, including honors English and history.

Linsey also said he takes pleasure in hitting the links occasionally at Club West in the Ahwatukee Foothills, where he enjoys an 18 handicap.

For college, Linsey said he will mostly likely stay home and attend Arizona State University,

**"I like to stay aware of current issues at home and around the world."**

unless he is given a scholarship to go out of state. He said he hopes to major in mass communication or political science.

Linsey has always been interested in traveling overseas. He said he looks forward to touring Australia and various countries in Europe.

Although there is not one particular person who Linsey idolizes, he said he looks to his immediate family for role models.

"I look up to people who set good examples," he added.

Linsey's love of autobiographies has given him the idea to someday write his own, and with a life that has already taken so many twists and turns, his first couple of chapters will be easy ones.

"If I were to become famous, I'd love to write an autobiography because I'd be able to pass my knowledge on to others about my career," he added.



Lindsey  
Castro



Mike  
Linsey