



2023 Lindsay Orange Blossom Festival  
Queen's Attendants  
Isabella Duran, Jennifer Gonzalez-Espinoza,  
Gabriela Leon, and Emily Padilla

**Isabella Duran**

My name is Isabella Duran and I am honored to have been chosen as an attendant for the 2023 Orange Blossom Queen's court. I am the daughter of Hector and Stephanie Duran. I have two brothers, Ethan who is older and Aiden who is younger. My parents have always been my biggest supporters and have helped shape me into the person I am today. They have taught me to work hard, to be a good person, and to respect and believe in myself.

I have lived in Lindsay my entire life. I am 17 years old and a senior at Lindsay High School. Being a Lindsay learner and athlete has helped me to grow as a leader and trailblazer. I have successfully participated in sports, clubs, and academic opportunities because of the support of my family, coaches, learning facilitators, and community.

During the past four years in high school, I have participated and excelled in various sports, clubs, and organizations. I have been on the Varsity Women's Soccer team all four years of high school. This is my second year as team captain. Playing soccer has taught me discipline, dedication, and perseverance. Over my soccer career I have been awarded East Sequoia League MVP, team MVP, Offensive Player of the Year, and most recently I became the new All-time Leading Scorer for LHS Women's Soccer! Did I mention I was the starting kicker for my high school's Varsity Football team for the past 2 years and I made history?! Ever since I was a little girl, I've wanted to play football. However, over the years I would constantly hear that football wasn't for girls. After the pandemic hit, I realized that life is simply too short to live with regret, and not playing football would have been mine. I also wanted to show others that yes, a girl can play football and be competitive at it as well. During my first season, I scored a 31 yard field goal that made Central Section Football History as the First Female Field Goal. I was also selected to the second team All-Tulare County. This year, I scored 24 PAT's and 4 field goals. My hope is that other girls who share my love for football won't allow stereotypes to influence their decisions. I have also participated in track and field, swimming and volleyball. In the community I have swam for Lindsay Skimmers since I was 5 years old and last summer I worked for the City of Lindsay as a lifeguard. I am so grateful for the support I have received from my coaches who have encouraged me, my teammates who have inspired me, and a special thank you to my family as well as people from the community that have attended my games and cheered me on.

In high school, I've taken on many leadership roles. I was class president my freshman and sophomore year. I've also been Commissioner of Athletics, CESPY Chairperson, a member of Team Empower, a member of the Principal's Advisory Council, a member of Captain's Counsel, and President of Block L. In addition, I am ASB President, a member of CSF, National Spanish Honors Society, FCA, ASL Club, as well as Rotary and Key Club where I have volunteered time in the community. Each of these opportunities has taught me responsibility, determination, and the value of teamwork.

Both of my parents are first generation college graduates. At a young age they instilled in me the value of education. They have always encouraged me to seize every educational opportunity that I am presented with. The summer before I began high school, I was presented with the opportunity to take my first college course at College of the Sequoias. I earned an "A"! Thereafter, I set some academic goals for myself. First, I wanted to be academically ranked #1 in my class, and I also wanted to continue taking college classes throughout high school. I proudly have remained ranked #1 my entire high school career. I have also completed 17 college courses and will have completed 20 by the time I graduate. In addition, I will be graduating with an Associate of Arts in University Studies in Math and Science from College of the Sequoias at the same time as graduating from Lindsay High School.

After high school, I plan to attend a 4 year university and major in biopsychology. After that, I plan to apply to medical school. I want to make a positive difference in people's lives by helping improve their quality of life. No matter where I go, Lindsay will always be near and dear to my heart. I feel so blessed to have grown up in such a beautiful and supportive community.

### **Jennifer Gonzalez-Espinoza**

My name is Jennifer Gonzalez-Espinoza and I am 17 years old. I come from a wonderful, hardworking family who has always supported my education and believed in my potential to accomplish great things. My parents, Rosalio and Margarita, were born in Huatajo, Michoacán and immigrated to the United States to ensure my siblings and I would have a successful, happy life. Although they could not attend college, my parents are the smartest people I know and without their stable and encouraging love, I would not be the person I am today. My older siblings, Karina and Ricardo are my idols and they have set a high standard with their character and work ethic. My younger sister Jasmine is also growing into a kind and dedicated person.

I have always loved school and strived to become an informed and well-balanced student and person. At LHS, I am part of the Business Pathway. These courses have made me a stronger worker, leader, and teammate. Since sophomore year, I have taken Dual Enrollment college courses and am part of the Cardinal Early College Academy. I am thankful to all the wonderful learning facilitators and administrators at LHS who care about my future and challenge me to be better every day while also making me feel welcome. I am also grateful for all the great friends and classmates who have given me wonderful memories and helped me become a better person.

I have been involved in various extracurricular activities. The club that has had the greatest impact on me is the Lindsay FBLA chapter. It has helped me get involved in community service, learn about business and government, and travel to compete in speaking and business competitions, while also teaching me the importance of making connections. I am also involved in Key Club which has given me the opportunity to participate in community service activities and meet wonderful people. I am also a part of Team Empower, dating back to 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and have had a more involved role in high school. I've been able to collaborate with insightful education specialists to learn more about the groundbreaking Lindsay PBS system and to advocate for it to visitors from across the country. This year, I joined ASB and Principal's Cabinet to make a change in the school and serve as a voice for students. As the City Council Representative, I attend city council meetings to give reports on school events and learn more about the city's government.

I have also participated in various internships around the city to build my career skills and learn from established community leaders. My sophomore year, I interned in the finance department of the Lindsay City Hall where I applied the skills I learned in my business courses. During

junior year, I interned at the Human Resources Department of the Lindsay City Hall. This experience helped me place 1<sup>st</sup> in the HR Management event at the FBLA National Conference and introduced me to many fantastic community leaders and passionate citizens. This year, I am interning at the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce where I help plan community events and learn about the intersection of government and business. In January, I was recognized as the Lindsay Female Youth of the Year at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards.

After high school, I hope to attend UCLA and then attend Stanford Law School. I plan to intern at law firms and in the California State Senate or Assembly and collaborate in research on educational or economic reform. After law school, I will either become an immigration or employment lawyer to help my people achieve the American Dream of raising a family in the United States. Further into my career, I hope to serve as a federal judge or become a policy analyst for the U.S. government to help create and improve laws that will help the people in my community.

### **Gabriela Leon**

My name is Gabriela Leon, better known to my friends as Gaby. I am adventurous and outgoing. I am the daughter of Angel and Lorena Leon, and sister to Christopher and Alexis Leon. The nieta of Arturo & Eva Saballa and Ricardo & Janie Leon. I was raised serving my Lindsay community. I have been setting tables, asking for fundraiser donations, and selling tickets for the Lindsay Hospital guild for as long as I can remember. I have also volunteered for the Rotary club. I am currently assisting with the Lindsay Ono City Sister committee. I also volunteered with HOW (Helping One Woman).

My educational career started as a Washington Tiger in the Dual Immersion program. As a Tiger I served as vice president of ASB. Mrs. Scheufele gave me the opportunity to lead at assemblies. I had amazing learning facilitators. A few that I would like to thank: Ms. Jovel, Mrs. Carmona, Senora Gutierrez who through your commitment to educate me, I was able to be a leader in Lindsay Leads (I traveled to Sacramento and participated on a panel for Improving Schools through Student Centered Learning and represented LUSD in Washington D.C. on a discussion panel for the work we do) and in EMPOWER (I led visitors from around the country on site visits). I recall Mrs. Wollenman hosted the OBF Queen and her attendants. The advice given was to be your best and give back to our community. Lindsay High has been an amazing experience for me. As a freshman, I chose the Medical Intervention Pathway not knowing what I really wanted to become in life. Post Covid I was able to intern with Megan Salinas, the Athletic Trainer during football season. She has inspired me to pursue a career in Athletic Training.

As a Cardinal I participated in several clubs: FBLA, Block L, Christian Athletes, and have served as Class vice president and ASB vice president. I played high school sports which included volleyball, soccer, swim, and track & field. I have been playing travel volleyball with NuBreed Volleyball Club since the age of six. I was often called Mini Me and Little Beast. I was the youngest and shortest player on the team. It did not intimidate me, it only made me work and play harder. Coaches Jana, Job, and Hailey gave me an opportunity to play. I am coachable and their guidance has helped improve my game. I have been able to serve as Team Captain, Team MVP, and League MVP for Volleyball. Offensive Player and Most Improved in Soccer. I ventured out and tried track and field and received the Outstanding Hurdler/Jumper award. I am proud of my teammates as we made it to the playoffs in volleyball and soccer. I am currently finishing my catechism classes and plan to be confirmed soon. I am a certified lifeguard and had the

opportunity to work for the City of Lindsay during the summer. I enjoyed teaching Lindsay Learners how to swim.

The performance based system has allowed me to move at my own academic pace. I am dual/concurrently enrolled at College of the Sequoias. I am close to receiving my A.A. I have applied to several universities. My passion is to play volleyball at the collegiate level. I have a few offers on the table and look forward to playing for a school that can further develop my skills.

I would like to thank the community for selecting me to represent this beautiful town of LINDSAY. I am humbled by this honor. I look forward to the memories that I will make during the school and business visits this week.

### **Emily Padilla**

Hello, my name is Emily Padilla. I'm 17 years old and currently enrolled at Lindsay High School. I was born and raised in Tulare until the age of eight, following my parents' divorce. I went to Tulare's Cypress Elementary School before transferring to Lindsay's Kennedy Elementary Learning Community. My grandparents relocated my family and I to the small town of Lindsay. I am Patricia Padilla Montes' daughter and the granddaughter of Irene and Francisco Montes. I have one older brother. Moving towns at such a young age was difficult. Looking back, it was the best part of my personal development. My mother and family guided me throughout the years when I needed it the most. I've met so many new people over the years, not just from Lindsay or California, but from all over the nation.

I made an effort to participate in sports, clubs, and organizations during my four years of high school. My junior year, I began playing soccer. Throughout high school, I also participated in a variety of clubs. I was in FCA, where I learned how to get closer to God and how important it is to have God by your side. Also included is the Rural Education of Americans Program, abbreviated as REAP. Obtaining a personal scholarship through my academic achievements. In the meantime, I was also involved in the California Scholarship Federation (CSF), Honor Roll, Math Club, AVID, The Ono City Japan Exchange Program, and, most importantly, FFA.

For the past three years, FFA has been my passion. Not only did I make some of my best friends, but I also made a lot of new friends from all over the state and nation. Creating millions of new opportunities, such as becoming a better public speaker, learning to be an entrepreneur, becoming self-driven, and discovering and excelling in livestock showing. Meanwhile, I am also a member of CDE teams such as Citrus Judging, Milk Quality and Dairy Judging, and the Veterinary Science Team. But most importantly, I improved as a leader, friend, and teammate. If it weren't for my Advisors, Mrs. Fonseca, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Pacheco, I wouldn't be as committed to achieving my goals and dreams. Driving me to excellence and encouraging ideas that once seemed impossible to me. Such as becoming a voting delegate and representing the state of California at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. They now encourage and support me in my goal of becoming a California State FFA Officer.

Living on a small goat farm and raising livestock has always been a big part of my life. Throughout high school, I worked hard to become the best in stock showing at local fairs and, eventually, jackpots. I've had five market goats, one market hog, and one shorthorn steer. My last livestock animal for this year's Porterville Fair is a shorthorn steer named Weasly, which I am currently raising.

Livestock showing has taught me a lot about animal health and the value of cleanliness, nutrition, exercise, and even something as simple as grooming. The responsibility and dedication that came with my livestock motivated me to grow and further my education and passion in livestock medicine.

I've always enjoyed volunteering in my spare time and with school groups. For example, I give out dinners to people in need on my time. Helping out at the California Wool Growers Association's annual ram sale at the Tulare Ag. Expo, putting up flags for deceased veterans at the Lindsay-Strathmore Cemetery, helping to clean up the campus, donating canned food for the Angel Tree Canned Food Drive, and participating in the Lindsay P.D. Annual Christmas Toy Drive are all examples of community service that I have participated in. Even simple tasks like assisting in feeding the school farm bring me joy. Knowing that even the smallest details matter and understanding that you should never take advantage of anyone or anything and try to help as much as possible.

Academically, I am on the honor roll. Keeping a GPA of 4.05. I completed 11 college/honor roll courses. Academics were extremely important to me as an individual in terms of my future endeavors. As I aspire to be a trauma veterinarian in the future, with the goal of one day opening my own animal hospital. I've always understood that my grades reflected my knowledge and ability to learn. As I work hard to get into UC Davis and Cal Poly Pomona, which are the top two animal sciences and veterinary/animal medicine schools. Because of my love for animals and my concerns about animal health, I've always wanted to be a veterinarian. I hope to one day give back to my agricultural communities by offering veterinary assistant internships to children who are as enthusiastic about small animal and livestock health as I am.