



One recent Adams City High School graduate is proud to share that she's from Commerce City, and she's using her past experiences to drive her passion to pursue a law degree and support her community's education system.

Viridiana (Viry) Valdez attended Monaco Elementary, Kemp Elementary, Kearney Middle School and ACHS, all in Adams 14 School District.

"There's something really special about Commerce City," Valdez said. "Maybe we aren't a community of great wealth, but we all celebrate with pride when we achieve our goals, despite having the odds against us."

Valdez's positive experiences in Adams 14 were boosted by many factors, including her family and influential teachers.

"My senior year was quite chaotic, as the district was coming up on its final year of Turnaround status,"



Valdez said. "Thankfully, with the support of many amazing teachers – like Mr. Deaguero and Ms. Mavrotheris – I was able to focus on academics and prepare for college."

During her senior year in 2014, Valdez heard more about the substantial post-secondary support provided by the Adams 14 Education Foundation. The Foundation's mission is to enhance the quality of education in Adams 14 by raising and distributing money to fund programs that support literacy, student achievement and expanded learning opportunities for all students.

"I applied for and received a \$20,000 scholarship from the Foundation, which I used to attend the University of Colorado in Boulder," Valdez said. "I remained in close contact with (Foundation executive director) Dale Mingilton, and the Foundation board of directors while I was enrolled at CU."

Valdez went on to receive a bachelor's degree in management, along with a minor in Spanish and a certificate in leadership.

Because of her passion for post-secondary education and her love for her community, Valdez accepted the Foundation's offer to join its board upon her graduation from CU.

"Dale and the entire Foundation Board of Directors, have graciously allowed me to serve alongside them to support the students of Adams 14. I am proud to support the Foundation's mission to provide expanded learning opportunities for all Adams 14 students," Valdez said.

Currently, Valdez is working on a law degree at the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law, and hopes to become an immigration attorney.

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## Adams 14 Education Foundation

“My hope is to clerk for a judge for a year, so I can get a more in-depth understanding of court processes,” said Valdez. “I feel incredibly passionate about immigration law, and I’d like to use my education to support underrepresented communities.”

“Opportunity shouldn’t be a privilege, nor something that’s reserved for those with wealth, power or prestige,” Valdez said. “The children of Commerce City need to be reminded that they have every right to attend the college or university of their choice, and pursue the degree and career of their dreams.”

As for her work on the Adams 14 Education Foundation board, Valdez hopes to reach Adams 14 students with her message of hope, determination and drive.

“The students here have the skills, the potential and the passion,” Valdez said. “They simply need the best learning environments available so they can be prepared to compete with their peers across the nation.”

Written by Breanna Deidel, Adams County District 14 Communications Department