



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 22, 2017

TO: Julie Castañeda, Clerk of the Board

FROM: Ramón Valadez, County Supervisor, District 2

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item**

Please place the following item on the Board of Supervisor's Agenda addendum for the meeting on Tuesday, September 5, 2017.

Presentation of recognition and proclamation to Kenji Azarias, 2017 Pan American Champion for International Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, Ismael Angulo, Junior Olympian, Leesa Mendibles, Junior Olympian, Taylor Percy, Junior Olympian, and Michael Richardson, Junior Olympian representing various schools throughout Tucson and Higher Ground, A Resource Center

(District 2)

AUG 24 17PM 04:00 PC CLK OF BD

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PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Higher Ground a Resource Center is celebrating its 10th Anniversary of service as a community resource center which serves children and families alike, with a major focus and emphasis on fostering academic success, connections, support, and dedication to meaningful recreational activities. Since its inception, Higher Ground has become more than just a place to attend, but rather, it is very proud of becoming a culture-infusing catalyst that generates a systematic change and influence in building up each of the communities and neighborhoods that it serves. Best of all, children who participate at Higher Ground are provided with countless opportunities to become outstanding students and accomplished athletes; and

WHEREAS, with the talented leadership of their coaches, their individual commitment to hard work and training these student-athletes have successfully bonded over a common passion for the martial arts, namely, Judo and Jiu Jitsu. With this proclamation, the Pima County Board of Supervisors is extremely proud to recognize and honor the following five students: Ismael Angulo, Kenji Azarias, Leesa Mendibles, Taylor Percy and Michael Richardson, who have each excelled at Higher Ground within their respective sports categories; and

WHEREAS, when Ismael Angulo first started Judo and Jiu Jitsu, he was unsure and somewhat apprehensive, but after winning several state championships, Ismael began to see himself in a more positive light. His dedication to the sport paid off and during the Junior Olympics, he placed 2nd in Juvenile A Male +64kg Light category and 1st in Novice Juvenile A +64kg category. Ismael is 14 years old and a 9th grader at Pueblo High School; and

WHEREAS, Kenji Azarias has won over 20 gold medals, with several of them as state champion in Jiu Jitsu and Judo in Arizona and California. Kenji started competing at the age of four and practicing these sports with his father as a way to stay active despite having asthma and severe allergies. Always being the smallest and physically weakest in the group, his passion and determination to train hard has paid off leading to his current biggest achievement of winning the 2017 Pan American Championship for the International Brazilian Jiu Jitsu for his weight class, making him the 2017 champion for both North and South America in his bracket. In addition to competing 12 to 15 times a year, he is enrolled in GATE classes at Hollinger School, where he maintains high grades in his school courses; and

WHEREAS, Leesa Mendibles has won several championships in the last two years and overcome many obstacles in her personal life to be part of this sport. Despite this, Leesa maintains outstanding grades in honors classes, is a part of the performing band, and is also an active volunteer at Higher Ground. During the Junior Olympics, Leesa placed 1st in the Novice Cadet Female +70kg category and 2nd IJF Junior Female +78kg category. She is currently tied for 3rd in the United States for her category which led to her recently being invited to compete in an international tournament to represent the United States. Leesa is 15 years old and a sophomore at Flowing Wells High School; and

WHEREAS, Taylor Percy has had to overcome many things in life, so she turned to Judo as a way to surround herself with supportive coaches and adults. She trains hard and has shown total passion and dedication to the sport. This includes training six days out of the week, making early 6 a.m. trips to Mount Lemmon to improve her performance, as well as travelling around the United States to compete. Her consistency pays off as Taylor continues to be a ranked competitor in USA Judo. During Junior Olympics, she won 2nd Cadet Female -63kg category and 1st International Cadet Female -63kg category. She is currently the #1 competitor in USA Judo for the Cadet Female -63kg category and is ranked 7th in the IJF Junior Female -63kg category. These weight and age categories are the toughest category in the girl's division and often a high priority category in selecting future Olympians. Taylor is 16 years old and a junior at Rincon High School; and

WHEREAS, when Michael Richardson first started middle school, he had several personal challenges and bullying incidents due to symptoms of his Asperger's. He had no sports background and initially only joined Judo as an activity after receiving tutoring services at Higher Ground. During Junior Olympics, Michael took 2nd in the International Cadet Male -66kg category. He is currently ranked #9 in the entire country in the Cadet Male category, one of the toughest brackets in USA Judo. He is a senior at Cholla High School and is taking honors classes and he satisfactorily maintains excellent grades. Michael's confidence in himself has grown and has allowed him to achieve many things through his hard work and dedication.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Pima County Board of Supervisors, in keeping with an honored tradition of recognizing similar significant and personal accomplishments, does hereby honor Higher Ground and these five student-athletes by proclaiming Tuesday, September 5, 2017 to be:

“Ismael Angulo, Kenji Azarias, Leesa Mendibles, Taylor Peercy, and Michael Richardson Recognition Day”

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5th day of September 2017.

The Honorable Sharon Bronson, Chair
Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Julie Castañeda, Clerk
Pima County Board of Supervisors