Vanessa Lopez a 10th graders that is a 15-year-old home school student through connections. I first met Vanessa when she joined the Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leaders Team in 2015. She was 13 and in the 8th grade student at Nikiski High School. Her post-secondary plan is to attend college for Business & continue to passion for entrepreneurship. In the 2 years she has been a team member I have seen tremendous growth and follow through with her dreams. As an advisor one of my task is to have students document their hours of Student Lead Leadership Activities. This process has let me see a snapshot of this spectacular Kenai Peninsula Native Youth Leader who independently took on issues she is passionate about.

Vanessa’s accomplishment and growth is remarkable. Vanessa has many leadership qualities. Just to name a few; She is creative in her ideas to solve problems in her community, she is self-motivation, dedicated, is hard workings, continues to move forward, has great at time management & documentation, has financial responsibilities, and much more.

* Vanessa loves coffee and decided create and start a coffee business through her church called Mochas for Missions. The monies raised from the coffee she makes and sales is donated to charities of her choice. Currently she is working on “YOU CARE KITS”, which makes bags with essential personal items for daily living & distributes them to people who are homeless. Her past funding projects included, Heiferfield program which sponsored chickens to be taken over seas to families in poverty so that they can start their own business of egg production. She said she wanted to help out other families because she knows what it is like. In addition, Mochas for Missions donates & to the local food pantry.
* Vanessa moved to the home school program for schedule flexibility as she works part time to help her family financially due to hardship.
* In 2016 she recognized that homeschool programs lacked the student-to-student social interactions and gatherings that high school youth have the opportunity to participate in when at a public school facility. Her mother, Carolyn Lopez, challenged her by asking her what she could do about it. Vanessa organized and created the Kenai Peninsula Home School Activities Committee (K.P.H.A.C), which includes their mission and plan of action to organize activities for homeschool students of all ages.
* She organized, planned, and implemented the first Homeschool Prom in May of 2017. Utilizing her resources, she was able to secure a facility, as well as delegated out duties to the other student volunteers, held cookie sales and other fundraisers to make it all come together. It was a huge success with over 40 homeschool students participating in the event.
* She manages the KPHAC Facebook page for communication as well as her many other duties. There are pictures of the prom and other activities she leads available on the page listed below.

<https://www.facebook.com/kphomeschoolactivities/?pnref=lhc>

* Through Alaska Business Magazine she found an opportunity and attended a two-week Business Academy Camp, in the summer of 2017 held at University of Alaska Anchorage, to further her education.
* Vanessa has attended Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula institutes, activities, and events, that include team building, life & leadership Skills, Social emotional Learning, Youth Development, Brightways Phlight Club, Service Learning International Youth Leadership Conference in Los Angeles, & First Institute Elder & Youth Conference in Fairbanks.
* In additions, she was invited to present her Home School Prom Project at the National Summit in Denver Colorado in July of 2017. It was sponsored by UNITY & Today’s Native Leaders, both National Native Youth Programs. She created a power point and spoke to over 250 Native Youth from around the United States sharing her idea so that others could learn from her journey!
* Most Recently, for the home school activities committee, she has taken it another step. She encountered a financial obstacle that lead her to connecting with Brides community resources in Soldotna where she started a 501 3c nonprofit committee. This will allow for her to handle the donations & fundraising for the committee!

This is only a brief summary and does not include ALL of her leadership qualities and social emotional aptitude.

I know she needs financial assistance for her post-secondary education and has been working on a plan to start applying for scholarships now.

I can’t say enough about how inspired I am by Vanessa!