

The Pueblo Chieftain

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All business

South High grad values health, future after cancer experience



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/JOHN JAQUES -- Galeth Bolanos will graduate Saturday from South High despite a brain tumor that stole 18 months from his high school years.

**By LORETTA SWORD
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN**

The baseball cap cocked sideways on his head belies his all-business demeanor, his quiet, matter-of-fact assessment of life as he knows it.

By no means has his been a typical, teenage life.

Galeth Bolanos will graduate Saturday with South High School classmates who played sports and

went to proms and sent him money and good wishes while he lived with an older sister in Denver for 18 months to be near the doctors who were his lifeline at The Children's Hospital.

Galeth was in the middle of his sophomore year when bothersome headaches became unbearable, and he was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

After surgery came a grueling round of chemotherapy, followed by almost daily radiation treatments for two months. When he wasn't being studied by his team of doctors, Galeth was keeping up with his studies through an online program that he finished with a 4.0 grade average.

No big deal, he says now. "It was easier than classes at school."

And he kept in touch with friends and former South principal Jim Wesley, who

helped organize a number of fundraisers to help Galeth's single mom pay his medical bills and the cost of her trips to and from Denver when she could get off work.

Galeth is the youngest of five children, all of them raised in a small home on Pueblo's West Side. He said his mom wanted the best for her kids and made great efforts to get them to classes at South as each of them went through high school.

All but one of his older siblings is in college now, he said, and the oldest is married and raising a young family.

Although he played football as a freshman, Galeth said he had no interest in sports or extracurricular activities after receiving clearance from his doctors to return to school.

He was interested in working, though, and has worked part time at Convergys telemarketing for nearly a year.

He hopes to get more hours this summer, so he can save for his college education at Colorado State University-Fort Collins, where he's pondering a degree in business or accounting, or both.

"I'm not sure about my major yet. I'm thinking about something to do with finances," he said.

"I like computer work. I like to be responsible for managing things."

Galeth's also an artist, but not the electronic variety.

"I'm actually pretty good, but I draw by hand, not on the computer. So I don't think that would be a

good choice for a career," he said.

Galeth said he doesn't regret having missed the social side of school and even believes that his brush with cancer, "in the end, was good for me. Because of that, it made me appreciate more" about everyday life, his family and his future.

"I was raised that way - to do good in school, and succeed - but of course, this experience boosted that mentality," he said.

"And I'm grateful to all the people at South who helped me out," because his mom, Luisa Bolanos, was disabled by a back injury and facing surgery herself when his diagnosis changed both of their plans for those years.

"But it's over now, and things are good. I'm ready to go on to the next step of my life."

lorettas@chieftain.com

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Here is a schedule of this week's high school graduation ceremonies:

- **TODAY** Central High School, 7 p.m., State Fair Events Center.
- **SATURDAY** South High School, 8 a.m., State Fair Events Center East High School, 12:30 p.m., State Fair Events Center. Centennial High School, 5 p.m., State Fair Events Center.