

## BHS class of 2008 graduates, ready for next step

[By Aaron Aupperlee, city editor](#)

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BARSTOW — Some just hoped not to trip and fall.

On Thursday, nearly 300 students walked down the Barstow High School track at Langworthy Field, some in high heels, some in sunglasses, some with their bodies contorted and eyes fixed on the swelling crowd in the bleachers searching for family or friends, but all on their way out of high school.

“After this, I get treated like an adult. I have to get a job and do adult things,” said Sammy Rugnao. “But I’m pretty excited.”

Rugnao is one of the many BHS graduates who will be heading off to college. His sights are set on Riverside Community College and then a trade school in Washington to get a job as video game programmer, something he’s done for years, he said. Brandie Reece, the class’ counselor since sophomore year, said that an unusually high number of students elected college over heading straight into the working world.

“It’s an outstanding group of scholars,” she said. “For the most part, this class, whether it be four years or two years, they’re going off to college.”

Mike Sessions is heading there. He will attend Cal State San Bernardino in the fall to study psychology. In addition to furthering his BHS education, he said he has other goals on his mind.

“I’m looking to succeed and making my mom and my grandma proud,” he said.

The student speakers at Thursday’s graduation touched on all that the class had been through and what is to come for the graduates. Associated Student Body President Nathan Silva touched on the classes accomplishments in sports and the community. Jordan Lee, class president, talked about what’s next.

“Some of us will venture off to college. Others will begin to contribute in the work force. Many will serve our country. Each of us will take the road that leads to our dreams. But no matter where we decided to go from here let’s remember where we came from, yes, our little desert town of Barstow, California. The Del Taco Town,” she said.

Most were excited about what comes next. Logan Wainner, who plans to study at Barstow Community College for a year, then at Cal State Long Beach before becoming a zoologist, said he will get to pursue a childhood dream. Scott Brown, headed for Cal State Fresno, said he is ready to

experience a new town.

New can be scary, but Salutatorian Christy Lee told the class to wait and see what the future holds. Remembering a story told by a teacher about a horse trainer who was always skeptical of the future, Lee offered advice to her fellow graduates.

“What looks extremely bleak now may be the cause of joy and happiness later, and what we see as an absolute disaster and wreckage of a life now may be what saves us tomorrow,” she said. “There really is no way of telling what the future brings. And so we wait. And we see.”

No matter what is next, many graduates said they will miss parts of high school. Cassandra Flores said she will miss friends and teachers, even when she got in trouble with them. Dwayne White, off to UCLA, said he will miss school lunch and hanging out with his friends. Some, like Stephanie Esqueda, will miss Barstow, the only town they have ever called home. But Esqueda, who plans to join the Navy, and others like Jonathan Hollingsworth, know it is time to move on.

“I’m ready to get out of Barstow,” he said. “I love my people in Barstow, but it’s time to make a change, time to make a move.”

In their high school lives, there was only one move left to make, across the stage, diploma in hand. And while Stephanie Mundy was nervous she would trip and fall — she didn’t — Angel Herrera was ready to go.

“I just want to get this over with so I can dance,” she said.

### **The next step**

After graduation, it is off into the world for Barstow High School graduates.

- Karen Figuerra plans to attend BCC for two years, then another college on her way to being a nurse.
- Cassandra Flores hopes to go to school in New York and study criminal justice.
- Treasughn Springfield is going to stay in Barstow and continue working.
- Mike Sessions wants to go to Cal State San Bernardino to study psychology.
- Scott Brown is off to Cal State Fresno to study business.
- Amber Nichols is going to study at Barstow Community College.
- Angel Herrera hopes to continue modeling and take online courses at Barstow Community College.
- Logan Wainner is going to Cal State Long Beach to study zoology.
- Stephanie Esqueda plans to join the Navy and fly jets.
- Steven Trusty will be going on a mission with his church.
- Sammy Rugnao is going to study video game programming at Riverside Community College and then a trade school in Washington.
- Dwayne White plans to enter the pre-law program at UCLA.
- Stephanie Mundy is going to stay in Barstow and attend BCC.
- Tara Davidson will continue her cosmology classes at BCC.

- Jonathan Hollingsworth plans to go to CSU Northridge to study radiology.
- Jonathon Szetela is going to go to BCC, then another school to study either geology or marine biology.

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