

The Path



From GEAR UP Wyoming | Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1



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The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

GEAR UP Wyoming has plenty to share to wrap up our summer. Read our newsletter to meet our featured student, learn some important dates for 2027, and hear about how we're strengthening support for Wyoming students.

Pages 2-4:.....Student Spotlight

Pages 5-6:...Navigating the High Degrees

Pages 7-8:.....Starting the Year Strong

Pages 8-9:.....Professional Development

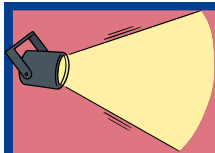


**GEAR UP
WYOMING**

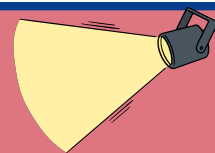
What is our mission?

GEAR UP Wyoming strives to increase the number of low-income students who graduate high school and enter a post-secondary educational institution to improve their access to career and life opportunities. [Visit our page!](#)

Here are our summer updates:



Student Spotlight: Lucia



As she prepares to begin her sophomore year at the University of Wyoming, Lucia Garcia is already building a strong foundation for her future. A recent GEAR UP Wyoming alum and aspiring educator, Lucia is pursuing a Bachelor of Elementary Education with a Minor and Endorsement in Early Childhood Education and plans to graduate in Fall 2028. Her dedication to her studies, combined with a deep sense of purpose and perseverance, has made her stand out among her peers. For Lucia, higher education is about more than earning a degree.

The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Student Spotlight (continued)

It is about fulfilling a lifelong dream, and making the most of opportunities that were not always available to those who came before her. "My dream is to be an elementary school teacher and that requires me to earn a degree," Lucia said. She credits the University of Wyoming's College of Education for helping prepare her for that goal, mentioning that its emphasis on classroom experience gives her motivation during challenging semesters.



Photo submitted by Lucia

Her commitment to education is also rooted in gratitude for the opportunities she has been given. Reflecting on her family's experiences, Lucia shared, "What most motivates me to seek higher education is the opportunities I have that many do not. I have had the privilege of being born in a country and state where higher education is valued and encouraged." That perspective has helped Lucia remain focused while navigating the transition from high school to college. Throughout her first year, she has been proactive about asking questions, connecting with campus resources, applying for scholarships, and taking intentional steps toward her career goals. According to her advisor, those qualities are what make Lucia exceptional. "Lucia stood out to me because she has approached her first year with honesty, determination, and a real willingness to grow," she shared.

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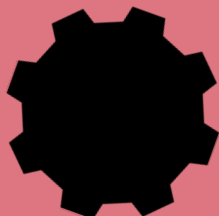
The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Student Spotlight (continued)

"She reflects what persistence really looks like: not having everything figured out, but continuing to show up, use her resources, and believe that she belongs here."

When asked what advice Lucia has for GUWY students or incoming college freshmen Lucia shared something simple yet profound: "If you want something, you must seek it." She encourages actively seeking new experience to improve the quality of your life, noting that "if you want friends, you need to talk to strangers; if you want to be a straight A student, you have to study extra hard; if you want to be a leader, you need to get involved. Going to college gives you a chance to become the person you want to be, but you still have to work for it." As Lucia enters her second year at UW, her determination, gratitude, and commitment to serving others continue to guide her path. With a clear vision for her future and a passion for supporting children through education, she exemplifies the resilience and ambition that GEAR UP Wyoming seeks to foster in students across the state.



The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

“Navigating the High Degrees”



GUY campers pose with their egg after an egg float activity

This June, students from across Wyoming gathered at the University of Wyoming for Camp GEAR UP 2026, a four day residential experience designed to help participants explore college and career opportunities while building the skills and confidence needed for future success. Guided by the nautical theme “Navigating the High Degrees” campers embarked on a journey of self-discovery, college readiness, and personal growth.

Throughout the week, students experienced life as a college student by attending classes, staying in UW’s newest residence halls, and enjoying meals in the recently opened dining center. Courses included Composition 101, Career Readiness, Wellness, and Cool U. These experiences encouraged students to explore their interests, identify their strengths, and begin charting pathways toward their educational and career goals.

Beyond the classroom, students built lasting friendships through team-building activities, hands-on learning experiences, shared adventures across campus, and talent shows. Whether they were collaborating with peers, learning new skills, or stepping outside of their comfort zones, campers demonstrated enthusiasm, resilience, and a willingness to embrace new opportunities. One of the most memorable moments of Camp GEAR UP 2026 came during the grand prize drawing.

The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Navigating the High Degrees (continued)

Jacob, a returning student from Western Wyoming Community College, had won the camp's grand cash prize the previous year. When his name was drawn once again this summer, he made a generous choice. Rather than keep the prize money for himself, Jacob chose to share it by splitting the award among five randomly selected campers. His act of generosity left few eyes dry and serves as a powerful reminder of the leadership, compassion, and community spirit that GEAR UP strives to cultivate. The moment filled campers and staff alike with pride and captured the very heart of the camp experiences.

As students headed home, they carried with them more than memories. They left with new knowledge, stronger connections, and a clearer vision of their futures. Camp GEAR UP 2026 was a reminder that when students are given the tools, support, and encouragement to dream big, they are ready to raise their anchors, chart their course, and confidently navigate their journey ahead.



A GUWY student walks on a tightrope held up by their GUWY peers

The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Starting the Year Strong

A new school year brings new opportunities, fresh goals, and exciting possibilities. Whether you're returning to familiar classrooms or starting a new chapter, the beginning of the school year is the perfect time to establish habits that will help you succeed both academically and personally, and one of the best ways to start strong is by getting organized early. Review your class schedule, set up a planner or digital calendar, and keep track of important deadlines. Remember that success is built through strong effort, consistent attendance, and a willingness to ask for help when challenges arise.

This is also a great time to think about your future goals. Whether you're interested in college, technical training, or military service, every class, activity, and experience this year can help you develop valuable skills for the next steps in your journey. Take advantage of opportunities to explore careers, connect with mentors, and participate in programs that support your growth. As the school year gets underway, be sure to watch for these important dates and deadlines:

FAFSA Opens: October 1st, 2026

ACT Senior Retake Window 1: October 13th - 23rd, 2026

Daniels Fund Scholarship Deadline: October 15th, 2026

UW 2027-28 Application Priority: November 1st, 2026

UW Trustee's Scholarship Deadline: December 1st, 2026

ACT Junior Testing Window 1: March 23rd - April 2nd, 2027

UW Housing Deposit: Due by May 1st, 2027 to secure Fall 2027 housing

The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Starting the Year Strong (continued)

Generally, scholarship applications are due in two waves; first in October and the second in March. Additional ACT testing windows can be viewed on the [Wyoming Department of Education Statewide Assessment Calendar](#).

The start of the new year is more than just a return to the classroom. It's a chance to build momentum, set ambitious goals, and take meaningful steps toward the future you envision for yourself. Stay engaged, stay curious, and remember that every successful journey begins with a single step down the path.

Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development continues to play a vital role in helping educators and school leaders create pathways to success for Wyoming students. This quarter, GEAR UP Wyoming is building on recent learning opportunities while looking ahead to new conversations and resources designed to strengthen student achievement and college readiness.

Earlier this month, educators gathered at TeacherCon 2026, where GEAR UP Wyoming sponsored keynote speaker Dr. Kim St. Martin. Dr. St. Martin highlighted the impact of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and the role these frameworks play in improving outcomes for students across all subjects and grade levels. Her presentation emphasized how schools can use data-informed decision making, early identification, targeted interventions, and ongoing progress monitoring to address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs before they become barriers to student success.

The Path from GEAR UP Wyoming

Summer 2026 | Vol. 6.1

Looking ahead, school leaders are encouraged to attend the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principles (WASSP) Conference, November 1-3, 2026 at the Ramkota in Casper, WY. GEAR UP Wyoming is proud to sponsor keynote speaker Tony Cantanni, whose work challenges educational leaders to think intentionally about school culture, leadership, and student success. The conference offers an excellent opportunity for principals and administrators to network with colleagues, explore innovative approaches to leadership, and return to their schools with fresh ideas and practical strategies. As we continue planning for the future, GEAR UP Wyoming is developing a book study to be held in spring 2027 covering *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty* by Paul Gorski. This powerful resource examines common myths surrounding poverty and provides researched-based strategies for creating equitable learning environments where all students can thrive.

Whether reflecting on lessons learned from TeacherCon, preparing for the WASSP conference, or engaging with future book study opportunities, GEAR UP Wyoming remains committed to providing meaningful professional development that equips educators and school leaders to help every student succeed.

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