



Senior Appreciation Night 2024 happened on 5/25 in Los Alamos. This year was its 40th anniversary since its inception in 1984. Acting Police Chief Gary Bequette found a way to help the community by organizing the first ever SAN. “He got tired of seeing the kids go up to the Dome (Forest Service property) after graduation; inevitably there would be three or four accidents each year, resulting in injuries that were maiming kids for life, and he saw quite a few fatalities.

This celebration is literally saving lives and has been doing so successfully for 40 years, instead of going up in the mountains and drinking, the community offers a safe drug and alcohol-free event for all seniors. This year’s celebration planning has been an uphill battle since the committee started meeting in November of 2023 as the incoming balance for SAN was just over \$1000. SAN costs over \$12000 to produce and requires around 50 volunteers the night of the event.

The SAN Committee consists of staff from The Family YMCA, Los Alamos County - Recreation, LAPD, LAFD, Mesa Public Library, Ruby K’s, Kiwanis, LAPS, Social Services, Atomic City Transit, SALA, PEEC, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, First United Methodist Church and any parent or community member who is interested in helping or providing feedback.

The Volunteers put the time and energy into this event to serve all seniors. In the class of 2024 there were 270 graduates and almost 180 of these seniors visited the Los Alamos Teen Center to solidify their mark in the LATC history by putting their hand print and signature on the walls. All participants tell volunteers that this night is one of the best one in their senior year.



Everyone who is a senior is invited, you don't have to walk to qualify, if you are home schooled you are welcome, took the GED – welcome, if you got that pesky letter saying you didn't graduate – you are welcome, and you get to bring a guest. A total of 251 seniors with guests passed through during the event and over 115 stayed the whole night and attended breakfast in the morning and participated in the drawing for the coveted grand prizes.

In 2024 the community really came together in a big way. It's heartwarming to attend the event as an organizer to see the sheer joy of the participants. This year we exceeded expectations for fundraising and was able to go all in on gifts for the Games Night Auction (squish mallows are sold for around the same price as a house in Los Alamos) and the grand prizes.

Thank you to all our Donors, Partners, Community Members and Sponsors, you are spectacular. Thank you grandparents for sending checks to cover the fee for your grandchild to participate, your love is endless. Thank you extended family for sending checks or texting to donate, your care is limitless. Thank you parents, you donate your time to this event, your money and your energy, please know it goes directly to the participants of SAN, your love, care and guidance of your youth is infinite.