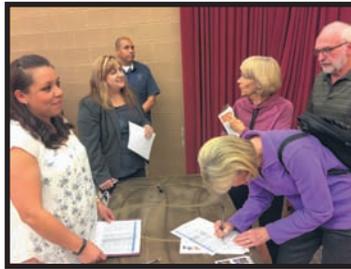


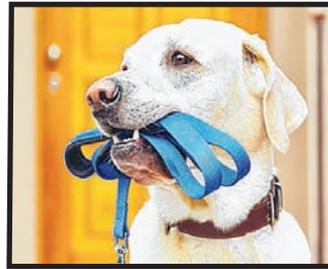
# Wrangler NEWS

Think Local. Read Local.

Feb. 18 - March 4, 2017 • Volume 28, No.4



Chandler's Neighborhood Resources Director Leah Powell was on hand at an HOA summit that reached out to the city's many neighborhood leaders with current legislative developments that will affect them. Pg. 4

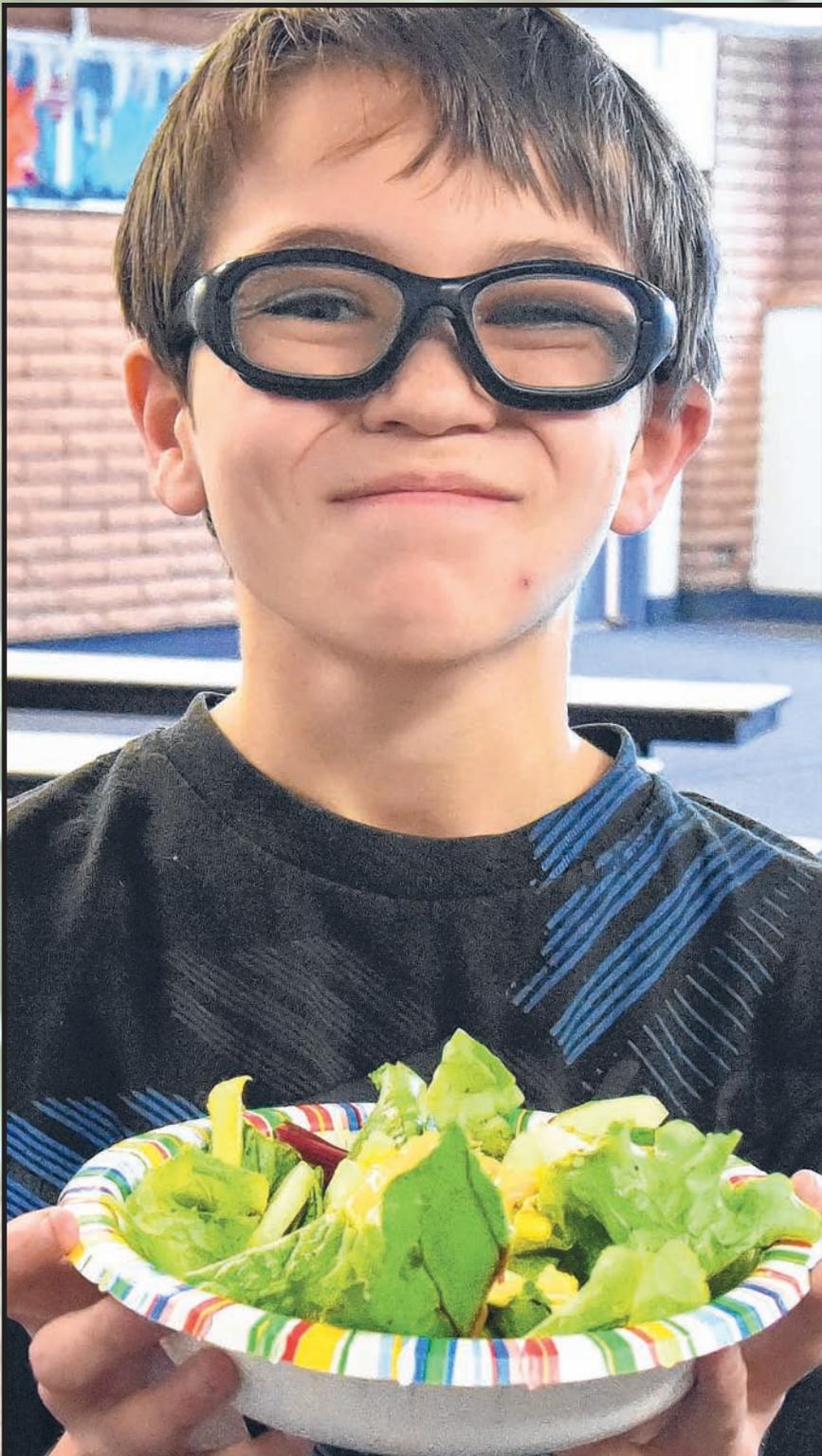


Grab your leash and get ready to stride forth with your furry companion. Feb. 22 is Walk Your Dog Day, and pooches the world over eagerly await the chance to take a stroll. Pg. 31



Pastor Des Wadsworth of Grace Community Church shares his personal faith journey that began in Australia, migrated to England and ultimately landed in Tempe 18 months ago. Pg. 10

What's Inside



## Therapists agree: Veggie gardens grow happier kids

**C**an gardening help heal minds? This question has been pursued by doctors, psychologists and occupational therapists interested in a practice called horticultural therapy, the idea that planting and maintaining a garden can be a therapeutic process.

Many schools and rehabilitation clinics across the nation are offering youth programs which have implemented garden programs to promote horticultural therapy.

In 2011, a center elsewhere in the country showed that horticultural therapy within its gardening program helped participating kids better manage emotional and behavioral issues.

— VEGGIES, Page 25

## Attorney draws throng to HOA summit as bills advance at Capitol

By Joyce Coronel

**S**ummit conferences typically draw international leaders to discuss serious policy matters, but Tumbleweed Recreation Center in Chandler was the scene of a similarly weighty confab that examined critical issues of a different sort, but on an admittedly smaller scale.

The Chandler Homeowners Association Summit drew about 90 residents from West Chandler and other areas across the city, many of whom sit on HOA boards that deal with everything from parking no-no's to unsightly weeds and non-payment of dues. Issues like crime trends and police activity were also addressed.

The city recruited attorney and HOA expert Beth Mulcahy to update residents on pending legislation that could affect their communities. She also gave attendees some tips about how to deal with difficult neighbors.

Mayor Jay Tibshraeny opened the evening by remarking on the "spectacular attendance" the HOA summits regularly attract, year after year.

"These meetings are an investment on our part to make Chandler a better city," Tibshraeny said. "I have placed a strong emphasis on neighborhoods."

Sean Duggan, chief of police for Chandler, who spoke at the summit in 2016, returned to apprise the group of changes that have occurred since then,

— SUMMIT, Page 7

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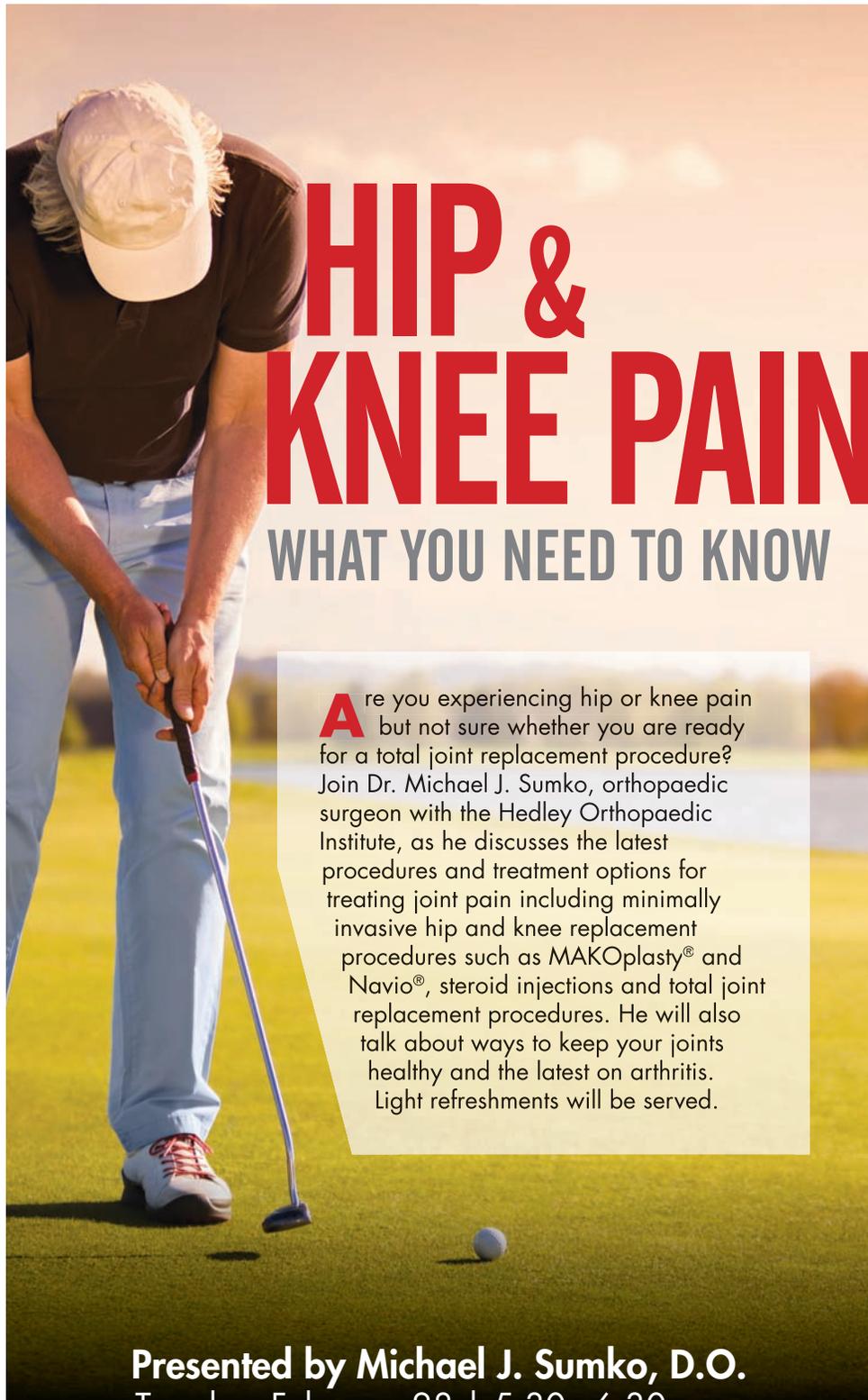
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## New city director aims to strengthen neighborhoods

**R**esidents of Chandler neighborhoods, including those in West Chandler, now have an experienced advocate on their side who is dedicated to helping them build a stronger community.

Leah Powell, who has worked for the city for more than 20 years, most recently as its community resources and diversity manager, has been appointed Neighborhood Resources Director.

Chandler City Manager Marsha Reed said Powell's expertise and relationships in the community will help her to effectively lead the Neighborhood Resources department.

"She brings unique knowledge of our community and neighborhoods and will ensure the department continues to deliver outstanding service for Chandler residents," Reed said.

When Wrangler News caught up with Powell, she was busily preparing for the city's Homeowners Association Summit to be held later that evening. Her new job title means broader responsibilities in the community.

"I will be overseeing the day-to-day operations and guiding the department toward our goals in the areas of public housing, community development, code enforcement, neighborhood programs and diversity," Powell said.

Although many Chandler neighborhoods have HOAs, there are a number that don't. These "traditional" neighborhoods, as they're described by the city, are sometimes registered and organized however, and Powell's department has a lot to do with that. The department offers these neighborhoods broad support and helps others start the ball rolling.

"Our neighborhood staff will work with them, educating them on the process and the advantages of being organized," Powell said. "They can help them get started with the process and set up community meetings. We have grant opportunities, as well."

Though many suburban areas in the East Valley have large swaths of neighborhoods where weeds, appliances, furniture and vehicles in disrepair create an eyesore in the front yards, Chandler—particularly its



Western half—is not one of them.

Powell said it's because the city takes a dual approach.

"It's a proactive approach of educating the community and, of course enforcement when necessary," Powell said. "We have a very active code enforcement team and we also have a great neighborhood preservation manager. They work toward making sure we are doing

both aspects, both education and enforcement."

The advantages to having a neighborhood organized and registered are many, Powell said, pointing to the ability to set up projects like a largescale clean-up effort. "Having that opportunity to bring people together to work toward the betterment of the neighborhood helps to create that sense of community," Powell said. It also helps establish an identity for and stabilize neighborhoods to help prevent them from going into decline.

Neighborhoods like Sun Meadows, which sits near the southwest corner of Kyrene and Ray, for example, gain a name and a sense of identity, plus plenty of advice on how to keep their community strong. The Sun Meadows neighborhood association formed in 2016 and met recently to discuss traffic concerns, poorly maintained yards, speed bumps and graffiti.

The city's Neighborhood Department can help communities start their own newsletters and webpage, and offers printing services for newsletter and flyers.

Powell said her department works with local non-profits in the area to help with neighborhood projects. In the spring, there's the Let's Pull Together program that brings volunteers on board to remove weeds for elderly and disabled neighbors who are physically unable to maintain their yards and cannot afford a professional landscaper.

"I think one of the resources that our department brings is that we can connect people with the greater community," Powell said.

The city of Chandler has more than 300 registered neighborhoods and more than 1,400 neighborhood leaders. Info: [chandleraz.gov](http://chandleraz.gov)

# Fun, funky weekend planned for downtown thieves market

West Chandler residents are about to find their city's downtown a whole lot funkier—and more fun.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, March 11-12, the monthly thieves market that is regularly hosted at Tempe's Big Sur Water Park will bring its "Best Of" version to historic downtown Chandler.

The event will feature a mix of 50 or so vendors selling furniture, jewelry, up-cycled items and one-of-a-kind treasures from yesteryear, along with an assortment that can best be described as "something for everyone."

Also: food vendors and unique entertainment offer one more dimension to the event.

Having run vintage and antique markets for eight-plus years, Thieves Market manager and creator Mickey Meulenbeek said she found her calling through her family's eclectic style.

A onetime interior designer for more than 25 years, she made her living by finding one-of-a-kind items that clients had her asking, "Where did you find this?"

Today, Meulenbeek continues to work with "off-beat, funky makers, as well and pickers who focus on a kaleidoscope of industrial, salvaged and upcycled treasures."

She warns guests that this isn't "the quintessential shabby chic and craft

market"—so if you're looking for loads of whitewashed furniture, this event isn't for you.

However, if you're like many others, you're wondering what makes this event unique from the monthly Thieves Market fleas in the Big Sur Parking lot—what qualifies it as "best of"? Meulenbeek explains that larger, multi-day events like this one are put on the calendar early and give pros a chance to collect, make and display their best inventory.

Location of the event will be in downtown Chandler's Downtown Stage Plaza at 178 E. Commonwealth. Entry is \$3 at the door. Visitors should bring cash, as credit cards are not accepted for admission.

A perfect way to cool down and discuss your finds with your party after snagging your finds. Entertainment for both the days will be anything but usual:

Belly dancing by Saharan Silk can be enjoyed both days, and *The White Lightning Band*, an "Acoustic Roots American" band, will play on March 11.

Mobile vendors include local food trucks such as The Local Lunchbox and Waffle Crush, along with additional snack vendors offering food options for purchase.

Meulenbeek's Tips?

Bring additional cash in addition to the \$3 for entry. Tip: Many vendors are willing to barter.

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# City of Chandler NEWS+ Events

[www.chandleraz.gov/newsroom](http://www.chandleraz.gov/newsroom)

## Time for Budget Connect

Once again, Mayor Jay Tibshraeny and the City Council are hosting Budget Connect, an online forum where Chandler residents may ask questions in real time and learn about the City's budget and fiscal policies during a special live event that will be held from 6-7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 23.

The public may submit ideas, questions and input online at [chandleraz.gov/connect](http://chandleraz.gov/connect) starting at noon, Thursday, Feb. 16 through Thursday, Feb. 23. The online forum will be streamed in real time on

the City website at [chandleraz.gov](http://chandleraz.gov) and broadcast on the City's cable station, Channel 11.

During the event, City staff will monitor Chandler's official Facebook and Twitter accounts using the hashtag #budgetconnect. While the public is welcome to attend the event in person at the Council Chambers, 88 E. Chicago St., the City is encouraging residents to engage in this live forum from their home, office or any place they may be at the time by connecting online.

Additional detailed information about the City's budget is available online at [chandleraz.gov/budget](http://chandleraz.gov/budget).

## Chandler Science Saturday

The City of Chandler, along with event sponsors Intel and Orbital ATK, invites the public to the sixth annual Chandler Science Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18. This free event is for the entire family and explains how fun, creative and important science can be to daily life. Get ready to explore the basics of science as more than 60 companies and educational organizations host interactive, hands-on learning activities.

Event sponsor Orbital ATK will launch a rocket every hour, and their scientists and engineers will have a variety of interactive and hands-on activities for families to participate. The company will have a passport for kids to earn stamps as they complete each activity. Once the passport is filled out, kids may exchange it for a prize.



Orbital ATK also is hosting a special guest, former four-time NASA Shuttle Astronaut Brian Duffy, from noon-3 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to head to the Downtown Stage from 1-2 p.m. to hear Colonel Duffy speak about his experience in space, how to pursue a career with NASA and

what's next with NASA's next generation of space exploration.

Intel and its volunteers will display Makey Makey/Sparkfun kits and feature activities focused on the fundamental basics of computer science. For more information about the Chandler Science Spectacular and the participating companies, visit [chandleraz.gov/science](http://chandleraz.gov/science).

## VITA Program offers free tax preparation

Tax season has arrived and the City's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is ready to help Chandler residents. Individuals and households who made \$54,000 or less in total income last year are eligible for free income tax preparation and electronic filing through early April.

The following six tax preparation sites in Chandler are now open for walk-in sessions:

- First Credit Union, 25 S. Arizona Place, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesdays; 4-8 p.m. Wednesdays
- Chandler Hamilton Library, 3700 S. Arizona Ave., 4-7:30 p.m., Mondays; 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Tuesdays
- Chandler Christian Community Center, 345 S. California St., noon to 6 p.m., Tuesdays
- The Chandler CARE Center, 777 E. Galveston St., noon to 4:30 p.m., Wednesdays; noon to 4 p.m., Fridays; 9 a.m. to noon, Saturdays
- Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, 2145 W. Elliot Road, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturdays

All sites will prepare basic tax forms on a first come, first served basis. Interpreters also are available to assist Spanish-speaking residents. When visiting a VITA site for free tax preparation, all filers must bring several items with them, including valid photo identification, Social Security cards, proof of income and more. For a complete list of what to bring to your walk-in session or to see if the site is closed during certain holidays, visit [chandleraz.gov/VITA](http://chandleraz.gov/VITA).

## Change in trash and recycling days

Trash and recycling days are changing the week of March 6. Changes to collection are necessary due to residential growth throughout Chandler. This transition will increase efficiencies with trash and recycling collection service for all residents. Not everyone is affected, but those that are will receive a letter and a postcard from the City notifying them of the change in late February. To check your days of collection, please visit [chandleraz.gov/recycle](http://chandleraz.gov/recycle), or call 782-3510.



## EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- 18 Chandler Science Saturday, Downtown Chandler, 782-3038
- 18 America in Times of Conflict: Japanese Internment: When Some Americans Looked Like the Enemy, Downtown Library, 782-2800
- 18, 19 Wags & Kisses Flyball Tournament, Tumbleweed Park, 502-2761
- 20 Presidents Day, City Offices closed
- 23 Budget Connect, Council Chambers or on a smartphone, 782-2180
- 23 City Council Meeting/Study Session, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 24 5th Annual African American Banquet, Center for the Arts, 782-2214
- 25 Arizona Railway Day, Tumbleweed Park, 821-1108

- 28 Proposed Utility Rate Changes Open House, Council Chambers, 782-2265

### MARCH

- 4 Ostrich Festival Kick-Off Weekend: Mayor's 5K Fun Run, Ostrich Festival Parade, Public Safety Fair and Chandler Classic Car Show, Downtown Chandler, 588-8497
- 6 City Council Study Session, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 9 City Council Meeting, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 10-12 2017 Ostrich Festival, Tumbleweed Park, 588-8497
- 11 America in Times of Conflict: She Went to War-Women's Stories of Military Service, Downtown Library, 782-2800
- 15 Chandler Senior Expo, Chandler Senior Center, 782-2720
- 16 Sonoran Sunset Series Concert, The Knockabouts, Veterans Oasis Park, 782-2890

- 17 Downtown Chandler Art Walk, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 20 City Council Study Session, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 22, 23 Spice of Life Senior Variety Show, Center for the Arts, 782-2680
- 23 City Council Meeting, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 25 Great American Beer & BBQ Fest, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 602-276-2499
- 27 America in Times of Conflict: Film + Forum-Dick Cavett's Vietnam, Chandler Senior Center, 782-2800
- 31 18th Annual Chandler Jazz Festival, Downtown Stage, 782-2665

For event details, visit [chandleraz.gov](http://chandleraz.gov) or call the Chandler Special Events Hotline at 782-2735.

Mayor Jay Tibshraeny & City Council



# Summit

From Page 1

including enhanced technology that has allowed his department to protect citizens better.

"This meeting has a special place in my heart because it's one of the first presentations I made three years ago as a newly appointed chief," Duggan said. He spoke of the partnership between the department and Chandler Fashion Center that now allows police to access the more than 90 cameras distributed around the mall, allowing officers to have information in real time. Previously, Duggan noted, the department was getting this intelligence second- or third-hand.

"It's an incredible enhancement to security," Duggan said. "If there is an active disturbance, our dispatch (staff) now have access to those cameras so our officers know what they are getting into."

Another important aspect to community safety, he noted, was the cooperation between police and citizens. "There is no successful department in the country that doesn't have the support of the people who live and work there," Duggan said.

Mulcahy, an attorney whose firm represents more than 1,500 HOAs, said she's partnered with Chandler for the last five years to educate homeowners, adding that she "absolutely loves" her work. "It's really fun helping associations solve problems so we can build great communities."

She said she gets what it's like to serve on an HOA board, particularly since she was recently elected treasurer of the one in her own neighborhood.

Mulcahy's presentation focused on pending legislation at the state capitol that deals with HOAs and the bills that recently went into effect.

Short-term rentals, she said, are a hot topic right now, and a new rule that became law last month holds that a city, town or county may not restrict the use of vacation rentals or short-term rentals.

"For associations, if your city or town had an ordinance that previously indicated that short-term rentals were prohibited in certain areas, this state law now trumps that," Mulcahy said. "That means you have to rely on your documents to regulate it." HOAs could also consider amending their documents, but it's not an easy process, she said.

"Get online and look in your association and see how many short-term rentals you currently have—you might be surprised to see you already have a lot," Mulcahy said, adding that she recommends taking a wait-and-see approach. "Many of the associations we are working with are having a harmonious relationships."

Other new laws Mulcahy discussed included imposition of HOA late fees, absentee ballots and the amending of HOA documents in condominium communities.

Hundreds of bills are up for consideration at the state legislature, but Mulcahy zeroed in on the ones having to do with HOAs.

Senate Bill SB1113 deals with synthetic turf and states that HOAs would no longer be able to prohibit it. Another deals with parking on city streets and rules that HOAs would no longer be able to restrict it.

The cities usually have more relaxed parking rules, Mulcahy said, adding that she doubts the measure will pass. Another measure, SB 1400, was termed "worrisome" by Mulcahy. The bill deals with the foreclosure and lien process that HOAs must go through. At press time, the bill was still in committee.

Mulcahy advised those in attendance to keep the lines of communication open with neighbors.

"The most effective boards communicate all the time with their owners," she said.

"I always worry when board members receive a records request and they are doing everything they can to not give the records.

"If you want a good association with a strong sense of community, have good communication."



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**Differences in  
brains of boys,  
girls should guide  
teaching strategies**

By Diana Whittle

It's not often that a *New York Times* best-selling author comes to town, but Dr. Michael Gurian was well-received by area residents during a free workshop sponsored by the Tempe Union High School District.

A highly regarded marriage and family counselor, Gurian gained international renown as an author on gender differences, specifically in adolescents. His ongoing research serves as the basis for his prolific writing career.

Gurian calls himself a "social philosopher" who pioneered efforts to bring neurobiology and brain research into homes, schools, corporations and public policy. The Gurian Institute, which he co-founded and recently relocated to Chandler, conducts research internationally, launches pilot programs and trains professionals.

The author of 28 books, Gurian presented his thoughts during a public seminar on better parenting and educating of youth, particularly in an era when they are easily distracted by the constant use of cell phones and social media.

More than 400 community residents attended the public presentation, presumably anxious for complementary advice on learning ways to better parent their teenagers. He gave the nighttime audience insight into the differences in the brain development between boys and girls and noted that, particularly during junior high, girls are better than boys in being able to focus on words and concepts.

The spokesperson for TUHSD, Jill Hanks, said the district hosted the speaker as a "way to address social and emotional wellness—which takes a whole community."

Among those attending were two board members in the neighboring Kyrene district, Michael Myrick and Michelle Fahy. Both said they gained useful insights during the presentation.

"In my house, video games will only be allowed on the weekend and limited in duration to a few hours," said Myrick, who was recently elected to the Kyrene board.

Myrick is also taking Gurian's suggestion to heart to limit time with other forms of technology and encourage physical activity as a way for his sons to decompress from the school day.

"Dr. Gurian suggests holding off on smart phones for children until they reach the age of 13," said Myrick, "and he provided data to suggest children who do use them constantly can have negative impacts on their brain's development. I think a more basic phone can be a more practical option for someone under 13."

Kyrene Board Member Fahy, also newly elected,

—Continued on facing page

brings the perspective of being both a parent and an educator. She noted that she learned more about the behavioral differences of teenage boys and girls.

“Gurian’s explanation of how male and female brains are different helped me to understand many behaviors seen in a classrooms every day,” said Fahy.

“One thing that really stood out to me was the importance of movement and spatial skills in boys. Equally important was to understand that girls connect deeply with friends and have a strong ability to pick up on non-verbal social cues from others.

“Knowing these concepts can help teachers develop alternative methods for communicating with students and responding to behaviors in the classroom,” said Fahy.

In addition to the public workshop, Gurian spent several hours during the day with about 850 TUHSD educators to offer his advice on the best way to reach youth who may not be tuned in to classroom learning.

He recommends more physical exercise for all youth so there is less chance of neurotoxic harm that can be obtained from excessive screen time on the computer, with video games and particularly with cell phones.

“Kids’ brains can easily be overstimulated by the electronics devices and it can impact brain development,” said Gurian.

He pointed out that the electronic devices have reduced the social skills of the boys, increased their aggressive tendencies and allowed them to mature into adults at a much later age than previous generations. “We have young people still living in their parents’ basements at the age of 25 who have taken no responsibility for their own futures and exhibit very little motivation,” said Gurian.

Robin Palmer, a teacher at Corona del Sol High School, attended the teachers session and said she recognized some of her students in Gurian’s examples.

“Dr. Gurian’s information about the male’s brain going into a rest state made perfect sense when I thought about my male students,” said Palmer, “and I will work to incorporate a couple of new ideas into my classroom to get the students out of their seats and into a simple physical activity to re-energize the brain.”

She felt her time at the seminar was well-spent. “I believe that this event was a valuable service for our community,” said Palmer.

“Education is changing—expectations are changing—families are changing. As educators, we need to be a cohesive group in determining what is best for our students so that we can produce an educated and responsible workforce—that’s really our goal as educators.”

### Meyer Montessori signups begin March 1

Parents interested in enrolling their children in the newly announced Meyer Montessori School are invited to attend a parent meeting at 6:30 P.M. Thursday, Feb. 23 at the Sanchez Administration Building, 3205 S. Rural Road.

Registration begins March 1. Children work at their own developmental level and curriculum focuses on practical life skills.

Information: [tempeschools.org/Montessori](http://tempeschools.org/Montessori) or 480-730-7102.

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# Our Neighbors, Our Faith

A recurring Wrangler News section focusing on our area's faith community

## Grace Community pastor gets personal about his faith



Pastor Des Wadsworth greets a worshiper at Grace Community Church.

— Wrangler News photo by Alex J. Walker

By Joyce Coronel

**D**esmond Wadsworth, or “Pastor Des” as he’s known to his flock at Grace Community Church, is anything but your typical pastor.

The self-described maverick with a British accent has led the Tempe church for the last 18 months.

Born in Australia, he spent the first eight years of his life Down Under until his parents decided to move back to England to care for his aging grandparents.

He remembers sitting in the airport, not too happily, and his father reassuring him. “My dad said, ‘Don’t worry, son, we’ll be back. When your grandparents have died we’ll be back.’ My last grandparent didn’t die until I was 25,” Wadsworth said. By then, he’d already

become a minister, having preached his first sermon at the tender age of 19. The road to that sacred calling was a bit circuitous.

At age 10, he realized that “next to zero” of his classmates went to church and that if they did, they’d never admit it. He felt bored at church and started feigning sickness on Sunday mornings.

“At age 13, my parents basically said, ‘We’re going to stop demanding that you come to church but you need to decide for yourself what you believe.’ I didn’t see it coming. It threw me,” Wadsworth said. “I was pretty sure there was a God. I knew my parents weren’t weird or boring. It was real to them, but it was nothing personal to me.”

After attending a youth — Continued on facing page

## Day of Healing for those wounded by divorce, separation

**B**arb Lishko, the marriage preparation coordinator at St. Andrew’s Catholic Church in Chandler, spends her days helping couples prepare for their happily-ever-after.

Over the years though, she’s had regular calls from people who, for one reason or another, are on the other end of the spectrum: their marriage has ended. Lishko decided to do something about it.

Two years ago, the parish began offering a twice-a-year series called The Catholic Divorce Survival Guide, a 12-week program for healing after the breakup of a marriage.

Not everyone is able to attend a lengthy program though, so Lishko came up with an alternative that premieres this month at the church.

The Day of Healing for the Divorce and Separated



takes place Saturday, Feb. 25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Andrew’s, 3450 W. Ray Road.

A continental breakfast and lunch are included in the fee of \$45. Participants need not be Catholic to attend.

The presenter is Milwaukee-based Marianne Skrobiak, who spent 21 years as a licensed professional counselor and herself experienced divorce. Skrobiak is known for her work with the divorced and separated and travels the country offering her seminar. It was just what Lishko felt people needed. She said she receives about three or four calls a month from people who are brokenhearted over their situation.

“I’ve talked to a lot of people who didn’t want a divorce in their life,” Lishko said. “One woman said, ‘This wasn’t the plan for my life. My plan was to have a family with him, to grow old together. By his choices, this is the bag I’m stuck holding.’ It really just breaks my heart.”

Those who have attended the previous divorce-

— Continued on facing page

## Grace

From preceding page

event, he heard the Gospel message in a powerful, new way and experienced a breakthrough. “They presented the Gospel in my language. I said, ‘I get it. I’m in.’”

Life didn’t change much for him until he went to college. He came to know a classmate whose example of faith made a strong impression.

“He was a guy who walked with Jesus—he lived differently.” Wadsworth said he realized that his new friend had something exceptional—something he wanted. “That’s when I really prayed about going all in and being a follower of Jesus.”

He remembers riding his bike to class every day and praying the same prayer: I’ll go wherever you tell me to go. I’ll be whatever you want me to be. I’ll do whatever you want me to do. At 17, he was fully committed. Interestingly, he never attended seminary. Instead, his pastor, a graduate of the famed Spurgeon’s College in London, saw potential in Wadsworth and took him under his wing.

“Everything I learned I’m going to teach you,” he told Wadsworth. For eight years, they met weekly. Later on, Wadsworth enrolled in correspondence courses with the London Bible College to continue his education.

He served six years with Youth for Christ, evangelizing high school students. He then spent 10 years as a youth pastor and ultimately became lead pastor. He and his wife, Melanie, have four children and live in South Tempe.

So how did they wind up at Grace Community Church? A friend suggested Wadsworth might be called to ministry in the U.S. Melanie had never lived more than 12 miles from her parents, however, and was dead-set against a move. The couple took a full month to pray about the decision. Wadsworth said his prayer at age 17 about going wherever God would send him kept resurfacing.

Melanie told God a move to the U.S. was too painful and that she would only do it if he told them clearly that it was his will, Wadsworth said. At that point, they were studying the Book of Acts. When Melanie came to Acts 7:3, she had her clear indication. The verse pointed to God’s command to Abraham to “leave your country and your people and go to the land that I will show you.”

It was a defining moment. “That has been our anchor,” Wadsworth said. “We stand on that.” His wife, he said, has experienced acute homesickness but is adjusting to the change.

During his first year as pastor, Wadsworth said he did a lot of listening. He wanted to discover the church’s identity and how it began. He met with the founding pastor, the late Guy Davidson, and his wife Martha, and learned that Grace’s “DNA” is all about community. The church is redoubling its efforts to expand its reach into the area.

He also insists on an effort to embrace those who haven’t yet connected with a church. “My heart is that everybody is able to worship God passionately here. There’s no one size fits all on that,” Wadsworth said. “I want people to walk in and walk out transformed.

“God has something specifically to say to you today. That’s mind-blowing.”

Information: [graceaz.com](http://graceaz.com)

## Divorce

From preceding page

recovery programs at St. Andrew’s say they feel more peace in their lives and have been able to work through the issues they had, Lishko said.

“They found out they weren’t struggling alone with some of the things that they were feeling.”

Beyond that, she hopes she can figure out a way to help couples not feel so pressured by expectations to marry. “One of the challenges is, how do you help couples get off the marriage train once it’s left the station?” Lishko mused.

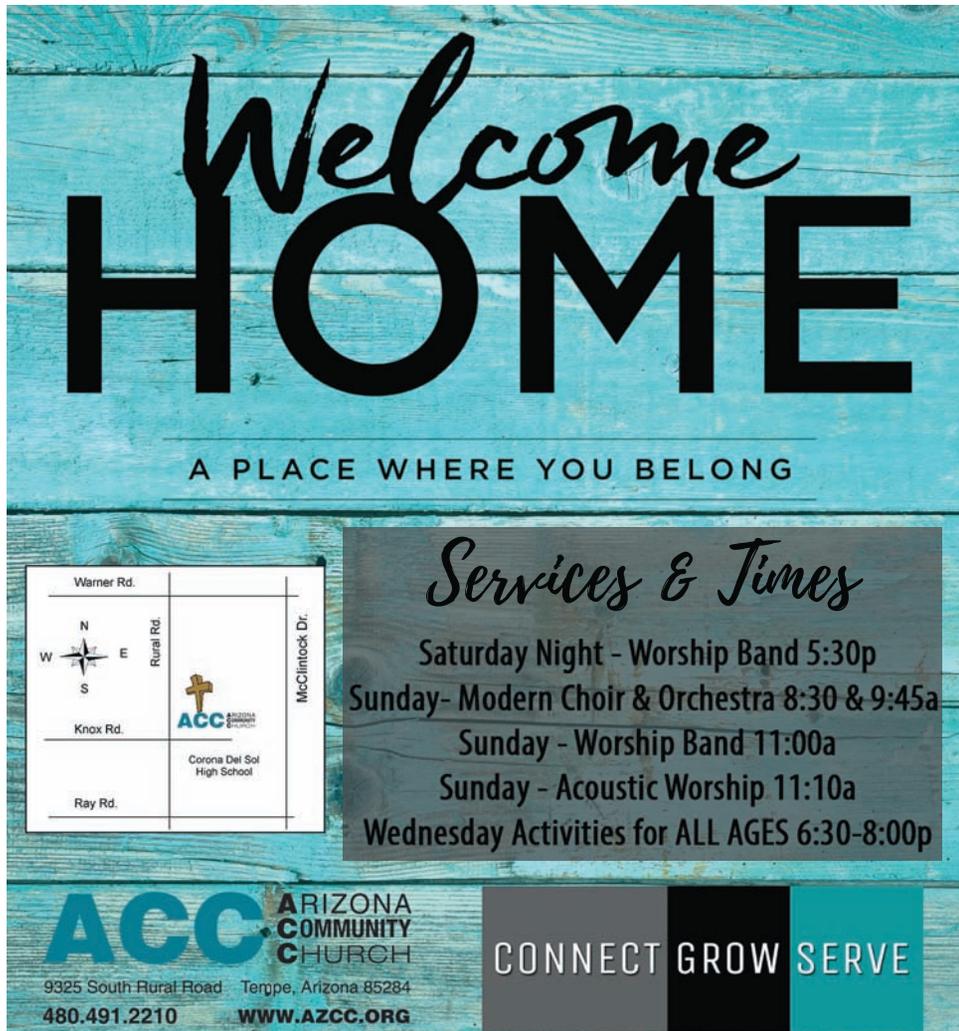
One couple who met with her for marriage preparation admitted that they argued every single day. When Lishko tried to gently tell the bride it might be best to call off the impending nuptials, the woman told her, “This is happening. I already have this booked and that booked and people are already coming in.”

Lishko said she tells engaged couples, “If you need to put a pause on this, please put a pause. There’s no pressure from us.”

In the meantime, she continues to get calls from those distraught over marriages that fell apart.

“I really wanted to offer something for anyone who is still suffering perhaps or feeling alone or broken in some way. This is a great way for them to just take care of themselves.”

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# Pastor's Corner: Reaching young families

Commentary by Pastor Bill Meiter  
Arizona Community Church

**H**ave you heard? Young people are leaving the church in record numbers — never to return again. Or so we are being told.



But the truth of the matter is that young people often do return to the church — once they get married and begin having children.

Families are the building block not only of society but also of healthy and growing churches.

That is why at Arizona Community Church we are committed to reaching young

families.

Parents instinctively recognize the importance of giving their children the opportunity to learn about God.

The Bible even encourages us to teach our children about the things of the Lord.

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)

Over the past several years Arizona Community Church has been putting the pieces in place to reach to young families.

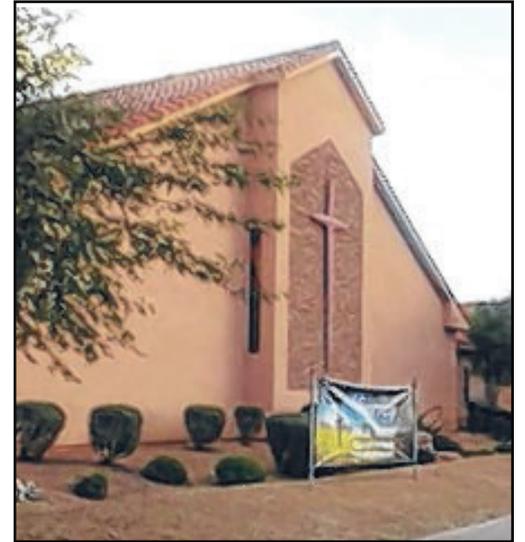
**AWANA KIDS CLUB**—A mid-week program (Wednesdays; 4:-5:30pm) designed for kids 3 years old – 6th grade. This is an amazing time where kids learn Biblical values; important life lessons; and God’s purpose for their lives.

**MOPS (Mother’s of Preschoolers)**—Meets every other Friday (in the mornings) and is designed just for young moms.

Fun crafts, messages just for moms, and fellowship are all part of this program which exists to minister to the modern mom. Moms don’t need to go at it alone.

**YOUNG AND MARRIEDS**—9:45 a.m. every Sunday. We have a NEW ministry for those young couples that are pre-engaged, engaged and newly married. Drop your kids off in our state-of-the-art children’s ministry building, and come to this new class and meet other people in your life stage.

**PRIVATE-CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** — Our church has an amazing (and fully accredited) school just for your kids. We have the very best teachers who will not only instruct your children and help them get ahead, but will also give them the



foundation to know God’s love for them.

**SATURDAY NIGHT SERVICE** — (5:30-6:30pm)  
We recognize that not everyone can make it to church on Sunday, especially when you have a growing family.

That is why we have developed a Saturday night service for our whole community.

And here at Arizona Community Church, we are just getting started in our efforts to reach young families.

We have Vacation Bible School, Sports Camp and so much more coming this summer.

So don’t panic the next time you hear that young people are leaving the church in record numbers.

They are coming back — and they are bringing their families with them.

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# Eye-catching red doors at St. James Episcopal Church designed to open a welcoming pathway

In an era characterized by both the contradictory elements of mega-churches and the waning influence of Christianity, South Tempe is home to a longstanding Episcopal congregation led Pastor Susan Wilmot, a native of Britain, who arrived in Tempe four years ago.

Home to some 150-200 souls, St. James Episcopal Church, founded in 1985 and nestled at the corner of Rural and Warner Roads, is a familiar sight to many in the area.

"We're all about outreach," Wilmot told Wrangler News. As an example, she cited the preschool that sits

adjacent to the church property.

It was once run by St. James but now is being utilized by Southwest Autism Resource and Research Center, or SARRC, offering programs for children 18 months to 3 years, about half of whom fall somewhere on the autism spectrum.

Wilmot says the school is charged nominal rent for its usage since the church views welcoming these children as part of its community outreach effort.

Members of St. James are active in regularly volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, Feed My Starving Children,

Angel Tree, feeding the hungry at the UMOM homeless shelter in Phoenix, and other outreach efforts as well, Wilmot said.

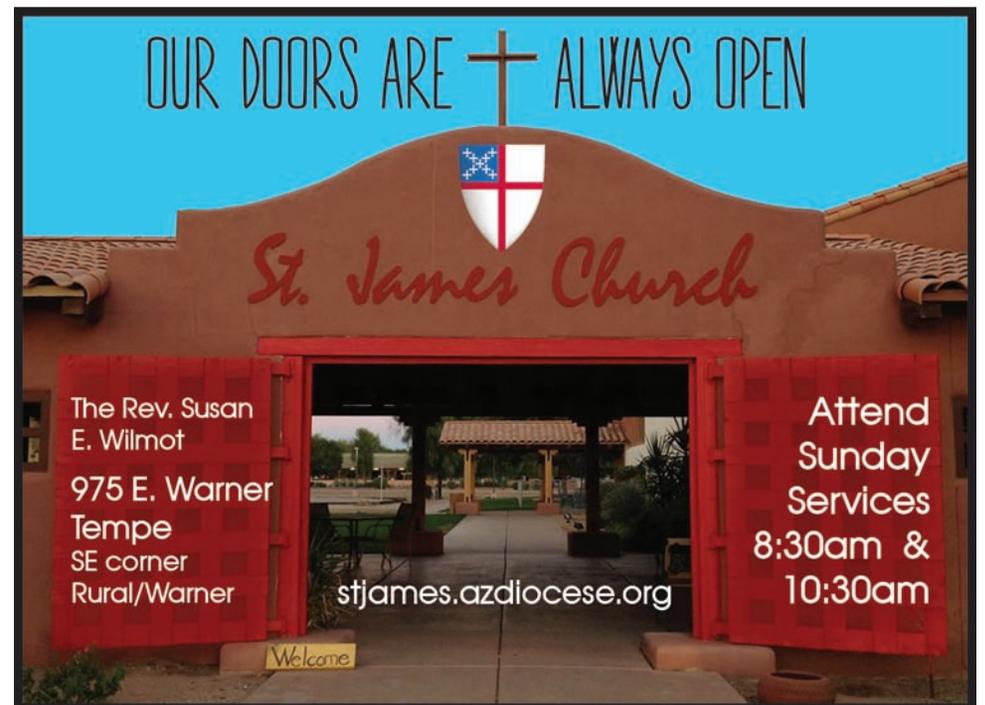
For years, the empty property that sits kitty-corner from St. James has been the object of speculation. At one point, there was a proposal to establish a care center on the premises. Wilmot says her church supported such a development. "We would have been able to visit the people easily," she said. The surrounding neighbors, however, worried about potential disturbances such as middle-of-the-night ambulances.

According to Wilmot, the eye-

catching red doors that adorn the west entrance to the church are more than just an artistic touch. Three years ago, the doors were a dull desert brown, but members of the congregation worked together to transform them by applying the crimson hue that now draws the eye of passersby.

The color red also holds a spiritual significance in that it symbolizes the Holy Spirit, the blood of Christ and the blood of the martyrs, but the Episcopal tradition of red church doors traces its roots to the Middle Ages in England, Wilmot said. In those days, red church

— ST. JAMES, Page 14



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# St. James

From Page 13

doors were readily identifiable to those seeking refuge within.

On a warm February afternoon, several women were seeking a different sort of refuge: an hour of Bible study with Wilmot.

The group of 11 women—sometimes attendance is higher, sometimes lower—were diving into the Gospel of Matthew’s parable of the sower and the seed.

Carole Justice was one of them. She’s belonged to St. James for five years and said she and her husband knew Wilmot when she was pastor of a church near Show Low.

“Sometimes things just work out wonderfully,” Justice said of Wilmot’s relocation to St. James.

“We are a loving and welcoming congregation. We do a lot of outreach, helping neighbors and serving meals at UMOM.”

South Tempe residents may recall the split that occurred at St. James

Church back in 2005. At that time, the pastor, Keith Andrews, announced that he and a faction of other members were leaving the congregation because of their disagreement over the ordination of a gay bishop in New Hampshire.

At that point, the St. James congregation numbered about 370 adult members.

Andrews went on to establish Living Faith Anglican Church and declare his fidelity to a more conservative Anglican bishop in Rwanda.

In 2015, Andrews was ordained a bishop and now resides in California. Cindy Frost, who belonged to St. James prior to the split, is one of the congregants who followed Andrews.

She called the 2015 division “gut wrenching,” but said that “in the end, everybody followed their conscience and did as God called them to do.”

Wilmot, for her part, says that St. James Episcopal Church welcomes all its members, gay or not.

“How can we tell gay people they are not welcome?” Wilmot said.



Pastor Susan Wilmot and women of St. James spend Wednesday afternoons immersed in Scripture studies.

— Wrangler News photo

A note in the church bulletin encourages visitors to sign the guest book and stay for refreshments following services.

It also states that the pastor’s door is always open and that she is ready to listen, even going so far as to list her cell phone number.

St. James Church offers both men’s and women’s Bible studies, a weekly Wednesday evening healing service, a book club and Christian formation. Sunday worship services are held at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Information: [stjamestempe.org](http://stjamestempe.org)

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# In-depth analysis of where Kyrene has been, where it needs to go

## Governing board receives report of wide-ranging, 4-month audit

*Editor's note: At the invitation of Dr. Jan Vesely, Wrangler News education writer Diana Whittle sat down with the new superintendent to cover progress that has been made since Vesely was appointed to the post in July. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the status of a comprehensive appraisal that was conducted by a respected national firm, and to determine what improvements might be considered as Vesely moves forward in her first year on the job, and thereafter.*

### Special report by Diana Whittle

As the first new superintendent of the Kyrene district in two decades, Dr. Jan Vesely decided she needed a clearer understanding of the organization's inner workings—what had gone before, what challenges might await in coming years.



When applied to a school setting, this translates into an in-depth review of the systems in the district, including the policies, organizational relationships, administrative functions, budgeting and curriculum design.

The vehicle to accomplish this: an audit by an outside consultant with national experience in school curriculum.

"A curriculum audit is a rigorous process that

focuses on what is required to effectively and efficiently deliver quality instruction to our students," said Vesely. "The end result is a report that points out the positives, as well as the deficiencies for the school administrators and the board."

Curriculum Management Solutions Inc., a company based in Iowa, was retained for the project. Well-known in the education field, the consultants in fact trademarked the term "curriculum audit" in 1996.

A team of auditors spent the past four months in the district, researching and doing extensive in-take work, including 180 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in the district; 25 focus groups with both community members and parents; 400

responses to a survey; visits to 250 classrooms in 25 schools; and a review of more than 700 district documents.

The summary of their findings is now a report, which was unveiled to the Governing Board during its regular meeting on Feb. 14. A replay of the meeting can be viewed on-line through YouTube.

"Now that the Governing Board has received the audit, the staff can turn their attention to assessing the recommendations that were made," said Vesely.

"I will be expected to come forward with my corrective plan of action to respond to the discrepancies that were identified."

Even before the audit was completed, however, Vesely was ready to move forward with developing updated plans to priorities that previously were identified by the board, such as better serving the needs of special education and gifted students; improving the performance of struggling students, particularly those with significant academic achievement gaps; and offering more educational choices to parents.

Vesely also announced on Jan. 27 her plan to redirect staff resources from the District Office to the schools.

"The changes I announced to staff, who are impacted, represent a shift of employees from the District Office to instructional-support positions in

— AUDIT, Page 23



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# Sports

With Alex Zener



Corona wrestlers who qualified for the 6A state championship were instrumental in helping the Aztecs win the schools third team state championship earlier this month. Bottom row: Coach Jimmy Martinez, Shane Aguarin, Zack Kvalle, Matt Gable, Cole Bernstein, Vinny Dolce (holding paper) Diego Fill, Ryan Chancellor, Josie Carmona (kneeling), Emma Ruffalo. Top row: Stephano Linares, Armando Arellano, Brandon Konecny, Coach Thornton, Bryce Nickel, Dylan Conner, Hunter Carmona, Tanner Mendoza, Nick Ruffalo, Mauricio Vega, Jacob Garcia, Jacob Featherman, Jacob Santa Cruz, Nick Harrell, Justin Sorenson, Coach Clare, Coach Carmona. — Photo courtesy Coach Martinez

## Aztec wrestlers claim state 6A championship

The Aztecs started the year with a strong group of seniors and dominated their competition the second half of the season to culminate in their championship win at the Division I State Wrestling Tournament in Prescott Valley.

“This year was incredible,” said head coach **Jimmy Martinez**. “I have been fortunate to have a large group of senior wrestlers who have been with me since their freshman year. This group were my first undefeated freshman team and became the nucleus of our team this season.”

“When we started the season, we knew we had a shot at the state title but that we would only have one shot, so we had to get it right,” said Martinez. “Everyone on the team committed to our goal to win State, even though some wrestlers, who had been performing well early in the season, lost their spots when our transfer-student wrestlers were able to participate after sitting out the first part of the season.”

This team state championship win was Corona’s third state wrestling championship. Its first two were

in 2009 and 2010.

The Aztecs, after taking second place at the Peoria Tournament of Champions in early January and winning the Flowing Wells Invitational the next week, knew they were on their competitors’ radar.

“We realized we would have a target on our back when the state tournament rolled around,” said Martinez. “Sunnyside is always up there as the team to beat but we started to see that we had the power on our team to match their wrestlers.”

The Aztecs qualified 13 wrestlers out of 14 weight categories for the Division I state championship meet, ultimately defeating Sunnyside by 23.5 points (226.5 to 203), but it was touch and go after the first two rounds.

“We were in the lead by only a point before the semi-finals,” said Martinez. “Then we lost five out of nine semifinal matches.”

“We were redeemed in the next round of wrestle-backs when we won all nine matches that gave us a cushion,” said Martinez. “At that point, we realized we were in a position that would hold up for the

championship.”

It helped that Corona had four individual state champions who went undefeated at the state tournament: **Cameron Upshur, Jacob Garcia, Vincent Dolce** and **Brandon Konecny**.

One of these almost gave up wrestling.

“Cam became discouraged during the semester break at the Clash in Rochester, Minn., for personal reasons and left the team for a short period,” said Martinez.

“He returned with the desire, motivation and commitment that not only boosted our team with his points but he re-invigorated our team.

He gave us the cushion we needed to win a championship.”

Junior **Cameron Upshur**, with a 32-4 individual record in the 120-pound weight class, defeated four wrestlers during the state tournament, the first two by fall or pin.

Upshur’s desire and commitment to win was in full display when his third match was tied and went

# Sports

From Page 16

into overtime. Upshur scored the first point to win the match in Sudden Victory 8-7 to wrestle in the championship match, which he won by decision against a Sunnyside wrestler 4-2.

Junior **Jacob Garcia** came out of the bottom half of the draw with a 23-2 record to defeat a more experienced Cibola senior wrestler and win an individual state championship medal in the 138-pound weight class.

"Jacob started the year ready to step to the head of his weight class," said Martinez. "A loss at the Peoria Tournament of Champions only served to motivate him more than anything the coaches could have done. He was unstoppable after that loss.

**Vincent Dolce** went undefeated his senior season, with a 24-0 record at 152 pounds with three out of his four state championship matches won by falls. He defeated a Cibola wrestler who had won 44 matches over the season with a fall in 1:31 minutes to take home his individual state championship.

"Vinny has the attitude that anyone standing on the mat across from him is trying to take something away from him," said Martinez. "He did everything he needed to do to prepare to win a title, and then he did more by committing to additional technique sessions to ensure he was ready. He doesn't just prepare to win a competition; he prepares to dominate it."

**Brandon Konecny** closed out his senior

season going undefeated as well, 26-0, winning his individual championship in the 160-pound weight class with a fall in 1:55 minutes.

"Brandon is a very smart and likable young man who believes in himself," said Martinez. "He works hard, understands what he needs to do to win, and then just goes about doing it. He's easy to coach because he needs very little input. He just goes out and wins."

Corona got the additional points needed to win the championship with three third place, two second place and one third place state medal winners.

Sophomore 106-pound **Zack Kvalle**, with a 52-4 overall record, took third place after winning his first two matches by falls before losing to the eventual champion and the No. 1 seed from Sunnyside.

Kvalle went on to win his next two matches to take home a third-place medal.

"Zack had an awesome season," said Martinez. "He is the hardest worker on the team and a bit like the Energizer bunny. He never stops and never runs out of gas."

Wrestling in the 132-pound weight class, sophomore **Bryce Nickel** took third place in his first state tournament. After losing in the second round he fought hard in the losers bracket to win his next two matches to win a third-place medal.

"Bryce steadily progressed all year long," said Martinez. "He is still figuring out what he needs to do to reach the top of the podium, but he works hard and he listens. He'll be someone in the mix next year."

**Hunter Carmona** started his final high school state tournament strong, winning his first two

matches by fall before losing his semifinal match in a decision to a Cibola wrestler in the 145-pound weight category. He fought back to win with a 5-1 decision in his final match to take third place ending his senior season with a 43-9 record.

"Hunter is one of our senior leaders who has been part of our core group of successful wrestlers all year," said Martinez. "He has been a leader on and off the mat who will be heading off to the Coast Guard Academy next year."

**Cole Bernstein** placed fourth in the 126-pound weight class ended the season with a 42-10 individual record.

"Cole may have saved his best tournament for his last high school competition," said Martinez. "He proved to himself that he is one of the best wrestlers in his weight class. He needed to believe in himself and I think he finally figured that out."

**Nick Ruffalo**, in the 170-pound weight class, was Corona's other fourth place finisher accumulating a 44-11 record.

"Nick is another one of our senior leaders that helped the team gel this year," said Martinez. "He works hard and listens to the coaches. He is the kind of wrestler that coaches are looking for to make a positive impact in the room."

After losing his first match, senior 182-pound **Diego Fill**, fought back to win his next four matches and earn a fifth-place medal.

"How can I best describe Diego? Gutsy comes to mind," said Martinez. "Diego wrestled through a shoulder injury he sustained in the quarter-final round. Many wrestlers would have given up,

— SPORTS, Page 18

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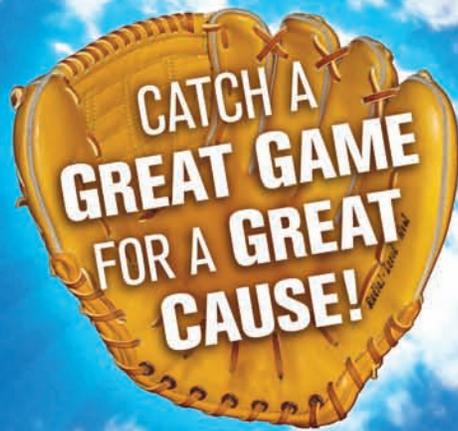
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## Sports

From Page 17

but Diego took one for the team and wrestled through pain for four matches on Saturday to place fifth and help us win the championship."

"Those matches will always be memorable because of how tough it is to wrestle with pain. I'm so proud of his effort."

The final three qualifiers were **Dylan Conner** wrestling in the 285-pound weight category ending the season with a 36-15 record, **Jacob Featherman** at 220 pounds (30-15) and **Jacob Santa Cruz** at 195 pounds (33-17).

### McClintock Wrestling

The Chargers had four wrestlers qualify for the Division II state wrestling tournament placing seventh as a team with 65 points, mainly due to two junior siblings both going undefeated to place first.

Junior **Gator Groves**, 53-0 on the season, won four straight matches wrestling in the 145-pound weight bracket to take him his third straight individual state championship.

His brother, **Marco Groves**, also went undefeated, at 52-0, to win his third straight individual DII state championship medal in the 160-pound weight category.

Senior **Kevin Sosa**, 36-13, won his first match before losing the next two in the 170-pound weight class.

Fellow senior **Alex Kunitada**, 37-14, wrestled for McClintock in the 113-pound weight class. He lost his first match but went on to win the next two before being eliminated in the double elimination tournament.

### Marcos de Niza Wrestling

Wrestling in Division III, the Padres team took 10th place with 54.5 points at the state championships held in Prescott Valley Feb. 9-10 when five of their wrestlers qualified for the state tournament.

Junior **Andrew Torres** was the runner-up in the 152-pound weight class championship match after winning three

straight matches before falling to the No. 1 seed in the finals. Andrew Torres finished the season with a 44-6 record.

Fellow junior **Aljandro Torres** took home a fifth-place medal in the 160-pound weight class after losing his first match but then went on a three-match winning streak take fifth place. He completed the season with a 49-4 record.

Senior **Edward Hercel** wrestling at 195 pounds, defeated his first opponent but then lost two matches in a row to be eliminated in the double-elimination tournament. He compiled a 32-10 record.

**Ben Martinez** completed his senior qualifying for the state tournament in the 220-pound weight class, finishing with a 21-16 record after being eliminated from the first tournament after the second round.

Junior **Hamza Manassra** had an up-and-down state tournament in the 285-pound weight class after winning his first match 8-7 to then lose the second match. He would go on to win two in a row before being eliminated after his second lost. He came away with a 34-20 season record

### Corona Girls Soccer

The Aztecs, as the No. 9 seed in the 6A State Championship, defied all odds by not only defeating the No. 8 seed Highland, 2-0, in the first-round Feb. 1 but also the No. 1 seed Hamilton, 2-1, in the quarterfinals Feb. 4 with a 2-1 score.

Corona did lose to archrival Desert Vista, 2-0, in the semifinals Feb. 8 but not before giving the team and its fans something to remember.

The Aztecs had confidence heading into the state playoffs because they had not only played a tough schedule all season but because they had already played most of the top eight teams and thought they could beat any one of them on any given day.

"We had played Highland, Hamilton and Desert Vista during the regular season and even though we lost to all three, we felt comfortable that we could compete with each team in the state tournament," said head coach **Matt Smith**.

"We also had unbelievable chemistry, some of the best I've ever seen."

In the first round against Highland, it was a defensive battle until **Olivia Nguyen** scored two goals in the second

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half.

In the quarterfinals against Hamilton, Corona was able to get a 2-0 lead after scoring one goal in the first half on a free kick from **Laney Gordon** and then another five minutes into the second half when **Skylar Byrnes** kicked in a goal after **Abby Robertson's** shot went off the crossbar.

Down two goals with not much time left, the Huskies started to press in an attempt to score after halftime, which they did on a free kick with 10 minutes left in the game.

Corona's defense kicked up a notch and denied the Huskies another goal and the 2-1 victory.

"Our seniors played incredible defense defending our goal that second half against Hamilton," said Smith.

**Jordan Freese** was great in the goal and **Nikki Hoey** was exceptional playing on a sprained knee."

"Senior outside backs **Laney Gordon** and **Emily Ramsland** were mature, composed and worked incredibly hard on defense," said Smith.

The offensive players who had scored all season long played strong roles in the state playoffs as well.

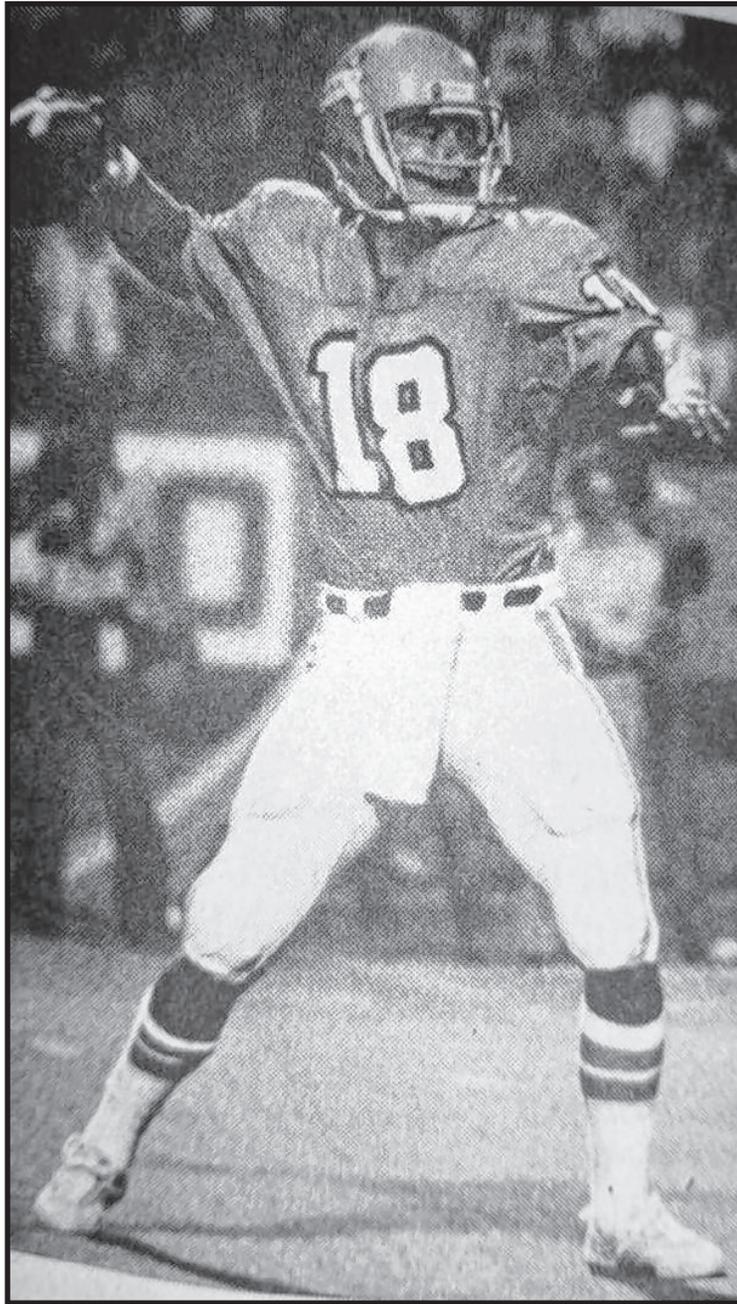
"**Olivia Nguyen** and **Skylar Byrnes** were our leading goal scorers all year and they delivered in the playoffs, as well," said Smith.

"**Abby Robertson** was dynamic in the midfield playing both offensive and defensive roles.

"On defense, **Brooklyn Marois** in the defensive midfield and our entire backline of **Hoey**, **Ramsland**, **Gordon** and sophomore **Sam Scheurer** were all great," said Smith.

"Overall, it was a fun season with a group of girls who liked each other, was played for each other and made coaching high school soccer all it should be," said Smith.

"A group of tremendous Aztecs who did themselves, their team, their families and their school proud."



## Cardinals team up with Padre alum for new Marcos field

By Kody Acevedo

**O**scar Ramirez Jr. still has the mentality of a high school quarterback.

He wasn't just any high school quarterback, either. He was the first quarterback in the history of Marcos de Niza High School.

"I'm an old football player, man. A quarterback with a linebacker mentality."

Ramirez is a native of the Valley. Having grown up in Guadalupe, he started high

school at McClintock and made the move to the brand-new Marcos campus in 1971.

"A few of us got chosen to pick the Padre name," Ramirez said. "We all voted on it and we came down to the New Orleans Saints colors. The other was the San Diego Padres colors. We made the foundation from way back then."

More than 40 years after he graduated from Marcos, Ramirez is returning to the field he once commanded as a player—this time as a

maintenance supervisor for the Tempe Union High School District.

"I kind of did full-circle," Ramirez said.

Ramirez has been working for TUHSD for over 30 years. His most recent project is one close to his heart.

He's part of the team that will help design Marcos' new football field, which last month received a welcome boost via a \$100,000 grant from the NFL Foundation/LISC Grassroots Program, a partnership between the NFL Foundation and Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the nation's leading community development support organization.

The Arizona Cardinals are the leading sponsors of the grant.

"When people step up like that, like the Cardinals, to me that's beautiful and it makes a heck of an impact," Ramirez said.

The grant will go toward the field itself: the grass, the sprinklers, the end zones, etc. It's expected to be ready by the upcoming 2017 season in the fall.

"It's overwhelming," Ramirez said. "It's gratifying to me to do things like that for the students and our community. Like I said, it makes a heck of an impact. People like to drive by and see something aesthetically pleasing."

"It is going to be something good, and since I came into this position here I'm going to see to it that a lot of these fields get back to how they used to be."

Ramirez has worked in the district's plant operations since the early 1990s.

He said the biggest hurdle his department has to overcome is the lack of funding to give football fields the proper care they need.

"When you get the NFL and the Cardinals doing something like this, it just overwhelms the heck out of me," Ramirez said.

He now looks forward

to giving back to the school where he built his roots as an athlete.

From Marcos, Ramirez went on to play at Mesa Community College, where his team won a national championship.

He then relocated to the University of Texas at El Paso and eventually got a chance to try out for Houston Oilers in 1979.

"I'm standing in the tunnel (at Arrowhead Stadium) as we were coming out to play the Kansas City Chiefs, and I'm going 'here's this little guy from Guadalupe, man, and look at these huge dudes'," Ramirez recalled.

After the excitement about his football career with the Chiefs began to taper off, Ramirez made a switch to baseball. He eventually landed a minor-league job as a pitcher in the Minnesota Twins organization.

"I got to meet a lot of great people, a lot of great coaches," Ramirez said. "I got to be around Tom Kelly, who won two World Series. So, it's been an exciting life. I've been very fortunate."

While pitching in Visalia, Calif., Ramirez blew his arm out and hung up his baseball spikes having fallen short of reaching the big leagues.

So, he returned to the Valley and the school district that gave him so much early in life.

Ramirez, now 60, happily celebrates his days as father of three and grandfather of 10.

And he still wakes up every day loving his job that has now spanned three decades.

With framed quotes from such legendary sports figures as Vince Lombardi and Tony Dungy hanging on the wall of his office, Ramirez continues to coach his co-workers and preaches that small acts of kindness can go a long way in a community.

"All of us can do a lot of little things in a great way," he said. "But, if we're doing our due diligence and providing safe fields and playing surfaces, we've got to do that. And when people step up like the Cardinals, that's beautiful."

# Diversions

## 'Fist Fight' — Foul comedy with a small redeeming bit of drama

By M.V. Moorhead

Charlie Day is Andy Campbell, a milquetoast English teacher at an underfunded, underachieving, metal-detector-enclosed high school.

Ice Cube is Strickland, a tough history teacher. It's the last day of school, the odious, arrogant students are playing outrageous pranks, and the teachers are re-interviewing for their jobs in the face of layoffs.

Things are tense.

Andy witnesses Strickland violently lose it in front of his class, and faced with the prospect of losing his job if he doesn't, he "rats out" Strickland to the principal. On the familiar grounds that "snitches get stitches," Strickland then challenges Andy to the title combat after school.

The rest of this broad, crude, foul-mouthed comedy, directed by Richie Keen from a script by Van Robichaux and Evan Susser, involves Andy frantically resorting to ever more dishonorable and humiliating tactics in an attempt to avoid this fight.

In outline, the plot is very much like that of 1987's *Three O'Clock High*, except with teachers instead of students.

Ultimately, of course, in the grand tradition of movies, Andy and Strickland must face off—if they didn't, the title would be a cheat.

It's an indefensibly stupid, ill-conceived, mostly unfunny, often offensive movie. So, of course, I feel

compelled to defend it a little. A very, very little.

First of all, the actors are good. Day, a veteran nitwit from the *Horrible Bosses* movies and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, fearlessly plays shamelessness.

He isn't the customary cinematic comical coward, like Bob Hope or Woody Allen, making his avoidance of peril into a self-deprecating dignity—he's palpably willing to abase himself, and the effect is painful, verging at times on poignancy.

Tracy Morgan brings his querulous, imploring tones to the part of the perennially losing football coach, and he's pretty funny.

Jillian Bell is even funnier as a guidance counselor who seems desperately in need of guidance herself.

Only Christina Hendricks, as a possibly psychotic French teacher, seems wasted, although I suppose no footage which features Christina Hendricks walking down the hallway in a form-fitting black dress can be considered a total waste.

Ice Cube is always effortlessly commanding, even a role like this, which aside from being one-note is saddled with a major idiocy at its core.

The moviemakers trying to sell us on the idea that Strickland's rage is because he's fed up with the disrespect of students and the indifference of his colleagues, and that he's insisting on going through with his challenge to Andy on the grounds that a fight between two teachers will somehow showcase the problems faced by those in their profession.

As ludicrous as this is, it may point to the reason why, as terrible as *Fist Fight* is, the movie can't be called dull. It draws a certain degree of dramatic potency from the near-impossible situation in which public school teachers in poor districts find themselves—constant frustration if they care about their jobs and their students; soulless defeat if they give up.

The dumb fight-between-teachers plot, even though it was probably the inspiration for the picture, is also a

weight around its neck.

It's possible to see how, with the same cast and the setting, something could have been made that was at least equally funny but genuinely trenchant.

*Fist Fight* is rated R, and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Harkins Arizona Mills and other multiplexes Valleywide.

## Chandler Feb. 28 dining event will raise funds for valued arts center programs

Area residents and employees can dine out for a cause with Eat Your Art Out Chandler, an all-day event conceived by Chandler Center for the Arts.

The Feb. 28 fundraiser combines efforts of community arts enthusiasts, corporate sponsors and local eateries in support of various initiatives at the center, including Connecting Kidz programs, a free summer concert series and headline entertainment.

Restaurants participating in Eat Your Art Out will contribute to the funding of programs at Chandler Center for the Arts through donating a percentage of their day-of-the-event proceeds directly to the center.

Families, friends and workers in the area complete the puzzle simply by eating lunch and/or dinner at any of the participating locations.

Essentially, anyone in the Valley can show support for the arts just by eating at one or more of the participating restaurants.

For those who would like to volunteer for Eat Your Art Out Chandler by actively inviting friends, family and co-workers to eat out, they are encouraged to sign up to be a restaurant or table host ambassador for one of the participating restaurants.



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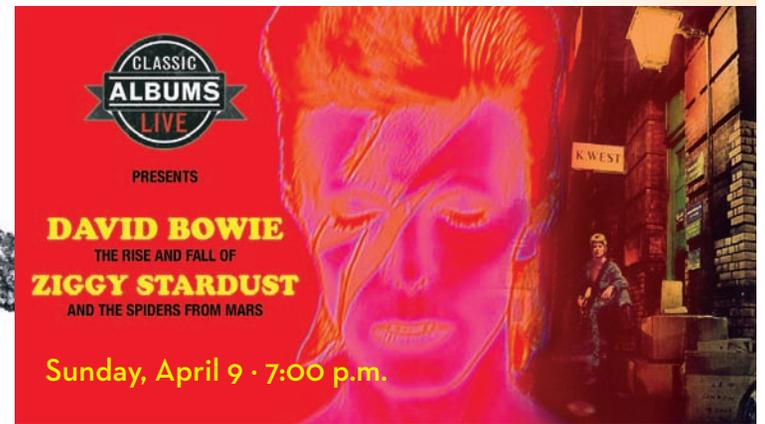
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## February recognizes value of kids' early dental awareness

Wrangler News staff

Parents and caregivers are the first defense in helping prevent tooth decay in the Kyrene Corridor's youngest children and, of course, their counterparts nationwide.

With February having rolled around as National Children's Dental Health month, it's a time during which dentistry professionals endeavor to focus attention on the topic.

Dr. Stacy Tracy and Dr. Roxanne Huber of Tempe Smile Design don't want to let the month slip by unnoticed.

There are events sponsored by the Arizona Dental Association, such as "Give Kids A Smile," she says, that provide dental treatment to children who cannot get the care they need at different times and locations during the month.

Adds Tracy:

"There are so many important reasons to keep children's primary or "baby teeth" healthy. These serve many key functions besides making the child look good and presentable in society."

Also, she notes, these teeth act as space maintainers for the permanent ones waiting to erupt. "If these are prematurely lost, permanent teeth will not have space to erupt properly, causing malocclusion (a bad bite) later in life."

Some of the primary teeth are not naturally lost until the child is between 10 and 12 years old, sometimes older, and it would be problematic for them to lose one of those teeth when they were 5 or 6 because they are not restorable, according to Tracy.

Sealants can be placed on newly erupted permanent molars around the ages of 6 and 12 to prevent chewing surface decay, which is the most common dental decay. But this can only happen if the child is seen early enough.

Early visits to the dentist prevent pain and swelling, which affects the child's day to day activities, including school attendance, notes Tracy.

"We follow the ADA and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists recommendation that children be seen as early as 1 year old by their dentist," she said.

"This visit serves many purposes. It gets the child familiar with coming to the dental office, we get a chance to look at the teeth as they are newly erupted to check for future eruption problems and bite issues, talk about oral habits such as pacifier use and thumb sucking and the damage they cause if they go on too long.

"We are able to educate the parents about how to properly care for their child's newly erupting teeth so as to prevent future problems."

Proper brushing- and flossing-education are given. Baby teeth need to be flossed just like permanent teeth.

According to Tracy, fluoride use and toothpaste are recommended, and decisions are made as to whether a child needs fluoride supplementation or not.

"You would be surprised how many adults do not know that their child needs to brush morning and night just like the parents.

"They should not be put to sleep with a bottle so that milk sits on their teeth all night. Milk is very good for tooth health, but it breaks down to a sugar and should not be allowed to stay in the mouth for long periods of time."

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# Audit

From Page 15

the schools. These changes represent a cost-neutral shift of \$2.1 million in resources from the District Office back to our schools," said Vesely.

More details on this plan are expected to be included in a presentation before the Parent/Superintendent Council on Feb. 21.

Additional areas of concern that the audit identified are updating the technology plan for the district, enhancing professional development opportunities and developing stronger curriculum management.

It's a full plate for any administrator, and Vesely also plans to focus on building student capacity and enrollment for the district.

"This year, we are down about 400 students district-wide," said Vesely. "We also know that like most school districts in the state, Kyrene is more diverse ethnically and economically."

The audit reports that over half the student body has identified racially as other than White; nearly one-third of enrolled students are considered economically disadvantaged. With enrollment shifts, scores on state assessment tests dropped slightly.

"While a majority of Kyrene students still earn excellent scores on assessment tests, there are significant achievement gaps noted in the performance of economically disadvantaged students," said Vesely.

"We know we have work to do in specific areas, but I am confident in the new learning opportunities we will be offering in partnership with our Governing Board.

"In the next school year, we begin the expansion of Kyrene Traditional Academy to Pre K – 8, prepare our application for an International Baccalaureate program at Kyrene Middle School, implement the redesign of our middle schools and provide greater opportunities for early learning," said Vesely.

"Yes, these are ambitious goals, but they are critical in the long term to securing our enrollment base for the future. And, I view these discrepancies as an opportunity for staff to strengthen our reputation as one of the best school districts in the state."

In summary, Vesely says her main priority as the superintendent is to ensure that every child in the Kyrene District receives a quality education and is college or career ready.

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**Sign up: [www.chandlercenter.org/tablehost](http://www.chandlercenter.org/tablehost)**

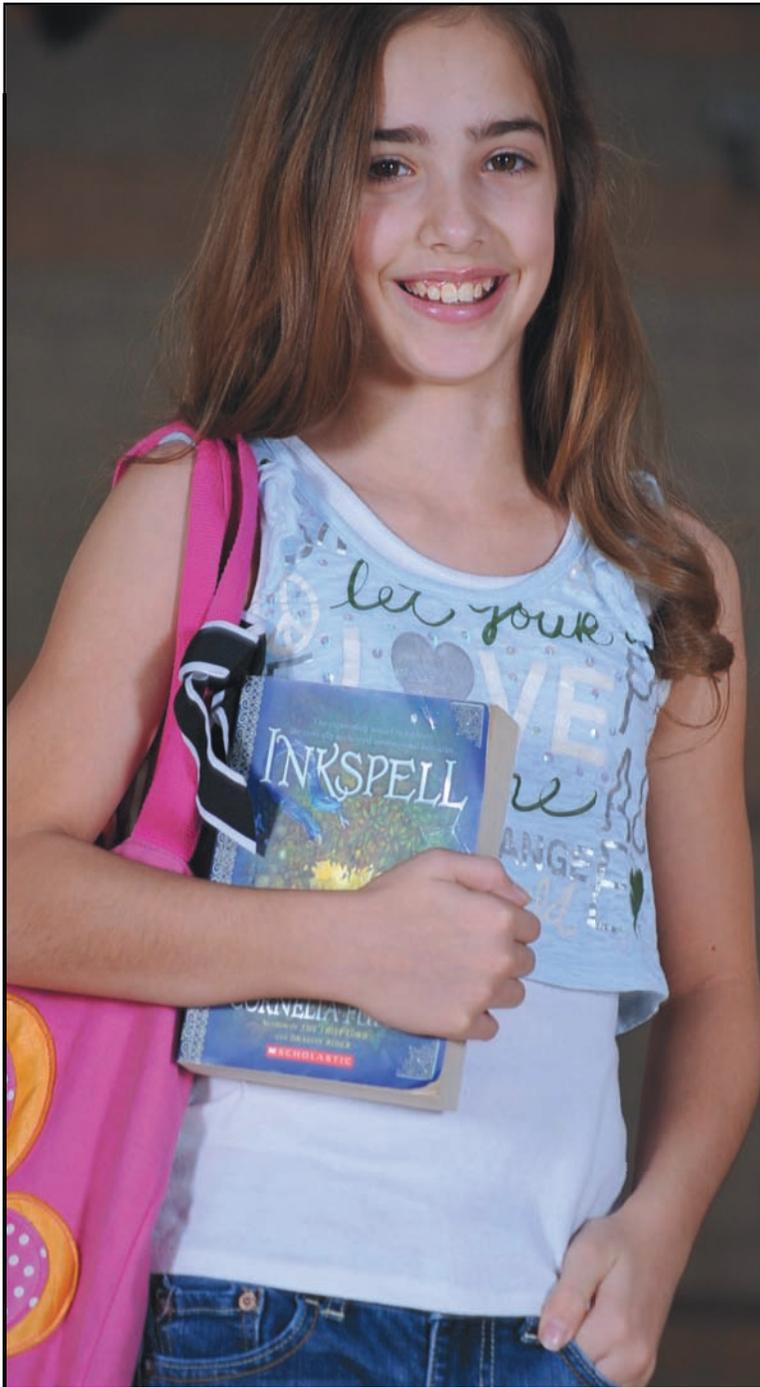


**Save The Date!**  
Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>



- Participating Locations**
- Eat Breakfast Here*  
Crisp Greens
- Eat Lunch Here*  
California Pizza Kitchen - Chandler  
Crisp Greens • Crust - Chandler  
Floridino's • The Living Room  
Nando's Mexican Cafe  
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San Tan Brewing Co.  
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- Eat Dinner Here*  
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**Emphasis on Academic Excellence:** to meet interests and needs of middle school students. Advanced courses in science, social studies, English language arts, and world language. Opportunities in technology, engineering, physical education; plus fine and performing arts.

**Responsive Instruction and Support:** high-quality core educational experiences that meet the academic and non-academic needs of students with cognitive and non-cognitive support for all student achievement levels.

**Developing Student Agency:** emphasizes and encourages a growth mind-set, adaptation and self-advocacy in students.

Kyrene recently engaged principals, teachers, students, families and community members in creating a vision for the future of Kyrene's middle schools. Together, they completed a redesign of the middle school program with the objectives to increase achievement; provide learning opportunities and support for all students; continue our tradition of excellence; and encourage families in our community to choose Kyrene schools.



Engage with Kyrene Schools on Social Media

### Middle School Orientations

On March 20 at all middle schools  
*Times will be posted in early March*

[www.kyrene.org](http://www.kyrene.org) | 480-541-1000

### Tour our Middle Schools

Kyrene schools offer tours so you can see for yourself what our middle schools have to offer. Call us at 480-541-1000 to schedule a visit and *experience Kyrene!*

# Veggies

From Page 1

According to findings in the Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture, most of the students participating also said they would continue gardening after the program.

In 2015, Evans Elementary, of the Tempe Elementary School District, reopened as Evans Learning Center.

Desert Choice Schools and Autism Spectrum Therapies, a Tempe-based clinic, share the space at Evans and provide educational, behavioral and emotional support to Tempe Elementary students.

Tempe Elementary instructional assistant Ruth Pulaski says she believes in the positive behavior that can be harvested from horticultural therapy.

This past summer, Pulaski joined with Mary Bosen, city of Tempe Kid Zone employee and retired Tempe Elementary teacher, to kick off Evans Learning Center's school garden program.

"I've always loved gardening and have seen the positive benefits of growing one," said Pulaski. "The best thing I ever did was contact Mary to help me get one started here at Evans."

To get the school garden concept growing in the right direction, Bosen and Pulaski sought help from Tempe as well as surrounding businesses.

Walmart and The Home Depot donated store credit for the pair to buy supplies for building garden beds and irrigation. A&P Nursery in Mesa donated plants to the garden, and the city of Tempe donated seeds as well as a significant supply of compost.

"I so admire Tempe's composting program," said Pulaski. "The city truly believes in and provides support to school gardens."

After tilling the soil and setting up the garden beds, Pulaski and Bosen introduced the garden to Evans students.

The garden does not use any harsh insecticides or chemicals, ensuring an organic environment for students and staff to work in.

"The only thing these plants have had on them is water and compost," said Bosen.

Students earn the opportunity to work in the garden by working on their behavior. Student Support Director Tracy Harvester explained that the Evans school garden

has been a motivator for positive behavior with this group of students.

"Out of all the preferred activities that the students work toward, the school garden is the most popular choice," said Harvester.

"They're learning life skills that they can take with them in the future, along with enjoying working with nature."

"I love the garden because it's a relaxing space," said sixth-grader Serenity Grey. "I love to see the beautiful plants and eat yummy salads."

Said seventh-grader Joel Chavez: "The radishes are my favorite; I really like how I saw them as seeds two months ago, and now they are fully grown."

Sara Mauricio, who is Serenity and Joel's teacher, reports she has seen a big difference in her students' behavior thanks to the garden.

"The impact on motivation within the classroom has been outstanding," said Mauricio.

"They behave well so they can go out to the garden, and they come back feeling great. They also love eating their vegetables now."

Joel explained that his time at Evans has been beneficial and he hopes he will be able to go back to his home-school, Gililand, from the behavioral progress he has made.

"My goal is to attend Gililand once again," said Joel.

"I will be writing a letter and hopefully get an opportunity to go back."

To celebrate a successful first semester of gardening, Pulaski and Bosen organized an afternoon salad party to enjoy the fruits—or shall we say vegetables—of the school's labor.

Students and staff were invited to eat a garden-fresh salad of beet greens, lettuce, spinach, swiss chard and baby carrots, along with a variety of additional salad fixings.

One by one, students lined up and proclaimed how wonderful it was that they were eating vegetables straight from their own garden.

Desert Choice employee Ryan Alexander, who is a behavior teacher and PE coach at Evans, says he has seen the value of responsibility grow with his students in regards to the garden.

"The garden is a great way to teach responsibility to our students. They love to watch their plants grow and learn that hard work pays off."

— Story by Gabrielle Olson  
— Photos by Amy Garza

29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
CHANDLER CHAMBER

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# Briefly . . .

## Intro session for youth advocate volunteers

Tempe and West Chandler residents who'd like to know more about volunteering their time to help foster children navigate the court system will have an opportunity to do so Thursday, Feb. 23, at a 5 p.m. meet-and-greet event.

Volunteers who take on the role of Court Appointed Special Advocates, CASA for short, help serve as the eyes and ears of Maricopa County judges so they are better able to make sound decisions for the 12,000 children typically in foster care.

With a current roster of approximately 600 advocates, say officials, the need for more CASA volunteers is critical.

The Feb. 23 networking event, which is designed to be casual and informational, will be held at the Scottsdale location of Culinary Dropout, 7135 E. Camelback Road.

Those interested in attending or seeking more information should email [info@voicesforcasachildren.org](mailto:info@voicesforcasachildren.org)

## Textbook review through March 1

Parents of students in the Tempe Union High School District have from now until March 1 to review Social Studies textbooks that have been recommended for adoption in the 2017-18 school year.

The books will be available in the district office lobby for public review, after which the board will vote on the recommendations at its March 1 meeting.

The textbooks are being recommended by a committee comprised of TUHSD social studies teachers, who reviewed multiple options.

For more information, contact Director of Instructional Services Brent Brown at 480-839-0292.

## Chandler budget Q&A on Feb. 23

Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny and the City Council will host Budget Connect, a live online forum where West Chandler and other city residents can ask questions and learn about budget and fiscal policies, from 6 to 7 p.m.,

Thursday, Feb. 23.

Tibshraeny will moderate the event and answer submitted questions in real time with city staff and councilmembers.

The Budget Connect webpage opened on Feb. 16, offering an opportunity for residents to submit ideas, questions and input through Thursday, Feb. 23.

The website is at [chandleraz.gov/connect](http://chandleraz.gov/connect). The forum will be streamed and broadcast on the city's cable station, Channel 11.

During the event, staff will monitor [facebook.com/cityofchandleraz](https://www.facebook.com/cityofchandleraz) and Twitter: @cityofchandler using the hashtag #budgetconnect:

While the public is welcome to attend the event in person at the City Council Chambers, 88 E. Chicago St., residents are encouraged to engage in the live forum from their home, office or any place they may be at the time by connecting online.

Additional detailed information about Chandler's budget is available online at [chandleraz.gov/budget](http://chandleraz.gov/budget).



**It was all smiles at Rover Elementary on Valentine's Day as kindergarten students in Meghan Gilbert's class dunked strawberries in whipped cream, played Valentine Bingo and other festive games, and took turns posing in a photo booth that featured a pink boa and a hat bedecked with hearts. Parent helpers made sure all the kids were able to enjoy the plethora of Valentine-inspired learning activities.**



# Opening for the 2017-2018 School Year!



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Limited  
space  
available!

**Registration begins Wednesday, March 1 at 8 a.m.**  
at Sanchez Administration Building, 3205 S. Rural Rd., Tempe, AZ 85282

## Breakfast designed to build bright futures

Positive Programs for Youth will host its first annual "Building Bright Futures" breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28 at Chandler-based ICAN.

A free, family-centered youth service in the East Valley, ICAN provides a full complement of programs proven effective in equipping youth to achieve personal and academic success by tackling substance abuse, gang involvement and juvenile delinquency.

For 25 years, ICAN has been assisting

the community's youth with the tools they need to be successful: socio-emotional, resiliency and prevention skills.

The "Building Bright Futures" breakfast will be a celebration of ICAN's ongoing work with exceptional youth.

The free event will feature master of ceremonies Erica Cardenas, partner of Cuatro Communications and founder of inspireHER.

Guests will learn more about ICAN and will be invited to invest in its work through a donation at the level of their choosing. ICAN is at 650 E. Morelos St.



The East Valley Boys Service Club recognized seniors who will soon graduate. Honorees included, front row: Slade Summers, Will Goff, Josh Adazola, David Ewen, Adam Garcia, Liam Kovatch, Brenden Murphy; back row: Jared Ostendorp, Casey Patterson, Drew Mudry, Mark Papala, Evan Desai, Benjamin Macey. Also present, but not pictured: Mitchell Achord. The non-profit, philanthropic organization provides service opportunities for boys in grades 6-12 and their parents. Over 130 boys and their parents are members and they volunteer more than 3,000 hours a year in various philanthropic endeavors. Applications for next year's members are being accepted now through Friday, March 31. To download a packet, visit [evbsc.org](http://evbsc.org)

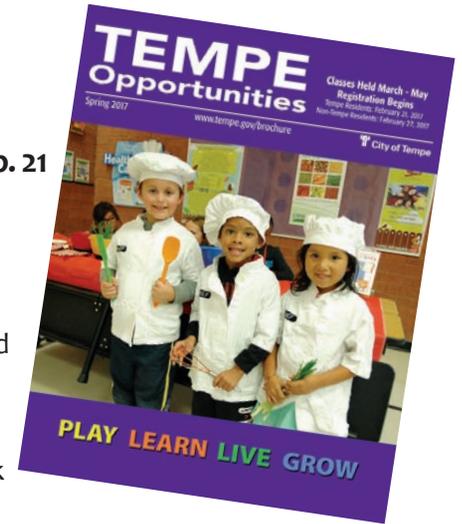


• Tempe Resident Registration begins Feb. 21

• General Registration begins Feb. 21

### Classes begin in March

The spring Tempe Opportunities brochure features hundreds of programs for every interest, age and ability, including health and fitness, art, dance, special interest, sports, aquatics and boating offerings. You can view the brochure online or pick one up at a City of Tempe facility.



[www.tempe.gov/brochure](http://www.tempe.gov/brochure)

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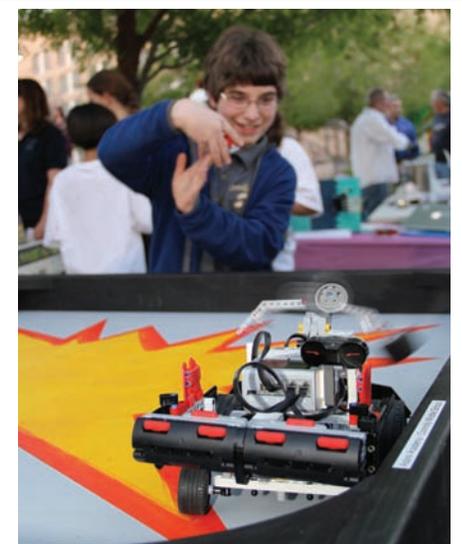
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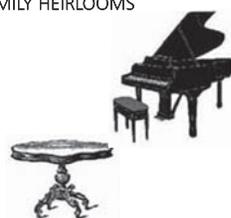
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## Feb. 22 is Walk your Dog Day

Your pooch may think every day holds this distinction, but it comes only once a year. So leash up. Don't disappoint.

By Sally Mesarosh

Quick, it's time to hit the "paws" button and take your dog for a walk. Feb. 22 is Walking the Dog Day, observed annually around the world.

Whether you venture forth to a dog park, a hiking trail or just across the backyard, the fresh air, exercise and socialization are good for both humans and hounds, say veterinarians.

Dr. Kimberly Focht, DVM, the Program Director of Veterinary Technology at Mesa Community College, said it's a tossup as to who gets the most out of Walking the Dog Day.

"Dogs enjoy many of the same

health benefits of walking as their owners," Focht said.

"At Mesa Community College's Veterinary Technology program, the students get outside and walk our resident teaching dogs twice a day, seven days a week. This makes for happier pups and students."

Focht believes that getting out and walking with your dog, even 5-10 minutes a day, can improve its behavior and give it the mental stimulation that all dogs crave.

### Focht's top dog walking tips

- Make sure to have a sturdy leash and collar or harness for your pet to

prevent it from accidentally getting away.

In the event they do escape from you, it is important for them to have identification on their collar or a microchip to help them be returned to you.

- If you find your dog to be unruly when on lead, invest in their and your relationship by attending obedience classes.

- Be sure to keep your pet up to date on vaccines and preventative care to keep them safe and healthy while enjoying the outdoors.

As for humans, walking a pet has been shown to boost the immune system and reduce blood pressure.

A long walk with a friendly companion is a natural way to calm frayed nerves and put things in perspective.

It's much easier to find motivation and stick with an exercise plan if there's an eager mutt reminding you that it's "time."

Janet Rosenkrantz, a West Chandler resident and owner of two dogs, Kea, 3, and Duby, 15, said walking her dogs makes her feel like a good dog owner.

"When I get the leash, they're the happiest they've ever been in their lives," she said.

"Dogs are built for walking. It's their natural state of being."

Where are the best places for romping?

The city of Tempe has five dog parks, including Papago Park, Jaycee Park, Creamery Park, Mitchell Park and Tempe Sports Complex.

Dog park rules state that dogs must be licensed, vaccinated and wear a visible and current license.

Oh, and don't forget the plastic bags for "pick-up" duties.

Pet owners can find a map of dog park locations at: <http://www.tempe.gov/city-hall/community-services/parks/dog-parks>.

Perhaps the most important advice when stopping by these parks is to practice "unconditional consideration of your fellow pet owners."

Also, as summer approaches, take precautions that your dog does not overheat.

Rosenkrantz said she is looking forward to celebrating Walking the Dog Day by taking her pooches for a long walk. "Remember," she said, "A tired dog is a good dog."



City of Tempe

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Fabulous home tucked on a corner lot in Prestiges Pecan Tree neighborhood. Remodeled with the utmost care. Master suite with his/her closets, custom vanities and beautiful onyx walk in shower. A children's wing of 3 bedrooms with Jack & Jill set up. Oversized Family room with bar for family gatherings or entertaining. Chef's delight kitchen with s/s appliances, new cabinetry, new granite countertops, new lighting and a magnificent walk-in pantry. Walk-out Basement with Full Bath and Tons of Storage! Backyard with Italian grotto setting, heated pool/spa, fireplace, 2 built in bar areas and a huge yard with plenty of room to roam. \$934,000 MLS 5485936

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### Great Tempe Community



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