

Wrangler NEWS

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April 4 - 17, 2015

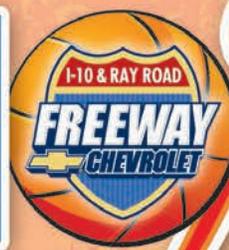
Vol. 26, No. 6

A young woman, Kaelyn Forbes, is the central focus of the image. She is wearing a maroon and white dress and is smiling broadly while holding a yellow and green striped flag. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a stage or arena setting.

• • • • •
The smile on Kaelyn Forbes' face came as no surprise to the crowd of cheering onlookers when she and her Corona del Sol teammates took first place among the state's Winter Color Guard competitors. The team scored an impressive 83.61 points in the National Scholastic A division. The daylong championship event showcased more than 50 color guards and 20 percussion ensembles from high schools all across Arizona. Next stop: U.S. Finals in Dayton, Ohio

Wrangler News photo by Billy Hardiman

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Optimism remains as Kyrene schools ponder Ducey budget cuts

By Diana Whittle

Spring is always budget time for the Kyrene school district, but this year school administrators must plan for a \$5.2 million shortfall in the 2015-16 fiscal budget, due to cuts recommended by the governor's office.

According to the Executive Budget Summary, the reason the governor chose to reduce non-classroom spending is to re-focus on students and teachers.

Superintendent David Schauer questions the rationale behind the diminished funding, however, and posted his comments on the district's website.

"The Governor's proposed budget impacts school districts negatively and is clearly a reduction in funding.

"For many years, Kyrene has been the top district in its peer group in classroom spending. We do not need to be told this should be our priority, as it always has been," said Schauer.

Staff recently developed several scenarios to reduce spending, which were presented to the Governing Board by the district's chief financial officer, Jeremy Calles. New this year is the involvement of the leadership team, at each of the district's 25 schools, members of which actively

participated in a decision-making exercise to identify potential cuts.

Some of the recommendations involve reductions in force for several positions, as well as reduced hours for others.

The specials, such as music, art and physical education, also could face sharp reductions.

At the district level, Calles says a withdrawal of \$2 million from the benefits trust might be a possible solution, due to positive management of the fund.

"The district made an investment into employee wellness practices and into communicating better behaviors on health management," he said.

The Kyrene Employee Benefit Trust board also developed multiple plans over the years so employees can choose health options that meet their needs, while being both cost effective for them and the district, Calles noted.

"The result was a multi-year reduction in claims expenses when the industry standard is to continually escalate from year to year."

District-wide salaries would adjust minimally with a 0.5 percent increase for all employees being recommended, which is not quite as dire as years when the district had complete a pay freeze, explained Calles.

"We also are continuing the Performance Based Retention Plan, which allows for a possible 2.5 percent increase to employees when they enter their seventh year with the district, if they have met all of the performance measures during their time of service," said Calles.

"The pay plan was introduced last year and is an employee retention strategy aimed at decreasing

employee training costs and keeping teachers in our district."

Calles anticipates that in addition to the cuts for the upcoming fiscal year, there will be more down the road.

"We can anticipate the governor and the legislature will continue their approach to balancing the state budget by reducing expenditures."

He says that there is some good news to be found, though.

"Kyrene's administration, in coordination with the Governing Board, has been very efficient and strategic in managing the budget over the past several years, in spite of diminishing funding support from the state."

Calles outlined the timeline for finalizing the budget, which by law must be balanced by June 30.

"We may still need to make a few more cuts over the next few years, but we will be surgical with our approach," he said.

"We are prepared to review the budget each year, carefully, to maximize our limited resources with the least possible impact on student achievement or their experience in the classroom.

"Kyrene will remain strong due to dedicated local support and a proven track record that makes Kyrene a popular choice with parents."

For additional information about the proposed budget, visit the district's website at www.kyrene.org and select the Financial Transparency link on the left side of the home page.

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Bonnie Brockway feels a 'sense of fulfillment' by achieving her lifelong dream.

— Photo courtesy Mesa Community College

At 72, MCC grandma gets her degree — and doesn't have to give up knitting

By Sally Mesarosh

Bonnie J. Brockway, a 72-years-young great-grandma and soon-to-be college graduate, was a bit worried when she went back to school at age 70.

She wondered if the professors and students at Mesa Community College would think of her as a serious student, not merely an old lady taking a break from her knitting.

She soon learned, however, that she had no need to worry.

"The students and professors were wonderful," Brockway said. "I have made such great friends. Some of them call me mom; some of them call me grandma. Going back to college has enriched my life no end. I do love to

knit, but I'd rather go to school."

Brockway's desire to go to college began in Wisconsin in 1959. Her plans for college were put on hold as she married at 17, raised four kids and divorced 22 years later. During that time she worked as a secretary at a two-year college, a deputy clerk for the State Bar of Arizona, an executive secretary at General Dynamics and a technical writer for Motorola.

Throughout the years, though, she preserved her love for writing. Brockway's work has been published in national magazines and Wisconsin newspapers, including the Crawford County Independent, the Vernon

MCC

From Page 4

County Broadcaster and the La Crosse Tribune. She now blogs for a marketing company and works for Maricopa Community College's Chair Academy.

Even with these successes, the lack of a college degree weighed heavily upon her mind.

"I always wanted to earn a degree," said Brockway, who now lives in Tempe. "It was one goal I didn't want to let go of."

So, at the age of 70, she took what she calls a "leap of faith" and enrolled at MCC. She loved it immediately.

"I felt very comfortable at MCC," Brockway said. "The energy and educational atmosphere gave me life, gave me breath."

Brockway names Josh Rathkamp's poetry class as her favorite class and Rathkamp her favorite instructor.

"His creative writing classes tap into all my creative juices," said Brockway, who received an honorable mention in

a recent writing competition at MCC.

"I enjoy them so much."

Her proudest moment so far has been the induction ceremony into Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

"I cried through half the ceremony," she said. "I can't believe at my age that I have attained such an honor."

She will graduate with an associate's degree in May and plans to transfer to Northern Arizona University's Extended Campuses Program to earn her bachelor's degree in creative writing.

Brockway jokes that her friends will fill an entire section of the bleachers during the commencement ceremony at MCC. She is filled with pride at the thought of her forthcoming graduation.

"To walk across the stage with my cap and gown and PTK honor ribbons and finally hear *Pomp and Circumstance* is going to be the highlight of my entire life, except when my kids were born," she said. "Even though it took all this time, it will be such a sense of fulfillment. What I really wanted all my life, I will have now."



Hot off the press: Summer camp time is just around the corner

It's about time to start making summer plans for your kids to ensure they stay active and engaged between school sessions. Tempe offers summer camps in a variety of subjects and at convenient times to help find one that's a perfect fit for any child. Registration for most camps is now open. Information at Tempe.gov/SummerCamps.

— Photo courtesy City of Tempe

Chandler Regional to join Kyrene for immunizations

Kyrene Family Resource Center will be the site of immunization clinics to be offered in conjunction with Chandler Regional Medical Center from 3-5 p.m. Tuesday, April 28. Vaccines are given to children six weeks to 18 years of age.

A parent must accompany their children to these clinics and provide

previous immunization history.

Effective in 2012, government rules mandated that:

1. Children with private medical insurance that covers vaccines will NOT be eligible for the free vaccines at these clinics; and
2. Vaccines will be FREE to children with NO insurance; children with AHCCCS and Kids Care Insurance; and children with private insurance that does not cover vaccines and Native American children.

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By Appointment

Chandler residents urged to access online polls as a way to get involved in helping plan city's future

What is the most important investment to maintain the quality of west Chandler and other city neighborhoods? That is the question being asked in a series of monthly online polls planners are using to aid them in updating the city's General Plan.

Residents wishing to participate in the process can visit the project website, www.chandleraz.gov/GPupdate, and click on the "Get Involved" tab.

The polls are part of a program required of cities at least once every 10 years to readopt or update existing General Plans. Chandler's current plan was adopted by the City Council and ratified by voters in 2008.

While the updating effort will employ traditional community meetings and engagement opportunities, the city early on established a project website, monthly polls and a Planning Lab whereby citizens and stakeholders can provide input into the process.

"The monthly polls allow residents to participate in the General Plan update wherever they have access to a computer or mobile device," said David de la Torre, the city's Principal Planner overseeing the project.

"It's an easy way for residents to share

their thoughts on specific topics during the update process."

The poll questions will change monthly, and in addition to being answered online, can be answered in person by visiting the Chandler Museum, located inside the McCullough-Price House, 300 S. Chandler Village Drive.

The museum houses project-related materials, including the monthly poll question, allowing visitors the opportunity to learn about and contribute to the project.

In addition, residents can interact with city planners in Planning Labs held between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. the first Friday of the month at the museum. Comments also can be submitted online at www.chandleraz.gov/GPupdate.

The public also is being invited to attend regular General Plan Citizens' Advisory Committee meetings and participate in upcoming outreach efforts, including Chandler Vision Fest, a week-long series of events to be held in mid-May aimed at encouraging public participation in the General Plan update process.

Committee meeting times and event details will be posted on the City's website, www.chandleraz.gov

Academy open to aspiring young firefighters

Young men and women ages 15 to 21 who are interested in someday pursuing careers in the fire service can get hands-on exposure to firefighting by joining the Chandler Fire Cadets, a skill-development and community-service program taught by members of the Chandler Fire, Health & Medical Department.

To become a cadet, candidates must first complete Chandler's Fire Cadet Academy, an eight-week program that starts May 2 and meets from 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays through June 27.

The academy includes elements of physical fitness, teamwork, personal development, firefighting

skills and more. It is held at the city's Fire Training Center, 3550 S. Dobson Road.

The academy application is online at www.chandleraz.gov/fire. A \$100 registration fee includes a polo shirt, two T-shirts and two pairs of training shorts. Uniform costs for boots, pants and a belt are additional.

Applicants who cannot afford the registration or uniform fees can apply for a scholarship by calling the cadet program's adviser, Battalion Chief Norm Germaine, at 480-782-2120 or emailing norman.germaine@chandleraz.gov.

All eligible applicants who apply will be accepted into the academy and must attend an orientation meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 16, at the Fire Training Center. Parents are also strongly encouraged to attend the meeting.

After graduation from the academy, Chandler

— CAETS, Page 7

Imagine. Explore. Accomplish.

 **Tempe Public Library**

Experience free programs and classes at the Tempe Public Library.



Writers on Writing: Rebecca Joy

Retired firefighter Rebecca Joy is author of *Tales from the Firehouse*, the real life stories of firefighters. She will discuss how she gathered these funny and heroic stories and created this fantastic book.

April 25, 11 a.m.

Meeting Room A



Book Signing: Randy Lindsay

Author of *The Gathering, Beginning's End*, an apocalyptic tale. He will answer questions and sign his book.

April 25, 1 p.m.

Informal Event Area

Tech Time

Tempe Public Library offers a variety of programs designed to keep you connected and improve your computer literacy. Learn how to use iPads and e-readers or spend a couple hours to learn PowerPoint, Excel or other computer programs. Explore what's offered on our calendar at www.tempe.gov/libraryevents



Poetry in April

Enjoy readings by three acclaimed poets in celebration of National Poetry Month: Bettie Anne Doebler, Michelle Salcido and Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow. Free coffee compliments of the Friends of the Tempe Public Library.

April 15, 6:30 p.m.

Connections Café Community Room



www.tempe.gov/library

3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe

www.facebook.com/tempepubliclibrary



Members of Chandler Fire Cadet Academy after a training session on how to spray water on a fire from a safe distance. — Photo courtesy Chandler Fire Department

Fire Cadets meet at the Training Center on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of each month for physical training, drills and classroom instruction.

Saturday meetings are from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Wednesday meetings are from 5 to 9 p.m.

Cadets who graduate from the academy are eligible to ride with fire crews and operate with them (must be age 16 or older).

Said Germaine:

“The Fire Cadet program is a great experience for young people who have a desire to become a firefighter.

“They gain a first-hand perspective on the mental and physical challenges we face every day.

“It also gives us a chance to see their work ethic and strength of character in a team environment. It’s always gratifying for me to see these young men and women rise to the challenge.”



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Coalition to End Homelessness advocates for poor; volunteers sought for April 6-7 phone bank

By Joyce Coronel

Judi Messer can't look away when she sees a homeless person begging for help. The former cardiac care nurse has devoted the last 17 years of her life to helping the men, women and children in the Valley who have no place to call home.

Messer knows they need help with the basics — things most people take for granted — so she developed the "Hands of Hope" project.

The East Valley resident gathers supplies such as socks, bottles of water, lip balm, nail clippers and granola bars and packs them into plastic, zipper-seal bags she keeps in her car to hand out. She's also put together hundreds of kits that people can distribute.

And though Messer is just one person trying to make a difference, she's not alone. The Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness was formed in the 1990s after advocates realized there was a need to coordinate efforts around the state in support of some of

the poorest of Arizona's poor.

Rebecca Pringle, communications manager for ACEH, said the group is working to end homelessness through coordination, education and advocacy.

"We believe the best way to end homelessness is to prevent homelessness," Pringle said. ACEH does not provide direct services but instead advocates on behalf of member organizations at the state legislature.

Some 51 organizations belong to the organization. One of them is Maggie's Place, a network of homes for expectant mothers who would otherwise be homeless. Arizona has three Maggie's Place homes; one of them, Elizabeth House, is located in Tempe.

Women can join the Maggie's Place community at any point in their pregnancy and stay until their child is at least six months old. Many of the guests come from difficult circumstances, such as domestic violence, drug abuse, lack of work experience, mental illness and low self-

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MORE: ArborDay5K.com

worth.

Over 650 women have benefitted from the Maggie's Place homes since the organization was founded in 1999. Kylie, who lived at Elizabeth House in 2006, had nowhere else to turn when she got pregnant. After giving birth to Brianna, a baby girl, the two remained at the home for three months. Counseling, mentoring and emotional support are just some of the benefits guests receive.

"I don't know where I would be if it weren't for Maggie's Place," Kylie wrote of the experience on the organization's website. "Maggie's Place was a lifeline for me."

Kylie has since been able to finish school and now works as a medical biller and coder for a behavioral health company.

For those who'd like to help feed the homeless, there's Paz de Cristo, a soup kitchen located on Broadway and Country Club Road in Mesa where a hot meal is served every night of the week. Arlen Westling, director of the organization, said that between the nightly meal service and food box distribution, about 50,000 meals are served each month.

Messer volunteers there on Wednesdays, handing out cough drops, reviewing medications and offering advice. Mostly though, it's the human touch she offers, as when someone approaches her for a new pair of socks.

"I look at them in the face. I don't let them come up to me and grab socks from the table," Messer said.

"They're holding their hand out for socks and I grab their hand and shake it.

"When I drive away, I feel like I've done the best I could for the situation I was in and I've made a



At Paz de Cristo center for homeless, visitor Donnie Franklin receives one of the approximately 50,000 meals served every month. — Photo Billy Hardiman/Wrangler News

difference in somebody's life just by looking at them or talking to them."

Pringle said those who want to help be part of the solution to ending homelessness can become members of ACEH.

"They can sign up for our alerts, get updates and all the other training that we have coming up. They can like us and follow us on Facebook. There's so much to learn," Pringle said.

For \$50, membership supports the work of ACEH to advocate on behalf of the homeless at the state

and local level. On any given night in Arizona, as many as 27,000 people are homeless. Poverty, domestic violence, chronic health conditions, mental health issues and substance abuse are some of the factors that contribute to homelessness. A lack of support systems and affordable housing are other forces that drive the problem.

"There's a huge need out there," Pringle said. The ACEH website lists the dozens of organizations that are part of the coalition, and donating funds, goods and services to these member agencies is another good way to help.

Volunteers are still needed to staff an April 6 and 7 phone bank in honor of Arizona Gives Day. ACEH is hoping to make some 5,000 calls seeking donations and will need willing participants with cell phones to make calls from the organization's Phoenix headquarters.

"It will be fun," Pringle said of the upcoming effort.

"You watch the numbers go up."

To volunteer for the ACEH phone bank or to make a contribution, visit ACEH.org or call 602- 340-9393.



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JUNE 22-26

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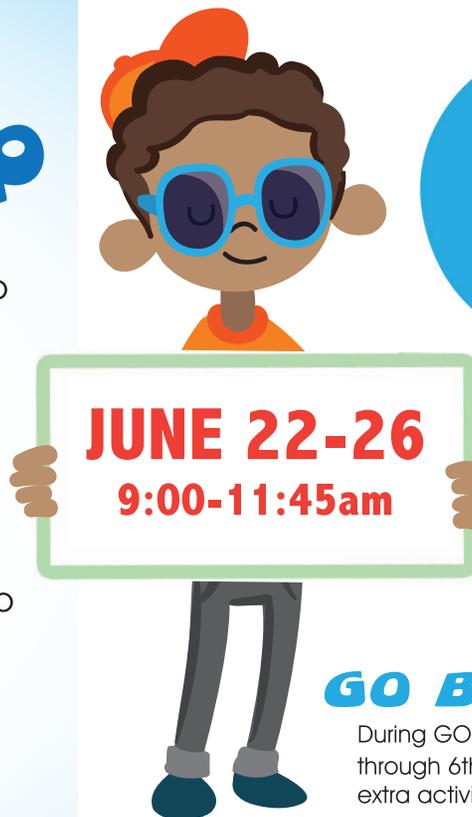
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WARBIRD RIDES

Three schools earn A+ recognition

By Diana Whittle

Three schools in the Kyrene district — Mariposa Elementary, Kyrene Traditional Academy's Sureño campus and Pueblo Middle School — have earned the Arizona Educational Foundation's A+ School of Excellence recognition for the 2014-15 academic year.

The awards follow an in-depth evaluation in the areas of student focus and support, school culture, active teaching and learning, curriculum, leadership, community and parental involvement, and assessment data.

A lengthy written document is submitted by each school, followed by a rigorous site visit by a team of judges. Preparation of each school's application involves collaboration among students, faculty, staff, administrators and community members.

Spencer Fallgatter, the principal at Mariposa, says that his school's staff worked as a team, along with the school's site council, during the year.

"We had one teacher, Amber Kremlacek, who authored the 35-page application with assistance from me," said Fallgatter.

"Mariposa received the A+ award in 2003-2004, again in 2008-2009, and (now) for the third year. I believe we are the only school in Kyrene that received the reward three times."

He says that one of Mariposa's strengths is having a diverse community along with an extremely active parent group, who are highly engaged in ensuring their children receive a quality education.

"We also have a very caring school community. We have a group within our school called

Mariposa KARES that focuses on many service projects," said Fallgatter.

"Most recently, we partnered with a non-profit to raise money for a former Mariposa student, who unfortunately, has cancer. We are a school that prides itself in meeting the needs of 'all learners' while continuing to work together to find innovative ways to provide ongoing support to our students."

Fallgatter says that as principal he is always looking for ways to improve the school's performance.

"A first-class school like Mariposa is always looking to up its game. Our teachers work with instructional coaches to improve their instructional delivery, focus on the specific

needs of their students and deliver instruction in a highly engaging way."

For Kyrene Traditional Academy, this was the first time it applied for the award and received it, according to principal Marianne Lescher. She agrees that the application was a shared effort that included students and parents.

Through the intensive process, the school also learned about its qualities.

"We rediscovered the strength of our climate and community, and the positive impact our collegial relationships have on students," said Lescher.

"We saw the positive impact of our Spalding reading program, and how well our students are achieving across all reading and language areas. We also saw how our positive and pro-active approach to behavioral supports has proven beneficial to our students and their behavior and our school's climate."

As for improvements, Lescher says she wants to continue on an upward trajectory.

"We want to continue to improve on teacher training in Spalding reading and Saxon math, our two unique resources and strategies. Our results are really great with these resources and we want to continue."

Both schools reported parents and students to be enthusiastic upon hearing news of the award.

"All day, parents were coming in to school to congratulate everyone, and we got lots of congratulatory emails! We are also excited because we have also been nominated for the National

Blue Ribbon School award, and we will hear about that in September," said Lescher.

She plans a school assembly for April 27 to celebrate as a school.

Recognition through the A+ School of Excellence program can help increase confidence in Arizona's public schools and create greater parent and community involvement, educators agree. Schools receive \$500 and a banner designating it as an A+ School of Excellence winner. All staff and faculty at the award-winning schools will be eligible for partial scholarships from Argosy University Phoenix. The award is valid for 3½ years.

"This is a well-deserved honor for the staff, students and parents in these schools' communities," said Kyrene Superintendent Dr. David K. Schauer.



Congratulations! KYRENE ALUMNI Athletes of the Month

Alex Hart – Track and Field

Kyrene del Cielo Elementary
Aprende Middle School

Kelly Naumann – Track and Field

Kyrene de la Mariposa Elementary
Aprende Middle School

Jackie Martin – Track and Field

C.I. Waggoner Elementary
Aprende Middle School

Kyrene is proud of its students as they move from elementary into high school and college. Each month we will honor some of our former students as we hear of their accomplishments.

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'Dollars for Scholars' comes to the rescue for many who aspire to higher education

Financial crisis doesn't have to derail college

By Joyce Coronel

For many high school students, a higher education — the key to a brighter future — is an impossible dream.

Thanks to Tempe Dollars for Scholars, 170 students from Tempe Union high schools have received the financial help to achieve their goals.

That's because nine years ago, Frank Schmuck, who serves on the Dollars for Scholars local board, met Dr. Irving Fradkin, a retired Massachusetts optometrist who in 1958 challenged others to give at least \$1 to help local youth receive a college education.

Fradkin's efforts resulted in the development of what is now a nationwide program with 700 affiliates in thousands of communities. Since its founding, the Tempe chapter of Dollars for Scholars, now part of Scholarship America, has awarded some \$173,000 in scholarships.

"The neat thing about the program is, they've never been frivolous with the money. They've always put it in the child's name and delivered it to the institution they've decided they wanted to attend," Schmuck said.

Although the deadline to apply for scholarships for this year has passed, Tempe Union High School students are encouraged to apply during the upcoming school year.

This year there were 200 students vying for 38 the scholarships worth \$1,000 or more. Some colleges and universities have agreed to match dollar for dollar, thereby doubling the amount of the award.

And while the organization is looking for applicants with good grades who don't have the financial means to pay for post-secondary education, the selection committee considers each student's particular circumstances.

"Good grades doesn't necessarily mean you were a stellar student forever. Some of them have life-altering events. Some of their stories are heartbreaking to hear," Schmuck said.

Nori Cannell, director of guidance and career and technical education for TUHSD, also serves on the board of Tempe Dollars for Scholars. She said the scholarship selection committee has criteria for judging each application.

"Some students have had to work part time to support their families or have had a parent who is ill," Cannell said.

The committee has received applications over the years from students who are homeless.

"We've had students like that who lived out of the back of their car with their family. We've had students where the mother or father died," Schmuck said.

At the award ceremony, a brief narrative about the recipient is read aloud to the audience and the individual or a representative of the organization that funded the scholarship presents a certificate to the student.

Scmuck said the sheepskin certificate is framed and includes the donor's photo or logo so that years down the road, when the student has graduated, there will be a tangible reminder of how their dream was launched.

"They're going to see that one day and say, 'This helped me, and now I'm going to help somebody else,'" Schmuck said.

"We want students who are really committed to getting some kind of higher education, regardless of whether they are going to vocational training, a community college, a trade school or certification program or a four-year college or university. We give them the resources to get started in school," Cannell said.

Clarissa Graham received a scholarship four years ago and graduated from Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business last December. Today, she's working in the supply-chain department at Arizona Public Service in downtown Phoenix.

"I am extremely appreciative and thankful for what has been given to me because it really had an impact on my education," Graham said.

"I felt valued just knowing that someone saw potential in my future and in me as a person. It also felt really great to have the financial stress taken off," Graham said.

Debbie Graham, Clarissa's mom, agreed.

"It meant a lot for us to receive the scholarship. It was very helpful because at the time, my husband was forced into an early retirement situation," Debbie said.

Schmuck hopes that many more people and organizations will step forward to help fund scholarships.

Recipients, he said, represent future employees, consumers and clients for the businesses that back such scholarships.

But there's more.

For every \$100 donated toward a scholarship, donors receive a raffle ticket for a chance to win a coach and team-signed ball from Corona del Sol's unprecedented four-time state championship basketball team.

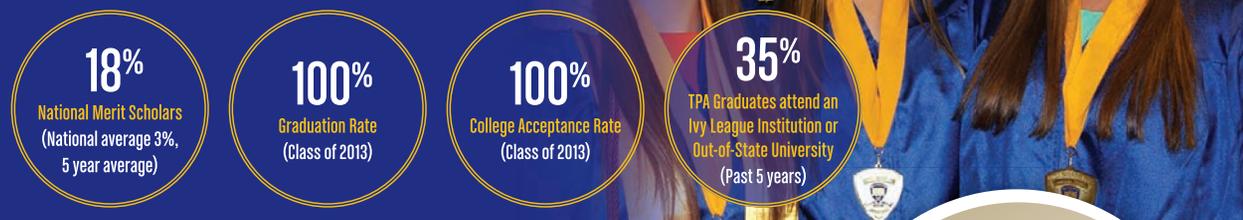
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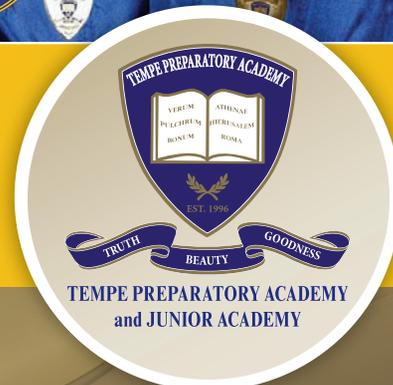
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Funding boosts CARE 7 crisis intervention services

By Sally Mesarosh

Getting families to talk honestly about substance abuse is not an easy task, according to Kristen Scharlau, Tempe's CARE 7 program coordinator.

But with recent funding from the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, the CARE 7 staff and Tempe police officers will have new tools and resources to help families struggling with untreated and sometimes generational substance abuse issues.

Tempe Social Services' Care 7 Program is one of 13 agencies in Arizona that recently received grant funding from the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission for substance abuse prevention. In all, more than \$600,000 was awarded for evidence-based programs focused on Arizona youth and young adults.

The grant program is a collaboration between ACJC and the Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services to fund prevention and education efforts by state, county, local, and tribal criminal justice agencies – as well as non-profit organizations – between April 1 and Sept. 30. Tempe Social Services' portion is for \$29,620.

Scharlau said given the limited time span of the grant, her staff is ready to hit the ground running.

"I'm so excited about this opportunity," Scharlau said. "Tempe is a really progressive community and we pride ourselves on promoting healthy families."

The CARE 7 Crisis Response Team, a group

of professionally trained staff and community volunteers, works closely with Tempe Police and Fire personnel to provide 24 hour, on-scene, crisis intervention services. After a recent merger, CARE 7 and Tempe's Counseling Services Department now work together to offer citizens an array of services from the original 911 call all the way through to therapy.

Scharlau said the grant funding will be used to help families develop healing strategies and coping skills through *Celebrating Families!*, a 16-week curriculum developed by the National Association for Children of Alcoholics. The program addresses the needs of children and parents in families that have serious problems with alcohol and other drugs.

After researching the program, which has a proven track record of success, Scharlau knew it would be a good fit. "Before, we dealt with the problem on the reactive side—after the fact—but now we can affect change on the other side," Scharlau said. "This is a mechanism for Tempe officers to have a positive tool to help families."

First, Tempe police officers and CARE 7 will identify families who can benefit from the curriculum. The families are then invited to an old-fashioned family sit-down dinner, followed by split counseling sessions, one for adults and one for children, lasting 90 minutes. At the end of the sessions, the groups come together to discuss what they learned.

A different theme will be presented each week with topics such as nutrition, anger management,

chemical dependency, making healthy choices and choosing healthy relationships.

"This curriculum gets families talking about the disease and how it is affecting their family," Scharlau said. Scharlau said statistics show that families with substance abuse run a higher risk of domestic violence and child abuse.

"Substance abuse is often a generational issue," Scharlau said. "If left untreated, it will only progress, and 10 years from now, officers will be dealing with the children of the adult substance abusers. But we can stop a lot of the problems if we start early."

John A. Blackburn, Jr., executive director of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, said he is pleased with the quality of the proposals that ACJC received from grant applicants.

"The evidence-based programs that we will be funding should have an immediate impact in communities all across the state," Blackburn said in a press release. The programs are designed to prevent and/or reduce substance abuse in a cost-effective manner, increase public safety, proactively address substance abuse and build collaborative relationships between public health, community, and criminal justice organizations.

Scharlau is certain that the *Celebrating Families!* curriculum will have an impact on Tempe families.

"I know that we will affect positive change," she said. "There's no way you can spend 16 weeks and not develop a relationship of communication and honesty." For more information on CARE 7, contact Kristen Scharlau at 480-350-2969.

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Best, brightest to be recognized

For the 18th year, Tempe will honor its best and brightest young people at the 2015 YouthFest Courage Awards and Tempe Top Teens recognition dinner from 6-9 p.m. Monday, April 6 at Tempe Mission Palms.

The awards acknowledge the courage it can take for a young person to grow up in a challenging world. Eleven young people will receive awards at this year's dinner for displaying the courage to overcome physical limitations, health conditions or family situations.

In addition to the courage awards, 46 young people will be recognized as Tempe Top Teens for their exemplary efforts in academics, athletics, arts, music, citizenship, community service and demonstration of social

conscience.

Mayor Mark Mitchell, members of Tempe City Council and Tempe Diablos will host the dinner, which will be attended by other city and state dignitaries, recipients and their families, educators, community leaders, school board members and superintendents.

Matt Pace of 12 News will serve as the master of ceremonies.

The evening will begin at 6 with a reception featuring the Tempe High School Quartet, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. featuring the Corona del Sol High School Steel Drum Band.

Tempe Mission Palms is at 60 E. Fifth St., Tempe.

Information: Kim Bauman at 480-858-2462 kim_bauman@tempe.gov



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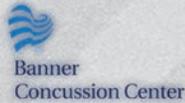
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Sports

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Aztecs gather in a pre-game prayer circle for their teammate

The Aztec volleyball team is all about being strong this season while playing on the court but they are being strong off the court, as well, for their teammate **Ridge Vanderbur**, who was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia this past summer.

“Our season is about being ‘Aztec Strong’ because we are dedicating our season to Ridge,” said coach **Brynne Evans**. “Ridge’s strength to fight his disease has motivated our team to fight in our matches.”

“Whether Ridge is on the court or not, he is one of our teammates. His jersey is on the bench for every match. He is one of us.” The Aztecs have nine players returning from last season’s 13-19 team. The six

seniors and three juniors should have the experience and leadership to help the rest of the team increase their win record this season.

“We are meshing together two groups of club-team players who have played together in either club or school volleyball for years,” said Evans. “I am pleased with how we are playing as one so far this season.”

Some of the players to watch include senior **Trystin Nelson** and junior setter **Ryan Iskandar**.

“Trystin has become a dominant blocker and hitter on our team,” said Evans. “Although Ryan is our setter, he has the ability to hit for us as well.”

In addition to Trystin and Ryan, Evans adds



Ridge Vanderbur during last season

For Aztecs, a welcome spike to the season

Jeffrey McCain to the mix as one of the team's go-to hitters when a point is needed. McCain and Nelson were also named by Evans as the players to put up the strongest block on the team.

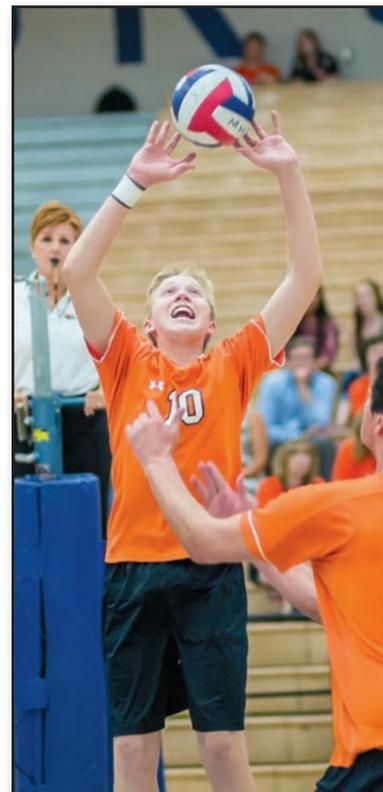


Moving up from JV to the varsity team this season are junior middle blocker **Austin Dixon**, sophomore defensive specialist **Dion Deguzman** and sophomore middle blocker **Connor Niemtschk**.

"Austin has great athletic ability, height and power (and) is steadily increasing his knowledge of the game," said Evans. "Dion is a fantastic and dynamic young defensive player with a great court sense, while Connor moves well across the net."

Corona has three defensive players who are also among the team's best servers.

"**Antonio Guarino**, **Dion Deguzman** and **Chris Baker** are all fantastic back-row players that we rely on heavily," said Evans. "These three are also some of our best servers."



Chris Davis

It is doubly important after losing out last year on a technicality.

"We were very frustrated last year when we were kicked out of the tournament due to the rule that three teams in each section are allowed to earn a spot in the tournament," said Evans. "Our goal is to not put ourselves in that position again. We have to earn our spot in the

regular season by being in the top two."

With an improved work ethic and team unity, the Aztecs seem to really want to drive each other to be better every day and make that spot in the playoffs, according to Evans, but they will have to fight every section game to win.

Getting to the state playoffs may be difficult again this season because some of the best teams in the state in the



Corona's Ryan Iskandar dives for a save

same Section V, including Gilbert, Hamilton and Desert Vista.

The Aztecs have won their last three matches but were scheduled to play the Gilbert Tigers on April 2 at home, Horizon Honors on April 7, and then Mesa on April 9.

It may be an uphill battle to make the state playoffs, but when the Aztecs need to be reminded to be strong and fight through adversity, all they have to do is look for Ridge's empty jersey on the bench.

"Whether Ridge is on the court or not, he is one of our teammates," said Evans. "Our goal is "State for Eight" in honor of Ridge. He is one of us."

In addition, the Aztecs have two freshmen on the team. Setter **Chris Davis** has given the team the option to open up its game offensively, and outside hitter **Ryan Pike**, a player with great natural ability, is improving every day with his work ethic, according to Evans.

Evans is counting on returning captain **Russell Johns** and fellow seniors **Devon Nelson** and **Alex Cox** to help provide leadership on and off the court.

The Aztecs are going to need to fight hard to make it to the state playoff tournament this season with the new rules.

Tempe Prep Softball — Tempe Prep, an independent D-IV school, played in the Salt River Softball Tournament at Coronado High School, March 26-28, defeating Tonopah Valley, 18-11, before

losing to San Carlos, 9-37.

Up next, Tempe Prep was scheduled to play at the Mogollon Mustangs April 2, Phoenix Country Day Eagles on April 6 and Paradise Honors on April 7.



Tempe Prep makes a crash landing at home



Marcos' Nick Leach narrowly slides past McClintock's George Lopez, successfully stealing second base

Marcos de Niza Baseball — With a 6-8-1 overall record and 3-2-1 in their section, the Padres are led in hitting and scoring by two freshmen, a junior and a senior.

Freshman **Nick Leach** has played in 13 games, so far scoring 16 runs and hitting .351. What's most impressive about this young player is his base running: he has stolen 16 bases on 16 attempts in the first 14 games.

Senior **Matt Langmack** was involved in 27 of the 84 runs scored by the Padres, including 16 RBIs, the most on the team and 11 runs hitting .289 in 14 games.

Freshman **Max L'Heureux** has 15 hits out of 37 times at bat, hitting .405, the highest on the team. He is also four for four on stolen bases, while **Ben Birk** is three for three attempts as well.

Junior **Giovanni Nieves** has played in all 14 games so far, with nine runs on 10 hits and 10 RBIs, hitting .323.

The Padres were scheduled to play Higley March 30, then at Notre Dame Prep on April 1. After Easter they will play at Apache Junction on April 7 before two home games: April 8 against Dobson and April 9 against Seton Catholic.

Corona Baseball — The Aztecs have started the season on a roll, only losing two games, compiling a 13-2 record and making it all the way to the finals of the Arizona High School Spring Baseball Invitational held this year at Brophy College Prep before losing to Hamilton 8-4.

Corona had an early 3-1 lead against the Huskies in the third inning before Hamilton's starting pitcher took over, not allowing Corona to get much action until the sixth inning when sophomore infielder **Chase Hamilton**, who has been coming back from an injury, hit an RBI triple to score the Aztecs' last run of the tournament.

Senior **Matt Weston** was excellent in the right field during the tournament, garnering the Gold Glove honors, while junior **Ryan Novis** took home the Outstanding Hitter award.

Corona left the tournament feeling good about its performance and boosting the confidence needed to defeat Chaparral in a close 3-2 contest on March 28, increasing the Aztecs' important power ranking points for the state playoffs.

The Aztecs were scheduled to play against Mesquite on March 31 before two away games. They will play at Gilbert Highland on April 2 and at Coronado on April 8.

McClintock Baseball — The Chargers, 3-10-1 overall, 1-3-1 section, are led in the hitting category by **Gianna Guaglianone**, who has 10 runs on 15 hits with two home runs and 7 RBIs, hitting .341 playing in 13 games.

Pete Lopez is helping his team, hitting .342 with 13 hits, 6 runs and 4 RBIs going to bat 38 times in 14 games, as is **George Lopez**, with 10 hits scoring 3 runs and 4 RBIs playing in 13 games.

Max Hartgraves has played in all 14 games so far, scoring 8 runs on 12 hits with 6 RBIs hitting .308.

Leading pitcher **Danny Gorman**, with two wins in his stats, can also hit the ball. He has been up to bat 45 times, scoring 8 runs on 10 hits

with a home run and 4 RBIs to his record.

The Chargers were scheduled to play at Skyline on March 30, at home against South Mountain on March 31 and at Arcadia on April 2.

Up next they will play Notre Dame Prep at home on April 8 before playing at cross-town rival Tempe on April 10.



McClintock's Danny Gorman takes a swing



Seton coach receives coveted Cotton Fitzsimmons recognition

In celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the Spirit of Cotton Award, named after former Suns head coach Cotton Fitzsimmons, Phoenix Suns Charities has presented Seton Catholic Preparatory with a personalized commemorative banner recognizing Seton girls varsity basketball coach Karen Self.

Seton was the first high school on the Phoenix Suns Charities tour as representatives delivered banners to all nine award-winning coaches.

"It was uplifting for JoAnn Fitzsimmons and me to return to Seton and see the 2008 Spirit of Cotton winner, Coach Self, still inspiring her girls basketball team with her winning ways, both on the court and in



the lives of her student-athletes," said Robin Milne, Phoenix Suns Charities executive director.

"The bond between Coach Self and her players was evident, and we were thrilled to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the award by hanging a banner in Seton's gym to acknowledge Coach Self for all her years of success."

Seton assistant principal David Sorkin was likewise pleased.

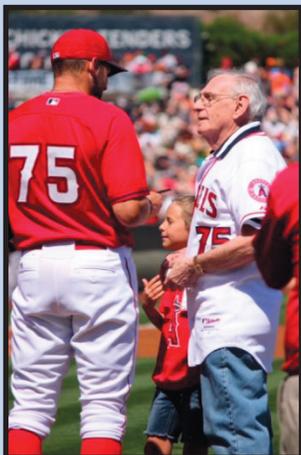
"It is a privilege for Seton Catholic's own Karen Self to be recognized by Phoenix Suns Charities as a former Spirit of Cotton Award recipient," he said. "The award is meaningful because it measures athletic success beyond the trophy case.

"Karen has dedicated 23 years to coaching and teaching at Seton, bringing home multiple awards and mentoring hundreds of young women on achieving success on and off the court."

As the girls varsity basketball coach at Seton, Self has won nearly 600 games and has brought home seven state titles.

The latest was the 2014 Division II Girls State Championship. In 2008, she received her first Spirit of Cotton Award, which recognizes a high school basketball coach who consistently demonstrates the best qualities of a coach, educator, mentor and community leader.

Self attended Arizona State University where she was a basketball all-star. She also teaches algebra and economics at Seton.



A memorable 75th

ASU Class of '63 graduate Ron Pies commemorated his 75th birthday by throwing out the first pitch at the spring training game between the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and the San Francisco Giants. Wearing Angel jersey #75, the pitch was caught by Angel #75, Kyle Kubitz. Kubitz topped off the game, driving in the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning. Pies is a former Cactus League President, chair of the Governor's Baseball Commission and vice chair of the Maricopa County Stadium Advisory Committee. He was also instrumental in bringing the then-California Angels to Tempe for spring training.

Chandler seeks Hall of Fame nominees

Chandler celebrates the athletic accomplishments and sports history of the community each year with the induction of worthy individuals and teams into the Chandler Sports Hall of Fame. Athletes, coaches, school administrators and teams that have brought state-wide and national recognition to the city are nominated by the public and chosen by a select committee whose members have a genuine interest in the history of athletics in Chandler.

The public nomination period is currently open through April 10, and forms are available online at www.chandleraz.gov/museum or at the Chandler Museum, 300 S. Chandler Village Drive, southwest of Chandler Fashion Center.

After the nomination period ends on April 10, the selection committee will review the submissions and vote. The next round of honorees will be recognized during the 12th Annual Chandler Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Luncheon on Feb. 13.

To be selected for the local Hall of Fame, a nominee must be five years removed from high school graduation and have excelled in a chosen employment field during those five years. Nominees must also have either attended or coached at a public or private high school in Chandler, or claimed Chandler as their hometown, during the period of their athletic achievements.

Inductees are honored for their achievements at the highest levels of their sport, whether at the local, state, national, collegiate, Olympic or professional level.

Information: 480-782-2717.

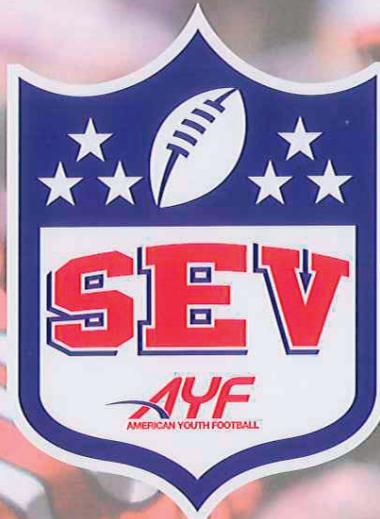
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Registration for Fall 2015 Tackle Football and Cheer is also now open!

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Diversions with M.V. Moorhead

'Furious Seven'

My mother always hated car chase movies. She used to take me to the live-action Disney comedies of the early '70s irritably, under protest, because they routinely ended with a wacky car chase.

A few years later, she was appalled when one of my nephews became an avid fan of *The Dukes of Hazzard*, and insisted on getting in the car through the open window.

Over the years I've enjoyed many a movie car chase, but at some deep psychological level I've always felt a little guilt over this, knowing that my Mom wouldn't approve.

That feeling was magnified while I watched this seventh entry in the *Fast and the Furious* series.

The accident that killed star Paul Walker in 2013 wasn't part of the film's production (nor was Walker driving).

But it was speed-related, and it's hard to overcome the sense that movies like this franchise—the implicit message of which is that it's impossible to be seriously injured in a car crash—may contribute to mishaps like this.

In a showpiece scene of *Furious 7* [spoiler alert!], Vin Diesel and Walker drive a high-performance car out of the upper-floor window of a high-rise building.

They sail through the air into the windows of the neighboring high-rise, then across that building and out the far side, through the air again into a third high-rise.

When Diesel begins barreling toward the windows, Walker yells "Cars can't fly! Cars can't fly!" but there's no sign that director James Wan agrees. This and other scenes inevitably have a macabre extra resonance.

The story has Diesel's street racing gang turned government agents stalked by vengeful Brit special forces rogue Jason Statham.

Djimon Hounsou is another heavy, Dwayne Johnson is the lead G-man, Michelle Rodriguez is back with her beguiling Snoopy-vulture scowl, and Kurt Russell saunters in for a few entertaining scenes as a shifty covert ops honcho.

All of the actors, starting with always-endearing Diesel, are agreeable, and the dialogue is so self-consciously macho and the action so cartoonishly

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overscaled that it's hard to resist the idea that the whole thing is a put-on, and start enjoying the silliness.

But every time a vehicle plummeted off a cliff in the Caucasus only to have its passengers emerge looking better than I do after a good night's sleep, every time somebody leapt from one vehicle to another with barely a bruise, every time a car jumped from a parking garage and delivered a duffel bag to helicopter in flight, some party-pooper part of me couldn't help but think, this sort of vehicular fantasy, seductive even for a non-gearhead like me, isn't harmless.

The mindset it creates may have contributed to one of this movie's own stars.

The movie is overlong, like many action blockbusters of recent years, but I can't claim that I wasn't diverted by some of *Furious 7*'s preposterous excesses.

But it still may qualify as one of the stupider and more irresponsible movies I've ever seen, and when it made me smile, I thought I could sense my Mom scowling at me.

Tempe Center for Arts hosts healthcare job fair

Tempe Center for the Arts will be the host site for a healthcare job fair from noon to 2 p.m. Monday, April 13.

The event is being held in response from statistics released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which say that healthcare support jobs will see the biggest growth, 28.1 percent, through 2022.

The next largest group, with 21.5 percent growth projected, includes healthcare practitioners and technical occupations

"Some of these are considered 'replacement jobs' which involve replacing older employees who are leaving the workforce," said Ryan Naylor, founder of LocalWork.com. "The other positions are newly created to handle increased demand from an aging population and more people who are now insured under the Affordable Care Act."

—JOBS, Page 27

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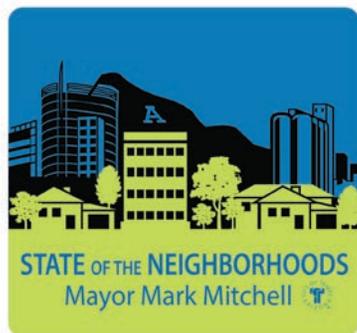
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City of Tempe Page



2015 State of the Neighborhoods Awards and Workshops



Join fellow residents at the 2015 State of the Neighborhoods Awards and Workshops on Saturday, April 18, at the Tempe History Museum, 809 E. Southern Avenue. This year's event will feature Mayor Mark Mitchell's

State of the Neighborhoods address. His speech will be followed by awards honoring residents who are building community and character.

The schedule includes registration and a light breakfast from 8 to 8:30 a.m., followed by the State of the Neighborhoods address and Neighborhood Awards presentation by the Mayor and Councilmembers from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Attendees are encouraged to stay for one of four concurrent "Sustaining Momentum" themed workshops from 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.:

• **Nourish Yourself and Your Neighborhood** – Pallet gardens are perfect for home gardens, especially when space

may be limited. Tempe resident and Desert Mission Food Bank Representative, Anne Costa, will show how to construct a horizontal or vertical pallet garden. Learn everything you need to get started, including tips on choosing the right pallet, attaching a drip system and selecting plants.

• **Nurture Your Neighborhood** – Join neighborhood association and homeowners association representatives for a panel discussion on innovative ways to stay connected. From potlucks to parades, cleanups to adopt-a-family programs, there will be plenty of ideas to help neighbors connect.

• **Apache Character Area Kickoff OR Central City Character Area Kickoff** – Ratified by voters through the General Plan in May 2014, Tempe's vision for itself in the year 2040 is one of even greater livability.

That means transportation, aesthetics, community amenities and quality of life all working in concert to attract and retain residents and businesses. If you live in the Apache Boulevard or central Tempe areas, join us as we kick off your Character Area Planning processes.

Identify the local places, spaces and activities that make your area unique, as well as opportunities for improvement. These will be the first of three public

workshops to create the future of these character areas. For more information, visit www.tempe.gov/characterareas

Immediately following the workshops, gourmet food trucks will be outside offering enticing lunch options.

Stay awhile and enjoy the community neighborhood picnic.

Invite a neighbor, friend or co-worker and reserve your spot.

Register by April 14 at www.tempe.gov/neighborhoodworkshop, by phone at 480-350-8234 or email at neighborhoods@tempe.gov.

Event sponsors include title sponsor SRP, HOA Document Archiving, Starbucks and Whole Foods.

Tempe explores Orbit expansion with public meetings this month

Tempe is looking to expand its popular Orbit neighborhood circulator service by possibly adding a new route – Saturn – to serve neighborhoods south of the US 60.

Residents who live between US 60 and Elliot Road are encouraged to attend one of two public meetings to discuss the possible new Orbit route: April 29 at 6 p.m. or May 2 at 9

a.m. Both meetings will be held at Marcos de Niza High School, 6000 S. Lakeshore Drive, and will cover the same information.

In 2014, the Tempe City Council authorized staff to explore adding a new Orbit route between US 60 and Elliot Road, from the city's eastern border with Mesa to the western side where Tempe meets Guadalupe and Phoenix.

The first phase of public involvement began in January, with more than 100 residents participating in public meetings and providing feedback online about points of interest, hours and days of operation.

The April 29 and May 2 meetings will include draft route(s) based on input received from residents in January.

Neighborhood circulator service was part of the Tempe Transit Tax

approved by voters in 1996, with the five existing routes – Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars and Jupiter – implemented between 2007 and 2008.

The existing routes operate seven days a week, connecting neighborhoods north of US 60 with local destinations, Valley Metro bus routes and light rail.

Tempe began work to expand the Orbit system in 2007, but had to put plans on hold due to the economic downturn and associated budget impacts.

The city renewed those efforts last spring, studying the feasibility of a new route, including estimating costs and gauging public interest through a telephone survey of residents in the area.

The survey indicated general support for a new route.



The city has \$1.2 million in Tempe Transit Tax funds available annually to operate a new route.

If approved and implemented, the Saturn route would provide connections to neighborhood destinations within the planning area, as well as several Valley Metro bus routes that travel to destinations like downtown Tempe, ASU, Tempe Marketplace, light rail and destinations throughout the Valley.

For more information, visit www.tempe.gov/orbit.

Dining Out: La Casa de Juana Ambiance, hospitality and, not to be overlooked, great Mexican food

By M.V. Moorhead
Photo by Billy Hardiman

Two proud, beautiful señoritas in sombreros and colorful skirts are waiting to greet you as you walk into La Casa de Juana. I suppose it's possible, of course, that they're *señoras*, however they're both made of metal so it's difficult to ask them.

In a bow to the dictates of my masculine upbringing, though, I instinctively think of them as señoritas.

Beyond those two steely eyed but welcoming greeters lies a dining room bursting with the primary colors of Mexico. Surreal faces gaze down from the walls, while the chairbacks are adorned with dramatic and romantic south-of-the-border scenes—for instance, three young ladies with bandoliers aiming rifles over the tops of a cactus.

Who or what are they defending? Your imagination can fill in the backstory while you eat. "They come directly from Guadalajara," says

— JUANA, Page 24



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Juana

From Page 23

Eduardo Chavez, owner of La Casa de Juana, of the chairs.

“They hand paint everything down there. That was my intention. When you go to Mexico, you see the color and the art.”

Chavez wants to give visitors the same feeling when they walk into his new Tempe eatery, in the strip mall on the southeast corner of Elliot and McClintock.

If La Casa de Juana is a fiesta for the eyes, it is no less so for the ears. Rousing Latin music fills the restaurant; I lunched the other day to the invigorating beat of a Spanish version of “Blame it on the Bossa Nova.” A two-man mariachi group holds forth on weekends.

Like the décor and the music, Chavez is also an import from Mexico.

“I was born in the state of Chihuahua, but my family moved to Rocky Point when I was little,” he explains. “I’ve been in Arizona for years, though. I graduated from ASU.”

Now at home on either side of the border, having managed a hotel in Rocky Point and opened a restaurant there, he also has spent summers in southern Mexico. And it’s this firsthand experience of our neighbor to the south that he’s infused into La Casa de Juana’s atmosphere.

Of course, atmosphere would mean little if the food wasn’t good. Which is where, in concert with the charm of the décor, La Casa de Juana really shines.

La Casa’s colorful environment and festive surroundings might be called the perfect enhancement for what seems to be some of the best Mexican cuisine ever, viewed from either side of our two countries’ shared border.

“I’m not a chef, but I love the kitchen,” says Chavez, and this love is easy to taste in his restaurant’s offerings.

The highly affordable lunch specials alone could keep you coming back— the cheese enchiladas (Mondays) are exceptional, and the chile relleno (Fridays) is about as good a version of that dish as I’ve ever enjoyed.

The tamales (Tuesdays) are a hearty wonder, but be forewarned, they may leave you badly wanting a siesta. On the other hand, the Baja mango shrimp ceviche (Sundays) is terrific for a lighter option.

While these aforementioned specials come with reduced pricing, they’re actually on the menu every day of the week at only a few pesos more than their regular, non-special-day affordability.

Chavez would eventually like to take Casa de Juana’s menu even farther.

“There are so many foods in southern and central Mexico that people don’t know,” he says. “But it’s hard to market.

“What I intend to do is offer foods from a particular state, say Sonora, and give people a chance to experience something they may never have tried before. I want us to have that difference from the chains, and keep everybody coming back.”

La Casa de Juana is at 1805 E. Elliot Road, Tempe (southeast corner of Elliot & McClintock). Lunch specials starting at \$5.99. Happy hour 2-6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Phone: 480-820-0837.



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Keeping good company:
A look at some of our favorite
neighborhood enterprises

TV series gives a shot in the arm to aspiring decorator's career

By Deborah Hilcove

In 2006, Christina Ray watched HGTV's brand-new reality show, Design Star. A stay-at-home mom in Atlanta, Ga., she had a knack for design and had helped a friend decorate her house. Another friend liked the results and wanted her house updated—then another and another—until Ray had a fledgling design business.

During the summer, HGTV advertised for applicants who wished to appear on the second season. Although she had no formal design training,

Ray decided to submit her portfolio, competing with more than a thousand applicants from throughout the country. Eventually, the pool was narrowed to 30 possibilities, then 11 were chosen.

The self-taught designer was told to pack her bags for Las Vegas where the filming would take approximately six weeks. "We lived in a penthouse," she said. "With only two bathrooms. You can imagine the drama."

The designers were challenged with designing a penthouse, a kitchen—and a wedding.

Ray's work won praise from the judges and she survived the midpoint of the show. She says she was "honored and blessed," and the experience was unforgettable. She mentions the friendships and her surprise at how quickly the cast members bonded.

When the series aired, Ray's career mushroomed. Overnight, she was flooded with requests for design consultations, and she realized she had to put together a business plan. Preferring to oversee projects herself, she took on residential and commercial projects, including new builds and renovations, clubhouses and medical offices.

Before long, she found herself working nonstop,

— DESIGNER , Page 26



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Designer Christina Ray found great reception for her talents after appearing on the HGTV cable TV show Design Star.
— Photo Billy Hardiman/Wrangler News

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Designer

From Page 24

and her “downtime” was devoted to returning business-related phone calls and e-mails, scanning design magazines, hunting down and sourcing materials for her multiple projects, and supervising the progress of the four contractors she employed.

Last year, her husband was offered a position in Arizona, and the Rays moved to Ahwatukee. She closed her Atlanta design studio, took some time off and focused on her family. She painted and renovated their new house, creating a comfortable and inviting home in the foothills. Together with several family members, she has been exploring the Valley’s design sources, becoming familiar with Arizona lifestyles.

Recently she began working for John G. Bebbling, owner of Arizona Flooring and Interiors in Tempe, where she consults with clients about home renovations.

Soon, however, her job will include colorizing for the Meritage Homes development in Scottsdale, where she will help homeowners select flooring, paint colors, countertops and cabinetry, creating a cohesive and attractive home environment.

“There’s so much tan and beige out here,” she said. “I’d like to brighten the design palette, introduce more grays, cream and white. Then color,” motioning to her office with an outstretched arm.

“It used to be beige with dark wood, and I lightened it up.” Her office is now painted a soft gray with white trim. She has accented it with glossy white floor-length drapes, a bright yellow, black-and-white modern painting, and a white orchid.

“And sparkle. I love sparkle,” she adds, smiling and pointing to a pair of hanging, mirrored lanterns.

Commenting on the change from her own free-wheeling design studio to more focused work, she says:

“I love it. I have time with my family. And I love creating spaces for other families to enjoy, places where they can build their own special memories.”

She continues, “Arizona Flooring and Interiors is like a family, too. It’s such a good place to work. The other day, John [Bebbling] asked us about our plans for the afternoon. Can you imagine? He took all of us to a baseball game.”

It seems John Bebbling has hit a home run with his new Design Star hire.

Jobs

From Page 21

Among support jobs predicted for growth are home health aides, psychiatric aides, nursing assistants, orderlies, pharmacy aides, phlebotomists and medical-equipment preparers.

Among practitioners and those in technical occupations, the growth projection includes doctors, nurses and dentists; physical, occupational, radiation, recreational, speech and respiratory therapists; veterinarians and vet technicians; medical records and health-information technicians; genetic counselors; athletic trainers; and occupational health and safety specialists

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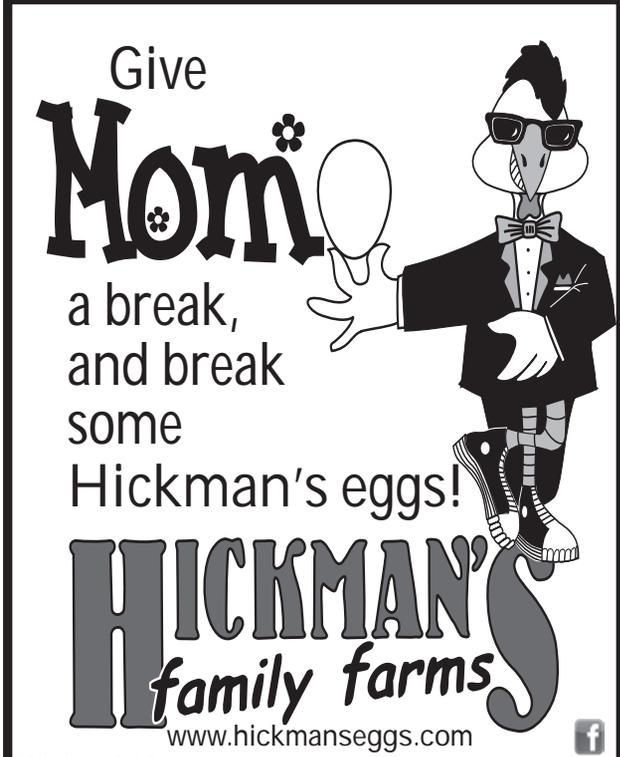
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The Last Word

By Nora Ellen

Every year, as part of “Disability Awareness Month” in March, Chandler’s mayor and council are honored to celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities and those who support them.

The recipients of the accompanying Disability Awareness Recognition Awards are invited to a council meeting where they are recognized in public. I join the members of the mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities in congratulating this year’s winners.

I am proud of each one of you.

The “Student of the Year” award was granted to Sydney Hinkel. Sydney is an eighth-grade student who was nominated by one of her teachers. Her nomination refers to her as an engaged and hard-working student who does not allow any limitation to negatively affect her life.

Sydney is known for her love of acting and singing, and she was recently involved in a school play. Her drama teacher stated, “Sydney was one of my best actors, as she was always on task, listened carefully to every direction and even became a leader for the other actors to look up to. I have no doubt she will soar to greater heights as an adult.” Congratulations, Sydney.

The “Educator of the Year” award went to Andrew Valuikas. Andrew is recognized for his contributions to improve the lives of students and individuals with disabilities throughout the community. He volunteers countless hours facilitating activities that promote inclusion on his school campus. He has been instrumental in creating a culture of acceptance and respect, and he is greatly admired.

The members of the committee have chosen Jesus Perez as the “Volunteer of the Year.” Jesus volunteers in a self-contained classroom for students with autism. This year, he has demonstrated many positive traits as a peer helper.

He has volunteered many hours to help with fundraisers for the special education program and is taking initiatives to recruit more volunteers. In addition, Jesus is helping to build a bridge between general education and special education. He is a great role model to his peers and an inspiration to all who get to know him.

Finally, the “Employer of the Year” award was given to the Chandler Police Department for the opportunity given to Steve Hunter. For more than 13 years, Steve has been able to increase his socialization skills through new friendships, and increased his confidence by accomplishing administrative duties. The Police Department has given Steve the chance to have meaningful employment by allowing him to learn and grow.

Created 25 years ago, the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities plays an important role as a liaison between individuals with disabilities in the community and/or those who serve them and the City Council. It advises the City Council on policies and regulations relating to accessibility, education and employment.

Moreover, the Committee administers a scholarship and stipend program for qualified residents and supports leisure activities and events for individuals with physical, mental, emotional or social disabilities through the city’s Therapeutic Recreation Program. The annual fundraiser for the scholarship program is a golf challenge that is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 13. Sponsors and donations for raffle prizes are always welcome.

To learn more about this event and the work of the committee, visit www.chandleraz.gov/therapeutic or call Collette Prather at 480-782-2709.

All of this year’s award recipients, along with the members of the Committee, can take great pride in all they have done for the city of Chandler.

Nora Ellen is a member of the Chandler City Council.

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