

ARCADIA NEWS



VOL. 33 NO. 5

ARCADIA • BILTMORE • CAMELBACK CORRIDOR

AUGUST 2025



2025 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Arcadia area high school football teams are primed for a thrilling season full of growth and playoff goals.

PAGE 34

WELCOME TO THE BLUE ZONE

Hopi is now a Blue Zones approved school – championing healthy habits that help kids in and out of the classroom.

PAGE 5

WHATCHA COOKIN'?

Chef Vincent Guerithault teaches summer classes on the art of French cooking with a southwestern twist.

PAGE 20

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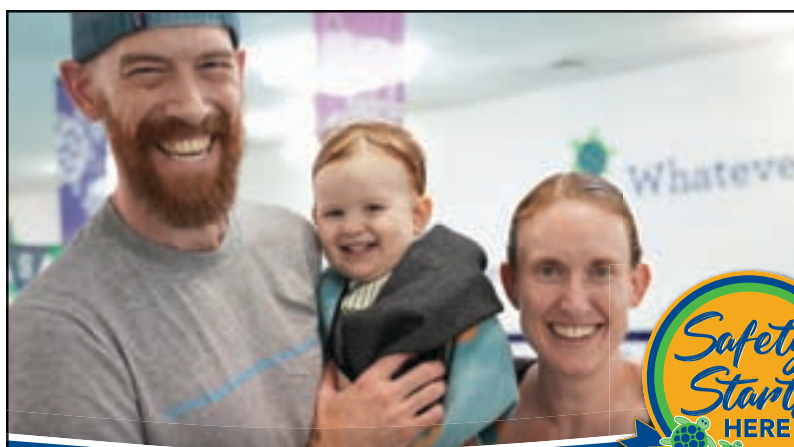
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Dr. Emily James is bringing legacy to Hopi Elementary as its new assistant principal, ready to lead with heart and build relationships with both staff and families.



Senior runningback Isa Ady reaches for a Hamilton High flag during last year's season opener in September.

PHOTO: PATTY KENNEDY



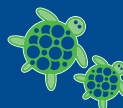
BUILDING A

Safer Community-

1 SWIM LESSON AT A TIME

AGES 8 WEEKS TO 12 YEARS SMALL GROUP CLASSES INDOOR POOL

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EDITOR'S NOTE

One of my all-time favorite opening movie scenes – and I know I am not alone in this – is that of *Clueless*, when Cher is getting ready for school and utilizes a computer program to put together an outfit from her moving clothesline of a closet. ICONIC, and every single girl in the early 90s dreamed of having exactly that in her house. What's crazy is that this technology probably exists (also, if you already have this program in your closet, please let me come check it out)!

All this to say back to school days are here, and students are ready to hit the halls with new outfits, shoes and school supplies to tackle a brand-new year.

Speaking of tackle, our August edition includes the annual high school football preview, and it's clear our teams are preparing for big goals on and off the field. Arcadia High welcomed new head coach BJ Pasquel as the Titans push for a fourth straight playoff run.

Brophy, led by Coach Jason Jewell, is reloading after a strong playoff showing, aiming for Arizona's elite open division.

Xavier Prep's flag football team, under new coach Matthew Reum, combines experienced players and rising stars in a fast-paced, high-communication game. Meanwhile, Veritas Prep enters the season stronger than ever, driven by record turnout, senior leadership, and a no-excuses mentality. The Titans, Broncos, Gators and Falcons are fired up and we're all ready to cheer them on from the sidelines.

There are 11 days left to submit photos for our Summer Vacation Photo Spread. Send photos to editor@arcadianews.com for a chance to be in the September issue. Your photo might be on the cover!

I hope you have the best August, and thank you for reading the Arcadia News,

Mallory

– Mallory Gleich



UPCOMING THEMES:

SEPTEMBER

Autumn

OCTOBER

Fall Sports

NOVEMBER

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WANTED: SUMMER VACATION PHOTOS

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or instagram: [@arcadianews](https://www.instagram.com/arcadianews)

Your photo may be featured on the cover!



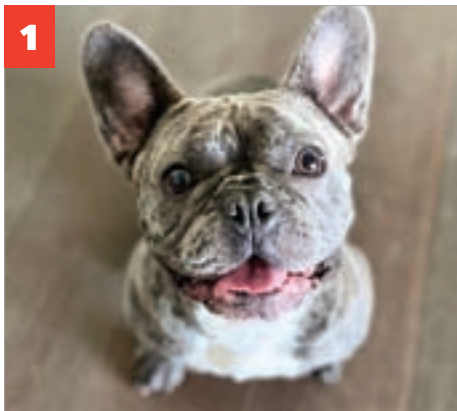
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Send your photos to editor@arcadianews.com
Be sure to let us know the names of the family or people
in the photo, where you went and what you did!

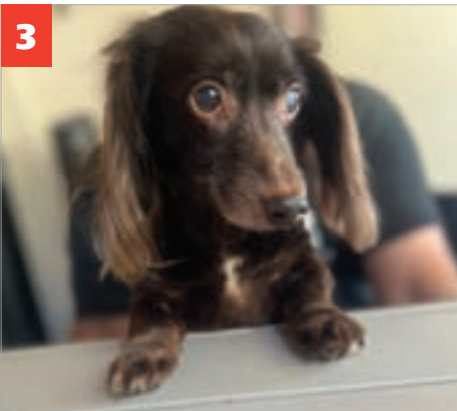
DEADLINE: MONDAY, AUGUST 11

ARCADIA'S PETS

1



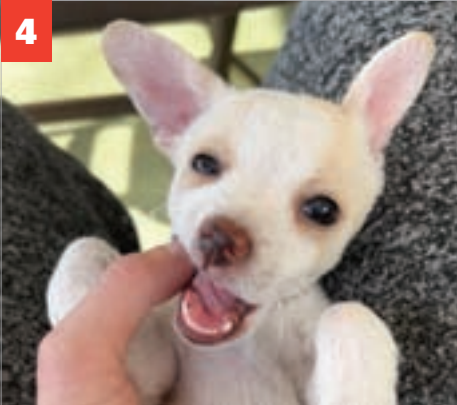
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2



4



1. Gio is the 5-year-old, four legged king of the house! With a personality bigger than his ears, Gio is part comedian, part cuddle bug, and 100 percent in charge. He may be stingy with his kisses, but he makes up for it with snuggles and the occasional side-eye. Food is his love language and he is very motivated when treats are on the line. Whether he's making us laugh with his signature snorts and dramatic sighs, or putting on a show with his antics, Gio brings joy, laughter, and just the right amount of sass to every day. He's not just a dog. He's a vibe.

– Gianna and Jonathan N.

2. Murphy is a three-year-old white golden retriever who loves his family and anybody else he meets. He's most

likely to be seen with his toy from the AZ Children's Business Fair or laying down on walks around the neighborhood whenever someone else walks by, hoping they will stop and pet him!

– C. Liakos

3. Meech – also known as Big Meech or Meecher Creature – is a 13-year-old dachshund who is the best big brother to six-month-old **4. Dixie**, a Chihuahua mini-poodle mix. Dixie was rescued from a bad home situation on Christmas Day and was the best present ever. She loves to zoom around anywhere she can – and Meech? He doesn't like to run at all!

– Melissa L.

Would you like to share your pet? Send a photo and a description (50 words max) of your pet to editor@arcadianews.com or text it to 602.840.6379. Include your pet's name and age, along with any fun facts about them you'd like to share. All animals are welcome!



Advocating for healthy habits earns Hopi national recognition

By Mark Hays

Hopi Elementary has become the latest SUSD campus to be recognized as a Blue Zones Approved School, joining Echo Canyon in embracing this community-led initiative designed to help students live healthier, happier lives.

Blue Zones Project® is a well-being improvement movement inspired by *National Geographic* Fellow Dan Buettner's research on the world's longest-lived communities. The project collaborates with cities, schools, workplaces, and other organizations to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to the environment, policies, and social networks.

Scottsdale was recently named Arizona's first Blue Zones Certified Community, thanks to support from HonorHealth, The Cigna Group, and Goodwill of Central and Northern Arizona.

"We learned about The Blue Zone Project through the City of Scottsdale initiative and were inspired and motivated to see the onboarding of other SUSD schools," Principal Anne Plenkovich said. "It was easy to see a natural alignment with our existing commitment to whole-child development, and we knew that adopting these principles would further empower our students in their day-to-day decision-making."

According to Plenkovich, becoming a Blue Zones school required a comprehensive assessment aligned with the project's core principles, such as healthy eating, physical activity, social connection, purpose, and stress reduction.

"We then had the opportunity to articulate our strengths and growth areas through artifacts and evidence of current school-wide commitments in our aim to encourage and

foster healthy habits into the daily procedures, policies, and Hopi ways," she said. "We were so proud to learn how much our current practices were already nested within Blue Zone values."

Kris Bio, organization and well-being coordinator for Blue Zones Project Scottsdale, said Hopi Elementary stood out during the approval process.

"Many of their best practices were already in place, showcasing their long-standing commitment to student well-being, while others were enhanced or aligned with Blue Zones principles along the way," Bio said.

Hopi's highlights include eliminating unhealthy foods from rewards and fundraisers, weaving nutrition into daily lesson plans through a school-wide gardening program, and revamping their cafeteria with student-created posters and a fruit and veggie bar.

Daily music mindful minutes, mindful meet-ups, and student-led well-being events such as Walk to School Day – plus their ongoing work with the Blue Watermelon Project – reinforce the commitment to healthy living.

"We can see possibilities for expanding our integration efforts, from classroom activities to school-wide events, enrolling more community partnerships, creating opportunities for student-led initiatives, and further spotlighting this acknowledgement as part of our brand," Plenkovich said.

The focus on healthy living will extend beyond the walls of the school.

"We are excited to identify ways we can partner with our parents, organizations, and the community to encourage and extend healthy and mindful practices," she said. "We

"We knew that adopting these principles would empower our students in their decision-making."



Fifth graders Ryder Wells and Sky Tsingine enjoy a moment with therapy dogs Axel and Roger at Hopi Elementary.

will also be looking for ways to continuously evaluate and adapt our efforts to ensure a lasting impact for happy and healthy living."

Hopi offers a variety of extracurriculars, including Girls on the Run, Sports Club, Jump Roping, and the annual Hopi Hullabaloo, all of which encourage students to stay active and socially engaged. The school community is excited to build on the success of the designation in the coming year.

bluezonesprojectscottsdale.com



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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

BRIEFS

Arizona Chef's Week, a new celebration of local chefs, creativity, and bold flavors, takes place August 1-10 at eateries like Beckett's Table, Hearth '61, Saint Urban and more. Independently owned restaurants across Phoenix will offer exclusive, three-course menus – priced at \$55 or \$66 per person – crafted just for the event. These one-of-a-kind dishes, drinks, and experiences won't appear on regular menus, making it the perfect opportunity to support Arizona's culinary scene.

arizonachefsw.com

Rise and Dream will host its annual **Back to School Fresh Start Event**, happening August 2 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Geneva Epps Mosley Middle School (1025 S. Beck Ave., Tempe). This event will provide school supplies, haircuts, clothing, hygiene products, meals, health screenings, wellness resources, camps, and appearances from NFL, NBA, and MLB alumni. The nonprofit is seeking partners, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and donations – interested parties can reach out via the website.

riseanddreamfoundation.com

Scottsdale Mini Dental Implants launched its inaugural **Help a Hero Smile** campaign, an initiative to honor U.S. military veterans with the gift of a life-changing smile makeover. One veteran will be selected to receive a full mini dental implant transformation free of charge. Nominations are open through August 31, and the public is invited to submit stories of veterans who have served and could benefit from renewed confidence and oral health.

helpaherosmile.com

Mark your calendars: **Free Arts and Dance Theater West** are inviting the public to a reception and performance of Peter Pan, taking place September 14 at Scottsdale Center for the Arts (7380 E. 2nd St.) at 2 p.m. This Professional Artist Series showcases

kids aged 8-18 years old, from foster care group homes, that studied with DTW for four weeks. Children learned movement, team building, rhythm and choreography. Guests can view exhibits at the center, enjoy the performance and participate in an art activity after the show. Attendance is free, registration is required.

freeartsaz.org

Hospice of the Valley's Dementia Care and Education Campus debuted Helping Hands, a volunteer group designed for people living with dementia and their caregivers. On August 1 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. (and the first Friday of each month going forward), the group will partake in crafts and activities geared toward the interests and abilities of the participants. One example is making and painting bookmarks for the library. This event is free.

dementiacampus.org



Desert Financial Credit Union is asking K-12 teachers to apply for its sixth annual **Adopt-A-Teacher Program**. More than 30 kindergarten-12th grade teachers will receive between \$500 and \$1,500 in school supplies. In total, the credit union will award \$45,000. Applications are open until August 8, with the winning educators awarded on September 2.

desertfinancial.com/adoptateacher

The **100 Club of Arizona** is seeking a singer to perform the National Anthem at this year's 9/11 Tower Challenge, taking place September 6 at 7 a.m. at Desert Diamond Arena. Singers interested in entering the contest can submit a video or link of themselves performing the National Anthem to marisha@100club.org. The winner will be announced on August 15.

100club.org

EVENTS

FRIDAY 8/1

A Taste of Italy

6 p.m. at Jamie's Bottle Shop, 7033 E. Main St., Scottsdale. Join Jamie's Bottle Shop – a boutique from the owner of Wrigley Mansion that offers 700 labels from across the world – for its Taste of Italy class, an expert-led journey through Italy's wine regions. Students will receive a beverage flight, charcuterie plate, and class materials. Enjoy some vino and learn something new. Tickets are \$75.

jamiesbottleshop.com

SATURDAY 8/2

Aerial Sound Bath

11 a.m. at Mountain Shadows Resort, 5445 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley. Unwind, elevate, and realign with an aerial stretch class and a meditative sound bath led by instructor Charley Hernandez. The experience begins with stretches in a silk hammock, designed to lengthen the body, release tension, and increase mobility while waves from crystal bowls, chimes, and other healing frequencies wash over you. Tickets are \$35.

mountainshadows.com

Slide the Rails

9 a.m.-1 p.m. at McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park, 7301 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale. One last hurrah before school starts takes place at the railroad park this weekend. Guests will find water slides, obstacle courses, a giant bubble foam pit, and access to the train and carousel. There will also be food and beverage options – Hartley's General Store has ice cream covered, while PoffCakes AZ and Kona Ice will be on-site serving up sweet treats. Tickets are \$10 per person.

therailroadpark.com

SUNDAY 8/3

Tai Chi & Qigong Experience

8 a.m. at the Japanese Friendship Garden, 1125 N. 3rd Ave., Phoenix. Experience the healing arts of Tai Chi and Qigong in the serene setting of the Japanese Friendship Garden. Guided by instructor Ping Wei, this workshop blends the flowing movements of Tai Chi with the energy-balancing practice of Hunyuan Qigong to enhance balance, strength, and inner harmony. Tickets are \$20.

japanesefriendshipgarden.org

WEDNESDAY 8/6

South African Passport Wine Dinner

6 p.m. at Wrigley Mansion, 2501 E. Telawa Trail, Phoenix. Take a culinary journey to South Africa's Western Cape with Wrigley Mansion. The venue will welcome Graysen Sherrer of Cape

Classics for an evening of vino, food, and storytelling. Guests are treated to a multi-course dinner paired with South African varietals, while Graysen shares insights into the region's heritage. Reservations are required; tickets are \$125.

wrigleymansion.com

Midweek Miles

6:30 p.m. at Biltmore Fashion Park, 2502 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. Join the Phoenix Run Club for a free community run that welcomes all ages and experience levels. Attendees will run through Biltmore Fashion Park – make sure to bring plenty of water and good shoes. For those interested in more, the club also offers a paid membership with benefits like discounts, training opportunities, and team events.

reddevelopment.com

Paint at the Park

5 p.m. at Chase Field, 401 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix. Where sports and art collide. Patrons will get a seat in the Banner Health centerfield patio, a hot dog dinner, and instruction/materials to create a Diamondbacks-themed sugar skull painting. The activity will take place before the game begins at 6:40 p.m. against the Padres. Tickets start at \$80 per person.

mlb.com/dbacks

SATURDAY 8/9

David Minkin Magic Experience

5 p.m. at the Renaissance Downtown, 100 N. 1st St., Phoenix. Experience the magic of David Minkin, an International Champion of Magic, in a show filled with mind-blowing illusions and storytelling. From objects passing through each other to time travel and mind reading, prepare to be amazed, entertained, and inspired. This show is for ages 8+. Tickets start at \$65 per person.

carnivalofillusion.com

SUNDAY 8/10

Cocktail Camp

1-3 p.m. at Chico Malo, 50 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix. Summer Cocktail Camp is a rotating event series that brings attendees up-close-and-personal with Valley mixologists and bartenders showcasing their craft. Participants will taste up to four cocktails, learn their history and maybe leave with new recipes to add to their roster. Tickets start at \$45, with a portion donated to one-n-ten.

phoenixmag.com

WEDNESDAY 8/13

Dinner and a Movie

5:30 p.m. at Marcellino Ristorante, 7114 E. Stetson Dr., Scottsdale. Guests are invited to Marcellino for a three-course summer special dinner while watching a classic film on the house. Tonight's movie is *Under the Tuscan Sun*: Diane Lane is a

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

recently divorced writer who buys a Tuscan villa, hoping it'll change her outlook on life. Dinner starts at \$50 per person.
marcellinoristorante.com

THURSDAY 8/14

Wine and Watercolor
6 p.m. at Shemer Art Center, 5005 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. Watercolor expert John Erwin is here to teach students all the tips to crafting a beautiful painting – vino included. Guests will learn the basics as well as some advanced techniques while also making new friends in an intimate setting. All supplies will be provided. Registration is \$45 per person.
shemerartcenter.org

FRIDAY 8/15 – SATURDAY 8/16

Sip + Shop Summer Market Series
6 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, at Hotel Valley Ho, 6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale. The Summer Market Series is back with a celebrity chef dinner on August 15, featuring a three-course meal prepared by Chefs Russell LaCasce and Beau MacMillan. Saturday's market will feature samples, live music, vendors, tastings and a voucher for ZuZu. The market is free to attend – but registration is required. Dinner is \$159 per person.
hotelvalleyho.com

SATURDAY 8/16

Sippin' Series
7 p.m. at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7380 E. 2nd St. Sippin' Series explores spirits and cocktail concepts with industry professionals. Each event will develop participants' knowledge on the topic through in-person tastings and discussion. Tonight's bevvie is whiskey, and guests will be able to sample three different kinds from Craftsman Distillers. Tickets start at \$50.
scottsdaleperformingarts.org

Resilient Hearts Symposium
9 a.m. at ASU SkySong Center, 1475 N. Scottsdale Road. Join Free Arts for a day of learning sessions and hands-on art experiences designed for mentors, volunteers, educators, artists, and youth-serving professionals. Attendees will hear from nationally recognized speakers, network, explore trauma-informed practices and more. Tickets are \$159.
freeartsaz.org

SUNDAY 8/17

Melrose Vintage Market
10 a.m. at The Duce, 525 S. Central Ave., Phoenix. This morning's pop-up market is boasting 'A Desert Noir Summer' theme. The event is family-friendly, with over 45 vendors selling their wares: vintage, handmade and upcycled furniture, decor,



David Minkin Magic Expreience at the Renaissance Downtown.

clothing, knick-knacks, handmade jewelry, and arts and crafts. There will be live music, plus brunch and cocktails available for purchase. Admission is \$5.
melrosevintagemarket.com

THURSDAY 8/21

Plumpjack and CADE Wine Dinner
6:30 p.m. at Caesars Republic Scottsdale, 4747 N. Goldwater Blvd. Luna by Giada is the setting for tonight's exclusive five-course dinner featuring premium selections

from Napa Valley's renowned PlumpJack and CADE wineries. Guests will check out Giada's signature Italian cuisine paired with bold, expressive drinks. Tickets are \$195 per person. Reservations required.
lunabygiadascottsdale.com

FRIDAY 8/22

**Better Business Bureau
Industrious Women's Summit**
8 a.m. at Better Business Bureau, 1010



BBB Industrious Women's Summit at Better Business Bureau.

E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix. Women are stepping into leadership roles, but events designed to support and celebrate these trailblazers were limited – until the BBB stepped in. The Industrious Women's Summit keynote speaker for 2025 is Dr. Adelaida Severson, the force behind Bushtex, Inc. Guests will enjoy breakfast and lunch, networking, panels, and a happy hour to close out the day. Tickets start at \$55.
bbb.org



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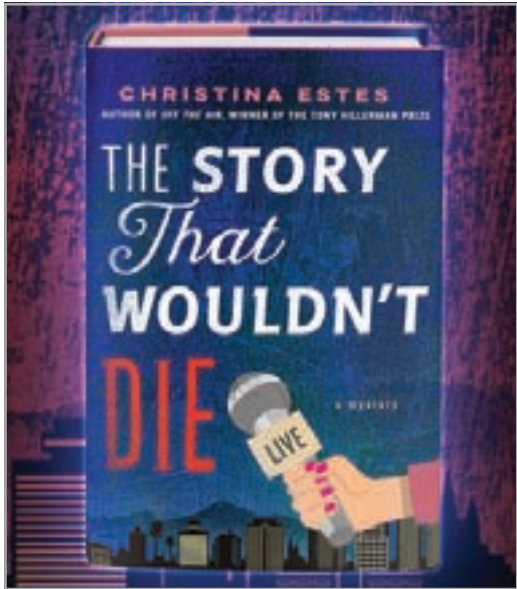
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Tino Ferrulli

WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



Whodunit & Who's Hungry? at Miracle Mile Deli.



Kidz Bop Certified BOP Tour at Arizona Financial Theatre.

SUNDAY 8/24

Whodunit & Who's Hungry?
11 a.m. at Miracle Mile Deli, 4433 N. 16th St., Phoenix. Join author Christina Estes and Olivia Fierro, host of Olivia's Book Club, at Miracle Mile Deli – a setting in Christina's new mystery, *The Story That Wouldn't Die* – for an afternoon of crime, conversation and cuisine. Tickets include lunch, a signed hardcover copy of the book, a Q&A, and the

chance to win prizes. Deadline to RSVP is August 10. Tickets are \$40.
christinaestes.com

Sip & Splash
4 p.m. at Andaz Scottsdale Resort, 6114 N. Scottsdale Road. Hang out poolside for this cocktail making competition. Guests will watch teams from two area bars or restaurants as they go head-to-head in showcasing their skill and passion for mixology by creating a cocktail with Hendrick's Gin. Attendees

can sample and vote for their favorite while enjoying the cool water and a live DJ. This is a 21+ event.
andazscottsdale.com

FRIDAY 8/29

Kidz Bop Certified BOP Tour
7 p.m. at Arizona Financial Theatre, 400 W. Washington St., Phoenix. Kidz Bop is going on tour and will sing the latest hits on the radio – with all the rated R stuff taken

out, of course. Hear songs like espresso, hot to go, dance monkey and more. Guests will also get to see a special performance of Snoop Dogg's DOGGYLAND, a crew of musical pups that sing, dance, and rap. Tickets start at \$53.
kidzbop.com

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The One Feature Arcadia Buyers Are Starting To Ignore

I've worked with plenty of Arcadia buyers who come in saying the same thing:
"We need at least 4,000 square feet."
But more often than not, that number changes once they start walking homes.

One couple I worked with last month was dead set on finding a newer 4,000+ sq.ft. home. We toured a few big ones with plenty of space, but most had awkward layouts: formal rooms they'd never use, extra hallways, and huge upstairs landings that served no purpose.

Then I made a suggestion to see a 3,200 sq.ft. home with a functional layout that included an open kitchen and living room, dedicated flex space, usable storage, split floor plan, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow. Every inch of the house felt utilized and served a purpose.

They bought that house.
The lesson: square footage is a number and not a guarantee of livability.

If you're buying, don't get stuck on a number.
If you're selling, don't assume more square feet means more value.

In a neighborhood like Arcadia where lot sizes, home styles, and renovations vary widely what matters is how the space is laid out and how it supports your lifestyle. The right layout, flow, and design often beats raw square footage and the smartest buyers in today's market are starting to figure that out.

Side note: If you are thinking about remodeling or building a new home, I'm always available to take a look at the plans for you to ensure what you are building will be desirable when you go to sell. Call or text me anytime at 602-561-0445.

Tucker Blalock



THE BROKERY

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OUT OF THE AREA, BUT WORTH THE DRIVE

FRIDAY 8/1

Elton and Billy: A Tribute

7:30 p.m. at Hale Theatre, 50 W. Page Ave., Gilbert. Two of rock and roll's greatest piano men – Elton John and Billy Joel – will be celebrated at this evening's performance. Experience iconic hits presented with the same electrifying energy and passion that made these two artists legends. Hear songs like Rocket Man, Piano Man, Tiny Dancer, My Life, Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me, Movin' Out, and many more. Tickets start at \$47.

haletheatrearizona.com

SATURDAY 8/2 – SUNDAY 8/3

Hot Wheels Glow-N-Fire

12:30 p.m. at the Desert Diamond Arena, 9400 W. Maryland Ave., Glendale. Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live returns. This new experience features the same level of fun and excitement with an added fiery twist. Fan favorite Monster Trucks Mega Wrex, Tiger Shark, HW 5-Alarm, Bone Shaker and more will be on-site, and fans can check out a transforming robot and the high-flyers of Hot Wheels Freestyle Motocross Team. Tickets start at \$30, VIP packages available.

desertdiamondarena.com

SUNDAY 8/3

The Wizard of Oz

Fountain Hills Theater, 11445 N. Saguaro Blvd., Fountain Hills. Move over, Wicked – we're going back to the original. Join Dorothy, Toto, the Tin Man, Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion as they travel along the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, where Dorothy discovers that there's no place like home. This afternoon is the last showing at FHT – make sure you see it before it's gone. Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$18 for kids.

fhtaz.org

MONDAY 8/4

Summer of Sing

7 p.m. at Christ Community Church, 1500 W. Chandler Blvd., Chandler.



The Wizard of Oz in Fountain Hills.



Arizona Cowboy Poets Gathering in Prescott.

Vocal Connection, a women's a cappella barbershop chorus, is hosting the "Summer of Sing" guest series. The group invites new voices to join in at special Monday night rehearsals that feature activities, incentives, and a welcoming atmosphere for singers of all levels. This evening's theme is Mystery Monday; events will also take place on August 11 and 18.

vocalconnection.org

La Montana Dr., Fountain Hills. Bust out those sleuthing skills at this murder mystery theater experience. Set aboard the Pineapple Princess luxury yacht and celebrating a royal wedding, everything is fine until a suspicious death turns guests into suspects. Enjoy a three-course meal, gather clues from outrageous characters (and maybe bribe a few), and solve the mystery to win the grand prize. Tickets are \$75.

fhtaz.org

SATURDAY 8/16

Under the Lights Clinic

6-9 p.m. at Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Kids ages 5-14 can head to the fields for an evening of baseball. Salt River staff will teach fundamentals and different hitting, pitching, fielding and catching drills. Players will be assigned to small groups based on age. Cost is \$85 per person.

saltriverfields.com

TUESDAY 8/19

Family Night

4-7 p.m. at Chompie's, 3212 E. Cactus Road, Phoenix. Summer fun continues to heat up at Chompie's Family Nights series, where guests can check out a variety of free kid-centric activities such as coloring, sticker fun and a "make your own cream cheese" experience. What's more, kids eat free with the purchase of an adult entrée during the event.

chompies.com

FRIDAY 8/22

The Australian Pink Floyd Show

8 p.m. at the Mesa Arts Center, One E. Main St. Fans won't want to miss this epic tribute, played by the members of The Australian Pink Floyd Show, who have been performing together for 50 years...that's right, tonight's the anniversary show, so you know there will be videos, pinpoint lasers and gigantic inflatables to celebrate the only way Pink Floyd fans know how: with gusto! Tickets start at \$75.

mesaartscenter.com

TUESDAY 8/26

Summer Wine Series

6 p.m. at the Arizona Boardwalk, 9500 E. Via de Ventura, Scottsdale. The Museum of Illusions Summer Wine Series is back. Guests will find exclusive access to the museum and its exhibits while sipping wines and snacking on light bites. A live DJ will also be on-site. The Wine Collective Scottsdale is providing libations for tonight's event. Tickets are \$40.

moiscottsdale.com

THURSDAY 8/28 – SATURDAY 8/30

Quilt, Craft and Sewing Festival

10 a.m.-4 p.m. at WestWorld of Scottsdale, 16601 N. Pima Road. Don't miss out on all things sewing, quilting, and crafting at this three-day festival. Guests will find various exhibitors boasting supplies like sewing machines, quilting rulers, yarns and beads. Discover new trends, tips and tricks, and find inspiration with make and-takes, in-person demos and raffle prizes. Tickets are \$12.

quiltcraftsew.com

FRIDAY 8/29

Postmodern Jukebox

8 p.m. at the Mesa Arts Center, One E. Main St. Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox returns to the East Valley this fall with their Life In The Past Lane Tour. Blending modern pop hits with vintage styles like ragtime, swing, big band, and doo wop, this time-traveling musical variety show features stars from PMJ's viral YouTube channel – dress vintage and take a trip back in time. Tickets start at \$40.

mesaartscenter.com

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Bloomin' August

Three area florists who help add some color to the desert

By Sherry Sklar

In Phoenix, August brings peak heat fatigue and wilted gardens. Monsoon rains may or may not arrive, and residents seek ways to alleviate the most stifling of seasons.

For those unable to escape to higher elevations or cooler climes, sanctuary can be found not just in air conditioning, but in the form, fragrance, and color of a bouquet. In Arcadia, the artistry of these floral designers brings something distinct to the table:

elevated artistry and globally sourced accessories, luxury and symbolism through rare blooms, and approachable creativity shaped by an artist's improvisational eye.



CAMELBACK FLOWERSHOP

camelbackflowershop.com

If flowers offer a visual journey, few embody that spirit more than Teresa Wilson. The longtime Arcadia resident and owner of Camelback Flowershop blends her roots with a global mindset, sourcing blooms and accessories from Italy, the Netherlands, Savie Island, and Mexico City, where she often travels with her fiancé.

"We go for the art, inspiration, and food," she shared.

One of Teresa's greatest joys in running her business is traveling with intention. She meets growers and creators firsthand and brings that experience home to enrich her customers' lives.

Teresa trained at an immersive floral atelier in Paris, earning admission after honing her language skills by listening to tapes on her Walkman. She completed three months in the studio and three months apprenticing before returning to Phoenix to launch her business.

Starting small, she hand-delivered arrangements and gradually built Camelback Flowershop into a thriving studio.

"The way I run my business, the way I build relationships, is always based on how I would want to be treated, and how I'd want flowers in my own home," she said. Supporting small growers, such as Whipstone Farms in Paulsen, Arizona, is her passion.

"I did a massive four-year deep dive about 15 years ago because I didn't want to buy flowers that had been sitting in someone else's cooler. I wanted quality, direct from the farm to my customer," she said.

One of Teresa's favorite arrangements combines metal, produce, and flowers, though she ultimately relies on instinct to guide her creative choices.

"Art is a bridge to people. But once you cross that bridge, then what? It's all about giving," she said. "That's the heart of everything we do: give, give, give. And flowers play a special role in that."



FLOWERS BY MEL

flowersbymelarcadia.com

While some arrangements seem almost untouchable in their grandeur, one florist has carved out a creative path from her home studio, offering stylish designs for life's events, big or small.

A dinner party shifted Melissa Heinrichs' career from reading specialist to floral design, and now, Flowers by Mel has become a go-to for holidays, baby showers, celebrations, and everyday arrangements.

"The whole idea began after I tablescaped a friend's birthday dinner," she explained. "His wife, a locally known photographer, tagged me in a couple of photos, and that's where the idea took off."

Soon, people began asking for help with their holiday tables, and the word spread. She began juggling teaching part-time, raising her children, and floral work. Eventually, she leaped into a full-time design career.

"It felt like a now-or-never situation," she said, "and I haven't looked back."

Melissa's goal: to offer design-forward arrangements that were still attainable. She credits working from home for proving that a storefront isn't essential.

"For a long time, I thought I needed one to feel legit," she said. "But my in-home studio gives me, as a small business owner and full-time mom of three, a great quality of life."

Describing her design style as emotional and bespoke, Melissa enjoys mixing high- and low-priced flowers to create arrangements that are both expressive and enduring.

Most orders are "Designer's Choice," giving customers room to guide the look while trusting her instincts. Flowers by Mel also offers hands-on arranging classes that bring people together to create, connect, and celebrate everything from birthdays to baby showers.

Melissa feels deeply rooted in her Arcadian community and in giving back. Her motto, "We do life together," is a testament to the strength of that connection.



NOVAPETAL FLOWER LAB

floweraz.com

If Camelback Flowershop is inspired by art and travel, Novapetal Flower Lab is its emotive, Instagrammable counterpart. The Biltmore-Arcadia studio, led by husband-and-wife team Olga and Anthony Sheppard, is renowned for its luxurious florals and special fondness for the peony.

Starting from a dream and working in a garage studio, Olga and Anthony brought their European and American heritages together to create something new in the market that they felt was missing.

"We started NovaPetal in a single apartment garage – just like Steve Jobs!" Olga said. "From those early days, we were committed to creating floral designs that feel like art: expressive, architectural, and emotionally resonant."

One of the studio's signature techniques is the European spiral, a method of building arrangements that is carried across every design, imparting structure and flow. This method allows them to create lush, naturally balanced arrangements for daily orders and wedding florals to an upcoming subscription service.

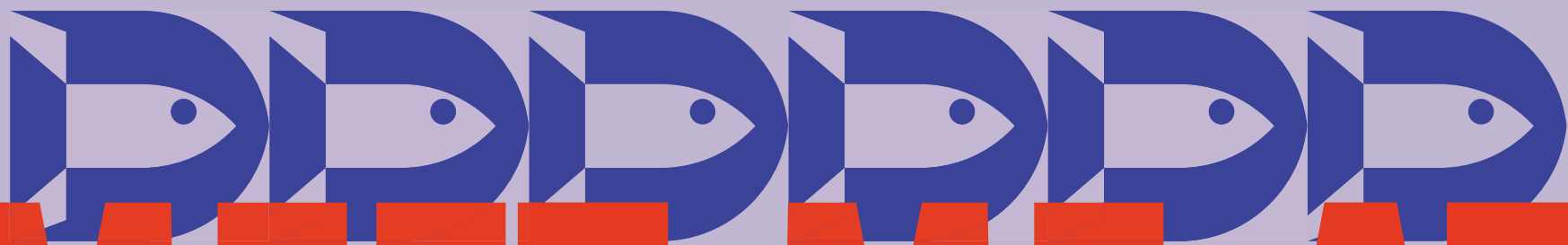
The peony, long a symbol of romance, prosperity, and even bashfulness, is at the heart of Novapetal's aesthetic. These hearty plants, some of which are known to survive for as long as 100 years, have blooms ranging from white and cream to blush pink, rose, and deep red.

Most florists source peonies in the spring and early summer; however, Novapetal's strong relationships enable them to source globally and maintain a consistent supply.

"Offering peonies year-round is part of our commitment to bringing beauty without seasonal limits," Anthony said.

"We've built partnerships with specialty growers across the globe – from Chile to New Zealand, Japan to Holland – depending on the season," Olga added.

The Sheppards' combined strengths and creative team bring European artistry and American efficiency to deliver a truly deluxe experience.



MEET ME AT MINNOW?

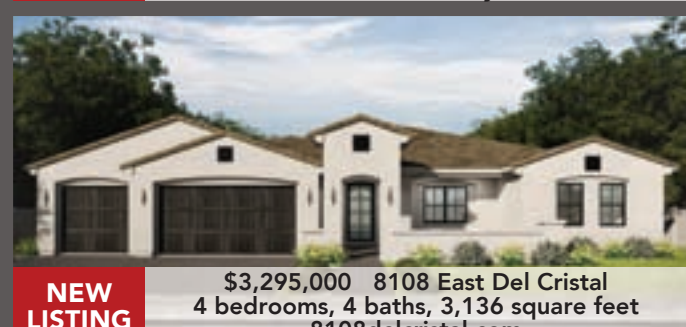
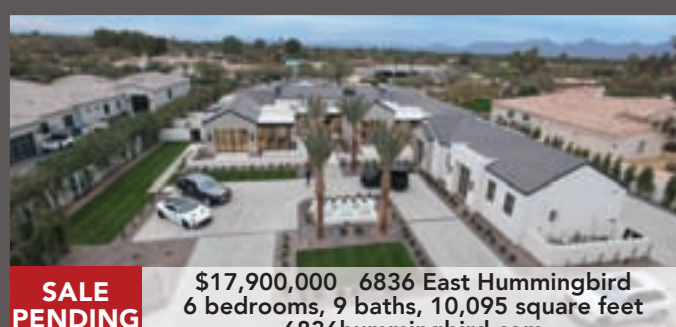
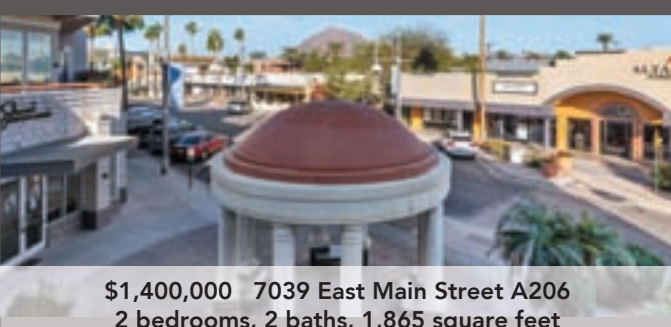
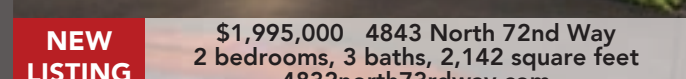
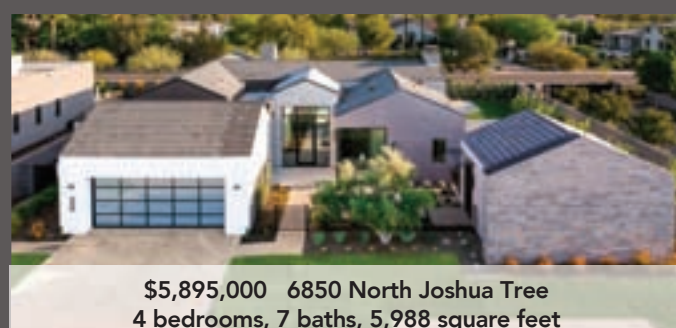
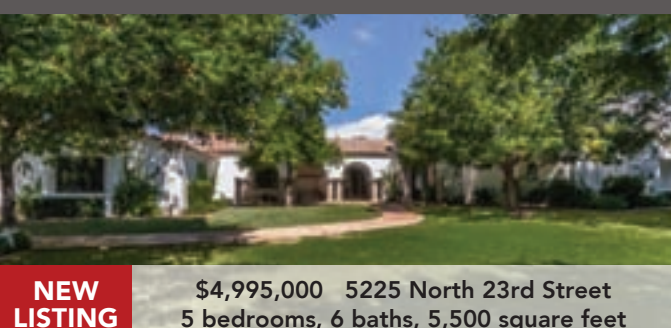
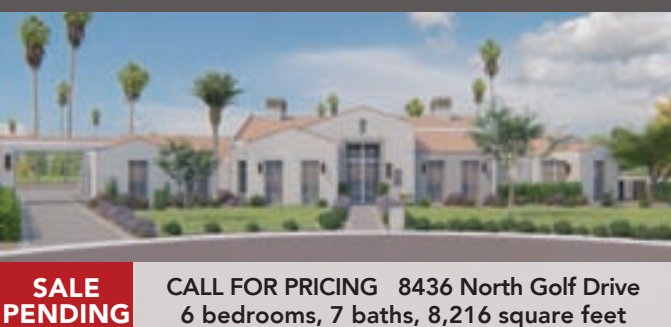
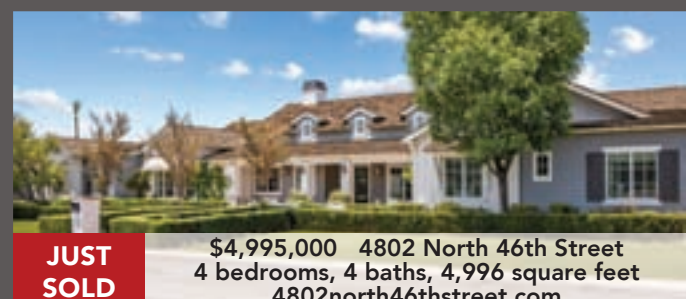
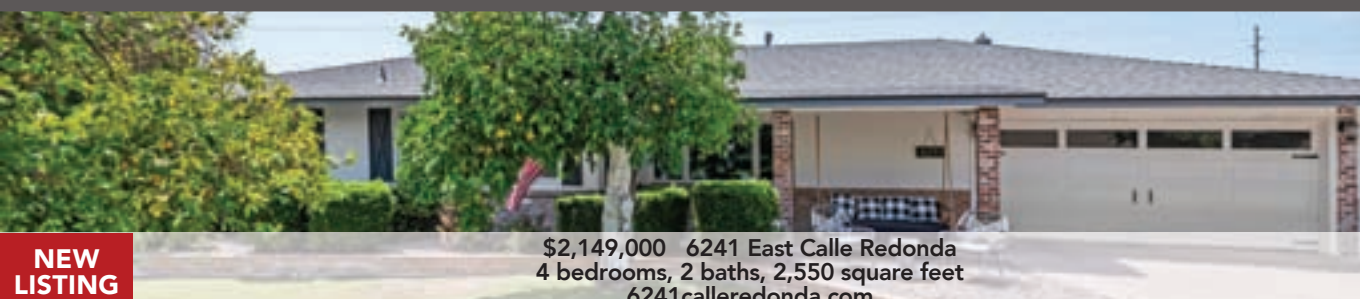
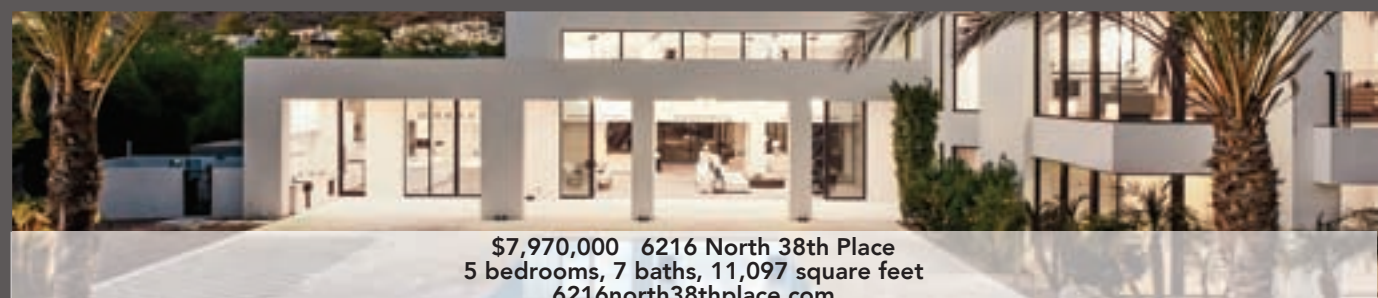


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In the Kitchen

with Executive Chef Lawrence ‘LT’ Smith, Owner of Chilte

765 Grand Ave., Phoenix • chiltephx.com

A former football player with a deep passion for sports, Chef Lawrence “LT” Smith made a bold shift from the field to the kitchen, fueled by a curiosity to explore every aspect of food. That journey led him to culinary school, and ultimately, to Chilte: a bold, soulful restaurant rooted in street food, storytelling, and cultural inspiration.

Where did you grow up?

I’m from Cleveland, Ohio. As a kid I played a lot of sports, so I grew up traveling and chasing football. I was in Omaha, then Denver, then Pasadena. When it was time to move on from football, I moved to Phoenix to live with some of my old University of Akron roommates. I set my feet down and I’ve been here ever since – that was around eight years ago.

The majority of my family is still in Ohio but I did get my sister to come out here and it worked out because she has a house, got married and is pregnant, so that’s really cool. I’m really happy for her.

Give us some insight into your upbringing. Are your parents in the industry?

Not anymore, but my parents met while working in restaurants. My dad was a line cook and my mom was in a front of house position back in the day but they moved into professional careers after that, so no one was a “professional” far as restaurants go.

We lived 30 minutes or so outside of Cleveland so it was a smaller town, and I was really into sports – football, baseball, basketball, track, soccer... it was simpler times. It was really chill.

What cemented your journey into culinary?

I was done playing sports, and I was kind of on a ‘who am I now’ kick. I was working in a corporate office job and couldn’t even make it a month [laughs]. It was not for me. I applied for the *Great Food Truck Race* just to see what we could do, and my team and I made it to the finals of the casting process. I told myself, ‘If we get on the show, we’ll do the show, and if we don’t, I’m going to culinary school.’ We didn’t make it, so culinary school it was.

Once I got to ACI (Arizona Culinary Institute) in Scottsdale, it was on. Sports translated so well into the kitchen. I

became a natural and unbeknownst to myself, I was a natural with flavors and balancing and understanding those concepts so I was able to jump right in. As soon as I got out of basics, I started cooking around the Valley.

In my first kitchen, I applied for pastry and they put me at the salad station – but that was all right because I learned a lot really fast, and culinary school gave me the chops to grow.

Was pastry your original plan?

That’s what I wanted to go into – it was my favorite class in school. I couldn’t get my foot in the door at any restaurants with that angle so when I started at elements [at Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort] I thought, ‘Okay, we’ll see what I can learn here, where this will lead me.’ It was cool.

I like the monotony of pastry. It’s very detail-oriented and slower paced, but there’s still so many fun ways to build flavors and even with what we do at Chilte, it’s not really anything traditional, so I like to bring a savory palate to my pastries. I like the challenge of it and I still like being in different spots in the kitchen, that way you can learn, and you can get better at each part.

How did Chilte come about?

We started as a 10x10 pop-up during the pandemic, just my wife and I, out of our house. We had a grill and a cashier box and that was it. It was such a slow start [laughs]. We were also out at farmers markets getting the word out.

Once we got traction, we’d go to bars and farmers markets and we even got a few catering jobs. We’d do the farmers market in the morning, drop off, clean the kitchen, drop off catering, clean, go to a bar and cook all night and get up and do it all over again.

What was on the menu at the pop-up?

It was our OG birria tacos. I started with those before they were trendy. I was doing my own little riff on that. So it was the birria and the *pibil* [a slow roasted cooking method] tacos. Eventually we added tortas [sandwiches] to the menu. That was it: elevated street food.

What is your first memory of food?

I always go back to – and this is what probably drives my chef’s spirit – picking cherries with my mom. We



had a cherry tree, so we’d pick them and make like, a pie or a jam. I’m always chasing that feeling I had picking cherries with my mom.

Easter eggs – the smell of vinegar? That always brings me back, too. My parents recently sent me a bunch of pictures of me as a kid, in the kitchen, ‘cooking’ with bowls and pots and pans... subconsciously I knew! My first job was washing dishes, and then they graduated me to working with chicken until they realized I was only 14 and wasn’t supposed to be touching the food [laughs].

Where have your food adventures taken you?

At elements, I grew out of the cold side pretty quick and they didn’t have room on the hot side, so they sent me to work with Chef [Alex] Stratta at Match. That was cool because I learned breakfast and prep and some cool techniques and flavors. After that, I helped open Ghost Ranch with Chefs Rene Andrade and Roberto Centeno. That was my first sous chef position. That one had a lot of learning curves, I learned how to manage people and talk to people

and financials and a lot of multitasking. It also gave me the opportunity to grow into an executive pastry chef position and build my resume. I trained at Phoenix Public Market and then went to Tempe to develop a bread and pastry program.

I did some admin, some bartending and then boom. Pandemic. They closed one, they sold one, and I was out of work.

And then Chilte?

Yes! I started Chilte, which officially opened in 2020. We did the tent for almost two years; we did a food truck and then this opportunity popped up. We were burnt out, getting ready to call it quits and the Egyptian Motor Hotel people called us up for a tasting to see what restaurant they were going to put in the space.

We paused the food truck and came onto the project only to be met with a two-year delay on construction – added to the three years they had already been working on it. They finally opened in February two years ago. It was tough times. I had just started hiring staff, so it was hard trying to figure out how to keep everyone on.

I was like, ‘Okay, we’re ready to go –

NOPE – okay, we’re ready to go, NOPE.’ It was a tough couple of years. When we moved in, it was a blank canvas with only a kitchen. I designed the interior and was in here caulking and building a bar and learning plumbing and electrical, but we made ourselves fit in the space. Decked out the walls with local art and kept it comfortable, mid-century and funky. Chilte is short for chiltepin, which is a chili. They’re small but mighty.

Tell us about Chilte’s awards and accolades.

I have to admit, I’m still so new to the industry that sometimes I don’t know what the awards are [laughs]. I’ve never had my sights set on winning awards so when I heard I received *Food and Wine’s* Best New Chef, I’m like ‘Dope, but now I need to research what this is.’ Then I find out I follow almost all the chefs that have been on the list.

Esquire did a big write-up. *Bon Appetit* did a write-up. This year I was a semi-finalist for a James Beard award for the first time and that was super exciting. I’m proud to get those recognitions for me and the team. Hopefully I can get a win at some point but until then, I’ll keep my head down and keep grinding.

What’s the inspiration behind the dishes?

There are so many fun, creative drivers to this menu, but it always goes back to us trying to tell a story on a plate and trigger the feeling of, ‘Oh, this reminds me of...’ Especially for me, not being Mexican and cooking Mexican food with a street flair and Midwest flair that comes together... I have to learn how to balance those flavors. My wife is from Sinaloa and I had

Japanese influence. I’m tugging on that thread. Whatever strikes, I lean into it and see what I can come up with. It’s summer, so I want cold dishes, tropical stuff, I lean into that and I’m excited about it.

What’s the most popular thing on the menu?

It depends. I think right now it’s the *hoja santa* quesadilla. It’s approachable yet unique, and it’s great for pictures. It’s been in a lot of write-ups, so when people come in they’re like, ‘Hey, do y’all have that quesadilla thing?’

The birria taco on a squid ink tortilla is the OG from the tent days, and I knew once I brought the birria back I was never going to get away from it, so I took that and gave it a fun twist with the miso consommé. For me, it’s the burger. I am always eating a burger.

What is one piece of advice you’d give a chef who’s just starting out?

Be a sponge. Keep pushing and learning as much as you can. Don’t think you know it all. I’ve been in the industry for seven years and I still don’t know anything.

Sometimes I feel like I didn’t do enough learning and studying under other guys, because I went out on my own so fast. Keep paying your dues, keep learning and don’t try to get ahead of yourself. Also, have some grace with yourself and your mentor – that’s a big one. Find someone to work with and learn from.

Who is your dream dinner guest?

I don’t want to cook for anyone; that’s too much pressure [laughs]. It’s kind of

I’m proud to get those recognitions for me and the team. Hopefully I can get a win at some point, but until then, I’ll keep my head down and keep grinding.

some Mexican chefs that started teaching me the flavors and the culture – I drew from the people I was around while also bringing the nostalgia of home and Midwest soul food into the mix.

Is there a process for coming up with new menu items?

Travel plays a part in it – I start with tradition, as there’s a Mexican ‘part’ to each dish, and then I build or riff on that. I would never call it fusion because I’m not trying to smash two things together that don’t make sense.

I always try to find the common or cultural thread that connects them, whether that’s Afro-Latin or if there’s a

corny, but I wish I could cook for our grandmas who passed literally within a month of us opening the restaurant. They supported us financially and with love and family for years. I never got to cook for my grandma as Chilte and as a chef, so it’d be cool to do that.

What’s next for Chef Smith?

I don’t like to plan too far ahead, but I’m open to whatever opportunities may present themselves. I have a million concepts in my brain but I want to get this team locked in and get Chilte to whatever level it needs to be at. We’re going to keep on grinding.

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Charles Mitchell

Charles Mitchell is, quite literally, all about people. It’s not just a motto – it’s the name of the executive search firm he co-founded with his wife, Sherri: *All About People*. And after just a few minutes with Charles, it becomes clear how well that name fits. His warmth and sincerity are unmistakable. He listens closely, speaks thoughtfully, and leaves a lasting impression.

In his office, the walls echo his ethos. Inspirational plaques aren’t just decoration – they’re declarations. One reads, “An Attitude of Gratitude Brings Great Things.” Another challenge, “Be Better, Be Different.” A third offers a profound truth: “Blessed Life.” These aren’t just words to Charles. He lives them.

Among his greatest blessings is his family. He and Sherri recently celebrated 25 years of marriage – a journey that began with a serendipitous meeting, followed by Charles’ persistent pursuit and a first date. Eight months later they were married and today, they are parents to Haley (24), Jadyn (20), and Tate (17).

Charles and his younger sister were raised in North Carolina in a household that emphasized education and community service. He earned an undergraduate degree at North Carolina A&T State University, an MBA from

the University of North Carolina, and later graduated from American University’s Washington College of Law. He is also a Harvard Business School graduate after completing their executive education program.

“I thought I wanted to practice law,” he reflects. “But I soon realized I was wired to be an entrepreneur.”

Sherri had been building a staffing and executive recruiting company but in 2002, with Charles’ encouragement, they launched a firm of their own. “She knew this business inside and out,” Charles said. “I just convinced her that there was no better bet than betting on herself. Our purpose is on purpose. We’re a heart- and mind-based firm, obsessed with impacting the lives of the people and corporations we serve.”

They help individuals build thriving, meaningful careers. And when people thrive, so do their families – and the communities they call home.

At 58, Charles remains as passionate about his community as he is about his business. He is a dedicated supporter of nonprofit education, serving on boards and helping to create organizations with a focus on equity and opportunity.

He’s the founding board chair of Vista College Preparatory, a nationally recognized charter school serving underrepresented communities throughout Phoenix.

He says balancing family, business, and service isn’t easy. “I’m constantly trying to prioritize – so I can create more impact with less time. The truth is, I gain far more from volunteering than I could ever give. But if I’m remembered for anything, I hope it’s that I showed up for others and that I tried to make a difference.”

In his downtime, Charles is an avid reader and a



passionate traveler. His favorite books reflect his deep curiosity and heart-centered philosophy: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The Alchemist*, and *The Forty Rules of Love*. High on his bucket list? Living overseas with his family for an extended period of time.

When asked what legacy he hopes to leave, Charles pauses, saying, “That I cared about the plight of other people.”

Spend even a few moments with Charles Mitchell, and it’s clear, his legacy isn’t just a future hope. It’s already taking root.

“If I’m remembered for anything, I hope it’s that I showed up for others.”



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PHOTO: LEEVON GUERITHAULT

Guests learn techniques, taste ingredients and cook specific dishes; upcoming classes focus on sauces and croissants.

Whisk it up with Chef Vincent's immersive cooking classes

By Mallory Gleich

At Vincent on Camelback, where fine dining meets the flavors of the Southwest, summer has brought more than just seasonal ingredients – it has reignited Chef Vincent Guerithault's long-standing passion for teaching.

For the first time since the early 2020s, the well-known restaurant near the corner of 40th St. and Camelback is hosting in-person cooking classes, giving guests an intimate, hands-on experience with the chef himself.

Known for signature dishes like smoked salmon quesadilla, lobster chimichanga, rack of lamb with spicy bell pepper jelly, and veal sweetbreads, Chef Vincent blends classical French training with regional flair, and now, patrons have an opportunity to step behind the scenes and into the kitchen with one of Phoenix's culinary pioneers.

"Vincent has always enjoyed teaching," his wife, Leevon Guerithault, said. "He spent years at Les Gourmettes cooking school with Barbara Fenzl and even taught non-

credit courses for ASU's Barrett Honors College. These new classes are such a fun and personal way for him to share that knowledge again."

Held on Sunday and Monday evenings inside the restaurant's cozy bistro, each class focuses on a specific topic, such as sweet and savory soufflés or classic French sauces.

Students gather around a large table for a hands-on session led by Vincent and his son, Christian, as they work through techniques, taste ingredients, and – most importantly – cook. With a limit of 14 students per class, the format remains intentionally intimate and engaging. And yes, there are usually leftovers for students to take home.

"We've had requests for years," Leevon said. "The slower summer finally gave us a chance to make it happen. The response has been incredible – these classes have been booking up fast!"

The Guerithaults have committed to releasing the

schedule on the first of each month at noon via their Tock page. The return of classes marks yet another chapter in the restaurant's storied legacy.

"We hosted our first private event in December 1985 and opened to the public in January of 1986," Leevon said. "We've been at the same location ever since and will be celebrating 40 years soon."

For fans of French cuisine and those seeking to elevate their culinary skills, the classes provide a unique opportunity to learn from the pros. And for Vincent, it's about more than recipes.

"Sharing what he's learned over a lifetime in the kitchen – that's what really excites him," Leevon says. "It brings him joy."

August's classes are almost sold out, but there are a few spots still available toward the end of the month. Classes will focus on croissants, crepes, crème brûlée and more.

vincentsoncamelback.com or exploretock.com

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Cole Pitas, Jonathan Banks, Caden Phillips, Cooper Phillips and Caden Reder.

CLS program helps students gain confidence by developing potential

By Cliff Summerhill

The Connections Program at Christ Lutheran School is transforming the educational experience for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and enriching the school community in the process.

“Connections is so much more than a classroom,” Director Caley Chapman said. “It’s a Christ-centered community where students are known, loved, and supported in every aspect of their development.”

The program blends individualized one-on-one instruction, small-group learning, and intentional inclusion in general education classrooms. Students follow the same curriculum as their grade-level peers but benefit from customized instruction that incorporates hands-on activities, visual supports, and a strong emphasis on vocabulary and conceptual understanding.

“Because students are learning the same content in the Connections room, they are well-prepared to push into the general education classroom when they demonstrate academic and behavioral readiness,” Chapman said. “This model allows them to learn alongside their peers while still receiving the individualized support they need to thrive.”

Patrick Polachek, a student in the program, shared that he likes science, friends, and loves his teachers.

“They make me feel so happy in my heart,” Patrick said. “The Connections Program helps me do my math, helps me make friends, and it shows people I can do anything!”

Fellow student Sibilla Orazio shared the sentiment. “I love school because I love all my friends, my classroom, and art class too,” Sibilla said. “I get extra help with my reading and math, and I love all my teachers.”

According to Chapman, Connections students participate in meaningful inclusion and join in all school activities, including art, music, PE, lunch, and recess. From leading prayers at pep rallies to performing in the school musical, students who were once hesitant to participate are now taking center stage.

“This intentional integration promotes authentic relationships and creates opportunities for our students

to shine in ways that are truly inspiring,” Chapman said. “The impact has been deeply meaningful for students and our entire school community.”

Chapman returned to the school after earning her master’s in special education and shared her dream of starting an autism program, which resulted in an immediate, “Let’s do it!” from Principal Doyle.

What followed was the launch of a much smaller Connections Program, created in partnership with Gentry Pediatric Behavioral Services. Starting with just a few students, it has grown into a robust initiative with dedicated teachers, Applied Behavioral Analysis therapists, speech and language support, and a thriving culture of inclusion.

In addition to the student program, Christ Lutheran has started the Adult Work Program, which provides adults with autism and other neurodiversities with meaningful opportunities to work in a structured, Christ-centered environment.

“The Adult Work Program adds another layer of purpose and connection to our ministry, showing our students and families that we’re committed to walking alongside them – not just now, but for the long haul,” Chapman said.

The school’s immediate goal is to expand into the seventh and eighth grades, continuing to support students as they grow. In fall 2026, Chapman hopes to launch an additional cohort of younger students to meet the growing demand for early intervention and support.

A fundraising campaign is currently underway to support these expansions, which would include new classrooms, resources, staff, and services.

“At the heart of it all, our mission remains the same: to foster belonging, growth, and faith in every student we serve,” Chapman shared. “With God’s help and the continued support of our community, we are building a future where every child has a place to learn, grow, and be loved.”

clsphx.org/connections

“**At the heart of it all, our mission remains the same: to foster belonging, growth, and faith in every student we serve.**”

DISTRICT 6 UPDATE

Safety, services and summer fun

The City of Phoenix Lockbox Program allows firefighters to gain entry to your home in case of emergency without causing any damage to your residence. This is done by utilizing a key that you provide in a secure lockbox attached to your entryway.

This program not only provides free lockboxes to vulnerable Phoenix residents; it also allows those who already have their own lockbox in place to register their lockbox code with the fire department.

Free lockboxes are donated by the Phoenix Realtors and are distributed on a first come, first served basis to vulnerable Phoenix residents who are 55+, or have special needs or mobility issues.



KEVIN ROBINSON

Councilman
District 6

602-262-7491
District6@phoenix.gov

New Phoenix Police Chief

As chairman of the public safety and justice subcommittee, I want to congratulate Matt Giordano for being selected as the Police Chief for the Phoenix Police Department. I know he will serve the citizens of Phoenix and the women and men of the police department well.

Parks and Rec Month

This month, we’re celebrating everything our parks and recreation team does to support a healthy community, from maintaining clean and safe parks to offering programs that bring neighbors together. Parks and Recreation touches lives in so many ways, and their work deserves our recognition. I encourage you to get out and enjoy a local park, pool or splash pad – and if you see a Parks and Rec employee, don’t forget to say thank you!

Bulk Trash Appointments

Phoenix residents now have a more convenient way to manage large waste items that don’t fit in standard garbage or recycling containers, thanks to the city’s appointment-based bulk trash program. This Q&A covers what you need to know:

What is bulk trash?

Bulk trash are materials that are too large and must not be placed in the garbage or recycling container, like furniture, small appliances, toilets and large amounts of vegetation.

What is appointment-based bulk trash?

Appointment based bulk trash offers customers the convenience of scheduling a collection on a date that works for them. Find a list of accepted items online and visit phoenix.gov/publicworks or call the Public Works Customer Contact Center at 602-262-6251 to schedule an appointment. Customers can schedule appointments up to six months in advance for up to four collections per year.

What if there’s not enough space at the edge of the property for bulk trash?

Place piles at the front edge of the property (curbside). The edge of a driveway can be used as well. For exceptions, we can work with the customer to place a pile neatly at the curb on the street. If the street is the only available space, please work directly with management.

Customers can place up to 10 cubic yards of material and all items in the pile should be placed within five feet from the edge of the property.

Happy August!
Councilman Kevin Robinson

Teen-led nonprofit teaches kids the skills to save a life

By Mallory Gleich

It's a harrowing fact, but a fact nonetheless: over 350,000 people undergo cardiac arrest outside of a hospital annually, and of those, over 60 percent die before reaching a hospital. Another fact: last year, over 60 people died due to water-related incidents in Arizona.

It's these kinds of statistics that propelled Brophy sophomores Sanath Seetharam, Sahil Bagai, and Suhaan Sharma to start a nonprofit called Life Savers Phoenix.

Life Savers, a Dragon Kim Foundation Fellowship project, trains under-resourced kids aged 8-12 in CPR, AED use, bleeding control, and emergency response techniques. The trio hopes to empower students to become first responders in their neighborhoods.

"There wasn't one specific incident that made us realize kids haven't been taught these skills," Sanath said. "We have seen that kids are normally some of the closest to an emergency because they are the ones who go to the pool and play outside the most. As such, we want to build a community of lifesavers who, as they grow up, learn more skills that they might use to save a life someday."

The program is tailored to address the unique risks associated with living in Phoenix. In addition to core CPR and AED instruction, children learn about water



Sahil Bagai, Suhaan Sharma and Sanath Seetharam.

safety, fire hazards, and how to respond to encounters with poisonous desert creatures.

Since launching in June, Life Savers Phoenix has already trained over 200 kids across five different sites in the Valley and partnered with City of Phoenix community centers to teach children in the summer programs. The July seminar was one of the group's most significant events yet, running for a whole week.

"The City of Phoenix was a bit skeptical at first," Sanath said. "They weren't sure the kids would grasp the material or stay engaged. But after our first sessions, the directors told us the kids kept asking when we were coming back. That kind of response has been incredibly motivating."

The founding team is certified as CPR and AED instructors through Cypress

Education, and they've collaborated with medical professionals to tailor the lessons. A toxicologist from Banner Health provided expertise on poison control. At the same time, a child-life expert from HonorHealth coached them on how to communicate complex medical information to young audiences in a clear and easy-to-understand way.

"We worked hard to make sure the lessons are both informative and fun," Sanath said.

The idea for Life Savers Phoenix was brought to life through the Dragon Kim Fellowship, a competitive leadership and community impact program for high school students. The application process included essays, transcripts, teacher recommendations, and personal video pitches from each team member.

The fellowship awarded the team a grant of approximately \$4,800 to fund supplies, curriculum development, and logistical costs.

Since receiving the grant, the team has received mentorship from the Dragon Kim Foundation to fine-tune every aspect of their program. Their work has extended beyond the classroom as well – they regularly volunteer at American Heart Association events to educate families on emergency response.

Life Savers Phoenix has big goals. With growing interest from both kids and community organizations, they hope to expand their reach throughout Arizona and eventually serve as a model for youth-driven emergency preparedness programs nationwide.

"In some areas, ambulances can take eight to nine minutes longer to arrive," Sanath said. "The people who are always in the areas during these emergencies are kids, but they often stand off to the side since they think they are unable to help. We believe that if we can empower these kids with the skills to help, they could potentially save a life."

Through compassion, training, and a powerful belief in youth, Life Savers Phoenix is proving that age is no barrier to being a hero.

Learn more on Instagram
[@life_savers_phoenix](#)

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Western Spirit celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2025.



WHERE THE WEST LIVES ON

Take a tour through Scottsdale Museum of the West

By Michael P. Murphy

The wagon wheels hanging from the ceiling catch the eye as soon as visitors enter the lobby of Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. The first exhibit they see is a series of oil paintings by John Clymer, depicting a time when mountain men – not cowboys – explored the region, illustrated beautifully by the master painter.

Next up, a display of Hopi pottery. Impressive bronze statues were created by the talented hands of John Coleman. Then paintings and sketches from women artists, and a terrific exhibit of a variety of Western memorabilia. A walk up a flight of stairs leads to a fun exhibit on color in Western art: A Fistful of Colors. The perfect title for the lively exhibit.

This is a place where stories of the Old West are told through art. The temperature may be triple digits outside, but inside it's a comfortable 71 degrees. Welcome to The Cool Frontier.

Earlier this year, Western Spirit celebrated its 10th anniversary. Its beginnings were humble, born out of the determination of a small group of city leaders who chose never to give up on their dream of creating a place that would honor the history of The West's Most Western Town.

"Jim Bruner likes to say it started with a tin cup out on the street asking for donations," CEO Todd Bankofier said. "The 10th anniversary was about those people who persevered all those years ago. They were so committed."

The idea of a Western museum began in the 1960s, when it seemed only natural to have a historic aspect in the newly incorporated city of Scottsdale.

Former Mayor Herb Drinkwater, prominent businessman Paul Messenger, and two-time city councilman Jim Bruner were among the group of 10 to 12 leaders who met frequently to plan and raise funds. They had no building and no art, but they did have a vision. And, as Bruner so emphatically put it, "Failure is not an option."

Over the years, private donations, big and small, rolled in. The City Council passed a bed tax in 2013, which helped complete funding. Construction began at the end of 2013, and two years later, in January 2015, Western Spirit opened its doors, marking the start of a new era in the arts. Nineteen states in America's Western region are represented in the exhibits. True West Magazine rated it the No. 1 Western Museum six out of the last 10 years.

"We are proud to be a Smithsonian

affiliate," Bankofier said. "We can borrow the resources of the Smithsonian as needed. We became an affiliate from day one because of the art and the stories we can tell in this museum."

The award-winning building, designed by Studio MA, is iconic. Architecture is one of the museum's most notable features. The environmental capabilities are impressive, as evidenced by the savings in water and energy, and the achievement of LEED Gold Standard certification.

“This is a highly educational learning facility. That's why we do so much docent training, to tell the stories in a consistent, truthful, and historical manner.”

Expansion is already underway to accommodate the addition of galleries and educational programs. It's essential to Bankofier that the museum continues to serve as a tool for young people who are fascinated to learn about the people who came to this part of the world for the first time.

"We encourage people to bring their young children," he said. "This is a highly educational learning facility. That's why we do so much docent training, to tell the stories in a consistent, truthful, and historical manner."

As part of Western Spirit's Cool Frontier promotion, visitors of any age can enjoy Artist Tuesdays and current exhibits with BOGO (buy one, get one free) tickets until September 30. With the theme "It's Cool in Here," this summer's offerings include a lineup of exhibitions and events.

"A Decade of Western Spirit" greets guests with a timeline of the museum's most impactful milestones. Key highlights include Women of the Southwest: A Legacy of Painting, featuring nearly 200 works by 25 pioneering female artists.

Visitors can also explore Canvas of Clay, Courage & Crossroads, the A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection, and People, Places, Predicaments: John Clymer's West. Artist Tuesdays return each week through August, offering a chance to see artists like Lindsay Green and Kathy Howard at work and Western film lovers can catch classic Spaghetti Westerns in the museum's theater.

westernspirit.org



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Rim Country offers a refreshing change of pace for visitors

If you're looking for an unforgettable Arizona escape, just follow Highway 87, the "Beeline Highway", into the heart of Rim Country. This scenic route leads travelers through the sprawling Tonto National Forest – Arizona's largest, and the most visited "urban" forest in the nation. Stretching nearly three million acres from the edge of the Phoenix metro area to the Mogollon Rim, the landscape transforms dramatically, from flat desert terrain to pine-covered highlands reaching elevations near 8,000 feet.



Robin's Adventures
BY ROBIN SEWELL

Robin is the host and executive producer of the Arizona Highways Television, Saturdays and Sundays on CBS.

Along the way, saguaros yield to towering evergreens in the world's largest stand of ponderosa pines. With trout-filled creeks, dramatic rock formations, and cool mountain air just two hours from the Valley, Rim Country offers a refreshing change of pace and scenery.

As you cruise north, keep an eye out for a cheerful red and yellow building just past the "Entering Strawberry" sign. That's PIEbar, a cozy roadside eatery where big flavor fits in the palm of your hand. Owned by Kimberly Brennan, PIEbar specializes in handmade empanadas that blend

tradition with a touch of magic.

"Our inspiration came from a woman in Puerto Vallarta who sold out of her empanadas every morning by 6:30," Brennan recalls. "We wanted to capture that same freshness and soul."



Tonto National Forest



PIEbar



Kohl's Ranch Lodge

PIEbar's rotating menu ranges from green chili to mushroom stroganoff to the fan-favorite lemon bar empanada, described by one customer as a "spiritual experience." Seating is outdoors, under patio umbrellas or a sprawling oak tree, and the ambiance, especially during Strawberry's signature pink sunsets, is as warm as the empanadas.

About twenty miles outside Payson sits Kohl's Ranch Lodge, a rustic retreat shaded by pines and nestled along Tonto Creek. Established around 1917 as a working cattle ranch, the lodge became a gathering place for local families and visitors. Today, it remains a cherished escape with studio lodge rooms and Creekside cabins, many complete with private decks and Jacuzzis. On-site dining at the Zane Grey Steakhouse adds to the appeal, whether you're seeking a family getaway or a peaceful place to unwind.

For outdoor enthusiasts, Rim Country is a mountain biker's dream. With nearly 900 miles of trails, there's

terrain for every skill level. In Pine, electric bikes offer a leisurely way to explore, while Payson's adrenaline-pumping routes satisfy thrill-seekers.

"We have a tremendous variety of trails and scenery," rider Wayne Gorry said. "Whether you're out for a casual ride or something intense, it's all here."

If you prefer to explore on foot (or with a fork), pay a visit to Strawberry's historic schoolhouse or stop by the Rusty Pine Cone gift shop in Pine, where locals Gene and Leigh welcome every traveler like an old friend. Just down the road, craft beer flows at THAT Brewery, and the Honey Stand tempts with sweet treats from Arizona bees.

No trip is complete without seeing Tonto Natural Bridge, a stunning limestone arch over a pine-shaded canyon, or grabbing a spaghetti supper at By the Bucket, and don't forget the "bodacious" meatballs.

From mountaintop vistas to warm empanadas, Rim Country is a reminder that sometimes, the best adventures are just a beeline away – or just off an Arizona highway.



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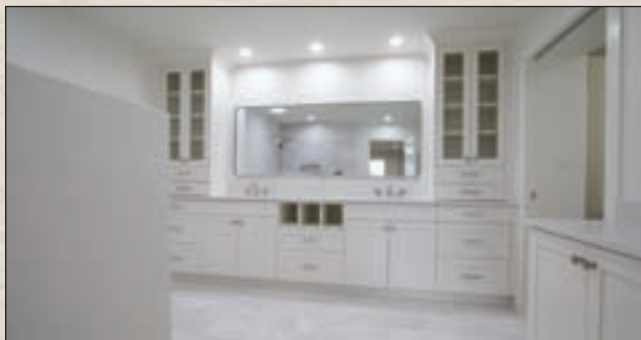
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Jump around: A few of the best splash pads around the Valley

By Rachael Bouley

August means back-to-school season for the big kids – but what about the little ones? Fortunately, families with younger children can still enjoy some cool summer fun. The Phoenix and Scottsdale areas are home to a variety of splash pads where kids can hit the water and burn off some energy. Here are a few splash pads where youngsters can play. And parents, if you want to join in, we won't judge!

DESERT RIDGE

21001 N. Tatum Blvd., Phoenix

Open year-round from

9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

shopdesertridge.com

The Desert Ridge splash pad is one of the more popular and well-known for north-Phoenixians, but all are welcome! Located near AMC Theatres and Cartel Roasting Co. in The District, the area offers big spray jets and ample seating for families.

It's a great spot to cool off before or after shopping. Swim shoes are recommended, and stay tuned: Desert Ridge's surrounding entertainment areas will offer special events with DJ entertainment, giveaways, and character visits in the future.

SCOTTSDALE QUARTER

15279 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale

11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Saturday,

12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday

scottsdalequarter.com

Scottsdale Quarter is an open-air shopping center with an (award-winning!) pop-jet fountain for kids and families. Located in The Quad and open during the summer and back-to-school season, this splash pad is surrounded by palm trees for just the right amount of shade.

Scottsdale Quarter was named a *USA Today* Reader's Choice as one of the top ten shopping centers in America, and the splash pad is one of the biggest draws for families. It's close to popular eateries like True Food Kitchen, so you can grab a bite to eat after a day of play.

LUCI'S AT THE ORCHARD

7100 N. 12th St., Phoenix

Open daily 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. through mid-October

lucisgoodness.com

Luci's at the Orchard is a café, coffee and juice bar, and is also home to the vintage Splurge Ice Cream & Candy Shop. This revitalized, historic Phoenix ranch home has a splash pad on the pet-friendly patio, making it a great choice for families needing a one-stop shop to sip, shop and cool off. Citrus trees line the property and create a shady oasis.

While you're there, check out the gourmet marketplace with candles, soaps, specialty foods, and toys and games for the kiddos.

SCOTTSDALE CIVIC CENTER PARK

3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale

Open daily during park hours, sunrise to 8 p.m.

scottsdaleaz.gov

The newly renovated Scottsdale Civic Center Park now features the Water and Fog Plaza, a splash pad



fountain near the Children's Gardens on the east side. Kids can splash through the different areas and delight as fog surrounds the nearby plants. Slides, climbing structures and other playground equipment are close by, so it's a win-win for families with active youngsters who need to let some energy out.

VISTA DEL CAMINO PARK

7700 E. Roosevelt St., Scottsdale

Open daily during park hours, sunrise to 8 p.m.

scottsdaleaz.gov

The 71-acre park is home to a splash pad with fun features like spray rings, animal-themed sprayers, fountains and more. It's surrounded by grassy parkland with a concrete climbing area off to the side, and other amenities nearby such as playgrounds and sport courts. The dog-friendly park often has furry friends cooling off near the splash pad, too – dogs and water, what more do you need for a fun day outside?

ARIZONA BOARDWALK

9500 East Via de Ventura, Scottsdale

Open daily 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

azboardwalk.com

Arizona Boardwalk entertainment destination offers a variety of family-friendly attractions, including the OdySea Aquarium and Butterfly Wonderland, but one of the most popular excursions for youngsters are the foam parties. Taking place this month on August 9, 10, 30 and 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., families will find endless foam, fire truck water play, water squirter battle zones, and other fun water activities. If you're tuckered out from the sun, there's also dining, shopping, and indoor interactive experiences.

Hopi's assistant principal returns to her roots

By Rachael Bouley

Hopi Elementary has a new assistant principal walking the halls, and she couldn't be more excited to be leading the Hawks. Dr. Emily James is a legacy leader who attended elementary, middle, and high school in the Scottsdale Unified School District before returning to teaching for the past decade.

Dr. James attended Sequoya, Cocopah, and Chaparral and has very fond memories of her time as a student in the Valley.

"There are so many wonderful teachers who have had such an incredible impact on my life. The amount of energy and love that was poured into me as a child is something I will never take for granted," Dr. James said. "When I visit those schools, I am instantly flooded with memories of what it was like there."

Her positive educational experience as a child inspired her to pursue a career in teaching and administration, and she strives to create the same meaningful moments with her students.

"I hope that they will look back one day on their time in SUSD with the same pride and joy that I do," she explained.

Dr. James received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Arizona and a master's degree in applied behavior analysis from Arizona State University.

She went on to earn a doctorate in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

Very early in her career, she knew her goal was to become an administrator one day. Over the past decade of teaching, she has served on school and district committees to gain a better understanding and obtained her principal certification while pursuing her doctorate.

"I was able to complete my principal internship with some incredible leaders in SUSD," Dr. James said. "I also completed a superintendent internship during that time. It was eye-opening to learn about the operations from a bigger view."

Dr. James taught all core subjects (math, reading, writing, science, and social studies) and ran morning announcements, the Be Kind program, and coding clubs.

Now, after teaching first and fifth grade at Tavan and, more recently, fourth grade at Cherokee, she is happy to be back in the neighborhood as Hopi's assistant principal.

"It has been a privilege to be a teacher for the past 10 years, and I am so excited to be able to serve in this new capacity. I know I have big shoes to fill, and I am thrilled for the opportunity," Dr. James said. "My goal has always been to work with children, and my dreams have evolved along the way. I had wonderful administrators as a child and as a teacher – they inspired me to follow in their footsteps."

Dr. James emphasizes classroom community and kindness, striving to create a school environment that feels like family and a place where students are comfortable being themselves.

"I believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to learn in the ways that best suit them; what works for one child does not always work for all, and that it is our job as educators to help everyone be successful," she explained.

For Dr. James, classrooms should be a space filled with learning, having fun, making memories, and exploring new ideas. She looks forward to supporting Hopi students and staff in ensuring a successful school year through collaborative problem-solving and teamwork.

"I am most excited to get to know the community. I know it is made up of wonderful families, children, and staff members," she added. "I can't wait to form long-lasting positive relationships with everyone I have the opportunity to meet and serve."

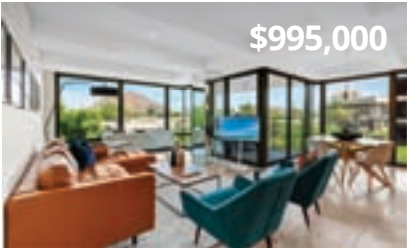


Dr. Emily James



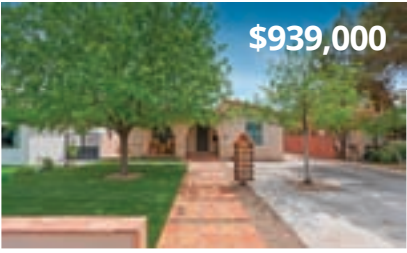
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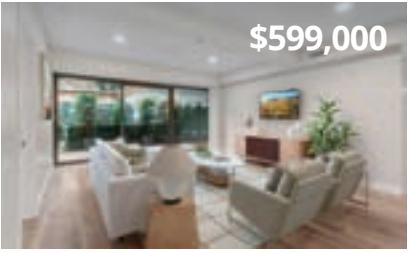
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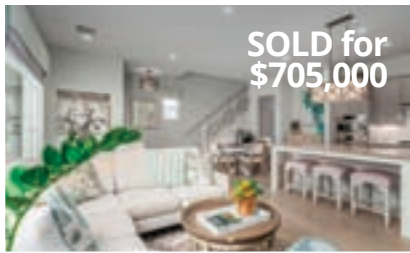
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Mister Pio



Playa Bowls



The Dining Scoop

WHAT'S NEW AT THE BIRDCAGE?

The Arcadia Birdcage Plaza near 44th St. and Thomas has seen a revitalization in the past year, with businesses and eateries popping up and giving the neighborhood some new places-to-be-seen. Mister Pio specializes in Peruvian-style rotisserie chicken, while Playa Bowls offers açai bowls, smoothies, and other tropical snacks. The additions bring a mix of bold and refreshing flavors to the community.

Mister Pio
4502 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix
misterpio.com

Mister Pio, a rotisserie-forward restaurant from co-owners Justin Nasralla and David Goluboff, opened in October 2024.

The duo, who met in Lima, Peru, in 2013, formed a friendship thanks to their shared passion for food and culture. Justin, who's originally from Toronto, Canada, had a dream of opening his own restaurant for years. After

working in kitchens across the Valley and across the world, he decided to settle down and found the perfect spot for Mister Pio, a restaurant that honors his Peruvian heritage, inspired by his mother's roots in Lima.

At the heart of Mister Pio's menu is their rotisserie chicken, marinated with a dry brine for two days and cooked over marabú charcoal in a Josper rotisserie oven, known for its intense heat and flavor-enhancing power. The focus on a smaller menu means everything is crafted with care.

"Since we only focus on a few things at Mister Pio, everything is equally special and delicious," Nasralla said.

Diners can order a chicken sandwich, a quarter chicken with dark meat or white meat, a half chicken or a whole chicken. House-made fries, which are triple cooked for maximum crispiness, are available in small and large sizes for \$6 and \$9 respectively. The menu also features a market salad.

"Our chickens come from Bell & Evans, known for air-chilled birds raised without hormones or antibiotics. Spices are sourced from Mount Hope, while fresh greens and vegetables arrive straight from Steadfast Farms," Nasralla said. Even the charcoal used for the rotisserie is carefully selected for performance and purity.

While the restaurant is still in the process of securing a liquor license, there are a variety of non-alcoholic drinks available. As a business owner, Justin says he doesn't dwell on the challenges.

"I know I'm fortunate to do what I'm passionate about every day," he said. "We are very excited about what the future holds!"

Playa Bowls
4528 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix
playabowls.com

Playa Bowls was created in Belmar, New Jersey, by founders Rob Giuliani and Abby Taylor. It started as an açai stand on Jersey Shore, inspired by the duo's travels to beach destinations. They decided to bring the bowls they'd eaten on their journeys back to the East Coast.

They struck a deal with the owner of the pizza shop they lived above and launched a pop-up shop – and now, over a decade later, there are more than 300 Playa Bowls locations across the country.

"We're really huge on the Midwest and east coast, down the shore line," Arcadia Playa Bowls owner Roosevelt Nix said. "I think there's close to 90 locations in Jersey and New York alone."

Nix, who's originally from Ohio, learned about the concept in Columbus. Pittsburgh Steelers fans may recognize the name: Nix played for the NFL team for five years and went to the Pro Bowl in 2017 before retiring and heading for sunny AZ.

"While I was playing football, I was always looking for brands to franchise and kind of get into business with," Nix said. "I fell in love with the Playa by my house, and the rest is history. I was excited

THE SCOOP

Coming soon to Tempe's Mill Avenue is NYC-based **Prince Street Pizza**. The shop will open in the former Jimmy John's space at CenterPoint and offer New York-style slices, specialty Sicilian squares, pizzettas, salads, appetizers and desserts. Stay tuned as we learn more!
princestreetpizza.com

Bad Jimmy's, the smashburger eatery that began as a pop-up in 2020, has opened its third location near Bethany Home Road and 7th St. in Phoenix. Founded by James Piazza, the brand expanded to downtown Phoenix in 2023 and Scottsdale earlier this year. The new spot features the signature smashburgers, waffle fries, wings, salads, and soft-serve ice cream.
badjimmys.com

to bring one of my favorite things to one of my favorite places."

On the menu, diners can choose from bowls, smoothies and juices – fresh and bottled. Guests start by choosing a base: pitaya, açai, banana, mango and more; there are over 35 options. Smoothies are around \$7 and bowls range from \$12-\$15.

"We have granola, all the fruits, tons of different options for drizzles...you can fully customize your bowl or smoothie," Nix said. "People love the Pura Vida and the Nutella, but it's hard not to say that people love the whole menu!"

Playa Bowls has four Arizona locations, with the most recent opening in the West Valley. Nix said he has plans to open a few more stores of his own, and wants Arcadians to know one thing: Playa Bowls isn't just an açai and smoothie shop – it's a vibe.

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Feeling stuck? Fix your search fundamentals

Have you been on LinkedIn lately? If so, you've probably seen posts from frustrated job seekers. They are mad and feeling demoralized. Some are giving up. Looking for a job is hard, even under the best circumstances.

The majority have never looked for a new job from scratch. In most cases, the job seeker receives a call from a friend, a colleague, or a recruiter. They are asked to apply for a job. They interview for the role, and may be selected. The process is relatively quick and painless.

Occasionally, job seekers will venture out on their own to search. They'll apply for jobs online, where they have no connections. This is great, but it's a different kind of search. It involves more applications and more interviews... and much more rejection.

This experience often leads the job seeker to believe they are failing. They are comparing this new, more difficult experience to the experiences

they remember from the past. Add on the current news coverage, and you may begin to feel doomed. The headlines talk about how bad the market is. Layoffs seem like an everyday occurrence. The negative LinkedIn posts seem to be social proof that things really are as bad as they seem.

Before you stop searching, consider this. Companies are still hiring. 147,000 more jobs were added to the U.S. economy in June, according to the

Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate is currently 4.2 percent, which is generally considered positive.

If you are struggling, remember this. Searching for a job in this new way is hard, even in a good market. New jobs do exist, and it is possible to land one. The biggest shift I am observing this year is that companies are moving through their hiring processes more slowly than in past years. In the end, they are still hiring.

What can you do to increase your odds? First, audit your job search materials. Consider doing an overhaul of your resume. I'm not just talking about making it "ATS friendly." Make sure it's human friendly. Employers will only look at your resume for seven seconds before they decide whether or not to talk to you. Update your LinkedIn profile.

Take the time to write a cover letter that you can use as you apply for jobs. I know that this sounds like a pain, but you are the best one to tell your own story to employers.

Last, apply for more jobs than you did in the past. Don't apply to five jobs and then decide it's over. Apply to 50. Apply to 100. As they say, getting a job is a job. If you audit your search and keep going, you will find it in the end.



*Career
Corner*

BY ANGELA COPELAND

Career expert
and founder of
Copeland Coaching.
copelandcoaching.com

30 YEARS AGO



Thirty years ago, Arcadia High welcomed Ingleside alum Dr. John Weimer to the principal position. Arcadia News wasn't able to find any updated information on Dr. Weimer, so instead, we're re-introducing Dr. Janelle Danskey, who took over the position two years ago.

Dr. Danskey earned a Bachelor's degree in History and a Master's in Secondary Teaching from Willamette University, followed by a Doctorate in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Portland. Though she originally planned to teach English, she shifted to history during her sophomore year and has remained passionate about education ever since. When her sister later moved to Sacramento, Danskey sought out a sunnier climate and set her sights on Phoenix. After moving to Arizona, Danskey searched for opportunities

in the Scottsdale area and was thrilled to discover an opening at Arcadia.

Reflecting on what matters most in school leadership, she emphasized the

importance of a strong ethical foundation.

"It's something I believe in deeply. We're responsible for meeting all students' needs so we can support their developing knowledge and



Dr. Janelle Danskey

the skills they need to be successful and recognize that our world is changing rapidly," Danskey said.

"We're excited to welcome our students back to school for a year filled with growth, discovery, and connection. We can't wait to see all they will accomplish this year!"



Under 17 Nationals Quad: Cara Boyle, Julia Green, Emma Perry, and Sienna Goforth.

Xavier crew charts a new course and a top national finish

By Sherry Sklar

Xavier Prep Crew, a year-long sports program, concluded its 25th season with a thrilling achievement: eighth, 14th, and 17th-place finishes at the 2025 USRowing Youth National Championships in Sarasota, Florida.

To reach that level, Xavier rowers had to qualify at the Southwest Youth Championships, one of the country's most challenging regional regattas. Unlike large club teams, Xavier is a true high school program. Every athlete comes from the same school and earns her spot through dedication and drive.

Head Coach Geoffrey Stricklin, joined by coaching assistants Chase Hoyt, Essence, Johnson, and Kevin Boyle, credit the team's success to a culture of self-sacrifice, team spirit, and hard work.

"It's an exciting time. The culture's changed – it's now a team that's competitive and respectful – and we're just getting started," he stated.

Xavier Crew trains year-round, six days a week, balancing land workouts with early morning rows on Tempe Town Lake. The team launches from a modest enclosure tucked beneath the 202 freeway at Mill Avenue, which they refer to as their boathouse.

Coaches follow in small motorboats, calling instructions through megaphones as rowers loop along the lake's 3,000-meter stretch.

It's this level of preparation that helped carry them to Nationals. Although not all athletes who helped qualify could attend, each played a crucial role. A scheduling conflict resulted in last-minute lineup changes and boat swaps. Through it all, the team remained unified and supportive.

Lauren Aldrete, who sat in the stroke seat of the U16 coxed quad that placed first at Regionals, started rowing a little over a year ago. Since then, she said it's become one of the most enjoyable parts of her school career.

"I love all of my teammates and enjoy the early mornings and long afternoons with



U16 squad Olivia Moshiri, Madison Minnitti, Ava Yparraguirre, Emma Perry, and Lauren Aldrete.

them. Rowing has brought structure to my daily routine. Being consistent and building trust are two of the many lessons rowing has taught me," she said.

"It felt unreal having an opportunity to compete at Regionals. My goal this year is to succeed in both academics and athletics, while continuously improving my skills for both," teammate Ava Yparraguirre, a first-year rower and coxswain of the U16 quad, said.

Stricklin explained that "the competition at the regional and national levels is extraordinary."

"The fitness, strength, and technique that these kids develop over the course of a year are remarkable. And then to compete and be considered among the top in a region or country...It's a major thing," he said.

To focus on fair competition, junior rowing racing categories have shifted mainly from traditional weight-based groups, such as lightweight and heavyweight, to age-based classifications. Designations include U16 (under 16) and U17 (under 17).

The highlight of the season was certainly the championship effort of the U16 quad, including coxswain Ava Yparraguirre and rowers Lauren Aldrete, Emma Perry,

Madison Minnitti and Olivia Moshiri. Finishing strongly in the time trials and heats, this group ran away with the championship, winning the event by over a boat length and bringing home the trophy to Xavier. Winning at Regionals was a first in Xavier history.

At nationals, the team faced unexpected challenges. The unpredictable Gulf Coast weather brought heavy storms, causing delays and forcing compressed competition schedules. Despite technical setbacks and a challenging time trial, U17 doubles partners Sophie Robaina and Ella Boyle won the C final, overtaking the competition in the final 200 meters for the victory.

Three boats earned spots in Sarasota: Izzy Castro and Olivia Moshiri, U17 Double (8th place); Cara Boyle, Julia Green, Emma Perry and Sienna Goforth, U17 Quad (14th place); and Sophie Robaina and Ella Boyle, U17 Double (17th place).

Now entering his third year as program head, Stricklin, a theology teacher at Xavier, is helping gain real momentum, with athletes and families responding to a renewed sense of unity, accountability, and pride.

Stricklin brings the perspective of a seasoned college rower. As a student-athlete at Loyola Marymount, he competed in the

IRA Championships in Syracuse and knows the level of athleticism needed to succeed. He first joined Xavier Crew as an assistant coach in 2022 and assumed the role of head coach in 2023, leading the program with a vision to elevate its standing. Strong recruiting and increased program visibility fueled significant growth, allowing the team to enter this year's competition with twice as many boats as in the previous two years.

Stricklin spoke with emotion about the seniors who helped carry the team through its rebuilding years. He also recognized the senior youth quad, who competed at Regionals but didn't advance to Nationals, as central to the team's progress.

"They showed up every day and modeled consistency, professionalism, and class," he said. "That group, along with the eight or nine seniors who just graduated, carried this team through the dog days. Our recent success is as much theirs as anyone's."

That commitment is reflected in the younger rowers who are already making their mark on the program.

"I have been rowing for about nine months and have attended both events, in Regionals competing in the U16 category, and Nationals competing in the U17 category. Before crew, I didn't play any sports, and now it is one of the most important things in my life," freshman Olivia Moshiri said. "My goals as a student-athlete are to return to Nationals and potentially make it to college rowing."

Coaching at Xavier has helped Stricklin reconnect with the sport he once rowed at the collegiate level. "I rediscovered my love for it," he reflected. "Being part of this team brought that passion back in a way I didn't expect."

As he looks ahead, Stricklin hopes to continue building a program that fosters discipline, camaraderie, and opportunity. "It's about more than winning races. It's about shaping futures."

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GET READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL

By Kylie de Best

Football is here, and high school programs are already deep in the playbook, preparing for a big season. Whether it's under the Friday night lights or the quick tempo of flag football action, Arcadia area teams are gearing up to leave it all on the field.

From weight room warriors to sideline strategists, here's a look at what's ahead for Arcadia, Brophy, Xavier, and Veritas in the 2025 football season.

ARCADIA HIGH

The Titans are eyeing the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year, and they've been grinding all summer to make sure they're peaking in the fourth quarter of the season. With early morning conditioning and team drills four days a week, this squad isn't just running plays – they're running a mission.

The team welcomed new head coach BJ Pasquel (*see right*), stepping in for the now-retired Coach Ray Brown. Pasquel brings a "tough but fair" approach, focused on discipline, accountability, and building a team-first culture.

As the season approaches, Pasquel said that younger athletes on the freshmen and JV teams need to focus on learning the core offensive and defensive plays and philosophies that define the Titan football program.

"Developing individual skills will be essential in preparing them for a future transition to the varsity level," he said.

A strong commitment to summer and spring workouts will also be crucial for improving strength, speed, and overall performance.

Across all levels, players are expected to lead by example and be a positive influence on campus.

"From a strategic standpoint, the team aims to execute a balanced, physical offense that builds on past successes while tailoring plays to the team's strengths,"

Pasquel added. "Defensively, success will come from a clear understanding of alignment, assignment, and technique – along with the ability to play fast and with intensity."

"I'm looking forward to this season because I get to be on the field with all my friends," quarterback Zach Smith said. "We're ready to lead the team and get ourselves back to the playoffs."

With a senior-heavy roster that knows what it takes to win, the Titans are huddling up with purpose and a clear goal: make the postseason and make some noise. Their first official practice kicks off August 4 – stay tuned for updates later in the season.

- 8/29 @ Bradshaw Mountain
- 9/5 @ Camelback
- 9/12 @ Moon Valley
- 9/18 Deer Valley
- 9/26 ALA – West Foothills
- 10/3 Combs
- 10/10 @ Mesquite
- 10/17 Poston Butte
- 10/24 Eastmark
- 10/31 @ Snowflake

All games at 7 p.m.

BROPHY PREP

The Broncos are charging into 2025 with a solid stable of returning talent, looking to build off last year's deep playoff run that ended in the 6A semifinals. While graduation hit their line hard, this year's training camp was all about filling the trenches with fresh strength.

Coach Jason Jewell, who brings more than a decade of college coaching experience, runs his practices like a D1 program – high tempo, high energy, and high expectations.

"We coach these kids hard, but we love them just as hard," Jewell said.

With eyes set on cracking The Open,

Arizona's elite playoff bracket, Brophy's motto this year might as well be reload – not rebuild. The opening game takes place on August 28 vs. powerhouse Basha.

- 8/28 Basha
- 9/5 @ Regis Jesuit
- 9/12 Perry
- 9/19 @ Hamilton
- 9/26 Red Mountain
- 10/3 Shadow Ridge
- 10/17 @ Higley
- 10/24 @ Liberty
- 10/31 @ Saguaro
- 11/7 Williams Field

All games at 7 p.m.

XAVIER PREP

Flag football is making waves, and the Gators are ready to dive into a packed season full of speed and strategy. With 12 regular-season games and a postseason tournament on the horizon, this year's team is a perfect blend of seasoned vets and hungry newcomers.

New head coach Matthew Reum (*see right*) aims to instill a culture of leadership, drawing on the wisdom of upperclassmen to elevate the entire roster. Summer practices and open workouts have laid the foundation, with tryouts coming soon.

"Flag football is fast-paced and exciting," player Imani Campbell said, "but it also takes a lot of communication and trust with your teammates. That's what makes it special." This year's home opener takes place on September 16 vs. Mesa High.

- 9/16 Mesa High
- 9/23 @ Higley
- 9/25 Westwood
- 10/2 St. Mary's
- 10/7 @ Perry

All games at 6 p.m.

VERITAS PREP

The Falcons are entering the season with more muscle and momentum than ever. With their largest summer camp turnout in program history and a strong offseason weight room presence, this squad is built for battle.

Coach Mike Sanfratello said the offseason gains are already paying off, calling this year's team "the strongest we've ever had." The Falcons will play nine regular-season games plus a region crossover matchup based on seeding – 10 games to prove their grit.

"This season, we're all in – no egos, no excuses, just a brotherhood built on trust and heart," Captain Baylor Arnold said. "Don't be surprised if you see Veritas on your feed in November."

With a powerful senior class and a coaching staff dedicated to developing leaders on and off the field, Veritas is hoping to go the distance and take it deep into the playoffs. Hit the stands on August 22 to watch the Falcons take on Camp Verde.

- 8/22 @ Camp Verde
- 8/29 Scottsdale Prep
- 9/5 @ Antelope
- 9/12 Mountainside
- 9/19 @ Benson
- 9/26 @ Highland Prep
- 10/3 Trivium Prep
- 10/17 @ Phoenix Christian

All games at 7 p.m.

Whether calling plays from the sideline, hitting the sled at practice, or cheering from the stands, the 2025 high school football season is shaping up to be a gridiron showdown to remember. Stay tuned – these teams are just getting warmed up.

BJ Pasquel ready to lead the Titans into a new era

By Cliff Summerhill

Arcadia High School has officially named BJ Pasquel as its new head football coach, welcoming a familiar face and seasoned leader to the top spot of the program.

Pasquel isn't new to the sidelines – he's been part of the football staff for nearly four years, most recently serving as the varsity offensive coordinator for the past two seasons.

"This will be my first year as head coach," Pasquel shared. "But the transition has been smooth because I've already built strong relationships with many of our student-athletes."

With 33 years of coaching high school football under his belt, Pasquel brings a wealth of experience. His résumé includes a 14-year run at Coronado High and a stint as offensive coordinator at Cactus Shadows. His journey into coaching, he says, was inspired by Coronado's well-known Coach Joe Corte.

"He taught me a lot about the game, but more importantly, he helped me become a better teacher and coach,"



BJ Pasquel

Pasquel said. "He was competitive, tough, consistent, fair, honest – and he genuinely cared about his student-athletes and his school. I've tried to follow that model in my own coaching."

In addition to his coaching background, Pasquel is a veteran educator – now entering his 29th year as a physical education teacher with the Scottsdale Unified School District, and his 10th year teaching at Arcadia.

"AHS is a wonderful community," he said. "I value the rich diversity of our student population. The

parents, alumni, and boosters all work together to support the football program and make it an incredible experience for the student-athletes."

Pasquel is focused on building a positive, growth-oriented team culture this season.

"My hope is that we create an environment that encourages athletes to learn and develop both on and off the field," he said. "Our goals are for every student to grow – athletically and academically – because of their involvement in football."

The Titans are coming off three straight playoff appearances, and Pasquel is ready to keep that momentum going.

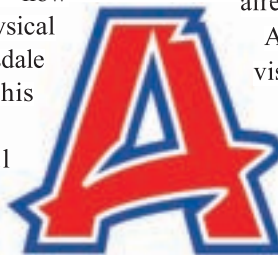
"We want to be playing our best football at the end of the season and make the playoffs for a fourth straight year," he said. "I'm looking to build on the great things that have already been happening here."

A strong coaching staff is also helping drive that vision. Defensive Coordinator Steve Struzyk and Offensive Line Coach Mike Hudnutt – fellow Arcadia educators – are key to maintaining consistency within the program.

"I feel lucky to be teaching and coaching at Arcadia High," Coach Struzyk said. "Coach Pasquel has assembled a great staff this year,

and I'm honored to be the defensive coordinator. The kids have been working extremely hard since spring to achieve their goals, which are to get better each week. The rest will take care of itself."

As Pasquel takes the reins, the Arcadia Titans are poised for another exciting season – built on tradition, driven by teamwork, and guided by a coach who's committed to excellence on every level.



Inspiring the next generation of flag football athletes

By Michael P. Murphy

Matt Reum remembers the day well, in when a friend asked for help in coaching his son's flag football team. As someone who enjoys all things sports-related, Matt accepted his friend's invitation and quickly developed a certain passion for the game. That was in 2019, and he has been coaching boys' and girls' flag football at the club and high school levels ever since.

"I love coaching," he said. "I had always coached other sports, such as basketball or baseball, but never flag football. I love mentoring the kids and coaching the right way to do things, how to get better and refine their skills."

That same passion led to his new position as the varsity flag football coach at Xavier Prep. Coaching syncs with his love of being outdoors. He has competed in



IRONMAN and triathlon endurance races, and in November 2024, he ran the New York marathon.

As a Brophy graduate who has lived in the community for 30 years, coaching the Xavier team is an opportunity he said he's very much looking forward to. It's a fall sport, so Matt is already set for those parent meetings, tryouts, and summer ball.

"Being a new coach, I thought it important for me to get to know the players," he said. "And for them to know me, know the program, and help them determine if they want to try out for the team."

Matt is a big believer in students learning life lessons through sports. Dedication, resilience, hard work, and teamwork are all important parts of the game. Having played many different sports while growing up, he understands that they are not the same, so

he developed a coaching style that caters to players who have never played flag football but have played other sports.

"I'll adapt their individual coaching to relate the skill or outcome we're trying to achieve to a skill they're more familiar with from that other sport," he said. "It's rewarding seeing the pride from an athlete as they evolve into a football player through that adaptive coaching approach."

Many of us might have played flag football during school recess, but the game is now much more than that. The popularity, for both boys and girls, has grown exponentially in varsity programs over the past few years. The game is also



Matt Reum

being added to the 2028 Olympics, where, for the first time, there will be more female athletes than male athletes.

"I want the girls to take away three things from this team," Matt said. "That they learn something they didn't know from playing, that they have fun, and gain more appreciation for the game. Right now, they are on the cusp of something that's going to

be around for a long time, and it's going to be an effective and rewarding way for young women to be involved in sports at the varsity level."

Flag football is a fast and exciting game. Fun, too. But it can also be a character-building life experience for the players, and that's just the way Coach Reum likes it.



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No tradesies happening with these lunch ideas

When August rolls around, it's back-to-school time – and for many of us, that means shifting back into busy routines. Between work, school drop-offs, and trying to stay cool, having a few easy meal ideas, especially ones that are healthy, satisfying, and lunchbox-friendly, can make all the difference.

In honor of National Sandwich Month, I'm sharing three plant-based sandwiches that are anything but boring. They're packed with vibrant vegetables, bold flavors, and wholesome ingredients perfect for lunch, dinner, or a shaded picnic at the park.

First up is a Mediterranean grilled sourdough sandwich layered with roasted eggplant, briny olives, and pesto or hummus. It's smoky, hearty, and delicious. The veggie hummus sandwich is loaded with grilled zucchini, a mix of veggies and a generous smear of homemade herby hummus – a crisp, cooling combo for hot afternoons. And finally, my personal

Plant-based Wellness



BY MIRIAM HAHN

Owner of YouCare-SelfCare, a private wellness practice specializing in plant-based lifestyle and disease prevention. youcare-selfcare.com

favorite: the classic chickpea mash (mock tuna). It's zesty, protein-packed, and even better after a night in the fridge. These recipes are quick to assemble, customizable, and perfect for anyone looking to add more color and crunch to their lunch.

I will also be hosting a couple of back-to-school cooking classes next month – stay tuned and join my monthly membership for printable recipes, health videos and live Zoom cooking classes. Only \$10 a month!

Mediterranean grilled sourdough sandwich SERVES 4



Ingredients

- ½ eggplant cut into six round slices about ½-inch thick
- Olive oil, salt, smoked paprika, garlic granules
- 1 cup pitted green olives
- Roasted red peppers from a jar
- Sun-dried tomatoes from a jar
- Fresh basil leaves
- Spinach
- Premade hummus or pesto
- Pepperoncinis
- Dairy free butter
- Sourdough – or whatever your fave is

Directions

1. **Preheat the oven to 400F.**
2. **Lay the eggplant in a single layer on a sheet pan and drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle on the seasonings. Roast 10-15 minutes or until the eggplant is nicely browned.**
3. **Dice the olives by hand or with a food chopper.**
4. **Slice the bread and butter one side.**
5. **On the unbuttered side, add a layer of the hummus or pesto on one side and a layer of the diced olive spread on the other. Then add the eggplant, roasted red pepper, sun dried tomatoes, pepperoncini, basil, and spinach.**
6. **Close the sandwich and sear in a hot skillet for about four minutes on each side. Cut and serve.**

Veggie hummus sandwich SERVES 2



Ingredients

- 1 small zucchini, thinly sliced lengthwise
- Olive oil, salt and pepper
- 2 cans cannellini beans
- 1 cup parsley
- 1 cup cilantro
- ½ cup tahini
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ½ tsp. pink salt
- ½ avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup shredded carrots
- 2 leaves green leaf lettuce
- 3 radishes
- 4 slices whole grain bread

Directions

1. **Add the oil to a cast iron skillet and bring heat to medium-high. Add the zucchini strips and grill for one to two minutes on each side until charred and tender.**
2. **Make the hummus by putting the cannellini beans, tahini, lemon zest and juice, cumin, garlic, olive oil, salt, parsley, and cilantro into a food processor and blending until smooth. Or, use premade hummus to save time.**
3. **Toast bread and spread the hummus on both sides. (You'll have leftovers to use as a dip!)**
4. **Add a layer of shredded carrots to each side so they stay in the hummus. Then, on one side, add the zucchini strips, radish slices, avocado slices, and lettuce.**
5. **Press together and slice in half.**

Classic chickpea mash (mock tuna) SERVES 4



Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 diced celery stalks
- 2 tbsp. diced red onion
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- ¼ cup chopped dill pickles
- 2-3 tbsp. vegan mayo
- 2 tsp. grainy mustard
- Ezekiel toast
- Broccoli sprouts
- Tomato

Directions

1. **Mash chickpeas and combine with the rest of the ingredients.**
2. **Spread on toast, add tomato and sprouts. Enjoy!**

Sage

This is your moment, know it and grow it!

Sage – recognized as culinary sage or common garden sage – is a medium sized, multipurpose, perennial shrub that can reach up to four feet in height and likes to grow in sandy or loamy soil. It is part of the mint family and has green branches, hairy elongated light gray-green colored leaves with a strong, almost winey, dominant flavor. Sage's piney, lemony, camphor-like aroma capitalizes on our most memory-evoking sense and smell, and is slightly bitter. Its taste and the flowers that bloom in the summer awaken other senses.

While acknowledging that basil leaves enchant me,

the sage leaf is among my absolute favorite. I love its shape, color and especially its structure. Each leaf contains various minerals such as potassium, calcium and magnesium, which are important for the health of our body. Because sage leaves are dear to my heart, many bushes grow in the garden and new ones get planted every year.

Sage has the oldest history among medicinal herbs. It's not just folk tales that speak of the

benefits, many do not realize what a rich history sage has had throughout the ages.

Sage was used as a fertility treatment in ancient Egyptian times. Greeks used it for wound healing, women's health, as a diuretic, for snakebites and as a meat preservative. They were the first to cultivate it and are the ones responsible for the herb we know today. During the Middle Ages it was used to treat maladies including fevers, liver disease, and epilepsy. The Romans considered it a sacred herb to be gathered with ceremony.

In the ninth century, Charlemagne had sage included among the herbs grown on his imperial farm in Germany. During the 1600s, the Chinese exchanged the herb with Europeans. It was used in England to make tea. An Old-World herb, sage was brought to America by colonists for use in their gardens and kitchens.

People use it to smudge and clear the atmosphere of their homes. One common belief is that sage strengthens the brain, the senses, and memory in addition to being an all-natural source of antioxidants with anti-inflammatory properties. In the United States, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, California, Utah, and North and South Dakota grow sage on farms and in orchards.

Beyond their appeal in returning year after year, they are also frequently used in flower borders for their

beautiful foliage and flowers. Throughout the summer and fall, they lend a wonderful palette of color and texture. In spring, they erupt in colorful blooms while many stay green year-round.

Sage is said to love company, it's unlucky to plant it in a pot or flowerbed by itself. It should be added during spring or fall as they will not establish themselves in summer heat. They form bubbly soft gray mounds that are hardy and can tolerate areas of little rainfall. Be mindful not to allow sage to compete with tree roots.

Fresh sage leaves are thicker with a soft, downy feeling. They can be harvested as needed any time of year, although the most intensely flavored leaves are gathered prior to flowering. Fresh cut herbs have a limited shelf life and can get expensive depending on how many you need. Common sage is economical and timesaving, whereas variegated and purple sages are a tad bitter for cooking. Spring sage is tender in flavor

“Because sage leaves are dear to my heart, many bushes grow in the garden and new ones get planted every year.”

and texture, but as the season progresses the flavor becomes more pronounced and the leaves sturdier.

It's one of the few herbs when, as its leaves grow larger, the flavor intensifies. The leaves are easily torn but are usually chopped or minced before adding to a dish.

Today we've relegated the flavor of sage to heartier fall dishes, like Thanksgiving stuffing. Try diced leaves in omelets, soups, breads, sausages, fish, tomatoes, asparagus, brussels sprouts, cabbage, oranges, lemons, garlic, cheese and marinades. They can also be fried to a crispy texture for pasta and gnocchi. It's a main component found in many poultry and Italian seasoning blends.

If your plant is already in place don't be tempted to start pruning it before you see fresh growth appearing at nodes along the stems. Choose a dry day without too much wind. Sage can only be propagated by cuttings and should be taken between the end of April and the beginning of June. At this time, the shoots are at the optimum stage of maturity, and not too soft. Experts suggest removing a sage plant after four to five years. The leaves are thought to lose their fresh flavor and develop a “woody” taste.

It's best to add dried sage toward the beginning of

a recipe so it has time to mellow and blend with other flavors in the dish. There's no dismissing the rewards of using fresh herbs and being able to gently press a leaf between your fingers to release the scent. Add fresh sage toward the end of cooking for nuance and complexity.

If you have a lot of herbs and a food processor, homemade pesto is easy to make. Here lies a world of possibilities, the side of pesto's improvisational nature rather than following a recipe. Pesto made with sage has a strong, penetrating smell released by brushing that's intensified by tearing or chopping. It is also an astringent, which is what makes it excellent with meat, and fat, as well as with nuts such as pistachios or hazelnuts. The best pesto comes through innovation and are always made with fresh leaves and a variety of nuts and cheeses.

Pistachios make a great base because they complement the strong flavor of the sage. A dollop on top of soups like roasted butternut squash, tomato, cauliflower, and minestrone give the ideal burst of flavor with its rich consistency and concentrated flavor. Consider it for steamed or grilled vegetables. Most white meats go beautifully with pistachio-sage pesto – think delicate scallops or halibut baked in foil with cherry tomatoes. It's best on pasta or rice – heat wakes up the scent of the “secret ingredient.”

The color is a softer, gentler green but the flavor is stand-up-and-be-noticed good – a full palate sensation! Blend the ingredients together at high-speed without the olive oil, then mix it in at the very end at a low speed. Remember the rich history of this herb as it was used throughout the ages, from family kitchens to monasteries to king's castles. Enjoy!

Pistachio-sage pesto

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups fresh basil
- 10 medium tender young sage leaves, washed and dried (roughly half a cup)
- 2-3 garlic cloves, peeled
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt, or to taste
- ¼ tsp. black pepper, or to taste
- 1/3 cup lightly toasted pistachios
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup grated Romano cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Instructions:

1. Put the pistachios in a food processor and pulse until they are coarsely ground or hand chop to a fine consistency.
2. Add the basil, sage, garlic, cheeses and blend.
3. Slowly add in the olive oil and blend once again until smooth.
4. Scrape down the sides, season with lemon juice, salt and pepper.
5. Blend again.
6. Refrigerate the pesto with plastic pressed to the surface to prevent browning or freeze in small batches and defrost as needed.



Thyme in My Kitchen

BY SHERRY KLUSMAN

@thyme.in.my.kitchen

DID YOU KNOW? WATERMELON

HOW HEAVY?

350 POUNDS

As of July 2025, the heaviest watermelon ever grown remains the record set by Chris Kent in 2013, weighing 350.5 pounds. In the years since, Kent has continued breaking records; at the North Carolina State Fair in 2022 and 2023, he entered watermelons weighing 287 and 308.1 pounds respectively, placing first and third in the watermelon division.



WHAT SHAPE?

CUBE

Cubed watermelons, grown in Japan, are cultivated in special square containers that shape the fruit as it grows. These melons are primarily decorative and often used as luxury gifts due to their high price (up to \$200!) and novelty.



While they are pretty neat looking, they are usually harvested before full ripeness, making them less sweet than regular watermelons. A few farms do grow edible square watermelons, but they're rare and even more expensive due to the care needed to balance shape and taste.

HOW MANY?

1,200 VARIETIES



There are around 1,200 different varieties grown worldwide, ranging in color, size, shape, and taste. These include the red ones we're most familiar with, yellow and orange-fleshed varieties, seedless hybrids, and even miniature or icebox melons. Each variety is bred for specific traits, like sweetness, texture, rind thickness, or climate adaptability. Some, like the Japanese Densuke, are known for their rarity and price, while others, like Crimson Sweet or Sugar Baby, are popular for home gardens and farms.

WHICH STATE?

FLORIDA

Florida is the leading producer of watermelons in the U.S. In 2022, the state produced over nine million hundredweight (also known as CWT – centum weight – or 100 pounds) of watermelons, accounting for approximately 30 percent of the nation's total production.

A surprising fact: Arizona is also one of the top watermelon-producing states, with farms concentrated primarily in Maricopa, Yuma, Pinal, Cochise, and La Paz counties. These regions supply almost six percent of U.S. watermelon production, with harvest running from May through November.



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DID YOU KNOW? WATERMELON

Watermelon is a fruit (more specifically, a berry), but it's also considered a vegetable because it's related to cucumbers, pumpkins and squash.

About 92 percent of its weight is water, making it one of the most hydrating fruits you can eat.

Most seedless watermelons are produced through hybridization, not modification.

The rind and seeds are also edible: The rind can be pickled or stir-fried, and the seeds can be roasted and eaten like nuts.

Watermelon is believed to have originated in the Kalahari Desert in Africa.

Ancient seeds have been found in Egyptian tombs dating back over 4,000 years.

In the United States, National Watermelon Day is celebrated on August 3.

Watermelon is high in lycopene, an antioxidant that may help protect against certain diseases.

Watermelon has been studied in space farming experiments to understand how to grow fruit in environments like the International Space Station or on Mars missions.

The word "watermelon" first appeared in the English dictionary in 1615.

A watermelon takes about 90 days to grow, from planting to harvesting.

In Egypt and Israel, it is common for watermelon to be served with feta cheese.



SAY WHAT?

HE COULD...GO... ALL...THE...WAY!

In 1989, during the annual Luling Watermelon Thump in Texas – a four-day festival featuring melon-eating contests, parades, and entertaining competitions – Lee Wheelis set out to make history at the event's specially constructed "Spitway."



Competing against skilled locals and visitors, each aiming for fresh glory in the "World Championship Seed Spitting Contest," Wheelis achieved something extraordinary: he launched a watermelon seed an astonishing 68 feet 9¹/₂ inches.

That 1989 feat didn't just reclaim the festival's record after previous competitor John Wilkinson's win, it earned Wheelis national fame. He drew media attention, fielded radio interviews, and became something of a local legend.

His record has officially stood for over 35 years. Even today, the Watermelon Thump honors its world-record spitters with cash prizes, celebrations and a dedicated viewing arena.

WORD SEARCH



CUBE
EGYPT
FLORIDA
FRUIT
HUNDREDWEIGHT

JAPAN
KALAHARI
LUXURY
MARICOPA
SEED

SWEET
TEXAS
THUMP
VEGETABLE
WATERMELON



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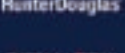
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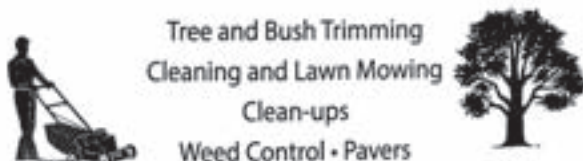
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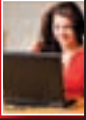
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Meet the new Titan in the Times

Hello, Arcadia News readers! I'm Francesca Mena. I'm a junior at Arcadia High School, and the newest writer of the Titan Times.

I don't just want to be a name attached to an article though, so here's a bit about

me: I've lived in the neighborhood almost my whole life. I attended Hopi and Ingleside before becoming a Titan. I have a little brother going into eighth grade at Ingleside; and my family and friends are important to me.

I'm involved in dance and theater, and I even had the opportunity to choreograph the spring musical last semester. Make sure to mark your calendar for all of Arcadia's shows this year – dance, theater, band, CMAS, and more!



Francesca Mena

When I'm not studying or performing, I love to read and write. I've wanted to be a journalist since sixth grade. When I saw the "new voices wanted" issue of the Titan Times, I knew that was my chance. I reached out to AHS grad Ahva Ghazanfari, the founder of the Titan Times, and thanks to her, I get the opportunity to write for this great newspaper.

This past spring, our 2025 seniors graduated, and with them the writers of the Titan Times, but this year's goals remain the same. This section aims to highlight what makes Arcadia great: the people – and more specifically, the students. Readers may see feature stories about them or read about what's important to them.

Looking to the future, I can't wait to be a voice in the paper and share all the great things I see about Arcadia, both the high school and the community.

WELCOME BACK, TITANS!

We all love summer, right? Endless pool days, ice cream, hanging out with friends, traveling, and most importantly: no homework. But part of what makes the season so exceptional is that it doesn't last forever. The end of summer

is close at hand and students are getting ready to come back to school... and this year? They're excited.

I've spoken to current Arcadia students (don't worry, freshmen – you'll get your moment!), and here's what they're looking forward to for the 2025-26 school year.

A common theme between classes is an excitement to move up a grade: the sophomores are happy to no longer be freshmen, the juniors are looking forward to being upperclassmen, and the seniors are anticipating the start of their last year of high school.

Many students are also ready for the novelty of the year: new friends, new teachers, new classes. Students appreciate the old, too: catching up with friends, resuming extracurriculars and sports, and the start of familiar traditions: football season, here we come.

Of course, the Class of 2026, our seniors, have the most to look forward to, as this is their year of lasts: last first day of school, last high school sports season, last homecoming and prom. But this is also the year that they get to experience special senior traditions: senior sunrise and sunset, market day, senior breakfast, grad-walk, and the cherry on top at the end of the year, graduation!

Although I am not a senior myself, I wish the Class of 2026 nothing but the best as they start the final chapter of their high school careers, and here's to a brand new year as Arcadia Titans!

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