

ARCADIA NEWS

VOL. 33 NO. 12

ARCADIA • BILTMORE • CAMELBACK CORRIDOR

MARCH 2026



WHAT AN ADVENTURE!

Arcadia Little League All Stars took their talents to Taiwan for eight days of baseball games, tours and cultural education.

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LEMONADE STAND DAY

PANDA's annual Lemonade Stand Day returns across Phoenix to raise funds for pediatric research and support.

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SPARKLE AND SHINE

Arcadian Tessa Frey spearheaded a community-wide prom dress drive, helping students celebrate with confidence.

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MARCH

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From a comforting latte during a difficult hospital stay to a custom-built mobile coffee cart, Grounds & Gratitude serves up care and connection.

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Arcadia High School student-athletes were honored at the annual All-District banquet, where record-setting Titans showcased their talent, resilience, and dedication.



Arcadia Little League's Jack Brandt, Cannon Olmsted, Will Clancey, Jacob Silius, Walker Freckmann, Liam Voris, Oakley Knutson, Andrew Wachinski, Ben McLyn, Chase Amundson and Cody Openden.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DANNY OPENDEN

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The furthest I've traveled nationally is Wisconsin – which, if you know anything about the Midwest, is a totally different mindset. The furthest I've traveled internationally is Cabo San Lucas – a popular retreat for Arizonans and thus, not that interesting.

There are 11 Arcadia Little Leaguers that have me beat as far as traveling goes (and honestly, as far as baseball goes), since the team returned from a whirlwind adventure in Taiwan in January.

Tony Kao, a Taiwanese government official and baseball fan, arranged a trip for the All Stars after watching them win a state tournament in 2025. He organized scrimmages and cultural visits for the team, its chaperones... even Mayor Kate Gallego joined in! Over eight days, the players bonded with Taiwanese teams, returning home with an appreciation for the way baseball can connect people around the world.

We've got a few holidays and Spring Training going on, plus PANDA's

annual Lemonade Stand Day is happening on March 29 and the Festival of Hope – an inaugural event hosted by Tristan's Trees – is taking place on March 1. Plenty of food, fun, and education and more are happening this month!

Arcadia News is pleased to present the 2026 Spring *Arcadia Home & Design* edition, where readers will find stories about new charging technology, trends in wallpaper and the Arizona Worm Farm, a gardening organization that opened in 2018 and focuses on helping Arizona growers thrive.

We hope you enjoy reading this special Spring edition as much as we enjoyed creating it, and thank you, as always, for reading the Arcadia News!

mallory

– Mallory Gleich



UPCOMING THEMES:

APRIL

Camp Guide

MAY

Mothers

JUNE

Summer

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"A day without sunshine is like, you know, night." – Steve Martin

ARCADIA'S PETS

1. Hello my name is **Dunkin** and I am a new Haver-Hood resident! I was rescued four years ago from kitty foster care and live a very happy life. I enjoy chasing bugs, morning breakfast treats, and sleeping 20 hours a day!

–Karen C.



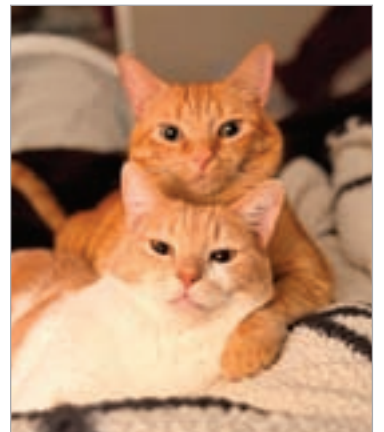
2. I'm **Enzo**, a one-year-old Golden Retriever living in Arcadia Lite. I love my little human sister, Kai, who is seven months old. People know me as the gentle giant – I'm the sweetest boy, love to play, and really enjoy my walks in the neighborhood.

– Lauren M.



3. **Jack** is 4-year-old, 22-pound orange tabby and a love bug! We've had him for 11 months, and so far, his favorite thing to do is cuddle. When he's feeling feisty, Jack likes to play with his brother **Jonah** and our 20-year-old beagle Clementine. He enjoys sitting at the screen door looking out and making friends with the outdoor kitties in the neighborhood. He never forgoes a second lunch or a nice, long nap.

– Leticia C.



4. This is **Remington**, an Australian labradoodle who's 15 weeks old! He moved in with us on November 1. Remy is pure chaos in a fluffy body. Zoomies at full speed, zero brakes, unlimited personality. He's playful, hyper, and always up to something. Best addition to our family and the best dog ever. Life is way more fun with him!

– Sophie H.



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!



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VOTED BEST SEAFOOD IN LOVIN' LIFE 2023, 2024, 2025
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Echo Canyon’s young chefs have a ‘waffle-lot’ of heart

By Cliff Summerhill

Even without a trophy, Echo Canyon Middle School walked away from the Feeding the Future culinary contest with something more lasting: a renewed appreciation for community, creativity, and the belief that students can do extraordinary things when given real responsibility.

Feeding the Future pairs students with professional chefs from across Arizona and challenges them to design healthy, affordable meals that could realistically be served in school cafeterias. This year, 11 schools from across the Valley competed. Echo Canyon didn’t take the top spot, but their Sonoran Sunrise waffle sandwich made an impression.

Echo Canyon has been connected to the Blue Watermelon Project for a decade, serving as its main campus. According to Principal Kat Hughes, this year was their second – and, due to the school’s impending closure – their last year participating.

The team included four students: Chloe Wilkins, Jonah Gross, Dewone Smith, and Hanna Dickson. They worked under chef mentor Rachel Tribby from Arizona State University to create an open-faced waffle sandwich called the Sonoran Sunrise, inspired by Southwest flavors, family breakfasts, and school nutrition guidelines.

Students had to navigate unique challenges faced by both school food regulations and industry chefs.



Echo Canyon students Jonah Gross, Chloe Wilkins, Hanna Dickson, and Dewone Smith with chef mentor Rachel Tribby from Arizona State University and Principal Kat Hughes.

“This recipe was actually really hard to make work,” Hanna said during the group’s presentation to the judges. “We had ideas we loved, but we had to follow real school food rules like calories, sodium, and cost. We learned that chefs don’t just cook what they want, they solve problems.”

The students leaned into regional identity by incorporating prickly pear cactus, a bright and distinctly Southwestern ingredient. To balance its sweetness, they experimented with herbs grown in Echo Canyon’s school garden, ultimately choosing rosemary for its savory aroma

and kid-friendly appeal. Cost constraints meant using the prickly pear as a garnish and using honey to enhance the visual presentation.

For Jonah, returning for a second year changed his outlook.

“Coming back felt like I had more opportunities,” he said. “I could experiment more, and since we had the same team, we shared ideas that we thought would be cool. Looking back at what I did last year, I feel like I really improved.”

His favorite moment wasn’t cooking; it was competition day itself. “It’s stressful, but it’s so fun to walk around and try a bunch of dishes,” he shared. “At the end, everyone’s eating popsicles and waiting for the winner. We didn’t win, but it was still really fun.”

A highlight for the team was visiting FnB, the acclaimed restaurant run by Chef Charleen Badman – founder of the Blue Watermelon Project. The experience gave students a new perspective on textures, flavors, and how local ingredients can shine in modern dishes.

With Echo Canyon set to close at the end of the school year, the Sonoran Sunrise waffle sandwich has taken on deeper meaning. As Chloe shared with judges, the recipe represents the school’s community, memories, and what students can create when they are supported.

bluewatermelonproject.org

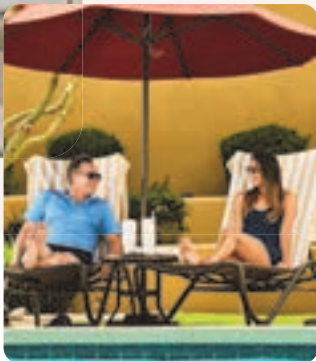


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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

BRIEFS

Mark your calendars: The 11th annual **Arcadia Cares: Food for Kidz Packathon** is back and scheduled for March 6 (4-7 p.m.) and March 7 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (3641 N. 56th St., Phoenix). The community is welcome to volunteer to help pack meals for underprivileged families. poppheoenix.org

Plan ahead: The 14th annual **Team Taylor Arcadia Family Fun Run** will happen on April 26, 2026, at 48th St. along the canal. At the event, participants will run, walk or wheel their way through Arcadia in remembrance of children who lost their lives to AIDS. Proceeds benefit Phoenix Children's Safe Sleep & Home Safety Program. There will be an afterparty at O.H.S.O. Registration is open. phoenixchildrensfoundation.org

Also happening in April: The 14th annual **Rescue Rinse** is happening on April 4 at ReThink Agency, 4714 N. 44th St. Bring your pups for a bath benefitting Desert Tails Shelter. ReThink will provide water, shampoo and treats for any family that stops by. Pet parents can enjoy coffee and pastries. There will also be a silent auction. Washes are a \$20 minimum donation. rescuerinse.com

Debuting this March, **Camelback Plumbing** is an owner-operated plumbing company serving Arcadia and the greater Phoenix area. Founded by Phoenix natives, Camelback Plumbing is licensed for residential and commercial plumbing (ROC 362009) and handles repairs, drain and sewer work, water heaters, water filtration systems, and preventative maintenance. camelbackplumbing.com



Pita Jungle is celebrating **National Pita Day** with a weekend-long fundraiser on March 28 and 29, donating \$1 to Arizona nonprofit Waste Not for every pita sandwich sold at participating locations. The promotion supports Waste Not's mission to create sustainable food systems while allowing guests to enjoy a variety of pita options through dine-in or takeout orders. wastenotaz.org

St. Mary's Catholic High School will host its annual Taste of St. Mary's dinner and silent auction on March 21, featuring a Hollywood-themed evening of glitz and glam, beginning with a tour of the newly remodeled gym, plus cocktails, music, and an auction. Proceeds from the event support St. Mary's students and programs. Tickets are \$60. smknights.org

EVENTS

TUESDAY 3/3

Celestial Circle Series

5 p.m. at Sanctuary Camelback Mountain, 5700 E. McDonald Dr., Paradise Valley. Each circle event at Sanctuary blends traditions with modern mindfulness, offering grounding practices of guided meditation. Guests will learn to align with the rhythms and cycles of nature, deepen self-awareness, and cultivate calm. This evening's theme is "the equinox of becoming." Registration is \$45. sanctuaryaz.com

THURSDAY 3/5

Roars and Pours

5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Phoenix Zoo, 455 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix. It's time to get wild for Happy Hour. Roars and Pours is a 21 and over event that boasts craft brews, wine and food options, and open walking trails. Attendees can also visit special exhibits, play lawn games and hear live music and entertainment. Tickets are \$10. phoenixzoo.org

FRIDAY 3/6 - SATURDAY 3/7

Scottsdale Family ArtsFest

5-9 p.m. and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd. Fun for all ages happens at ArtsFest. Guests will see performances, interactive demonstrations, and creative interventions. Grab a bite from various food trucks and experience performances and art exhibitions delivered by SUSD students, family-friendly activities and more. This event is free. scottsdalearts.org

SATURDAY 3/7

Persian New Year Festival

11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd. Celebrate the spring season at this year's Persian New Year Festival. Guests will find authentic food, music and dance performances, plus a comedy show, a vendor marketplace, activities for kid and art from local and international vendors. General admission is \$15; VIP packages available for \$175. pnyf.org

El Rio Vivo Art & Music Festival

8 a.m. at Liberty Wildlife, 2600 E. Elmwood St., Phoenix. Get some fresh air and learn about conservation at the third annual El Rio Vivo event. Attendees start the day with a nature walk along a City of Phoenix nature trail, then head back to campus for art vendors, live music, shopping, educational booths, activities for the kids, food trucks and animal encounters. This event is free for all ages. libertywildlife.org



El Rio Vivo Art & Music Festival at Liberty Wildlife in Phoenix.

Rock the Night: British Invasion

5:30 p.m. at Shrine Auditorium, 552 N. 40th St., Phoenix. Rock the Night is a concert-style fundraiser celebrating iconic music and inspired by legendary UK artists like the Beatles to Elton John and beyond. There will be themed dinner stations, a hosted bar, activations and an auction, plus live performances from the Phoenix Children's Chorus. Tickets start at \$200 per person. phoenixchildrenschorus.org

Mariachi and Folklorico Festival

7 p.m. at Herberger Theater's Center Stage, 222 E. Monroe St., Phoenix. Prepare for a world of music and culture at this evening's event. Guests will hear – and see – the musical stylings of Mariachi Los Camperos, Mariachi Nuevo Azteca, Alan Ponce, Mariachi Nuevo Azteca and Ballet Folklórico Quetzalli-AZ. Those who attend the reception will be treated to an exclusive pre-show Tequila Herradura tasting and a performance by Miguel Aldaz. Tickets start at \$52. herbergertheater.org

Scottsdale Pickle Party

12 p.m. at Wasted Grain, 7295 E. Stetson Dr. If you love pickles, this event is for you! Gather at this Old Town hotspot for a live band and DJ, a complimentary shot (with a pickle back, of course), access to a special food and bev menu, including mocktails, photo ops, giveaways and a commemorative t-shirt. Tickets start at \$10. wastedgrain.com

SATURDAY 3/14

Pancakes and Booze Art Show

8 p.m. at The Duce, 525 S. Central Ave., Phoenix. This L.A.-based event started in 2009 and has since traveled to over 35

cities nationwide. Guests can revel in music performances from area musicians and DJs, meet over 75 artists, check out over 300 pieces of art and watch live shows – not to mention the free pancakes! Tickets start at \$15, and this is a 21-and-over event. pancakesandbooze.com

St. Patrick's Day Parade and Faire

10 a.m. at Margaret T. Hance Park, 67 W. Culver St., Phoenix. This St. Patrick's Day, head downtown and catch all the festivities – starting with a parade on 3rd St. and Oak. There will be marching bands, dance performances, bagpipes and decked out floats. Afterward, head to the Irish Faire to find live music, entertainment, food and drinks, a vendor market, and activities for the kids. Admission is \$15. stpatricksdayphoenix.org

Exclusively Little Expo

9 a.m.-1 p.m. at McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park, 7301 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale. If you're looking for family resources, this expo can be your one-stop shop. There will be booths on summer camps, educational institutions, attractions, youth sports organizations, and other area businesses. There will also be interactive activities for kids, guest performances, and train rides. Admission is \$3 per person. therailroadpark.com

Ancient Technology Day

9 a.m. at the S'edav Va'aki Museum, 4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix. This technology isn't the stuff that we're used to. The whole family can travel back in time and learn about atlatl throwing, adobe brick making, weaving their own cloth, roasted agave from an earthen oven, and many more technologies from way back in the day. Admission is \$13 for adults, \$6 for kids. phoenix.gov

WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



Mixtape Magic Gala at the JW Marriot Camelback Inn Resort & Spa.



Spirit of Mexico Festival at Heritage Park in Phoenix.

SUNDAY 3/15

Art Walk

1 p.m. at Biltmore Fashion Park, 2502 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. Biltmore Fashion Park debuted a new Sunday event series that showcases rotating exhibitions spotlighting Arizona artists. Gallery walls will be constructed in the outdoor area, allowing artists to connect with collectors and shoppers. There will also be drinks and small bites available. This event is free.

reddevelopment.com

TUESDAY 3/17

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

6 p.m. at the Scottsdale Public Library, 3839 N. Drinkwater Blvd. This month's Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable will host speaker Roseann Bacha-Garza, whose presentation is entitled "The Civil War on the Rio Grande." Doors open at 5 p.m. for meeting the speaker, book sale, and Civil War videos. This event is free.

scottsdalecwrt.org

SATURDAY 3/21

Mixtape Magic Gala

6 p.m. at the JW Marriot Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, 5402 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale. Child Crisis Arizona will host its 49th annual fundraising gala and take guests on a journey back to the 80s, complete with dinner, an auction, arcade games, live entertainment, iconic 1980s look-alikes including Cyndi Lauper and Madonna, and Glamour Shots. Individual tickets start at \$500.

childcrisisaz.org

Pickleball Clinic for Kids

12 p.m. at the Phoenix Tennis Center, 6330 N. 21st Ave., Phoenix. This clinic, hosted

by Chicago transplant Mark Miller and the Munchkin Programs, invites kids aged 3-8 to an afternoon of pickleball lessons. Attendees will receive tips, tricks, learn the rules and play the game – and the first 150 to register will receive a free slice of cake from Portillos.

munchkinprogram.com

SATURDAY 3/21 – SUNDAY 3/22

Spirit of Mexico Festival

11 a.m. at Heritage Park, 113 N. 6th St., Phoenix. The Spirits of Mexico Festival brings the sights, sounds, and flavors of Sonora to downtown Phoenix. The event will feature live music and folkloric dance,

authentic cuisine, indigenous art, and cultural demonstrations. Guests can also elevate the experience with VIP tastings, mixology and cooking classes, guided spirit sessions with master distillers, and more. General admission starts at \$20.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



ACMNA's founder Gerrit Steenblik (red hat) and former ACMNA President Paul Barnes (red shirt) with Gerrit's 1952 Ford Pickup at the Arcadia Auto Rama.

Veritas Music Fest

3-9 p.m. at Veritas Prep, 3102 N. 56th St., Phoenix. The eighth annual Veritas Music Fest happens today. Guests can come out and enjoy various student-run and professional performers and bands and win prizes from the raffle drawing. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$5 per person or \$25 per carload.

veritasprep.greatheartamerica.org

SUNDAY 3/29

Bunny Brunch

8:30 and 10:30 a.m. at the Phoenix Zoo, 455 N. Galvin Pkwy. Breakfast and fun in one. Guests can enjoy a brunch buffet, photos with the Easter Bunny, and admission into the zoo, which is included with the Bunny Brunch ticket price: adults are \$46, kids are \$38.

phoenixzoo.org

Windsor Square Historic Home Tour

11 a.m., starting at 200 E. Orange Dr., Phoenix. The Windsor Square home tour allows attendees to check out eleven homes in an array of architectural styles, including Spanish Colonial Revival, International and Transitional Ranch, and afterwards, visit a variety of jewelry, craft and other vendors at the street fair. A day of shopping, history, live music and more – sounds like the perfect Sunday! Tickets are \$30.

windsorsquarephoenix.com

SUNDAY 3/22

Arcadia Auto Rama

8-11 a.m. at Hopi Elementary School, 5110 E. Lafayette Blvd., Phoenix. Exhibitor registration is currently open for those who would like to be in the show. Guests can browse through cars, trucks, tractors and specialty vehicles. Trophies will be given out for Best in Show – People's Choice, Best in Arcadia and Judges' Choice. It costs \$20 to register, but there's no admission for spectators.

acmna.org

SATURDAY 3/28

A Roaring '20s Affair

5 p.m. at Mountain America Stadium, 500 E. Veterans Way, Tempe. Celebrate the inspiring stars of Camp Patrick during a Roaring '20s-themed gala under the night sky. There will be dinner, drinks, silent and live auctions, and stories highlighting how Camp Patrick supports kids and young adults living with Spina Bifida. Tickets start at \$250 per person.

camppatrick.com

Star Party

6:30 p.m. at Apache Wash Trailhead Park, 1600 E. Sonoran Desert Dr., Phoenix. Phoenix Astronomical Star Parties are exactly what they sound like – an evening of staring at the night sky! PAS experts will be on-hand to show attendees different parts of the sky – you might see different galaxies, star clusters, planets... the options and the beauty are endless. Bring your telescope if you have one! This event is free.

pasaz.org

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Record Breaking Sales

Since the beginning of the year, two homes in Arcadia and one in Biltmore closed at record-breaking prices. In all three transactions, we represented the seller.

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ARCADIA 5517 E Mariposa \$3,915,000
Highest sale for a lot under 34,000 square feet with buyer intent to build new construction



ARCADIA 4108 N 52nd St \$2,000,000
Highest sale of a floodplain lot in Arcadia Proper



BILTMORE 3186 E Stella Ln \$2,900,000
Highest sale of a home in Biltmore Greens

Each property had its own story and its own challenges. Achieving these outcomes required understanding not just what the market had done, but where it was willing to go.

When ceilings move in Arcadia and Biltmore, it is rarely accidental. It is the result of our disciplined strategy, strong relationships, and the trust our clients place in us to execute at the highest level.

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OUT OF THE AREA, BUT WORTH THE DRIVE

SUNDAY 3/1

Yoga at the Farm
9 a.m. at The Farm at South Mountain, 6106 S. 32nd St., Phoenix. A peaceful practice that doesn't require a two-hour drive to the pines. Yoga at the Farm is hosted by Master Yoga Instructor Jessica Dent, who will lead attendees through various poses for a 1.5-hour class. Afterward, head to Morning Glory café for breakfast – and if you need a little retail therapy, Botanica is here to help. Tickets are \$20.
thefarmsouthmountain.com

SATURDAY 3/7

Karaoke Paint N' Sip
7 p.m. at the Nile Theatre, 105 W. Main St., Mesa. Do you love punk rock? Do you love painting? Then this event is for you! The Nile will host a paint and sip where guests can hear all their favorite tunes while painting a masterpiece to take home. All materials – and one free drink – is included, and the singing? Well, that's optional. Tickets start at \$45.
theniletheater.com

SATURDAY 3/7 – SUNDAY 3/8

Downtown Chandler BBQ Festival
11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Dr. AJ Chandler Park East, 3 S. San Marcos Pl. SanTan Brewing Company and SanTan Spirits unite to bring beers and BBQ together. Guests will find dishes from Brisket Burger by Caldwell County BBQ, Back Alley BBQ, Honey Bears BBQ, Tom's BBQ and Just the T.I.P., and more, plus cocktails, games and live music. Tickets start at \$22.
santanbrewing.com

FRIDAY 3/13 – SUNDAY 3/15

Experience Ireland
9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Musical Instrument Museum, 4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day early with Experience Ireland at the MIM. Guests can listen to Irish music with authentic instruments, watch a step-dancing

performance, participate in family-friendly crafts and activities and enjoy an Irish lunch. General admission is \$20 for adults, \$10 for kids.
mim.org

Ostrich Festival
Times vary, at Rawhide Western Town, 5700 W. North Loop Road, Chandler. The 35th annual Ostrich Festival boasts national and local entertainment – this year Kansas, Rayvn Lenae and Jo Dee Messina will take the stage for weekend one. Carnival rides, food trucks, a petting zoo, animal races and, of course, ostriches will also be there. This event also takes place March 20-22. Tickets start at \$20 per person.
ostrichfestival.com

THURSDAY 3/19 – SUNDAY 3/22

Scottsdale Ferrari Art Week
Times vary, at WestWorld of Scottsdale, 16601 N. Pima Road. The premier international art and design fair in the Southwest, this event will showcase leading galleries from across the country and world exhibiting one-of-a-kind works from established and emerging artists. Ferrari Art Week combines historic American and contemporary art and design with a special focus on Indigenous and Latinx artists. Tickets start at \$30 with VIP packages available.
scottsdaleartweek.com

FRIDAY 3/20

Big Night Out Gala
5:30 p.m. at The Westin Kierland Resort, 6902 E. Greenway Pkwy., Scottsdale. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona is celebrating 70+ years of mentorship, empowerment and inspiration with this evening's event – guests are encouraged to dress up in cocktail attire and dress down in sneakers. There will be a reception, program, dinner and an after party with live band karaoke by The Instant Classics. Tickets start at \$250.
bbbsaz.org



All-Alaskan Pig Races at the Ostrich Festival in Chandler.

SATURDAY 3/21

Phoenix Wounded Vet Run
9 a.m. starting at Harley Davidson, 16130 N. Arrowhead Fountains Center Dr., Peoria. Community members are invited to ride to show support for local wounded veterans at the 12th annual Phoenix Wounded Vets Run. There will be a breakfast before the event kicks off and a raffle at the end of the event. Attendees will ride to the Roadrunner in New River. Registration is \$25 per rider or \$40 for a couple.
theyfoughtweridenational.com

Opera Salon
2 p.m. at Avery Lane, 15613 N. Greenway Hayden Loop, Scottsdale. Live opera, champagne and refined design will take center stage at Avery Lane as the showroom hosts an afternoon of opera. Guests can sip a glass of champagne or wine, snack on light hors d'oeuvres, and hear live performances from two acclaimed Arizona opera artists. General admission is \$50, with proceeds donated to AZ Opera to support their main stage performances and their educational outreach programs.
azopera.org

Boots in the Park
12 p.m. at Gilbert Regional Park, 3005 E. Queen Creek Road. Like the name says...you should wear your boots to this concert! Hitting the stage this year is Keith Urban, Dustin Lynch, Mitchell Tenpenny and more. There will also be art installations, axe throwing, a line dance hall, mixology bar, merch, food trucks and a cantina. Tickets start at \$104; VIP packages are available.
events.bootsinthepark.com

FRIDAY 3/27

Asian Food Night Market
5 p.m. at Centennial Plaza Park, W. Cinnabar Ave., Peoria. The Peoria Asian Night Market

brings the vibes with an all-Asian lineup of food vendors, plus a marketplace packed with anime merch and retail. This night market celebrates the diversity of Asian cuisine while giving small businesses a chance to share their culture, creativity, and flavors. Attendees can check out Duplex Boba Tea, Happy Buns, K Town in AZ and more. This event is free but registration is required.
visitphoenix.com

FRIDAY 3/27 – SATURDAY 3/28

Seekers Summit
7-10 p.m., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Tucson Expo Center, 3750 E. Irvington Road. Treasure hunters, your time is now! This event unlocks an immersive treasure-hunting experience featuring the cast of Netflix's *Gold & Greed*, a live on-site treasure hunt, and an attempt to set a Guinness World Record – all in two-days' time. Friday kicks off with an opening reception; Saturday features panels, behind-the-scenes insights, a creator deep-dive, an outdoor safety session, and the treasure hunt. Tickets are \$25.
tucsonexpocenter.com

FRIDAY 3/27 – SUNDAY 3/29

Wild West Music Fest
4-11 p.m. Friday, 2-11 p.m. Saturday, 2-9 p.m. Sunday, at Copper Sky Recreation Park, 44345 W. Bowlin Road, Maricopa. The Wild West Music Fest is a family-friendly event that features national and local entertainment, food trucks, vendors, rides and attractions to pay tribute to the early stagecoach days of the city. Tickets start at \$19 per day, with VIP packages available.
wwwmfest.com



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Spring in Arcadia means Lemonade Stand Day is on its way!

By Sherry Sklar

Supporting pediatric research and changing children's lives has been at the heart of PANDA's (People Acting Now Discover Answers) mission for more than 25 years. The organization raises funds for critical medical research while supporting children and families during some of their most vulnerable moments.

PANDA operates through a working board of more than 200 women, each of whom commits to five years of service. Its fundraising events benefit the University of Arizona's Steele Children's Research Center, led by Director Dr. Faye K. Ghishan.

"The organization is completely volunteer – it's a significant commitment," Board Member Nicole Hopkinson said. "Most everybody is a mother – or what we call a 'medical mama,' which is someone who has had a child facing a serious health issue."

PANDAS for Patients, a long-standing fundraiser for the organization, provides stuffed panda bears to children receiving treatment in the hospital. A physical object matters in long-term treatment settings, providing comfort to children and reassurance to families, who appreciate the gifted panda as support.

This campaign raised around \$63,000, with approximately 1,800 panda donations delivered directly to pediatric patients. Staff members distributed the stuffed toys – each accompanied by a handwritten note – to

children receiving treatment. The pandas were sold online and at Fox Restaurants across town. It was a community-wide effort, involving children and their families.

"I would send text messages to my kids' school and their moms asking them to consider buying a panda," Nicole said. "A lot of it comes from women on the board and their networks. Family members buy them and it spreads throughout the community."

This year, board member Marie Seaman's 18-month-old niece, Gemma, was diagnosed with B-cell ALL leukemia and received a hospital panda while undergoing treatment at the center. Marie was grateful for the support her family received from her PANDA sisters and the community.

"My brother and sister-in-law purchased

stuffed pandas for patients in Tucson, never imagining that just weeks later they would receive one for their own daughter. Knowing that Gemma was being cared for by the same extraordinary doctors we were raising money to support was deeply comforting," she said.

That momentum carries over to PANDA's next community-wide fundraiser, celebrating the state's official drink. On March 29, PANDA puts its philosophy of children helping children into action by setting up lemonade stands to sell drinks to passersby. There are more than 50 stands throughout Phoenix, Paradise Valley and Scottsdale.

The day-long event is a kid-led, neighborhood initiative that raised more

than \$30,000 last year. Designed to be participatory for parents and kids, it fosters grassroots neighborliness for a good cause.

"I like doing the lemonade stand because I like raising money for other kids, and it makes me feel good. I also like selling lemonade because I get to be with my friends, and it's really fun," Ten-year-old lemonade stand veteran Anne Silhasek said. "I feel good knowing that other kids feel better."

The campaign reflects PANDA's guiding principle: neighbors supporting neighbors. This month, keep an eye out for a cheerful sidewalk stand, buy a glass of lemonade, and take part in a small act that helps fund lifesaving research for Arizona's children.

azpanda.org



Evan Freeman, Poppy Bocking, Parker Smith, Bo Freeman, Bruce Buhrow, George Buhrow and Ben Smith participated in the 2025 Lemonade Stand Day.

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A new nonprofit takes root in Arcadia

By Sherry Sklar

Tristan’s Trees, a newly launched organization, gifts trees to parents who have experienced the loss of a child through stillbirth. Founded three years ago by Sheridan James, a mother and concierge internal medicine physician, the organization connects with families who wish to create a meaningful, living memorial. The tree, a permanent presence and symbol of strength and renewal, grows with the memories.

Sheridan and her husband, Tyler, like many parents growing a family, were excited to welcome their secondborn, a son who would be the younger sibling to their daughter, Haven. There was no indication that anything was awry. His stillbirth on May 31, 2023, at 35 and a half weeks, was an unexpected shock and devastated their world. They grappled to find an explanation for the unexplainable. Sheridan discovered that this little-understood medical event was more common than she thought, and that their lives would be forever changed.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in the United States, there are approximately 20,000 to 21,000 stillbirths annually. Many might be surprised to learn that in about 25 to 50 percent of cases, no definitive cause is found.

While their loss was incomprehensible, their love for their son grew in their hearts and minds. A physician, Sheridan’s desire to seek healing was second nature. Surprisingly, this path led to a tree.

“My friends approached me and said they wanted to purchase a tree in Tristan’s memory. That’s how this began,” she explained.

The flourishing backyard sapling became a focus of renewal and healing, leading her to establish an organization to bring comfort to families who’ve undergone a similar experience. In her own garden refuge, centered around the tree, she created a “sacred space” to honor Tristan. She knew that she had to pay that kind of peace forward.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERIDAN JAMES

Sheridan with her daughters Haven and Teddi Mae.

While the idea came naturally, she saw a need to formalize it into an organization, which became Tristan’s Trees, named after her son. It took time and considerable effort to turn a living act of healing into an official charity that would be sustainable for other families.

“When I first began thinking about how to share this idea beyond my own experience, I reached out to a few local nurseries, but it didn’t quite click,” Sheridan said.

She then connected with Whitfill, a family-owned nursery in the Valley, and received an immediate response. “They understood what the trees represented and were incredibly

kind and supportive in helping bring this part of the life mission,” she said.

Across many cultures, planting a tree has long been a way to honor someone’s memory. Tristan’s Trees draws on that shared tradition. Unlike other memorials, trees endure and grow alongside the memory of a child who went too soon.

Memorial trees are provided at no cost to families and are planted in meaningful spaces. The recipient visits the nursery to select the desired species of their 24-gallon tree, which the nursery delivers and plants. Sheridan explains that Tristan’s Trees facilitates the transfer of the tree but is hands-off during plantings, allowing families privacy.

“Instead, we’ve asked family members to document the experience and later share with us,” she said. Initially, donations from friends and family helped finance the nonprofit’s launch, which gifted its first tree this past November.

Sheridan collaborates with community partners and hospitals to connect with appropriate families and distribute resources. Often, she notes that there is limited follow-up support after parents leave the hospital and hopes to help bridge that gap through her remembrance trees and resource partners listed on her website.

Festival of Hope, the organization’s inaugural fundraising event, will be held on March 1 at Hopi Elementary School. Bringing together live music, a petting zoo, crafts, games, kids’ activities, and food trucks, the event will be a joyful celebration of life, connecting families and growing outreach and impact. General admission is \$25, and family admission is \$75.

As Tristan’s Trees continues to grow, the organization offers the community a meaningful way to support families navigating profound loss, planting living memorials that honor children gone too soon and foster healing and connection.

tristanstrees.org

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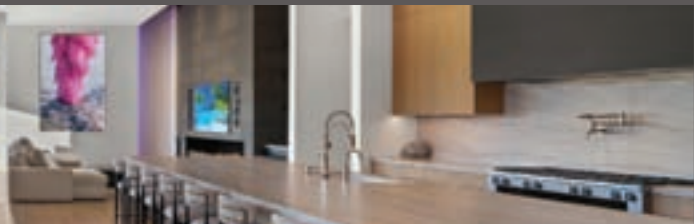


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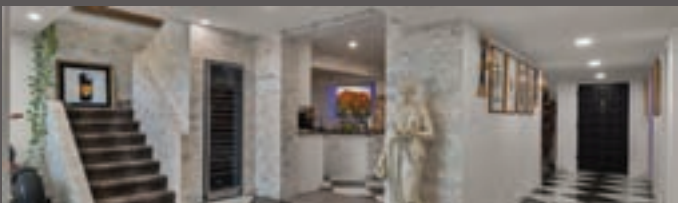
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In the Kitchen

In the Kitchen with **Stephani O' Connor**, Culinary Director for Fox Restaurant Concepts

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Stephani O'Connor's culinary journey has been fueled by hustle, curiosity, and a love for organized chaos. Now the Culinary Director for Fox Restaurant Concepts, O'Connor brings a sharp business mind and respect for technique to some of the Valley's most well-known restaurants.

Where are you from originally?

I grew up in Brooklyn, New York. I've been chasing warm weather, so I made my way across the country and was in Los Angeles for a few years and went back to New York and was like 'Nope' [laughs]. Back out west to Austin, Texas before moving here around 2.5 years ago to start working with Fox Restaurant Concepts.

Did you know you'd end up in Arizona?

I've always loved the southwest, and my sights were set on New Mexico. It's so different from anything I'd ever experienced growing up in Brooklyn – I've been to Chicago; I've been to LA... the culture in New Mexico is so much stronger, the landscape so different and the ingredients are crazy.

We did a lot of road trips from Austin to New Mexico, got out there and did some camping and fun things. I never thought I'd end up in Phoenix, but when the opportunity arose, I thought, 'Heck yeah, let's go!'

What industries are your parents in?

My dad is a retired police detective, but my parents have always been entrepreneurs. They did a lot of real estate and stuff like that, so I grew up watching them hustle and do their thing. My mom is 79 and she's still working; in our house the talk was work and business and how we're going to manage. My sister and I were involved so that work ethic was ingrained from a young age.

What inspired you to enter the restaurant industry?

I never thought it'd be my career, but I grew up working in restaurants. My friend's dad owned a restaurant, and he would put us to work [laughs]. I loved it. I loved the structure, the organized chaos... we got to curse!

I stuck with restaurants as a whole, I think, because I watched my parents build their business and a lot of the industry is about the business. Everyone is collectively like, 'Okay, what's on the plate and does it make sense?' It's fun to have everyone working together toward a common goal.

Did you attend college?

I did, I went to college to become a librarian [laughs]. I was working in kitchens in the morning and doing the prep work and I learned as I went. I was exposed to what other chefs were doing – they all had a strong outlook and knew what they were doing, and I was very drawn to that.

Wait... a librarian?

Honestly, I enjoy structure. I get asked a lot if I've ever been in the Army – I haven't – but I'm very pragmatic after growing up in a lot of chaos. My parents didn't work a typical 9 to 5, and we helped them with their business, painting apartments and a bunch of weird stuff; I enjoyed the structure of school and classes.

When I discovered the world of restaurants and what they do, it was almost like a little boot camp, you're in there and learning all the things and someone shows you how to do something and that's how you do it. It was like an instant gratification.

Your experience working in Brooklyn – was that like the stereotypical family-owned pizzeria situation?

It was exactly what you think! There are uncles and family everywhere and this one's got a secret recipe and no one knows how to make anything without the dad being there [laughs].

In college, I'd work in the morning in the kitchen. I was still learning and finding out about ingredients and how to handle food. It was intriguing! I wanted to work with the chefs rather than working the line at night. I wanted to learn the techniques and the ingredients. I also did a little bartending and it was crazy. I loved it and hated it. It was short-lived.

Did you attend culinary school?

It's hard to put a label on the experience I've had in restaurants. I worked in nice places and not-so-nice places, but I couldn't put down on paper what I know. As a confidence booster, I decided to go to Le Cordon Bleu in Chicago for its nine-month program. That was more so to learn the history and techniques of French cooking. I was like, 'Oh, I know how to do that...and now I know the French name for it!'

How did the Fox Restaurants (FRC) opportunity come about?

I was in Austin and we were looking to maybe get out of there – not necessarily move out of state, but a friend of mine from LA reached out. She was a recruiter for the company and said that they were looking for somebody and, 'I think you'd be perfect for it.'

So began the courtship between Fox and I, because I wasn't really looking and they weren't in a rush, so we were able to all get to know each other and the more time I spent out here, the more I realized how big a part



of Phoenix the company really is. His name and the restaurants are so well known.

The FRC team appreciates the art of culinary, but there's expansion and business to it. We want to keep the consistency and standards – and that was two years ago!

Tell us about a day in the life of a culinary director.

I get this question a lot! My job title says one thing and it's hard to put it all into perspective. Regional chef is our colloquial term because we have so many brands and types of regional chefs. I have a cohort who helps me with the 13 Blanco locations, but my day-to-day is spent on recipe development – pushing the standard with the current food items we have now – and always looking to make things better.

We engage the chefs at each location to make sure they understand the ingredients and understand what to do if things go wrong; really flexing their chef muscles and building them up to be bigger and better. On the grander scheme, we're in charge of everything culinary for all of Blanco and Zinburger, so I'm either in the kitchen with the team, showing them new recipes or I'm working R&D in the test kitchen.

How often do the menus change?

We do formal changes twice a year, but we tweak things if we get a wild hare. We do lots of promos like holiday menus and we have specials for certain days. The Peoria location will have a specialty lunch menu for Spring Training, and we'll do something for Happy Hour. That's the beauty of it; it's not cookie cutter and we can change when we see fit.

When you're developing these recipes, what do you use for inspiration?

We look at seasonality but before we start putting parameters on things, we just want to make delicious food. We look at what the needs of the menu are, what gaps we might be trying to fill... you look at the entire menu. Maybe you want to fill out the appetizer section, so you make food pertaining to what you're inspired by. We start big and get narrow.

My travel is mostly food related so I also use that for inspiration. We'll maybe do a few activities while we're there but mainly I just want to eat!

“

I can tell you on a daily basis, I feel like I'm winning an award because I get to work with these people and be proud of their growth.

”

Tell us about a recipe that you created when first starting out that you still think about today.

In Austin, we did a lot of activations because they had South by Southwest, and I can never escape the fancy milkshakes that we made specifically for one of the events. They went viral and it was a whole thing and people bring it up every time I visit.

I also did a dan dan noodle dish for The Peached Tortilla (in Austin); it was something we worked on for a long time and they're still selling them today. I'm proud of that one.

In terms of recognition, my job is recognizing talent and building teams, and I can tell you on a daily basis, I feel like I'm winning an award because I get to work with these people and be proud of their growth.

What's one kitchen item you find yourself using all the time?

It's very boring, but the answer is a very sharp knife. It's basic but the basis of great food is starting simple. You don't need any fancy tips and tricks... just a good knife. When I have time to cook, nothing beats roasted chicken, so that's what I'm cooking when I'm able.

I don't really use 'crazy' ingredients – I'm more taking your everyday items and using them in ways you might not expect.

Name a few chefs who inspire you.

Sam is definitely up there [laughs], but also, I think of the women in this industry. It's rare to see women in leadership roles. Dominique Crenn is one, she's based out of San Francisco, and she is just a wonderful food storyteller. She's one who reshaped leadership for women in this industry and did a lot of work for us.

If you could cook for anyone, who would you cook for?

Oh man... well, the cheesy answer is my grandmother. She was the cook. I'd like to say she taught me things, but she wouldn't let me near anything when she was in the kitchen [laughs]. I watched her a lot. I'd love to give her a feast!

If you were going to suggest a restaurant to a Valley newcomer, where would you suggest?

Lom Wong. It's so good and they're just so proud. I love their use of ingredients and their story is amazing. They're not afraid to change it up and keep things interesting on their menus.

When you're not working, what are you doing?

I'm running; I'm an avid runner. I also think that keeps me calm. I run early in the morning and it's the first thing I check off my list. I like to think anything else that happens in the day won't be as hard as that first run. I love to travel and love the outdoors, too.

What is your favorite and least favorite part of the industry?

Least favorite is turnover, but that's the nature of the beast. We're usually a pit stop for people on their career paths. But I get sad when people leave. The part I love is the mix of people. You're learning something about someone or learning a new recipe from someone. We're here because we want to share food with our guests, but we also love to share within the team. I love to lead by example.

What's next for Chef Stephani O'Connor?

Oh man... can I retire yet? [laughs] Just kidding. I'm going to continue pushing my knowledge base and getting to know the Valley more, and opening myself up to more events like Savor the Symphony (which took place in February). I'd like to get some more travel under my belt, keep things fresh and learn as much as I can!

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“Meet Ms.” | Ray Artigue

Sheena Kawamoto

It’s National Dentist Month and that’s enough to make any dentist smile. After all, they aren’t often celebrated – and much less adored.

Sheena Kawamoto acknowledges that most people don’t look forward to going to the dentist but she is bound and determined to erase their fears about sitting in her chair.

“Some people may have had a negative experience, and I understand that,” Kawamoto acknowledges, adding, “so I understand that they aren’t really looking forward to going to the dentist. My hope is to surprise them with a pleasant, comfortable outcome.”

Having grown up around a dental office managed by a close family member, Kawamoto was introduced to the profession at a young age. Though encouraged to become a dentist, she admits she had her doubts.

“I wasn’t so sure at first, because I couldn’t ever see myself putting my hands into people’s mouths,” she said with a laugh. Still, that proximity to the field quietly shaped her perspective and years later, she reflects on that experience with deep gratitude.

Her hesitation for the profession quickly evaporated when she observed dentists treating patients in a low-income clinic, witnessing the difference they were making in their lives.

“That did it – I knew I wanted to make a positive and lasting impact,” she said.

Dr. Kawamoto began her practice treating children but today provides all types of cosmetic dentistry procedures for adults, practicing at Studio B Smiles.

“You’re not only treating teeth, you are also treating people,” she said. “The complexities are sometimes challenging but it

is gratifying knowing you are making a positive difference in people’s lives.”

Kawamoto and her siblings grew up in Tucson, and she attended the University of Arizona, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology. Later she earned a Doctorate in Dental Medicine from Midwestern University in Glendale and completed her Advanced Education in General Dentistry residency in Mesa.

Kawamoto acknowledges that dental school, at the beginning, presented significant challenges. At one point a professor suggested she consider another profession. But she overcame the academic hurdles and that professor’s skepticism and today is an accomplished dentist.

“I kept putting one foot in front of the other,” she said. “Eventually, that consistency turned into confidence.”

Away from the office, Kawamoto enjoys traveling and puts an African safari high on her bucket list.

“Know your why and then bet on yourself.”

“It would be incredible to experience the continent’s beauty and culture firsthand and see it in all its splendor.”

Closer to home, Kawamoto fell in love with the Arcadia neighborhood: “I thoroughly love the area and all it has to offer.” When asked to name her superpower, the Arizona native answered without pause.

“Helping people feel seen,” she said. “Everyone deserves to feel valued, regardless of who they are or what they do.”

Her advice for the next generation is “know your why”, captured in a quote she once heard from a motivational speaker: *when you know your “why,” the “what” comes easy.*

“In other words, know your why and then bet on yourself!” she said. Wise counsel that should make everyone smile!



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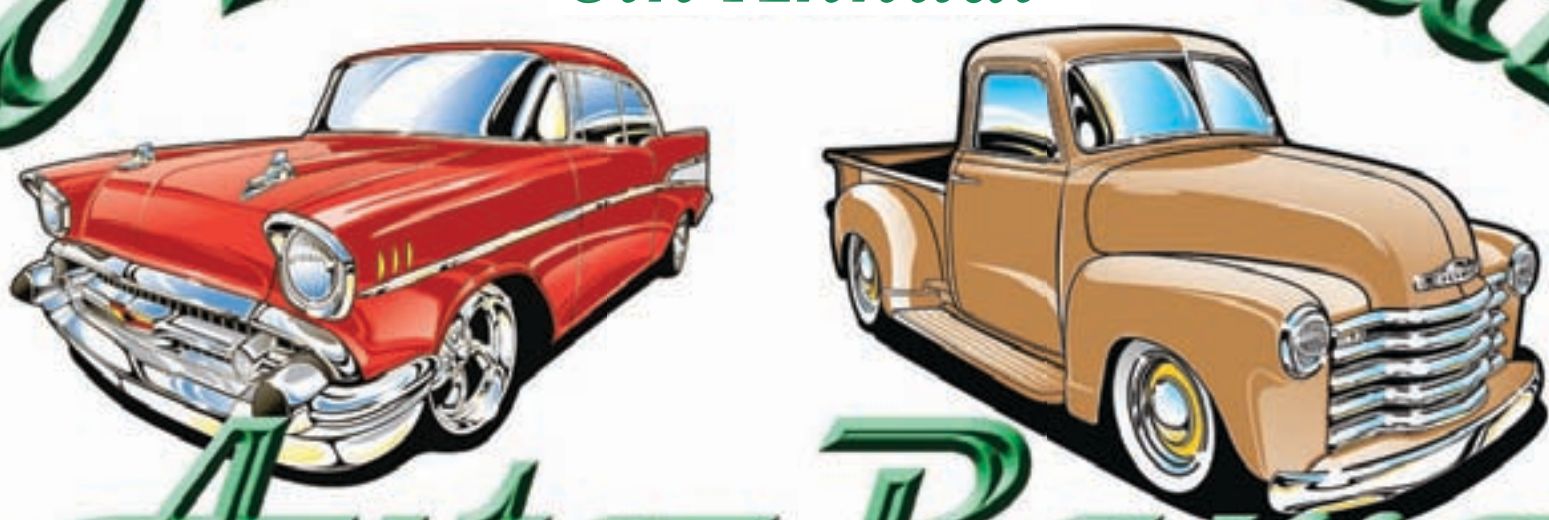
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Prom dreams come true thanks to Arcadia teen’s dress drive

By Mark Hays

Tessa Frey turned a simple idea into a community-wide effort that is helping foster teens across the Valley attend prom with confidence and dignity. Tessa, a sophomore at Xavier Prep, collected more than 400 prom and formal dresses through a dress drive that was showcased at a special boutique in February.

The idea took form last summer when Tessa was selected to lead a National Charity League Leadership Project, which included grant funding to help cover dress cleaning and repairs, as well as display materials such as rolling racks and hangers.

“The Camelback Mountain Chapter helped out by using its annual Ticktocker Day to sort, inspect, tag, and display the dresses,” Tessa said.

More than 100 members participated in the event, held at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. While Tessa initially expected a modest response, the final number of donations exceeded her expectations.

“I couldn’t believe how many dresses we received,” she said. “I was expecting maybe 100 or 200, but we collected more than 400 dresses.”

Of those donations, about 250 will be worn for prom. The shorter formal dresses will be saved for homecoming in the fall, and other donations are being distributed to partner organizations.



Xavier sophomore Tessa Frey gathered over 400 dresses for youth in foster care.

“More casual dresses are being donated to Jose’s Closet and Hospice of the Valley’s White Dove Thrift Shoppe, and we even received a few business-forward dresses that will go to Dress for Success,” Tessa said.

Rather than simply distributing the attire, Tessa wanted to create an experience that made each teen feel celebrated.

“I didn’t want to just drop off what we collected – I wanted each girl to feel special,” she said. “Our NCL chapter took

over over Jose’s Closet and turned it into a boutique with decorations, music, snacks, and all the dresses on display.”

Teens from across the Valley were invited to shop with assistance from volunteers and select shoes, accessories, and a personalized “Get Ready for Prom” kit. As to what she hopes the teens take away from the experience, Tessa kept it simple:

“I hope they found their dream dress and have an amazing night at prom,” she said,

explaining that the success of the drive has inspired future projects. Xavier asked her to organize a similar dress drive for the upcoming Senior Fashion Show.

What began as a leadership project grew into a meaningful event rooted in compassion and inclusion. Tessa’s efforts are helping ensure that more teens across the Valley can experience milestone moments like prom feeling confident, celebrated, and supported by their community.

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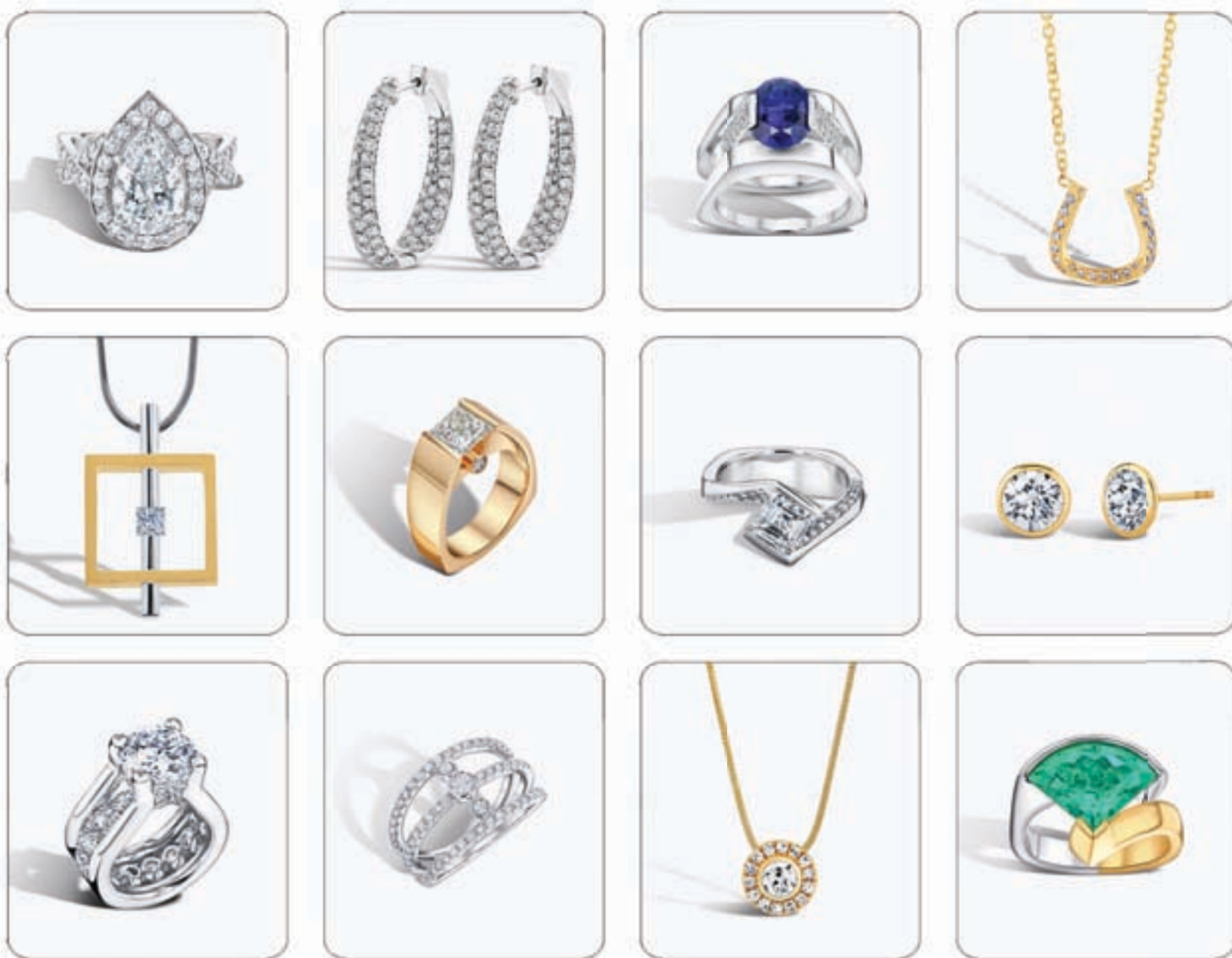
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Little league, big adventure

Arcadia Little League's All Stars Tour Taiwan



Mayor of Taipei Chiang Wan-an, Cody Openden, and Mayor Kate Gallego at the opening ceremony.

By Michael P. Murphy • PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANNY OPENDEN

It started with a fan's offer – one that turned into a trip of a lifetime for 11 Arcadia Little League players. Tony Kao serves as senior advisor/commissioner of the Overseas Community Affairs Council for the Republic of China (Taiwan). He's also a huge fan of Little League baseball, particularly the Arcadia All Stars. After watching the 12U team win the State tournament last year, he approached Coach Danny Openden with an interesting offer.

"I love this team," Kao told Coach Openden. "A Taiwan team is coming to Phoenix, and we'd like to arrange a scrimmage with the All Stars. Then they should come to Taiwan in 2026, and we'll set up games. If you can get your flights arranged, we will take care of everything else."

Kao was good on his word. He arranged an itinerary around baseball as part of a "goodwill trip" with a delegation representing the City of Phoenix, which included

Mayor Kate Gallego. Taipei, Taiwan, is one of 11 Phoenix Sister Cities.

The eight-day trip began on January 7 with a 14-hour flight to Taipei. The All Stars played their first game in Tainan, on the island's southern end. A colorful opening ceremony featured drums, dragon costumes, and flags. Mayor Gallego threw the first pitch to Arcadia's Cody Openden.

They returned to Taipei to play two teams from the same school that produced last year's Little League World Series champions. It was a glamorous affair, with paparazzi photographing the mayor, who attended the opening ceremony, and the All-Star teams.

Photos later appeared in local media, giving the players a taste of celebrity. That night, the City of Taipei hosted the three teams for dinner.

"The Taiwanese kids knew some English, but we had no idea how to speak Mandarin Chinese. Google Translate to the rescue," Coach Openden laughed. "Modern



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Arcadia Little League (middle) with the home teams from Taiwan, the Mayor of Taipei and Mayor Gallego. The Phoenix delegation, Tony and a couple others from Tony's workplace joined in as spectators for the games!

technology enabled kids from halfway across the globe to communicate."

Some exchanged jerseys. The evening ended with all three teams standing on a small stage and joyously singing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

The next day, Kao arranged for the group to visit a baseball campus, including a tour of an impressive Little League Hall of Fame. A ball signed by the Arcadia coaches is now part of that display, with Coach Openden adding "Arcadia Little League, Phoenix, Arizona, USA" to the ball.

From there, they visited Taiwan's presidential office building, where they were greeted by Vice President Hsiao Bi-Khim. Their visit concluded with an elevator ride to the top floor of Taipei 101, the second-tallest building in the world. After returning home, the All Stars reflected on how significant baseball is in bringing different cultures together and building lasting connections.

"It was an incredible experience," teammate Andrew Wachinski said. "It opened my eyes to new traditions and cultures."

"I loved the trip so much, I didn't want to come home," Ben McLyn said. "Meeting the Taiwanese players was my favorite part."

"I loved playing against the kids and hanging out with them after the games," Liam Voris added. "I liked seeing what they do in their free time. It was baseball, of course."

Shortly after their return, Coach Openden and Cody appeared on Channel 7's *Morning Mix* to discuss the trip. Tony declined but sent one message: "Tell them Taipei is a beautiful place to visit."

Danny did just that, sharing Arcadia Little League's overseas adventures with viewers.

"It was everything we hoped for – and probably ten times more," he said.



Tony Kao with Coach Danny Openden.

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Small comforts create big connections in the neighborhood

By Mallory Gleich

A cup of coffee can be more than just a morning pick-me-up – it can be a small, grounding moment in a busy day. For Rebekah Wilhelm, that moment became the inspiration behind Grounds & Gratitude, a mobile coffee trailer that debuted outside Métier Pharmacy in January.

According to Wilhelm, the name Grounds & Gratitude came from a very personal place. When her daughter was younger, she faced significant health challenges that led to multiple long stays at Phoenix Children's Hospital. One afternoon, Wilhelm stepped into the hospital coffee shop and held a warm latte in her hands, enjoying a small comfort in a difficult moment.

"It struck me how something so simple could become a reminder to pause, breathe, and find gratitude, even in the hardest seasons," Wilhelm said. "That moment planted the seed for what would become Grounds & Gratitude. I held tight to the dream of starting a coffee shop and now, four years later, the dream has become reality!"

The journey from inspiration to execution took eight months. The mobile trailer itself was custom-built by Aero Build in Nashville, Tennessee, with weekly videos keeping her closely connected to its construction.

Operating a mobile coffee business required navigating a few logistical hurdles. Grounds & Gratitude applied for a Mobile Food Type 2 Permit with the state, ensuring that it met all regulatory requirements before hitting the streets. Today, the trailer serves as both a stationary spot and a mobile service, appearing at community gatherings, private events and celebrations, in addition to its home base.

Located in the courtyard of Métier Pharmacy and Clinic, Grounds & Gratitude is open Monday through Friday from



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REBEKAH WILHELM

Braydon Ledford, Gabriella Wilhelm, Rebekah Wilhelm, Randle House and Grace Wilhelm. (right) Inspired by a latte and a personal journey at Phoenix Children's Hospital, Grounds & Gratitude blends handcrafted drinks with a mission of everyday comfort.



6 a.m. to 2 p.m. The menu features coffee, lattes, espresso, tea, hot chocolate, a signature protein coffee drink, and seasonal beverages. Wilhelm's daughter, who manages the cart and works as the barista, helped develop many of the recipes.

"We hope guests gain a feeling of belonging and care when they visit, whether it's through a familiar face, a comforting drink, or a simple reminder to lead with gratitude," she said.

That sense of community is a natural extension of the work Wilhelm and her team have been doing for nearly a decade at Métier Pharmacy and Clinic.

"That commitment to people is what we're most passionate

about, and Grounds & Gratitude is a natural extension of that mission, creating a welcoming space where connection, care, and gratitude are part of every visit," she said.

From a simple latte in a hospital coffee shop to a fully operational mobile coffee cart, Grounds & Gratitude is proof of the power of small comforts and thoughtful gestures. It's not just about serving coffee, it's about creating moments where people feel seen, cared for, and reminded to pause in the midst of life's challenges.

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Learn more @grounds_and_gratitude

A lounge that prides itself on its local roots

By Mark Hays

Neutral Ground, a new restaurant and lounge from Arcadia local Kevin Ehret, has opened its doors at The Marilyn. The concept has been years in the making, shaped by his cooking career both in the neighborhood and in New Orleans, North Carolina, and Hawaii.

"I have always loved the idea of a true neighborhood lounge," Ehret said. "A place that feels elevated but comfortable, where people can slow down, enjoy themselves, and feel genuinely taken care of."

Ehret said seasonality and hospitality are central to the lounge's philosophy.

"I learned to cook while working in Asheville, North Carolina, where farms and producers were part of everyday life," he said. "That mindset still shapes how we cook today."

The menu focuses on shareable dishes that shift throughout the year as fresh ingredients become available.

"If an ingredient is no longer at its peak, it comes off the menu," Ehret said. "We would rather change a dish than push something past its moment."

Local agriculture, especially during Arizona's cooler months, plays a significant role in what guests see on the menu right now, including bright citrus-forward dishes.

"Our food is designed as small,



PHOTOS: LILLY HERNANDEZ

Neutral Ground Lounge's design draws inspiration from New Orleans' Garden District.



shareable plates that feel clean and approachable," he said. "The dishes are meant to be fun and familiar, often presented in a slightly unexpected way."

The wine and cocktail programs follow the same mindset, focusing on familiar grapes, spirits, and flavor profiles while introducing guests to producers or regions they may not already know. Drinks are meant to be enjoyable and easygoing, pairing naturally with conversation and connection.

"The goal is to create food and drinks that pair naturally with conversation, connection, and the neighborhood," Ehret said. "We take our craft of food,

drink, and hospitality very seriously, but not ourselves."

Design inspiration for the space draws from New Orleans, particularly the Garden District, where "spaces feel layered, warm, and timeless," according to Ehret. He worked with designer Cindy Louie of Go Studio Go to bring that feeling to life.

"The goal was to create something that feels like an escape without being formal, a place that feels intentional and welcoming," he said.

Ehret is the sole owner of Neutral



Ground Lounge, a project he has been developing for more than 15 years. Opening in Arcadia holds personal meaning.

"I grew up from my middle through high school years about two miles away," he said. "After spending years cooking and working in restaurants around the country, it is meaningful to return and build something unique in a neighborhood I know well."

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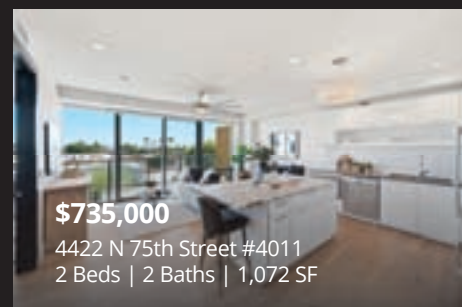
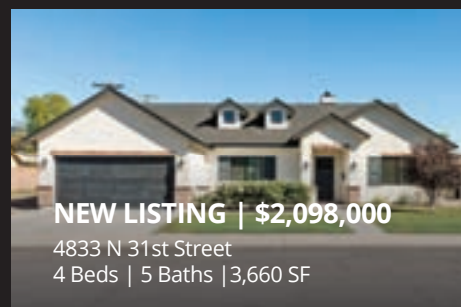
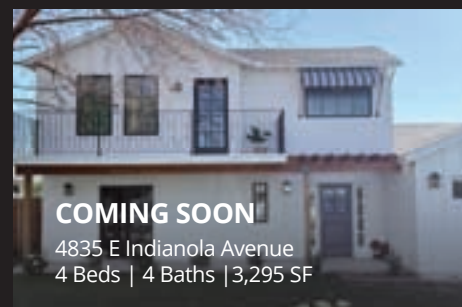
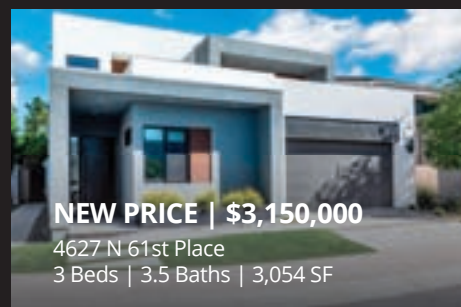
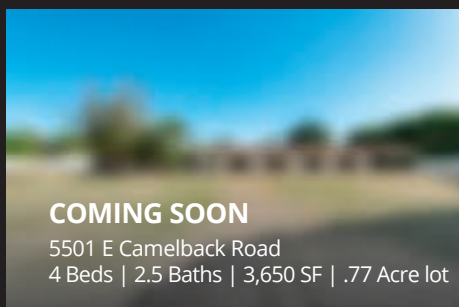
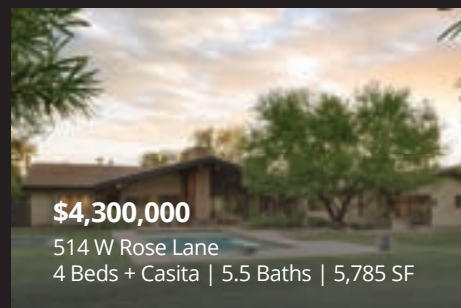
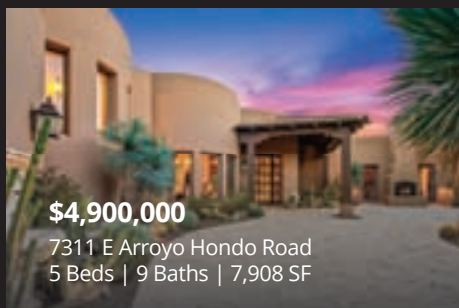
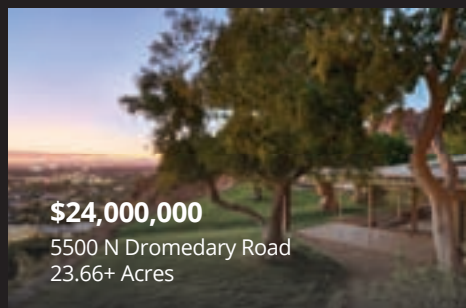
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Annual art exhibit lets student creativity shine

By Rachael Bouley

In January, the Shemer Art Center turned into a nexus of creative works when it debuted the annual New Horizons Art Exhibit, showcasing student artists from high schools around the Valley, including Arcadia High, Xavier, and Brophy. Later that same month, 69 students received 117 scholarship awards from the event, totaling \$6,700 – thanks to Shemer and its generous donors.

Participating students said it was incredibly rewarding to see their art displayed at the gallery as part of this long-standing tradition. AHS senior Kathryn Church submitted her art sculpture *Scyphozoa* (the scientific name for the common jellyfish) *Sky*. She used clay, wire, and recycled beads, reflecting her commitment to repurposing materials wherever possible.

“My goal was to create something just as playful as my granddad’s house in Puerto Penasco, Mexico, which is where I plan on displaying it,” Kathryn said. “I love to create art that focuses on the layers and imperfections of nature. With this piece, I took further inspiration from the design of jellyfish and the ocean floor, with its textured coral.”

Kathryn, who has always been passionate about art but struggled to work on it outside of the classroom, said she was grateful for the opportunity to display her creation and receive positive feedback.

“The opportunity to have my art surrounded by the work of so many talented student artists was incredibly rewarding,” she said. “To see my efforts within the classroom receive such praise has shown me just how important continuing my journey is, and although I’m not quite sure what that journey looks like, I’m excited to get started.”

Kathryn credits her teachers for offering a creative outlet, and hopes to further her art career at Fordham University.

Fellow Titan Jessica Collins submitted a piece called *Static Boom*, made with gouache



(left) Ella Wadsworth created a copper and silver sculpture called *Contrast Spoon*. (middle) Jessica Collins submitted “*Static Boom*,” made with gouache (a water-medium paint). (right) Kathryn Church created a sculpture using clay, wire, and recycled beads.

(a water-medium paint) and inspired by one of her favorite bands, Radiohead.

“Their music hits me in a way that’s hard to explain. It’s like the sound waves actually move through my body. It’s this weird mix of comfort, sadness, connection, and something I can’t put into words,” Jessica said.

“As I listen, the lines and shapes just started forming in my head, and I drew what the music made me see/feel.” She ended up hiding the faces of all five band members in the swirls around the girl, almost like they’re part of the energy surrounding her.

This was Jessica’s first time in the New Horizons Art Exhibit, an opportunity that she said meant a lot to her.

“People appreciated and understood the feeling I wanted to convey in my work, and it has given me more confidence to keep creating,” she said. “I’m not really sure yet what I want to do with my life, but when it comes to art, I want to keep creating, keep getting better, and make more complex pieces that challenge me and help me grow.”

Xavier senior Ella Wadsworth used copper and silver to create her piece, titled *Contrast Spoon*. She was inspired to make something she could utilize, and came across a picture

of a knife with contrast between the handle and blade.

“I decided to use that as inspiration for my spoon while also incorporating elements of metal contortion,” Ella said. “I was honored to have been chosen to display my work at this gallery, as I have never been a very artistic person, so it was an exciting experience for me.”

The warm welcome at the exhibition has reinforced her creativity and generated new ideas for upcoming projects.

“My future artistic goals would be to continue learning about different methods of metal contortion in jewelry and other wearable items,” Ella added.

Brophy junior Keegan Lawson submitted an oil painting on canvas titled “Did you know that I still look, despite the distance?”

Oil paint has become his preferred medium, and he used the piece as an opportunity to experiment with glazing techniques to achieve a specific visual effect. The work was inspired by his relationship with his older brother and explores the sense of distance and inconsistency he feels in their connection. To represent this visually, he

referenced a photograph from a childhood family trip.

“The exhibition was wonderful! I enjoyed being able to connect and obsess over art with other artists my age,” Keegan said. “Seeing the incredible talent of other students and being able to talk with them about their favorite artists and inspirations was very fun. I am grateful for the opportunity to get my art out there and make connections to people in the fine art sphere.”

Senior Nate Raczkowski submitted a photograph titled “The First Spark,” created using light painting photography. His intention was to produce something visually beautiful without assigning it a specific deeper meaning, instead encouraging viewers to create their own interpretations and stories.

“My experience was eye opening. I never knew how many amazing artists I walk past every single day,” Nate said. “This opportunity meant a lot to me because it was my first experience in an art show and I believe it set the bar high for future shows.”

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By Mark Jacobson

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Cowboy culture thrives at this family-owned Tucson ranch

White Stallion Ranch sits on the northwest edge of Tucson, where the city gives way to open desert and the mountains rise sharply against the sky. Bordering Saguaro National Park West, the ranch feels worlds removed from modern life, a landscape of towering saguaros, rugged trails, and wide, sunlit horizons. For many visitors, that sense of escape is the draw.



Robin's Adventures

BY ROBIN SEWELL

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

But long before White Stallion became the guest ranch travelers know today, this same desert was serving a very different purpose. The dust of this land carries more than hoof prints and hiking paths – it carries the quiet legacy of Hollywood's vision of the American West.

Thanks to its proximity to Old Tucson Studios, the region became one of the most recognizable natural backdrops in Western film and television history. The dramatic desert terrain, its distinctive cacti, stark mountain ridgelines, and unmistakable Arizona light offered filmmakers something no studio set could fully replicate: authenticity.

For decades, productions were drawn to the Tucson area to capture imagery that would come to define the genre. The Sonoran Desert's visual

language, vast skies, open space, and raw textures helped shape how generations of audiences imagined frontier life. While viewers may not always recognize specific locations, the scenery itself became iconic.

Yet White Stallion Ranch is far from a relic of the past.



Owned and operated by the True family for more than six decades, the property remains a working guest ranch where the rhythms of desert life unfold daily. Horses move along dusty trails. Wranglers guide riders through cactus-lined terrain.

Guests trade screens for saddle time and schedules for sunsets. Here, the West is not a performance, it is a lived environment. For the wranglers who call the ranch home, that connection to place runs deep.

"I love history," wrangler Jonathan Hulsey said. "You come out here in the quiet, and you can't help but think about the past. What were those guys thinking back then?"

The desert seems to encourage that kind of reflection. Removed from the noise and pace of everyday routines, the landscape has a way of slowing time. The silence feels

expansive rather than empty, creating space for perspective that many visitors find unexpectedly restorative.

Wranglers play a central role in shaping that experience. While the cowboy remains an enduring symbol of Western independence, the work of a ranch wrangler requires a distinct blend of horsemanship, patience, and intuition. Horses sense hesitation. First-time riders often carry nerves. A successful ride depends as much on reassurance and awareness as technical skill.

A cowboy's job may be moving cattle across open range. A wrangler's task is guiding guests across open desert. Different responsibilities, similar instincts. "It's the perfect combination," Head Wrangler Terry McDonald said. "People, horses, and the outdoors."

Among the ranch's most beloved traditions is the breakfast ride, a morning excursion that captures the essence of White Stallion Ranch. After guests are carefully matched with their horses, riders set out into the cool desert air as the sun climbs over the mountains.

The steady rhythm of hoofbeats replaces the usual hum of modern distraction. For many guests, the experience offers something increasingly rare. Stillness. Without screens competing for attention, the desert's scale and quiet take center stage. The deeper the ride, the more distant the outside world seems to become.

White Stallion Ranch has evolved over the decades, adding modern comforts while preserving the character that defines it. Yet the heart of the experience remains unchanged: an invitation to step into Arizona's desert landscape and encounter a version of the West that feels both historic and immediate. Visitors do not simply observe the scenery. They move through it.

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DISTRICT 6 UPDATE

Where music and community meet

This spring, the Pecos Community Center will host the 2026 Round Robinson pickleball event on Saturday, April 25, 2026 alongside a series of engaging community programs designed for learners of all ages.

Recently, students at Monte Vista Elementary School participated in the “Mind Over Music” program, which pairs Phoenix Symphony musicians with classroom teachers to turn ordinary lessons into hands-on, music-driven experiences.



KEVIN ROBINSON
Councilman
District 6
602-262-7491
District6@phoenix.gov

By integrating music into subjects like math, science, and language arts, students develop critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills in ways that feel both fun and memorable. The program helps students see themselves as capable, creative, and confident learners, leaving a lasting impression beyond the classroom.

Adults in the community can also get in on the creative action with the Adult Creativity Corner. Perfect for those who are new to crafting or looking for fresh project ideas, this one-hour session provides all materials and guidance, offering a relaxed and fun way to explore your artistic side. More details can be found at calendar.phoenixpubliclibrary.org.

For those seeking summer opportunities, teens can learn how to become certified lifeguards, gaining skills that are both practical and rewarding. Whether you’re a student, adult, or teen, Phoenix offers a multitude of ways to learn, create, and grow this season!

Kevin

PICKLEBALL ROUND ROBINSON

District 6 will host its Pickleball Round Robin on Saturday, April 25, at the Pecos Community Center.

COFFEE CHAT SCHEDULE

All meetings begin at 6 p.m.

- 1/26: Devonshire Senior Center
- 2/23: Madison Heights Elementary School (cafeteria)
- 3/23: Cowden Center, 9202 N. 2nd St. (Districts 6 and 3)
- 4/20: Pecos Park
- 5/18: Location to be determined
- 6/18: Location to be determined

CITY OF PHOENIX HIRING LIFEGUARDS

Starting pay: \$17.72 per hour

The City of Phoenix is hiring lifeguards for the upcoming season. Applicants must be 15 by the end of the certification class. The class fee is \$20, and all class dates are mandatory.

Apply at phoenix.gov/hr/current-jobs.
Selected applicants will schedule interviews in March.

30 YEARS AGO



Arcadia Titans continue to support their community

The Interact Club is no longer active at Arcadia High, but volunteerism is alive and well on and off the campus, thanks to clubs like the National Honor Society.

According to Club Advisor Megan Mittendorf, NHS members have completed over 600 hours of community service so far in 2026, with about half of them helping students stay on track and receive academic support. Off campus they have completed over 300 hours, and these took place in the

surrounding communities and schools, like helping out at events at Ingleside, Hopi and Tavan.

“These hours should double in impact as we close out the year. We also complete two fundraisers on campus; in the winter we did a toy drive for the St. Vincent de Paul Hope Chest before the holiday season,” Megan said. “In the spring, we collect book donations, and share literacy time with Tavan where they take all the books back to their classrooms.”

Leadership, records, resilience: Arcadia's All-District honorees

By Mark Hays

This winter, Arcadia High School student-athletes were celebrated at the All-District Athletic Awards Banquet, an annual event recognizing excellence, leadership and dedication across the school's sports programs.

The banquet not only celebrated athletic excellence but also recognized contributions beyond the field. SUSD Communications Manager Cymphanie Sherman highlighted how these honorees represented the Titans with distinction. Among them was senior football player Ian Slater.



**These recognitions meant
a great deal to me.**



"I was the captain of my high school football team, which advanced to the State Championship during my senior year, an experience I will always remember," Ian said. "I was honored as a First Team All-State selection in the 4A conference and received the Charro Award at the banquet. These recognitions meant a great deal to me because they showed that hard work and dedication truly pay off."



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF NATHAN SLATER



Kedon Slovis, Zach Smith, Ian Slater, Ryan Jimenez, Nick McCormick, Jax Ashley, and Coach BJ Pasquel.

Sherman echoed that sentiment, saying Slater "embodies what it means to be a Titan."

"His ability to make big plays led to him being named 1st team all Desert Sky and 4A conference," Sherman said.

Slater's football journey began with flag football before he transitioned to tackle football with the Arcadia Youth Titans. Many of the same teammates he played with in youth football competed with him in the championship.

He credits his parents as his biggest inspiration, calling them "the hardest-working people I know," and also admires former NFL wide receiver Julien Edelman, who overcame challenges and, "was never the biggest, fastest, or most recruited guy," Ian said. After graduation, he plans to attend the University of Arizona to study business and economics.

Several other Arcadia athletes were honored at the December banquet. Golfer Beck Sage earned high praise from Sherman, who said he is "an outstanding student and represents Arcadia well on the links." Sage was the SUSD district champion and set a new district scoring record.

Tristan Hillson was recognized for her leadership in flag football. Sherman said Hillson "was a true leader in starting the girls' flag football program," and highlighted her accomplishments as a two-time all-district selection and two-time Desert Sky first-team all-region player.

Another honoree, junior volleyball player Riley Rooney, also received special recognition.

"She was a first-team pin hitter," Sherman said, "and she works incredibly hard both on the court and in the classroom."

"Being selected for the All-District team made me feel like all the hard work I've put in has paid off, and being honored for that was really special," Riley said.

The banquet also spotlighted several football athletes. Jax Ashley was described



Samantha Gagnon, Chase Braden, and Coach Tyler Moore.



Beck Sage and Coach Eric Sage.



Kedon Slovis and Tristan Hillson.

as "one of our defensive leaders," helping guide the Titans to a State Championship berth and earning first-team defensive back honors for the second straight year. Ryan Jimenez was called "a workhorse for the Titans," rushing for more than 1,400 yards and earning an Ed Doherty medallion.

Quarterback Zach Smith was praised as

"the field general for the Titans," earning Desert Sky Region Player of the Year honors, while defensive back Nicholas McCormack was described as "a true shutdown DB."

Together, the honorees reflect the strength, versatility and commitment that define Arcadia High School athletics.

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Teamwork + perseverance = success for Colts football

By Rachael Bouley

It's only been two years since the Central Phoenix Colts started, but the tackle football organization has a lot to celebrate, from growing participation numbers to their first-ever State Championship.

Founded by retired NFL quarterback Drew Stanton in February 2024, the nonprofit is committed to promoting youth sports and developing leadership, character, sportsmanship, discipline, and athletic ability.

Stanton played 14 professional seasons, five with the Arizona Cardinals, and settled in Phoenix after retirement. He began serving as a volunteer youth coach, initially coaching tackle football in Arcadia.

"When the leaders of the Arcadia Titans Youth Football program decided not to field any teams for the 2024 season, Drew founded the Central Phoenix Colts to provide Arcadia-area boys an opportunity to play tackle and continue to develop their leadership and skills," Coach Peter Wand said.

In 2024, the Central Phoenix Colts had two teams – an 11-and-under team and a 12-and-under team. Last year, they had grown to three: 11-and-under coached by NFL veteran Lorenzo Alexander, 12-and-under coached by Stanton, and 13-and-under coached by Ronny McCarron.

Their first year, the 11-and-under team made an impressive inaugural run, finishing as state runner-up after losing the championship game to the Phoenix Southside Wildcats. In 2025, the now 12-and-under Colts went undefeated to secure the organization's first state title.



Asher Stanton, Izzy Johnson, Brayden Mason, and Auggie Wand.

"The State Championship game was an instant classic – the game was played on a chilly Saturday evening in the pouring rain," Wand said. "The Colts didn't let that keep them down and won the game 23-18 over a very well-coached team from Glendale, the Southwest Stampede."

There were 40 boys on the roster, with most hailing from Arcadia and nearby neighborhoods, including students from Ingleside Middle School, Saint Francis Xavier Catholic School, Christ Lutheran School, and All Saints.

The Colts went 12-0 in their unbeaten season. They started with training camp on hot summer afternoons at Arcadia High School through July and August. They connected and bonded as a team before

heading north to the cool pines where they beat the Flagstaff Panthers and set up momentum for the rest of the year.

Coach Wand's favorite moment of the season came during halftime of the championship game, when the weather was wet and the score was close as their opponents played a very physical brand of football.

"Team captains Izzy Johnson, Auggie Wand, Asher Stanton, and Brayden Mason pulled the boys together and reminded them that this was the moment they had worked so hard for," Wand recalled. "This was exactly what they had dreamed of – the chance to win a State Championship – and that there was 'no better place to be than right here and right now.'"

Wand coaches the offensive line and is impressed by the boys' commitment to their craft and helping the team succeed, especially after a heartbreaking loss in the 2024 championships.

"Football is the ultimate team game. We've got 11 young men on the field at any given time, and to be successful as a team, each of them must do his job to the absolute best of his ability," Wand said. "It's incredible to see their growth and development as football players and as teammates. In the playoffs, the boys simply refused to let each other down."

Co-captain and starting center Auggie said he's loved his time with the Colts after transitioning from flag football to tackle.

"The best part of the season was playing in the championship game, in the cold and the rain, with my teammates," Auggie said. "We all have to work together on every play. Like on a field goal, I have to make a good snap, Asher has to make a good hold, and Beckem has to make a good kick. Everyone else has to hold their blocks until the kick is off. It only works if we all do our jobs."

No matter what the weather or how long practices are, Co-Captain Izzy enjoys training with his teammates and remains committed to the game.

"This was a fun season and something new being on a new team," Izzy said. "The best part of the season was getting better coaching, which I usually don't get. Eventually, I want to get a scholarship for college, I want to get drafted to the NFL, and I want to win a Super Bowl."

Congratulations, Colts!

Hey, Phoenix! Let's get moving!

By Kylie de Best

Downtown Phoenix hums with energy from morning to night. Between big-name attractions and neighborhood happenings, there's always something drawing people into the city center. Later this month, that buzz will include a healthy dose of movement and mindfulness as the DTPHX Wellness Fair returns to Civic Space Park on March 25, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The annual event, which typically welcomes 200 to 250 attendees, shines a spotlight on the wide range of health and wellness resources right in Downtown Phoenix.

Open to the public, the fair features complimentary workouts led by local fitness instructors, giveaways from area businesses, healthy food and drink options, and one-on-one time with health professionals, nonprofits, and wellness studios.

Since 2023, Downtown Phoenix Inc. has partnered with ASU to host the event, creating an approachable space for people to explore self-care and discover how accessible wellness can be.

"This event is designed for everyone, whether you're already active in fitness and wellness or just getting started," Marketing Director Skyler Scott said. "It's a chance to connect with downtown businesses and organizations, take a step toward your health goals, and enjoy a fun, active day in the city."

A highlight of the fair is its lineup of high-energy workouts, which give attendees a chance to break a sweat while connecting with others. Guests can pre-register for

DTPHX WELLNESS FAIR

WHEN:

Wednesday, March 25 @ 11 a.m.

WHERE:

Civic Space Park, 424 N. Central Ave., Phoenix

More info @ dtphx.org

two to three free classes. Past offerings include Pilates, yoga, spin, HIIT – even a Bollywood-inspired dance class.

This year, organizers plan to host two complimentary sessions; one in the park's amphitheater and another on the lawn at Civic Space Park. Several vendors are already confirmed for the 2026 event, including ASU Health Services and the Longevity Lab, which will offer stretch therapy, cold plunge, red light therapy and more.

Spectrum Medical Health, Perry Monge Salon and Spa, Urban Eyecare, Orange Theory Fitness and the University of Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) and participated in years prior.

Civic Space Park is easily accessible, with nearby street and garage parking available. Visitors can also take the light rail to the Van Buren/Central Avenue station, just a short walk from the park, or reserve parking in advance using the ParkPHX app.

Downtown Phoenix Inc. hopes to grow the Wellness



The DTPHX Wellness Fair partners with various organizations that aim to educate attendees on health and fitness topics.

Fair through new partnerships and expanded fitness programming. Ideas on the table include adding a community 5K sponsored by a wellness brand – another way to bring more people together and keep Downtown Phoenix moving.

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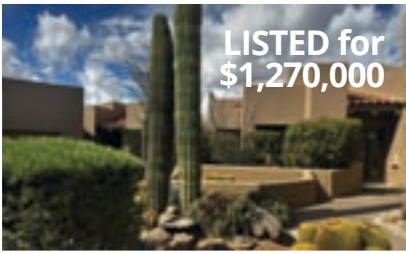


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Pie Snob



Four Peaks Brewing Company



Miracle Mile Deli

The Dining Scoop

BASEBALL AND CORNED BEEF AND PIE, OH MY!

From cheering on your favorite teams to indulging in sweet treats and enjoying festive fare on St. Patrick's Day, there's no shortage of fun and food in March. Whether you're looking for quick pre-game bites, themed menus, or special deals at restaurants and bars, neighborhood spots are rolling out options to help you make the most of every celebration.

PI DAY

Pie Snob (3933 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix) is serving up a sweet deal: every slice of pie will be \$3.14, with no limit on how many you can purchase. The special applies exclusively to pie slices, so cheesecake slices and mini desserts don't count!
piesnob.com

Just for Pi Day, **Jewel's Bakery and Café** (4041 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix) has created a caramelized pineapple cream pie made with caramelized pineapple topped with house-made caramel. Grab a slice for \$3.14!
jewelsbakeryandcafe.com

ST. PATRICK'S

Chompie's (9301 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale) will feature St. Patrick's Day specials starting at 11 a.m. Guests can enjoy corned beef with boiled red potatoes, cabbage, and Irish soda bread, available as a single portion for \$26.99 or "all you can eat" for \$34.99 (dine-in only). The menu also includes corned beef hash and eggs served with a bagel

and home fries. Guests can purchase Irish soda bread and themed pastries, including cupcakes, iced sugar cookies, and cake slices, to take home.
chompies.com

Fans of Irish beer and live music can head to **Four Peaks Brewing Company's** 8th Street Pub (1340 E. 8th St., Tempe), open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on March 17. The first 100 guests will receive a complimentary St. Patrick's Day t-shirt, and bagpipers will perform in the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Alongside the standard menu, the pub will offer Irish-themed dishes and beers.
fourpeaks.com

Miracle Mile Deli (4433 N. 16th St., Phoenix) will serve Irish dishes from March 16 through 21. The menu features corned beef, cabbage, Irish potatoes, and bread and butter for \$22. Guests can also enjoy Guinness, mint chocolate chip milkshakes, and green and white cookies to complete the meal.
miraclemiledeli.com

Pedal Haus Brewery (730 S. Mill Ave., Tempe) is back with another lucky year of its St. Patrick's Day celebrations and deals. The brewery will offer green Day Drinker Light Lagers, Irish stouts, Jameson shots and green tea shots until 3 p.m. Guests can also indulge in corned beef and cabbage and fish 'n chips all day long.
pedalhausbrewery.com

SPRING TRAINING

The Phoenician Tavern (6000 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale) offers a happy hour daily from 3 to 6 p.m.

Drink specials include \$3 off specialty cocktails, \$9 draft beers, \$10 margaritas, or the Spiked Phoenician Iced Tea, and \$11 glasses of wine. A variety of deals on snackable small bites are available. Select from \$8 queso fundido, chips and housemade salsa or a Kobe beef sliders, \$10 chicken wings, or \$12 pull apart pretzels.
thephoenician.com

Miracle Mile Deli (4433 N. 16th St., Phoenix) is offering an \$8 hot dog special for Spring Training, featuring a Hebrew National hot dog, fries, and a drink. Diners can also enjoy toppings like chili, coleslaw, or sauerkraut for \$1 more. This offer is valid until March 14.
miraclemiledeli.com

Four Peaks Brewing Company (1340 E. 8th St., Tempe) offers a Tour Experience on select Saturdays and Sundays during Spring Training. The 90-minute tour includes a guided walk, a beer tasting, and lunch. Guests also receive a swag bag. Admission is \$25 per person.
fourpeaks.com

Fans heading to the Cubs games can enjoy a stress-free ride with **Tempe Marketplace's** (2000 E. Rio Salado Pkwy.) free trolley service, conveniently located in the ride share area between Thirsty Lion and Kabuki. Running on select February and March home game dates.
tempemarketplace.com

Located within walking distance of Scottsdale Stadium, **Pizzeria Virtu** (6952 E. Main St., Scottsdale) introduced "Pizza al Portafoglio," a traditional Neapolitan street food, available through March 24. The handheld offering is a smaller margherita pizza folded into quarters for easy eating, providing a quick pre-game option for fans heading to Giants games.
virtuscottsdale.com

Pita Jungle (4340 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix) will offer a free small hummus for guests who bring in their same-day Spring Training game ticket. Offer is valid through March 24 at participating locations. Ticket must be presented at time of order.
pitajungle.com

Over Easy (4730 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix), is serving up 10 percent off an entire meal by showing a same-day game ticket. The offer is valid for the ticket holder's meal only, can't be combined with other promotions, and will be honored at all Over Easy locations.
eatatovereasy.com

Guests can bring their same-day ticket from any game to enjoy a \$2 Modelo at **The Montauk** (4360 N. Scottsdale Road) and a \$6 Diego margarita at **Diego Pops** (4338 N. Scottsdale Road). Margaritas are available on the rocks or frozen and made with 1800 Blanco tequila, triple sec, and house-made sweet and sour. Offer valid through March 24.
jocqueconcepts.com

With a same-day ticket, guests receive 10 percent off their total bill at **Brody's Italian** (10810 N. Tatum Blvd., Phoenix).
brodysitalian.com

Pedal Haus Brewery (730 S. Mill Ave., Tempe) is ready to play ball with its \$10 special featuring the Day Drinker Light Lager and a classic hot dog topped with ketchup, mustard, and onions. If you prefer just the hot dog, it's available for \$7.
pedalhausbrewery.com

Mastro's (6991 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale) is raising a glass with a new signature cocktail. The 7th Inning Stretch (\$18) is a limited-time cocktail that blends American Harvest



Free trolley service



The Phoenician Tavern



Pedal Haus

Vodka, Combier Pêche de Vigne, fresh mint, Monin Golden Turmeric, lemon, and Fever-Tree Ginger Beer, finished with candied ginger and a mint sprig.

[mastrosrestaurants.com](#)

Streets of New York (214 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix) is serving up its Spring Training Slam special, featuring any single-topping slice of pizza paired with the choice of a pint of Arizona beer or Arizona lemonade. This special runs through March 24 for dine-in guests at all locations – no game ticket required.

[streetsofnewyork.com](#)

WHERE TO STAY

At **Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa**, Jade Bar is serving a limited-time menu of baseball-inspired cocktails through March. The lineup includes creative drinks like The Ninth Inning and The Closer, both nodding to the 2001 World Series, the Cactus League Bloom honoring the return of the Cactus League, and the refreshing Home Plate mocktail.

[sanctuaryaz.com](#)

Situated at the base of Camelback, the **Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia** is located

roughly 20 minutes from both Scottsdale Stadium and Salt River Fields at Talking Stick.

[omnihotels.com](#)

Positioned in downtown Tempe, the **Omni Tempe Hotel at ASU** sits minutes from Sloan Park and Diablo Stadium, providing close access to several East Valley Spring Training facilities.

[omnihotels.com](#)

Located in central Phoenix, the **Sheraton Phoenix Downtown** offers convenient freeway access to multiple stadiums across both the East and West Valleys, generally within a 20-minute drive.

[marriott.com](#)

Mountain Shadows Resort Scottsdale is located about 15 minutes from Scottsdale Stadium, offering a central base for fans attending games in the Scottsdale and Paradise Valley areas.

[mountainshadows.com](#)

Less than a mile from Scottsdale Stadium, **Hotel Valley Ho** offers one of the closest hotel options for Giants fans attending games in downtown Scottsdale.

[hotelvalleyho.com](#)

WHAT'S NEW?

Eat Up Drive In (4001 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix) officially reopened with its “cooked slow, served fast” comfort food, from crispy chicken tenders and wood-grilled steak to its oversized baked potatoes, and new menu additions, including breakfast and a full espresso bar, ice cream shakes, new salads, sandwiches, and sides.

[eatupdrivein.com](#)



Durant's Steakhouse (2611 N. Central Ave., Phoenix) launched a Friday-only lunch service from 11 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. following its year-long restoration, ushering the legendary 1950 Central Avenue spot into its 75th anniversary era under the Mastro family while preserving its classic red-leather charm. Friday lunch features the full Durant's menu, including the iconic Porterhouse steak for two, prime rib, caviar service, lobster thermidor, crispy veal parmesan, and signature sides.

[durantsaz.com](#)



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Easy eats for eat-outside season

The days are already warm, the mornings are a little less chilly, and meals naturally start to feel lighter and fresher. It's the perfect time to lean into simple, fresh recipes that don't overcomplicate things.

The viral carrot salad is a reminder that vegetables don't need much to shine. Crisp carrot ribbons are tossed with zesty flavors that deliver crunch and brightness in every bite. It's an ideal make-ahead dish that works just as well as a quick side as it does layered into wraps or bowls.

For something heartier, the buffalo chickpea lettuce wraps bring a little kick of flavor while still feeling light and fresh. Saucy, spiced chickpeas add warmth and satisfaction, while crisp lettuce and crunchy toppings keep everything balanced. They're easy to assemble and perfect for relaxed lunches or simple outdoor dinners.

Rounding things out, the papaya glow salad fully embraces the season's brighter side. Juicy, colorful fruit and refreshing

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

flavors make this dish feel like sunshine on a plate, perfect for outdoor lunches, casual gatherings, or afternoons when you're craving something naturally sweet. These recipes are an easy way to enjoy early spring, with fresh, simple meals that feel good to make and eat.

Join my monthly membership for printable recipes, health videos and live Zoom cooking classes – spring classes are available now! Only \$10 a month!

Viral carrot salad Serves 1-2



• INGREDIENTS •

- 2-3 whole carrots
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 tbsp. sesame oil
- 1 tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 tbsp. toasted sesame seeds

• DIRECTIONS •

1. Wash the carrots and cut off the stem and tip.
2. Using a peeler, peel the carrots into thin ribbon slices – a Y-shaped peeler is ideal for this. Add the carrots to a bowl with the chopped green onions.
3. In a small bowl whisk together the sesame oil, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, maple syrup, and lime juice.
4. Toss the salad with the dressing and top with sesame seeds.

Buffalo chickpea lettuce wraps Serves 2



• INGREDIENTS •

- 1 can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 3 tbsp. vegan mayo
- 3 tbsp. buffalo sauce
- ½ tsp. pink salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ cup toasted sunflower seeds
- Butter lettuce

• DIRECTIONS •

1. Mash beans with a food processor or with a fork.
2. Add everything else in and mix well. Scoop out and stuff into a lettuce cup.

Papaya glow salad Serves 2-3



• INGREDIENTS •

- ½ chopped papaya
- 2 small mangos or one large mango, chopped
- 1 diced red pepper
- ½ cup diced cilantro
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 cup corn
- 1 large or two diced avocados
- Juice of three limes or ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 tsp. pink salt
- ½ tsp. each: cumin, garlic powder, pepper

• DIRECTIONS •

1. Combine and serve!

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE SHAFF



Brophy Prep.

Face-off time: Area high school lacrosse season is underway

By Michael P. Murphy

Often called the fastest-growing sport on two feet, lacrosse is back on local fields – and with it comes fresh faces, renewed rivalries and plenty of early-season intrigue. In and around Arcadia, high school programs are shaking off the offseason rust and setting the tone for what promises to be an exciting spring, even if the stat sheets are still mostly blank.

ARCADIA HIGH

Arcadia High enters the season in transition after graduating a large senior class. While past teams benefited from veteran-heavy rosters, this spring brings a different challenge – and opportunity – for Coach Dustin Kowell.

After losing 20 seniors, many of them starters, Kowell leaned into a strong recruiting period to reload the roster. Two returning seniors are expected to anchor the team: Grayson MacIntosh, an attackman poised to be a major offensive contributor, and Jordan Gortarez-Nelson, a face-off fielder who will play a key role in controlling possession.

“We have a lot of new faces on defense,” Coach Kowell said. “I’m looking forward to seeing who’s going to step into the shoes of last year’s graduates.”

That sense of competition and discovery is already fueling practices; as younger players get their first taste of varsity action. And when it comes to motivation, Arcadia doesn’t have to look far.

The coach considers Brophy Prep to be a good rival for Arcadia because many of the boys from both schools live in the same neighborhood and play the sport together...

BROPHY PREP

...and Brophy Coach Pat Harbeson agrees. His program once again features a deep and experienced roster, including five players already committed to play at the collegiate level.

Midfielder Eli Friedman, a four-year varsity player and one of the team’s two captains, is known for his ability to put points on the board. Joining him as co-captain is Dane Helt, also a four-year varsity senior and a lead defenseman. Junior Jack Grisoni adds strength at the face-off position, giving Brophy an edge in key possessions.

Between the pipes, the Broncos boast an unusual luxury: two senior goalies in CJ Wendell and Ryan Peitzmeier, who bring both talent and teamwork to the position.

“They fight and push each other in practice all the time,” Coach Harbeson said. “Ryan is CJ’s biggest advocate and vice versa. In a selfless act during a recent game, Ryan let CJ make his first career start as a varsity goalie. He saved the ball at 75 percent, but he had a great opening game.”



Xavier Prep.

That unselfish dynamic sets the tone for a team with high expectations and a clear emphasis on chemistry as the season unfolds.

XAVIER PREP

Xavier Prep is embracing a season of growth and leadership under Coach Diana Oduho. With a roster that blends experienced returners and emerging contributors, the focus is on development and cohesion.

“We have players now stepping into leadership roles as juniors and seniors and kind of owning their positions,” she said. “The team will be a little bit different, but it will be nice because our offense returns almost everyone, where our defense will be a little younger.”

Leading the charge is senior Amelia Busch, a First Team All-State selection last year at attack and a player Coach Oduho expects to rely on heavily.

“A good player on offense and defense with great stick skills,” she said.

Claire McClosky, another First Team All-State honoree, returns as a midfielder with seemingly endless energy. Coach Oduho describes her as a do-it-all player with a motor that won’t stop. The team also features juniors Mackenna Packer – known as “Packer the Attacker” – and her sister Keegan, who both started as freshmen and earned increased playing time through steady improvement and hard work.

With early-season storylines taking shape across programs, one thing is clear: while the season may be young, the excitement surrounding area high school lacrosse is already in full swing.



Arcadia’s Grayson McIntosh.



Jordan Gortarez-Nelson.

DID YOU KNOW? **BABE RUTH**

WHAT YEAR?

1914

Ruth was living at St. Mary's School for Boys when he signed with the Baltimore Orioles in February 1914. Five months later, he was signed to the major leagues. It was with the Orioles that he earned that well-known nickname, when a sportswriter referred to him as one of one of owner Jack "Dunn's babes." Ruth made his major league debut at Fenway Park on July 11, 1914, as a starting pitcher.

HOW MANY?

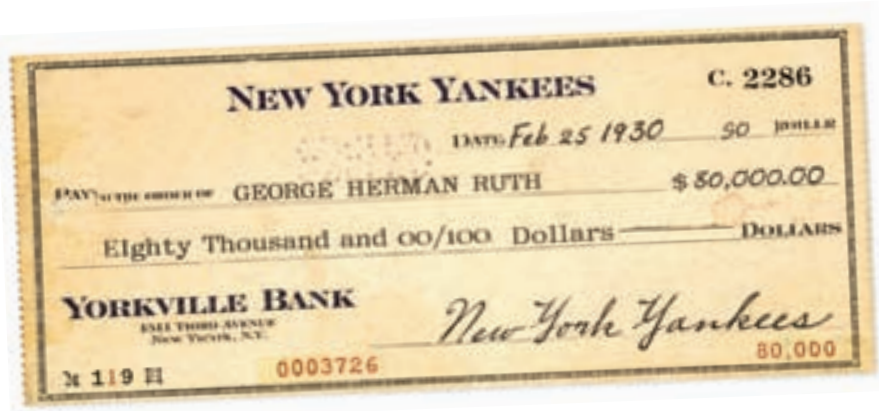
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Over his 22-year Major League Baseball career (1914-1935), Ruth hit 714 home runs, a record that stood for 39 years until Hank Aaron surpassed it in 1974. He also tallied 2,214 RBIs, 506 career stolen bases, and a lifetime batting average of .342. Ruth led the American League in home runs 12 times, including a single season record of 60 in 1927, which remained unbroken until Roger Maris hit 61 in 1961.

HOW MUCH?

80K

Ruth's top single-season salary was \$80,000, which he made in both 1930 and 1931. He was the first player ever to earn over \$50K when he made \$52,000 in 1922. According to a CPI inflation calculator from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, \$80,000 in 1930 is the equivalent of a little more than \$1.1 million today. (For the record, President Hoover made \$75,000 in 1931.)



WHAT CURSE?

Although the phrase "The Curse of the Bambino" wouldn't be coined for more than 50 years, the shift in fortunes between Babe Ruth's former and future teams was almost immediate. From 1920 to 1964, the Yankees dominated baseball, capturing 29 American League pennants and 20 World Series titles. Over that same span, the Red Sox managed just one pennant – and never won the World Series.





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DID YOU KNOW? *BABE RUTH*

His real name was George Herman Ruth.

Ruth lived his entire life convinced that he was born on February 7, 1894. He was actually born February 6, 1895, and died in 1948.

Ruth's parents lost six children in infancy, including two pairs of twins, with only George and his sister Mary Margaret, known as Mamie, surviving.

Ruth lived for a time on the site of what is now Oriole Park at Camden Yards, above one of his father's string of saloons.

He was sent to live at St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, a Catholic reform school, and listed as "incorrigible." When his mother died from tuberculosis in 1912, he became a permanent ward of the school.

Less than two weeks after his rookie season ended, Ruth married Helen Woodford, a 16-year-old coffee shop waitress. They were together until her death in 1929, and he married Claire Merritt Hodgson later that year.

Ruth posted a 0.87 ERA in three World Series starts and his record of 29 2/3 consecutive scoreless innings in 1918 wasn't broken until 1961.

Ruth's first World Series appearance came in 1915.

The Red Sox won three World Series titles during Ruth's six seasons with the team. In 107 seasons without him...they have won four.

In Game 2 of the 1916 World Series, Ruth pitched 14-inning complete game to beat the Dodgers 2-1. It is still the most innings ever thrown by one pitcher in a single postseason game.

Ruth missed the first 41 games of the 1925 season with what was termed "the bellyache heard 'round the world."

In 1924, Ruth knocked himself unconscious by running head-first into a concrete wall in foul territory at Griffith Stadium. He was out for five minutes but continued to play after he woke up.

His final appearance at a ballpark came on June 13, 1948, at Yankee Stadium. Photographer Nat Fein's famous photograph from that day, in full uniform, shot from behind while leaning on a bat, won the Pulitzer Prize.

In 1927, Ruth teamed with Lou Gehrig to form the heart of the Yankees – nicknamed Murderer's Row – which is regarded by many as the greatest team to ever play the game.

SAY WHAT? WHAT'S IN A NICKNAME?

Babe Ruth was not only known as "Babe" but earned a slew of colorful nicknames that reflected his larger-than-life presence on the baseball field. The most famous, "The Sultan of Swat," was coined by a New York sportswriter in the 1920s to highlight Ruth's unmatched power-hitting, with "swat" capturing the force of his home runs and "sultan" emphasizing his dominance over the game.

Other nicknames, like "The Colossus of Clout" and "The King of Crash," celebrated his ability to smash the ball and his status as baseball's premier slugger. Together, these monikers helped build the mythology of Ruth as more than just a player – they portrayed him as a spectacle, a larger-than-life figure whose swings thrilled fans and whose personality captivated the nation.



WORD SEARCH



BABE
BALLPARK
BASEBALL
HERMAN
HOME RUN

PITCHER
PULITZER
RECORD
RUTH
SEASON

SERIES
STATUS
SWAT
TITLE
WORLD



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ASPARAGUS: The magical vegetable of spring

Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) has a long history of heritage and luxury evidenced by its consumption and cultivation dating back more than 3,000 years across various ancient civilizations. The Egyptians depicted asparagus in tomb drawings, suggesting that it was seen as a sacred plant that could bridge the gap between the earthly realm and the divine. It was often associated with fertility rites and was believed to possess aphrodisiac qualities, making it a staple in rituals involving love and reproduction.

In medieval times, asparagus found its way into magical herbals where it was noted for its ability to purify and protect. Many believed it could dispel evil spirits and negative energy, while others used it to enhance psychic abilities. It's consistently been viewed as an herb of transformation used to initiate growth on both a physical and spiritual level.

Greeks and Romans considered asparagus a delicacy. It was renowned as the "vegetable for kings" and enjoyed by men like Julius Caesar and Louis XIV – a symbol of wealth and sophistication. Word etymology corrupted the word 'asparagus' and it was once thought to be a vulgar term. It

was changed to "sparrow grass" which sounded lighthearted and didn't possess an air of stiffness.

Asparagus is often considered an underappreciated and underrated vegetable because, despite its versatility, high nutritional value, and distinct flavor, it's overshadowed by more common greens like broccoli and snap peas. It's a member of the lily family and usually grown by itself. It's one of the earliest rapidly growing perennial vegetables to emerge in early spring, often

growing up to 10 inches in a single day. Asparagus is ornamental, too. There are delicate white, yellow or green bell-shaped flowers on their tall fern-like greenery, which reminds me that beauty can be found in the most unexpected places. Come fall, the foliage turns golden, showcasing bright red berries that entice the birds.

The scent of fresh, grassy, earthy asparagus eludes many folks due to a combination of sensory experiences, specifically its smell, taste, texture and reputation for being a difficult-to-prepare vegetable. Even though the season is extremely short, growing your own offers unmatched, sweet flavor and superior crispness compared to store-bought. There's no denying that asparagus is an elegant vegetable that adds a touch of sophistication to any menu. If a downside exists, it's that growing asparagus takes patience, grace, hope, effort and resilience. Some things in the garden take time!

A small plot of earth is all you need. It's a "plant-once-and-forget-it" perennial. Building and planting a bed for a vegetable you won't be able to enjoy for three years can test your resolve. It's an investment in the future but can be difficult to endure in the present. It condenses time which is both disorienting and mildly alarming.

Asparagus takes two to three years to establish itself because the first couple of years are spent building a strong underground crown and root system, not for harvesting, allowing the plant to store energy in its ferns to support abundant harvests. It's interesting to mention that the asparagus currently growing in old wine barrels line a 30' x 23' wall of sizeable rocks dug up from the yard that was



appropriately named "the wall of perseverance." Asparagus asks only for a little faith and the willingness to plant for the future. The wait is worth it!

Poor companion plants for asparagus include alliums (garlic, onions, leeks, chives), beans and peas that stunt growth and steal nutrients, and potatoes and carrots that compete for deep soil space. Other plants to avoid are fennel due to their chemical properties.

There are many varieties to choose from. 'Mary Washington,' 'Jersey Giant,' and 'Purple Passion' are my favorites. Start by choosing a sunny spot with well-drained, nutrient-rich soil, a spot where the crop can settle for the years to come. Most gardeners begin with one-year-old crowns that are dormant root systems resembling white, firm and crisp, octopus-like tentacles. The roots might look unassuming, but they hold so much potential.

Dig trenches at least six inches deep, and lay the crowns inside, spacing them out so they have room to wiggle and stretch. Then, little by little, cover them with soil as they grow, letting them settle in slowly. Newly planted crowns need a dose of fertilizer in early spring to encourage root growth and plant development.

Any fertilizer needs to have good levels of nitrogen to promote vegetative growth, and phosphorus for root development. Blood meal (an organic fertilizer made from dried animal blood) is high in nitrogen, while manure and compost provide a balanced source of nutrients that release their goodness slowly over time. If beds are already in place, the best time to fertilize is in late winter after they have been trimmed back or early spring, just before new growth begins to emerge. Asparagus can also be fed later in the season, after the last harvest.

Don't be tempted to harvest from new plants because now is the time when it's all about waiting for the spears to develop into fern-like foliage to feed the root system. This period is not easy – patience and willpower are needed to resist the urge to pull the greenery out because it resembles weeds. It's a time when you must be willing to let the garden grow a little wild before the neat and tidy asparagus begins to grow.

In year two, harvest sparingly for one to two weeks. Leave most spears to continue building root strength. Enjoy watching the plants strengthen and prepare to be surprised by slender green spears breaking through the earth, reaching for the sun, reminding you that good things come to those who wait.

Three is the magical year when you can bring the asparagus in from the garden to the table. Depending on the color selected, you might be surprised to learn that white asparagus is nothing more than green asparagus that

has been grown in darkness under mounds of dirt. When a spear first breaks ground, place an empty paper towel tube around it and close the top so sunlight can't peek in. In a few days, check its growth and be ready to cut. Chances are you'll discover the spear is tender, thicker and more fibrous.

Going forward, spears can artfully display themselves atop a quiche for breakfast, tossed among romaine for lunch or alongside a grilled lobster tail come dinnertime. Finally, the kind of harvest that feels almost effortless will continue until early June. If you're lucky you might get a second harvest, but the stalks will be thinner. After that, allow the plant to grow ferns to keep the crown healthy. Asparagus is a gift that keeps giving year after year, a true reward for the gardener who thought ahead, needing only to add a layer of fresh compost each season to keep it happy. Asparagus is a beautiful crop to grow, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies as well as thrips and two species of beetles.

While the airy, delicate foliage feels soft, mature plants are armed with tiny, sharp, camouflaged thorns along their stems. If you brush against them, it will result in an "ouch." Wear gloves because the stems have small, sharp, downward-pointing thorns.

For best taste, harvest spears when they are five to eight inches tall. Grasp near the base and bend gently until it snaps or cut on a diagonal with a sharp knife – careful not to damage nearby shoots. It should split where the woody end of the spear meets the tender stalk. Asparagus quality declines quickly after harvest, so refrigerate immediately what you don't plan to eat right away. Clean cultivation encourages vigorous growth, and it benefits the gardener to keep the area clean from the start.



Thyme in My Kitchen

BY SHERRY KLUSMAN

@thyme.in.my.kitchen

Caesar salad with sauteed chicken and asparagus

INGREDIENTS:

- 10-12 SPEARS MULTI-COLORED ASPARAGUS (ABOUT 3-4 CUPS CHOPPED)
- 1-2 HEADS ROMAINE LETTUCE
- 1-2 CHICKEN BREASTS
- 2 TBSP. BUTTER (DIVIDED)
- SEA SALT AND BLACK PEPPER, TO TASTE
- GARLIC POWDER, TO TASTE
- ONION POWDER, TO TASTE
- CAESAR DRESSING
- PARMESAN CHEESE, SHAVED

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Wash asparagus and snap or trim off the woody ends. Cut into 2-inch pieces.
2. Melt 1 tbsp. butter in a skillet over medium heat.
3. Add asparagus, season with sea salt and black pepper, and sauté for 5-10 minutes, until crisp-tender.
4. Transfer to a plate and allow to cool.
5. Wash and thoroughly dry the romaine. Tear into bite-sized pieces and place in a large salad bowl.
6. Slice chicken breasts into strips, then cut into 1-inch pieces.
7. Melt remaining tablespoon of butter in a skillet over medium heat.
8. Add chicken and season with sea salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder.
9. Sauté until chicken is fully cooked and lightly browned.
10. Transfer to a plate and allow to cool slightly.
11. Toss romaine with Caesar dressing until evenly coated.
12. Top with sautéed chicken and asparagus.
13. Sprinkle shaved parmesan over each salad.

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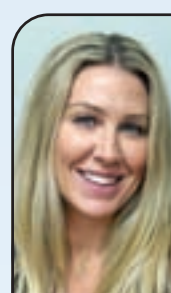


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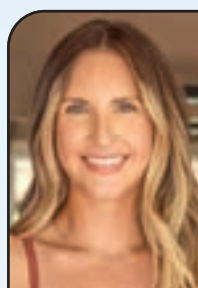
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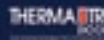


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Titan Times

VOL. 3 NO. 5

MARCH 2026

From the students of Arcadia High School

Student spotlight: Brady Lord

By Francesca Mena

With decision day just a few months away, Arcadia's seniors are gearing up for college and that includes future collegian of Rice University Brady Lord. Titan Times caught up with Brady to see what he's most excited for in this next chapter.

Brady has gone to Arcadia for all four years of high school. He is the captain of the track and cross-country team, an active Thespian, a member of the Arcadia Ambassadors, National Honor Society, and the president of LEAD Arcadia—a club focused on leadership and equality across campus.

At Rice, he plans to major in Global Affairs and minor in Spanish. He hopes to travel the world and connect with its people. When asked about what he's most excited about, Brady said, "I'm excited to be living on my own, to focus on whatever I want to focus on, you know? I'm excited to meet new people, too. It's going to be a couple thousand new faces!"



Brady Lord

Brady is excited to meet new people, but he won't forget about his friends and the faces of AHS.

"I've made some really fantastic friends throughout my time here, and it won't be the same at

Rice," he said. "I'll miss all the freshmen on the cross country team, all my theater friends that I've done hours and hours of shows with..."

After graduation, Brady hopes to leave a lasting legacy as "someone who is always uplifting and supportive... someone to look up to," And on the track team he wants to be the fast guy: "The fast senior that no one else knows," he said with a laugh.

Titan Times wishes Brady the best of luck at Rice University!



Claire Christensen



Max Straus

WINTER SPORTS WRAP-UP

Arcadia's winter sports are wrapping up, so let's take a look back at the highs, lows, and memorable moments.

The boys' basketball team had a strong regular season led by seniors Max Straus and Mason Kendrick. The team reached several milestones both individually and collectively. During a dominant 81-56 home win over Cactus Shadows, Kendrick reached 1,000 career points.

This accomplishment boosted both his confidence and the team's momentum, which carried them into a tough matchup against nationally ranked St. Mary's, where they narrowly fell short.

When asked about challenges, Kendrick said, "Moving the ball, but we are improving on that every day." He also highlighted the strong chemistry within the team, sharing how the players support one another: "My teammates motivate me before the games to play aggressive," he said. This team has a chance to make a deep playoff run and compete for a State Championship.

Arcadia's girls' soccer team faced major challenges this season but pushed through to build a confident and energetic squad. Senior Captain Claire Christensen reflected on the year.

"We lost a lot of upperclassmen so we've had to focus on rebuilding and strengthening our lineup, but our chemistry has improved so much," she said.

Despite adversity, the team delivered dominant 11-0 and 10-0 wins against Coronado and Mesquite. They also faced tough competition.

"Our toughest matchup was against Chaparral. Although we didn't get the result we wanted, it pushed us and made us stronger!" Claire said. Through ups and downs, the team proved it can compete and grow while dominating its opponents.

When basketball or soccer wins, they stay focused, and when they lose, they come back even stronger. This culture is what Arcadia is all about; it'll bring success for years to come. Go Titans!

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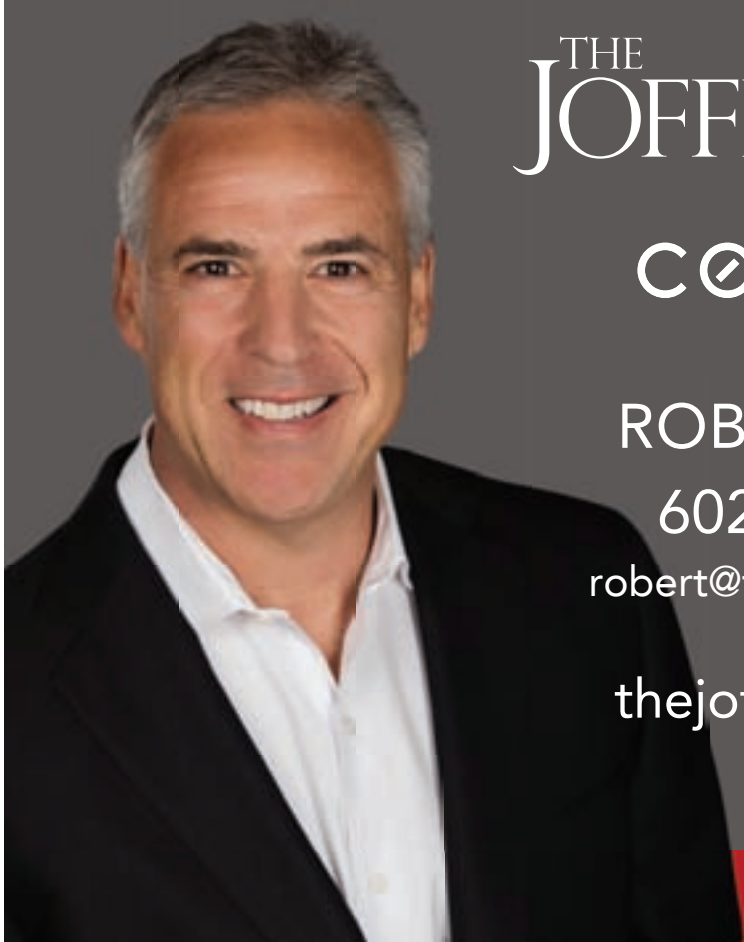
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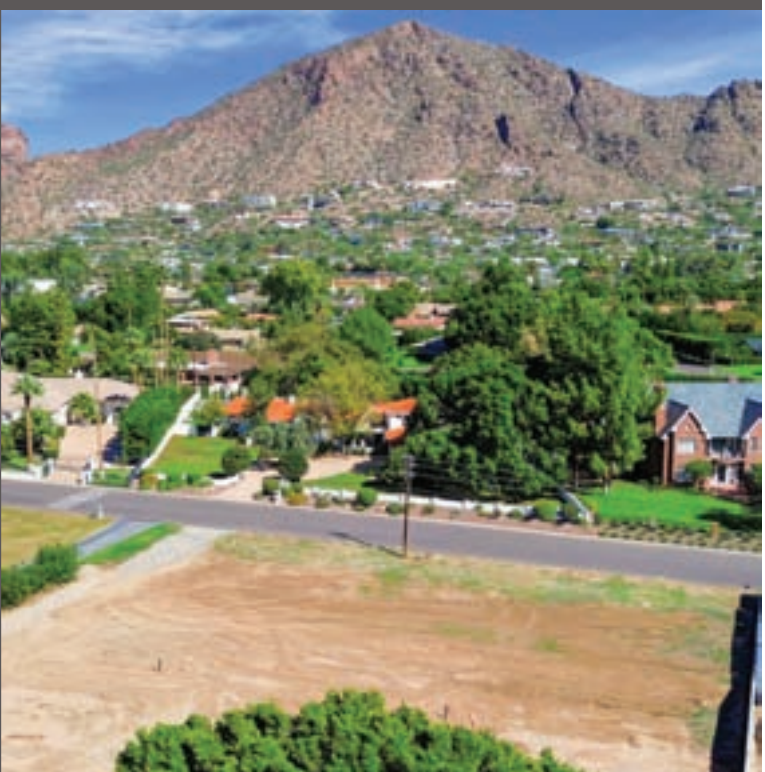
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