



north central news

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Garden nurtures community

By Kathryn M. Miller

On a somewhat overcast mid-September morning, a half-acre corner lot in Phoenix is buzzing with life. Neighbors quietly come and go, tending to their garden plots. A light breeze rustles through the trees and sends the wind chime singing; birdsong accompanies the chime while bees float from plant to plant, enjoying the hushed morning and the bounty of the garden. Welcome to Dig it, Grow it, Share it (DGS) – a community garden founded in 2019 in the Citrus Heights neighborhood near Indian School Road and 28th Street.

When the garden founder Jenna Pierides came across the lot in July 2019, the parcel had been vacant for more than a decade after the home was demolished. She was engaged in a leadership course and her idea was to build a garden that would bring the community together.

The lot was a tangle of overgrown weeds and landscaping, but it had big trees and a lot of potential. Pierides contacted the California investor who owned the parcel and they agreed on a lease – \$1 per month. She pulled in neighbors and developed the 22,000 square-foot lot into a neighborhood garden space, DGS.

Today, there are 26 fully rented garden spaces – sized 4x8 feet and 6x12 feet – and four mini plots, along with a specialty garden, compost area, a fire pit area and other gathering spaces.

“My plot is an absolute mess,” laughed Ayshica Andrews, president of DGS since 2023. It has been another brutal summer, and she says that one of the biggest issues for gardeners in Arizona right now is the weather, “It’s just not cooling down at all at night and it’s really affecting the vegetation – it can’t recover.”

Andrews has gardened for about 15 years, but after moving to Phoenix and apartment life, “I was getting depressed,” she said. “I just had to just get my hands back into the soil.”

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A sculpture by local artist Mark Carroll, combined with a decorative median, creates a vibrant entry to the Hatcher Road corridor at 19th Avenue. The years-long project has been a true community collaboration (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

Collaboration in action

Hatcher gateway project makes progress

By Kathryn M. Miller

Sunnyslope residents who have driven east on Hatcher Road from 19th Avenue in recent weeks have seen the progress on a “gateway” project that will welcome residents and visitors alike. The project is part of a community-wide beautification effort that has been years in the making, says Caroline Lobo.

Lobo is founding principal and owner of suoLL Architects and co-chair of theHUB, a group of business owners, property owners and residents along Hatcher Road in Sunnyslope, who are harnessing their interest, energy and activism to revitalize the area along

the stretch of road east of 19th Avenue to Cave Creek Road (www.sunnyslopehub.com).

The original funding was an \$8,000 grant from Keep Phoenix Beautiful. Another Sunnyslope community activist, Stacia Hurst, found out about the grant in late 2022, early 2023, Lobo recalled.

“She got wind of it and she contacted me and said, ‘Hey, there is about \$8,000 for perhaps a sculpture, some beautification, would you like to take advantage of that for Hatcher?’ And I jumped right on it. We had less than three months to make it all happen.”

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FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, North Central neighbors!

Can you feel it? Fall is around the corner – the magical season that is one of the reasons so many of us weather the brutal Phoenix summers year after year. As I write this, the forecast highs for the week are largely in the 90s, and as October arrives, the Valley is waking up with festivals and seasonal gatherings on the horizon.

Phoenix gardeners are also itching to get their hands back into the soil, which is part of the theme behind on of our community collaboration cover stories. In one North Central neighborhood, residents coalesced around the idea of taking over a vacant lot and creating a green space – one where they can produce their own food, escape to enjoy nature and gather to build community.

You will also find stories throughout this month's issue that offer resources to residents who are interested in gardening at home, learning about water management or just considering the environment more broadly by re-thinking driving habits and more.

Also on the cover is the story of neighborhood activists joining forces with local artists and city and county departments to beautify the Hatcher

Road corridor in Sunnyslope. Keep up with theHUB as their efforts take shape and that collaboration pays off. Our top Community story also highlights how other neighbors in Sunnyslope are fulfilling the needs of the area's younger residents.

This month in Café Chat, Marjorie Rice delves into the flavors of Egypt and the wider region that can be found at Uptown's Urban Fraîche; we introduce you to the Arizona Humane Society Pet of the Month, Teeny; help spread the good news from our North Central schools; and kick off Spooky Season with tons of Things to Do in North Central and beyond, and so much more.

Finally, the deadline to register to vote is Monday, Oct. 5. Civic engagement is how we can facilitate change in our neighborhoods and voting is a big piece of that puzzle.

As always, I encourage you to reach out if there is a North Central story that needs to be told. In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy our October issue, and until next month, all my best,

Kathryn M. Miller
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Sunnyslope's Arizona in Action sets fundraiser

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski

Siblings John and Lisa Coughlin know exactly what Sunnyslope families face. They lived it.

"We grew up in a lower-income household," said John, a 2003 Sunnyslope High School graduate. "My parents made sure we had the necessities – and a little bit more. As I've gotten older, I've realized how hard it can be for families."

The siblings, along with their parents, Sylvia and John Sr., wanted to do something for the neighborhood children. They raised money to provide nearly 30 bikes for an inner-city church.

The donations increased, and so did the number of bikes. In late 2025, the family's organization, Arizona in Action (<https://azinaction.org>), became an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit. That same year, Arizona in Action purchased 110 bikes for the Sunnyslope Youth Center. About 300 children attended, so a lottery system was used.

This year's goal is 500 bikes, which will be purchased during Black Friday sales, as usual.

"That's where you're going to get the best bang for your buck," John said. "When we have all brand-new bikes,



The Coughlin family is giving back to the Sunnyslope community that they call home by raising money through their nonprofit, Arizona in Action, to meet their goal of giving away 500 bikes to area kids this year (photo courtesy of the Coughlin family).

kids don't feel like they have to pick from one that's better than the other.

They're just all the same bikes."

To help raise funds, Arizona in Action is hosting Boots & Bikes, a country-themed event from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, at Driftwoods, 9832 N. 7th St. The entertainment is DJ Kate Scratch Fever, as well as a silent auction, raffles and donation opportunities. General admission tickets are \$60 at <https://bit.ly/bootsandbikes>.

Silent auction items include an Airbnb stay in Flagstaff, Wildlife World Zoo passes, golf rounds, winery donations, and packages featuring local restaurants and activities.

"We're still gathering everything," John said. "Most of it will be auction items."

More importantly, Lisa said, Boots & Bikes is a chance for Arizona in Action to introduce itself to the wider community.

The organization is still small, but the community response has been powerful. Lisa helps run nearly every aspect of the nonprofit, and the effort truly spans generations. Sylvia; John's daughter, Harper (a Sunnyslope High School student), his wife, Lauren; Lisa's son, Jayden Carbajal, and a circle of longtime friends all pitch in.

Among the volunteers is Britton Sanchez, who watched the organization grow from a simple holiday drop-off into a full-fledged nonprofit with long-term plans.

"I was so impressed with what they were able to accomplish with just a few texts, emails and social media posts,"

she said.

Having grown up visiting the Sunnyslope Community Center, she immediately connected with its mission. When John mentioned he was forming a nonprofit, she offered to help with fundraising and sponsorships.

"Volunteering is my passion," Sanchez said. "I know firsthand what this means to the kids Arizona in Action serves."

Lisa is proud of her family's accomplishments.

"My brother, John, eventually turned that effort into an official nonprofit," said Lisa, a 2000 Sunnyslope High School graduate. "It's been so cool watching it grow from our family pitching in to now having friends, volunteers, local businesses, donors and community partners jump in with us."

John and Lisa work full-time jobs and take care of family. John said the mission keeps him grounded.

"It's still important to me to keep going with this thing we've been doing," he said. "Whatever we have to figure out, we make sure to figure it out so we can get these bikes to the kids."

As Arizona in Action grows, the vision expands beyond bikes. The team hopes to develop additional initiatives that support Arizona kids and families who need a little extra help. And for John, the heart of it remains simple.

"If we can get kids outside, active, and feeling like someone cares about them, then we're doing something right," he said.

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This Summer Jacob and I skipped our usual beach vacation and instead traveled to **Wisconsin** for a **big Barkstrom wedding**. Jacob's youngest brother married the love of his life, and the Barkstrom's gained a beautiful, kind, and strong woman.

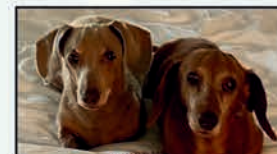


I typically go into experiences with no expectations, and going into the wedding was no different, but I never expected to experience the best wedding in the books to-date, it was beautiful, full of fun, the food was great, and the DJ even played the chicken dance for me, a tradition that comes from German Ternes side of the family (thanks to the bride for giving me that song). If you have ever read the Hobbit, if you can envision Bag-End, this venue transported you right to middle earth - it was beautiful.



As soon as we got home from the wedding, it was go time, Jacob and I started packing up the house, because we were under contract to purchase our new home and get our current home ready for rent. Little did we know that one week before our closing, we would be mourning the loss of our beloved 9½-year-old Chesapeake Bay Retriever, Bailey Bear Barkstrom. We walked through the doors of our new house carrying her ashes instead of her walking in beside us.

We are still grateful to have our two 16 and 15 year old Dachshund's, Dixie Doodle and Shady McGrady Barkstrom, and soon there after we adopted two sister kittens in, need of a loving home - Neya & Sumi Barkstrom.



To close out the Summer, I paddled Horseshoe Bend for an overnight camping trip with friends. We roasted s'mores, shared stories and impactful laughs around the fire, and gazed at the stars.

It has been a busy summer filled with celebration, heartbreak, adventure, and change, but we cherish every day we get to share with the people around us and that we get to meet, and we look forward to seeing you at our open houses this fall, winter, and spring.

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GARDEN, continued from page 1

She talked to a friend who told her about DGS, “So, I reached out to Jenna and I got started in here and then the next thing I knew I was taking over.”

Gardening is absolutely a way of life for many, including Andrews.

“When I first started gardening, my goal was to grow my own food and medicine. Here we do a lot of medicinal herbs along with culinary herbs. I always encourage people to do a mix of food, veggies and the herbs just for the overall health of the garden and to bring in those pollinators. And I don’t think people realize how much is actually edible.”

Despite the heat, the garden still has plenty of life in it as the caretakers prepare for the transition into fall. As Andrews walks around the garden, she points out the various plants. There is okra, squash, cucumbers, luffa, basil, eggplant, tomato starts, Egyptian spinach, corn, watermelon (which she hopes will perk up for the fall) and varieties of amaranth, among others. There is even cotton growing – planted to show younger neighbors where it comes from.

“Fall is the easiest season in Arizona for planting and it’s one that’s most exciting,” Andrews said. “Speak to any of our members right now and they’re



Through an arched entryway lies the DGS garden, a half-acre shared community green space where residents can rent a plot and grow stronger neighborhood bonds right alongside their vegetables, herbs and flowers (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

all itching to get things done. So, we’re prepping our soils right now.”

In late September, early October, gardeners are planting starts of culinary herbs; sunflowers and Zinnias are growing. Moving into mid-October, she suggests leafy greens. Arugula and radishes are quick to produce and do well from seed; Brassicas like cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, rutabagas

are excellent, along with cilantro, dill, parsley and fennel. And don’t forget to plan for spring blooms. Whatever flowers you want to see blooming in spring can be sown now, she said.

“If you want to do something really quick that is low effort, throw out a handful of flax seeds and just turn it in lightly. They’ll bloom come springtime. Chamomile is another one – just

toss seeds out when it rains, they’ll come up and you’ll never have to plant chamomile again.”

And for those who might be interested in pursuing a community garden in their neighborhood?

“First, you want to find your space; find out who owns it. And then you need to get the neighbors behind you. It takes a lot to get something like this going. You need money, you need lots of volunteers, you need materials, so you need businesses to get behind you. And then those people that are really interested in building community – who want to get to know each other and want a green space – they are just going to come along and fall into line and do what they need to.

“For us, we’ve gotten things to where it’s just a maintenance thing right now and our members are all very engaged in that.”

No matter how small, though, “I would really encourage everyone just start – just grow something,” Andrews said. “There’s so much reward in being able to do that. And I think it’s a skill that we really need. Being able to grow your own food is huge, especially with everything that’s happening in the world right now.”

Visit www.dgsgarden.org to learn more about the DGS garden.



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COMMUNITY

SCULPTURE, continued from page 1

They found a sculptor, Mark Carroll, who has a studio in Cave Creek, and gave him their specs.

“We wanted a sculpture that speaks to the different community groups working together, the collective wisdom that lies in the Sunnyslope neighborhoods...everyone working together, moving in the same direction to make Sunnyslope a vibrant community,” Lobo said.

While Carroll worked out the details of the art piece, theHUB (Hatcher Urban Businesses) looked for a site to house the artwork. The piece of land just east of 19th Avenue was the perfect spot to serve as a gateway, but it was owned by the Maricopa County Flood Control District. Calls to District 3 Councilwoman Debra Stark and then District 3 County Supervisor Bill Gates put the wheels of an intergovernmental exchange in motion.

“That exchange took about a year to fall into place, but then the water department took over that particular property,” Lobo said. “There were some underground utility issues that we had to deal with. So, all said and done, the sculpture was ready in three months. But the rest of it took forever.”

Through the Neighborhood Services Department’s Krista Roy and the



A new median with decorative planters welcomes drivers to Hatcher Road (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, the project gained momentum and additional funds. In the meantime, Lobo’s architectural firm worked on the overall layout of what the landscape would look like.

“We wanted to figure out how we could place the sculpture with a very integrated landscape, so people can walk through it and really immerse themselves with the way the sculpture has been designed,” she said. “That’s why you’ve seen all these swerve curves. It has lighting design, pavers and cacti all

integrated into the design.”

To pay for the landscaping, the group turned to the city’s Community and Economic Development (CED) team. The new median adjacent to the sculpture includes metal planter boxes, gravel and decorative metal cacti (there is not water in the center of the street). The area surrounding the sculpture will eventually have live landscaping.

“We worked on a package to get the Storefront Improvement Grant. CED pulled that out of the ARPA funding that was a result of the pandemic,” Lobo said. “We applied for that grant and got a half million dollars to do several storefront improvement projects, some of the signage that you see, like the HUB signs, along with the median. We wanted to create a really vibrant entry as you come in on Hatcher Road.”

The neighborhood continues to look toward the future of the area and

are working on ways that they can activate this corner in the future. In the meantime, there is still work to be done on the gateway – beyond finishing the landscaping, they want to bring in an artist to integrate all of the neighborhood associations and block watches onto one of the walls of the sculpture area. An official dedication event will be held down the road.

“The goal is to dedicate this to all the community groups of Sunnyslope that are working together to lift the community and continue to make it a vibrant place,” Lobo said. “It just feels it was a step in the right direction. There are many such projects that need to be taken on. We have our eye on several such projects that, even though it takes time, it’s important. If you don’t start moving the needle, one project after the other, then the vibrancy is never going to happen.”

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COMMUNITY

Get to know your council candidates

By Kathryn M. Miller

As we move closer to the Nov. 3 general election, we wanted to provide an opportunity for residents in Phoenix City Council District 4 and District 6 – and our readership more broadly – to learn more about the candidates who are on the ballot for the council seats. Councilwoman Laura Pastor, who has represented District 4 since 2014, will leave office when her term ends in 2027. In District 6, the sitting council member is running for reelection.

There are eight candidates on the District 4 ballot; six of them responded to our inquiry. Both District 6 candidates responded. We asked them what they see as the top two issues facing their respective districts and possible solutions for each, then posed a short series of questions based on current issues and resident input. But first, we asked: “What is the main thing that you want voters to know about you?” Read what each candidate who responded had to say at https://bit.ly/2026Elections_PHXD4 or https://bit.ly/2026Elections_PHXD6.

The deadline to register to vote in the November 2026 election is Monday,



The Sunnyslope community is invited to celebrate the Acacia Library’s historic status during an Oct. 24 event at the library (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

Oct. 5. For information on city of Phoenix council elections, head to the city’s information page: <http://phoenix.gov/elections>. To check your voter status, register to vote or find additional election information, visit the Maricopa County Elections page: <https://elections.maricopa.gov>.

Acacia is historic – it’s time to celebrate

The Sunnyslope Historical Society will partner with the Phoenix Public Library Acacia Branch to celebrate the library’s historic status during a public event to be held on Saturday, Oct. 24,

from 11 a.m. to noon at the library, 750 E. Townley Ave.

Designed by Bennie M. Gonzales Associates and opened to the public on Jan. 5, 1969, the 6,600-square-foot library was approved for Historic Preservation Overlay zoning by the Phoenix City Council at its Sept. 9 meeting.

For more information, visit www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/locations/acacia. Learn more about the Sunnyslope Historical Society and Museum at www.sunnyslopehistoricalsociety.org.

Plant sale celebrates ‘50’

As the weather turns towards fall, the Desert Botanical Garden invites residents looking to refresh their summer-weary landscapes by experiencing their annual plant sale event, open to the general public Oct. 23-26, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Cooler fall temperatures help trees and shrubs establish before next summer’s heat, making it the ideal season to grow a future shade canopy.

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary, the plant sale offers an opportunity to replace heat-stressed plants and refresh landscapes with desert-adapted favorites. Shop an exceptional selection of native plants, cactus, agaves, succulents, trees, shrubs, herbs, vegetables and seasonal decor. The garden’s horticultural experts will be available to help shoppers choose the right plants for their garden.

Desert Botanical Garden is located at 1201 N. Galvin Parkway. The event is free to attend – no tickets or reservations are required. For additional information, call 480-941-1225 or visit www.dbg.org.



Browse hundreds of native and desert adapted plants at the Desert Botanical Garden’s 50th Anniversary Plant Sale, open to the general public Oct. 23-26 (submitted photo).

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COMMUNITY

Local author debuts novel

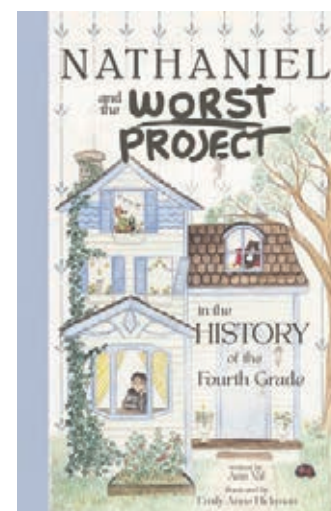
North Central resident Kris Ann Valdez, writing under the pen name Ann Val, celebrated the July release of her debut middle-grade novel, "Nathaniel and the Worst Project in the History of the Fourth Grade," published by the independent press Twenty Hills.

Geared towards readers ages 7 to 12, the chapter book follows fourth-grader Nathaniel Ichabod Lampley, who wakes up on the morning his science project is due only to realize he never made it. Desperate to avoid being late to school – again – Nathaniel cobbles together a last-minute diorama using stuffed animals from a neglected toy chest, his sister’s crayons and a Star Battles Trilogy shoebox.

What follows is the kind of disaster Nathaniel has come to expect. After all, misfortune has a way of finding him.

"I wrote this book to remind readers that mistakes are not the end of the world," said Valdez. "In fact, sometimes they're the beginning of the best stories."

The author is currently booking school visits, bookstore storytime and library programs throughout Arizona. Her interactive presentations include a reading from the novel, a creative activity inspired by the book and a behind-



A new novel released in July by author Kris Ann Valdez is geared toward middle-grade readers (submitted photo).

the-scenes look at how an idea becomes a published story.

She also launched “The Nathaniel Library Project,” a traveling library experiment to make the book more accessible to young readers. One copy is traveling from family to family around the country. Each child “checks it out” for about two weeks, can underline and heart passages, signs its traveling library card, takes an optional photo of the book visiting their town, and sends it to the next reader. Learn more about the project under the “Middle Grade” tab at <https://krisannvaldez.com>.



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A group photograph of the Dickinson Wright Family Law Team. There are eight people in the photo: four men and four women, all dressed in professional business attire. They are standing in front of a wood-paneled wall. The Dickinson Wright logo is visible in the background, featuring the name in a serif font with a stylized 'W' and a yellow swoosh.

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A square QR code located in the bottom right corner of the advertisement, which likely links to the firm's website.



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COMMUNITY

Tour connects artists, community

The annual Sunnyslope Studio Tour returns Oct. 24-25, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, showcasing 24 local fine artists at 11 unique home studios and creative spaces throughout the Sunnyslope area – from Northern Avenue to Peoria Avenue, and 19th Avenue to 18th Street.

Now celebrating its ninth year, this free, self-guided event offers the public a chance to explore a vibrant neighborhood, meet artists in their working studio and purchase original artwork directly from its source. And the impact of opening local workspaces to the neighborhood cannot be underestimated says Kris Kollasch, participating artist and event committee lead.

“Being involved in the studio tour has helped me connect to so many neighbors beyond the ones just next door,” said Kollasch. “By inviting them in to my creative space to see what the ‘crazy artist down the street’ is up to, I feel more connected to my neighborhood and to Sunnyslope as a whole. I’ve been able to watch kiddos grow up year after year as they come check out the art in my yard. It’s made a huge difference in our community.”

Unlike traditional arts festivals or gallery openings, this tour invites visitors directly into artists’ home studios to see where and how they work. Attendees can talk with artists about their creative process, view a wide body of work and purchase one-of-a-kind pieces – often at studio-direct prices.

“The Sunnyslope Studio Tour

brings together a really diverse and eclectic mix of artists. It’s a special celebration of creativity that brings people together, encourages them to explore the area, and lets them see, firsthand, what makes Sunnyslope unique,” said artist and studio host Elissa Nowacki.

Artist Megan Jonas added, “I chose to live in Sunnyslope 16 years ago, knowing that there was a community of artists that had chosen the neighborhood for its unique place in Phoenix history. Since then, I have joined and started to help plan the Sunnyslope Studio Tour. It’s fun to welcome folks to view the art I created at my studio and hear their stories of living in Phoenix as they react to my drawings and paintings depicting the Phoenix city and landscape.”

With works ranging from \$15 up to \$5,000, the event also provides an opportunity to build or expand a fine art collection while directly investing in Phoenix’s working artists. Attendees can explore a wide range of mediums – including ceramics, blown glass, jewelry, painting, pastel, drawing, mixed media, monumental steel sculpture



Local artists will once again open their studios to the community during the annual Sunnyslope Studio Tour, scheduled for Oct. 24-25. Pictured: Art on display at Kris Kollasch’s studio during the 2025 tour (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

and public art.

Find a list of this year’s participating artists and a studio map online at www.sunnyslopestudiotour.com.

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COMMUNITY

Holiday boutique supports special needs residents

Lura Turner Homes for Adults with Special Needs hosts its 41st holiday bazaar and craft fair, noon to 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 7, at Cross Roads United Methodist, 7901 N. Central Ave.

Dozens of vendors will offer everything from original art and baked goods to homemade Christmas decorations, jewelry and more. Vendors from Magic Moments' long-time boutique will be present, too. Proceeds from this free event benefit the special needs men and women who live at Lura Turner Homes, founded in 1965 by Methodist deaconess Lura Ann Turner.

The event is free, but shoppers are encouraged to bring canned goods for Desert Mission Food Bank. To reserve a booth, please call Dixie at 602-943-4789. For information, visit www.lura-turnerhomes.org.

Get insurance, tax info at October meeting

Retired federal employees are invited to a health insurance fair, and the general public is invited to attend "Tax Update 2026" – both events are scheduled for Friday, Oct. 16, between 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Cross Roads United Methodist Church, 7901 N. Central Ave.

The free annual health insurance event is sponsored by the Sunnyslope Chapter 1686 of NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees). All health insurance companies are invited to provide their health plan information. A welcome will be held at 11 a.m., followed by health insurance briefings from noon to 1 p.m. A NARFE chapter meeting will be held from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Organizers say that October is an excellent time for the public to review their tax situation and learn about tax changes. Michael Calisi, CPA, Calisi Financial, Phoenix and Scottsdale, will

speak from 10 to 11 a.m. To ensure adequate seating, leave a message by Wednesday, Oct. 14, at 602-799-9480 if you are planning to attend the Tax Update and/or the Health Fair. Questions about the event are welcome at caroleenculbertson@earthlink.net or claudhehc@yahoo.com.

SRP offers bill assistance

Eligible SRP customers experiencing financial hardship may qualify for up to \$800 in utility bill assistance

through an SRP-funded program administered by Wildfire. With \$5 million available, assistance is offered on a first-come, first-served basis through a network of community nonprofit organizations serving SRP customers.

Income-eligible customers experiencing a job loss, medical emergency, unexpected expense, or other financial hardship may qualify for assistance.

"No Arizonan should have to choose between cooling their home and paying for food, rent or other basic needs," said Kelly McGowan, Wildfire executive director. "Through this partnership with SRP, households facing

an unexpected financial setback can receive meaningful relief when they need it most. By working with trusted community agencies, we can ensure these resources reach families across the Valley and help them stay safe and cool this summer."

More than 100 nonprofit organizations throughout the Valley will help customers apply for assistance and distribute funding to eligible households. To find a list of nonprofit organizations offering financial assistance this year, customers can visit www.srp.net/gethelp or call 602-236-8888 or 602-236-1111 for Spanish.

WHERE TAILS WAG AND HEARTS FEEL AT HOME, LETS MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE PAW-SOME



North Central Pet of the Month

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Breed: Terrier/Chihuahua

Favorite Treat: Baby Carrots

Biggest Fear: Hasn't encountered-one. LOL

Least Favorite Thing: UPS Drivers

Most adventurous activity: Treed a raccoon twice his size

Favorite place to go: Anywhere he can run free in the neighborhood.

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OCTOBER DAD JOKE

Why did the skeleton go to the party alone?

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COMMUNITY

Light rail open house scheduled

Valley Metro and the city of Phoenix continue their open house series this month, offering an opportunity for residents to learn more about the proposed West Phoenix Extension project. The West Phoenix Light Rail Extension is a 10-mile connection that is

proposed to connect the existing Valley Metro Light Rail system to Desert Sky Transit Center. The current proposed connection is either Central Avenue/Indian School Road or 19th Avenue/Camelback Road. The route will travel along Indian School Road to 75th Avenue, then jog south to Thomas Road and continue to the transit center. At the two-hour open house event,

residents can talk one-on-one with project staff, ask questions and share their feedback. The next event is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 14, 6 to 8 p.m. at Steele Indian School Park Memorial Hall, 300 E. Indian School Road. Those who cannot attend in person can learn more about the proposed project, provide feedback online and sign up for project updates at www.valleymetro.org/project/west-phoenix-extension.

Grant win supports ‘Water for Shade’

To further its efforts to advance community-driven projects addressing extreme heat in neighborhoods across Phoenix, the City of Phoenix’s Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (OHRM) and its partners were selected for a \$115,000 grant award from the Climate Smart Communities Initiative (CSCI) to support the Water for Shade Project.

Joining a cohort of 27 other projects across the country and selected from a competitive pool of 271 applicants, Water for Shade will address extreme heat in Phoenix’s Sunnyslope neighborhood. With the grant support from CSCI, the partnership will explore sustainable financing models for tree canopy expansion, leading to key learnings for neighborhoods across Phoenix and beyond. This work supports the priorities of the City of Phoenix’s Shade Plan, Climate Plan, and General Plan.

This project will culminate in an actionable plan for place-based greening – including pilot tree plantings and innovative irrigation systems – ultimately reducing the public health risks of extreme temperatures by creating a more connected and shaded urban corridor. The project will also include an assessment of governance and financing options to accelerate planting and support maintenance for trees. It also allows for partnerships among the city, businesses, community organizations, property owners and residents.

Find more information at www.phoenix.gov/administration/departments/heat.html or <https://climatesmartcommunity.org>.

October is Rideshare Month

Valley Metro is encouraging residents to celebrate Rideshare Month this October. The goal is to use alternative modes of transportation like carpooling, vanpooling, public transit, biking, walking or teleworking instead of driving alone.

Participants can register and log their trips at ShareTheRide.com for the chance to win prizes including a one-night stay with \$100 resort credit courtesy of the Hilton Phoenix Resort at the Peak. There are also two \$50 gift cards courtesy of Lou Malnati’s and four general passes and a parking pass to Christmas at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Resort up for grabs, as well as other prizes.

Phoenix Spokes People and other like-minded organizations will join Valley Metro in support of multimodal transportation – combining bikes with other options like light rail, express and local buses and neighborhood circulators – at Arizona Center, 3rd Street and Van Buren, on Oct. 1, 7 to 9 a.m. for a kick-off event. Find details www.valleymetro.org/commute-solutions/rideshare-month.

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THE APPLE WAS NEVER THE PROBLEM

Adam, Eve, and what the auto industry knows about the way men and women buy, drive, spend, care, and get sold

After 32 years of marriage and 47 years in the automotive world, I have learned two things with reasonable certainty: men and women are different, and saying that out loud today can feel like pulling the pin on a grenade and setting it beside the breadbasket.

This is not about which sex is smarter, better, more emotional, or more logical. **It is about behavior**, and what happens when human behavior walks into a showroom, hears "horsepower," looks at an \$89,000 SUV, and somehow concludes, "You know, the payment really isn't that bad."

Which brings me to Adam, Eve, and the apple.

ADAM, EVE, AND THE FIRST SALES PITCH

I am not using Adam and Eve as neuroscience or theology. Relax. It is a metaphor. The apple represents temptation, persuasion, risk, and the moment when what we want starts negotiating with what we know.

And the automotive industry owns one hell of an apple orchard: horsepower, safety, luxury, status, family protection, zero-to-sixty times, and heated massaging seats because apparently the human spine can no longer survive a trip to Costco without Scandinavian rehabilitation.

FIRST, LET'S KILL A BAD IDEA

You have heard it: women are emotional and men are logical. Wonderful comedy-club material. Terrible psychology. Men are emotional. Women are emotional. Men reason. Women reason.

Psychologist Janet Shibley Hyde reviewed 46 meta-analyses and concluded that males and females are similar on most psychological variables, with differences often depending on context. I follow her work closely. Roughly 75% of my clients at Mazvo are women, and I have been married for 32 years, so studying how men and women think is not exactly a hobby. **It is professional development with a side of marital survival.**

Research has found women scoring higher in agreeableness, while a large meta-analysis found men showing greater sensation-seeking and behavioral risk-taking. That does not mean women are gullible or men were issued a factory-installed logic module. It means averages can differ while individuals overlap enormously.

THE CAR YOU BUY IS NEVER JUST A CAR

Ask why someone bought a vehicle and you will hear sensible explanations: reliability, safety, fuel economy, cargo room, resale value. Of course. And I bought my shoes exclusively because of their superior coefficient of friction.

Cars are transportation, but they are also rolling anthropology. They can communicate success, practicality, rebellion, taste, wealth, and occasionally a fairly aggressive midlife negotiation with mortality.

Vehicle-purchasing research has found women, on average, placing more weight on safety, environmental friendliness, and fuel economy, while men place more emphasis on power, performance, design, and image. It does not mean every woman arrives clutching crash-test ratings while every man bursts through the door screaming, **"HOW MANY HORSEPOWER?"**

Vanity does not have a gender. One person wants the badge on the hood. Another wants the reputation for being too sensible to care about badges. We rarely buy only the object. We also buy what it lets us believe about the person holding the keys.

NOW WE GET TO THE REPAIR COUNTER

Numerous researchers had men and women call repair shops for price quotes while varying how informed the caller seemed. When callers appeared uninformed, women were quoted higher prices than men. But when callers supplied a benchmark price, the gender difference disappeared. The deeper lesson is simple: knowledge changed the interaction. You do not need to rebuild a transmission to ask an intelligent question about one. But when you know enough to ask what failed, what evidence supports the recommendation, how urgent it is, and what happens if you wait, the conversation changes. That is informed ownership.

THE INDUSTRY DOESN'T NEED YOUR GENDER. IT NEEDS YOUR BUTTON.

The auto industry does not need to dislike you to influence you. It simply needs to understand you. Fear can sell safety. Ego can sell performance. Status can sell trim levels. Anxiety can sell protection products. Ignorance can sell almost anything.

One person hears, "You don't want to risk your family's safety." **Another hears,** "This one has

another hundred horsepower." Somewhere quietly, a cash register clears its throat: different apple, same orchard.

A good automotive professional reduces uncertainty. A bad one discovers what frightens, excites, validates, or flatters you and turns the volume up.

BEFORE YOU TAKE A BITE

After all these years, the most important divide in vehicle ownership may not be male versus female. It may be informed versus uninformed, proactive versus reactive, evidence versus assumption, and need versus identity. Possessing a vehicle requires a payment. **Owning one requires awareness.**

The industry only needs to discover what moves you. **Maybe** fear. **Maybe** status. **Maybe** horsepower, security, protecting the family, or that beautiful little sentence human beings use just before financial judgment leaves the building: **"I deserve it."**

I do not want women learning to negotiate like men or men learning to think like women. **I want both to become harder to manipulate.** Ask questions. Slow the decision down. Know what you own, need, can afford, and which part of you is actually making the decision.

Adam had a choice. Eve had a choice. So do we. **Temptation is not going away.** Horsepower will keep whispering sweet nonsense into somebody's ear, and there will always be another vehicle with seventeen cameras because apparently turning your head is becoming an optional feature.

The advantage belongs to the person who recognizes temptation before it becomes the decision. The car reveals the symptom. The owner reveals the pattern. Feelings may shape the decision, but behavior always leaves the evidence.

So before you buy it, finance it, repair it, upgrade it, or convince yourself you absolutely need it, ask one uncomfortable question: **Am I choosing the apple, or did somebody choose the apple for me?**

Because maybe the apple was never the problem. Maybe the real problem was thinking we picked it.

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COMMUNITY

Celebrate preserve land at Festival in the Mountains

North Mountain Visitor Center will play host to the second annual Festival in the Mountains. The festival is a community event and a fundraiser for the Save Our Mountains Foundation (SOMF), whose mission is to acquire and preserve land to assist in the expansion of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve. Running Nov. 6-8, the weekend is shaping up to be fun for the whole family, organizers said.

On Friday night, from 4-9 p.m., the festivities kick off with Pat McMahon, the beloved entertainer best known for “The Wallace and Ladmo Show,” whose decades in television, radio and community life have made him a true Arizona icon. McMahon will share his story and the remarkable journey that shaped the Valley’s history and character.

Throughout the weekend – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday – enjoy live music from local favorites Glen Gardner, Eric Ramsey, George & Georgia, Mark Bishop Evans and Nancy Elliot. Attendees can also join guided hikes, check out geology demos, and keep the kids busy with desert-themed story times and crafts, plus bring your pup along to see who



Nestled within the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, the North Mountain Visitor Center will host Festival in the Mountains in November – a fundraiser to support the continued preservation of the city’s open spaces (photo courtesy of North Mountain Visitor Center).

wins the Dog Costume Contest.

Get a jump on holiday shopping at the Market, where shoppers will find unique jewelry, ceramics, children’s books, ornaments, plus photography and art. Local artisans, crafters or vendors interested in participating in the Market, should email finance@saveourmountains.org.

Coffee and baked goods will be available to enjoy while browsing. Rattlesnake Garage will also be on hand on Saturday morning, offering the chance to safely meet some desert creatures up close, and in addition to

a silent auction with fun baskets and valuable items up for bid, residents can enter a drawing for a Dierks Bentley autographed guitar.

SOMF supports the Mountains Preserve with education, conservation, and research and maintain operations at the North Mountain Visitor Center in collaboration with the city of Phoenix. The North Mountain Visitor Center is open daily and is located at 12950 N. 7th St.

For information, visit <https://northmountainvisitorcenter.org>.



Community celebrates Pride

For 45 years, Phoenix Pride has been organizing marches, rallies, parades, entertainment, education, and outreach events to celebrate the Phoenix LGBTQ+ community. This year, the 45th Anniversary Pride Festival will be held in downtown Phoenix at The Arizona Center, 455 N. 3rd St.

A weekend of events begins Saturday, Oct. 10, with a Pre-Pride Coming Out Concert. Gates open at 6 p.m.; showtime is 7-10 p.m. On Sunday, Oct. 11, the Phoenix Pride Parade steps off at 10 a.m. The parade travels south on 3rd Street from Portland Street to Taylor Street, ending at the entrance to the festival. Festival hours on Sunday are noon to 10 p.m.

This year’s Phoenix Pride Festival will continue to be a celebration designed to bring the Valley’s diverse LGBTQ+ and allied communities together for a weekend of camaraderie and celebration, organizers say, while raising funds for the Phoenix Pride Community Programs and educating the public about the existence and continuing civil rights battle facing the community.

Find tickets and information online at www.phoenixpride.org/events/pride-festival.

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COMMUNITY

City hosts Hydrate series

The City of Phoenix Water Services Department and the Watershed Management Group are hosting the annual Hydrate Phoenix classes starting Wednesday, Sept. 30. This five-course virtual series includes Water Smart topics like “Rainwater Harvesting,” “Building Healthy Desert Soils,” and new this year: “Sustainable Living 101 for Renters.”

The Hydrate Phoenix course schedule includes: Sept. 30, Rainwater Harvesting; Oct. 7, Rain Garden Care; Oct. 14, Sustainable Living 101 for Renters; Oct. 21, Cultivating Native Edible Plants; and Oct. 28, Building Healthy Desert Soils

All classes take place on Wednesday from 6-7:30 p.m. View the course schedule and register online at www.phoenix.gov/administration/departments/waterservices.html. Click on the “Conserve Water” link and then follow the “Workshops and Videos” link to find information.

Blood supplies are low

The American Red Cross continues to urge donors of all blood types to act now and make an appointment to give blood or platelets amid the on-



going national blood crisis. Just three additional donors at every blood drive could help further stabilize the blood supply and ensure patients continue receiving lifesaving care, the organization said.

Since issuing only the second blood crisis in Red Cross history in late July, thousands of generous donors have stepped up to help save lives. At the same time, the blood supply remains under severe pressure, especially as communities head into the busy holiday season.

Book an appointment to give blood by visiting www.redcrossblood.org, calling 1-800-733-2767 or by using the Blood Donor App. Those who are unable to donate can still make an impact by encouraging eligible friends, family members and colleagues to give blood.

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COMMUNITY

Valleylife holds golf tournament

As Valleylife celebrates 79 years of service in Arizona, the organization is gearing up for its 35th annual charitable golf tournament, scheduled for Friday, Oct. 23, at Palmbrook Golf Club.

The tournament will bring golfers, sponsors and community partners together to raise awareness and funds supporting lifelong opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Golfers will have a chance to win a \$25,000 hole-in-one prize, along with prizes, raffles and awards.

Valleylife primarily serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, providing the life skills, education and support they need to build confidence, independence and the ability to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. Proceeds from the tournament benefit the Valleylife Foundation and help support these programs.

A significant measure of the organization’s vocational impact is the 60 adult members of Valleylife that have been successfully placed in careers, helping individuals pursue meaningful employment and greater independence.

To register for the golf tournament or to support the organization through sponsorship opportunities, visit www.valleylifeaz.org/events or call 602-331-2414.



A hand painted mural at the Valleylife Phoenix campus, 1142 W. Hatcher Road, provides a relaxing backdrop for the organization’s adult members (photo by Megan Moore; courtesy of Valleylife).

Food bank reaches 40-year milestone

At an Oct. 24 event, the PV Community Food Bank will celebrate “40 Years of Neighbors Caring, Neighbors Sharing” by joining with Valley businesses and supporters at Orange Tree Resort, 10601 N. 56th St., Scottsdale, for a luncheon and silent auction to support their continued efforts. The event will

be held from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Since 1986, the PV Community Food Bank, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has been a vital resource for individuals and families living within the Paradise Valley Unified School District boundaries. As the organization approaches the 40th anniversary of its service to the community in October, local businesses are invited to join in the celebration and support the non-

profit’s ongoing mission.

The food bank is currently seeking donations for the raffle and silent auction, as well as sponsorships, to help raise the necessary funds to keep their shelves stocked and continue providing essential programs.

“Your participation will make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve,” the food bank said. “Every \$1,000 feeds a family of six for a year’s worth of monthly visits.”

Since its founding, the food bank has relied primarily on cash and food donations from individuals and businesses, with no government funding accepted, and it continues this tradition to this day.

The PV Community Food Bank, located at 10862 N. 32nd St., has undergone many changes throughout the years, but its mission remains the same: to feed the hungry in Northeast Phoenix. None of this would be possible without its hard-working volunteers and the continued support of local businesses, charities and religious organizations that have partnered with the food bank from the very beginning, the nonprofit says.

To register for the 40th Anniversary event, go to <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/pvcfb-40th-anniversary-celebration>. To learn more, call 602-867-9228 or visit www.pvcommunityfoodbank.org

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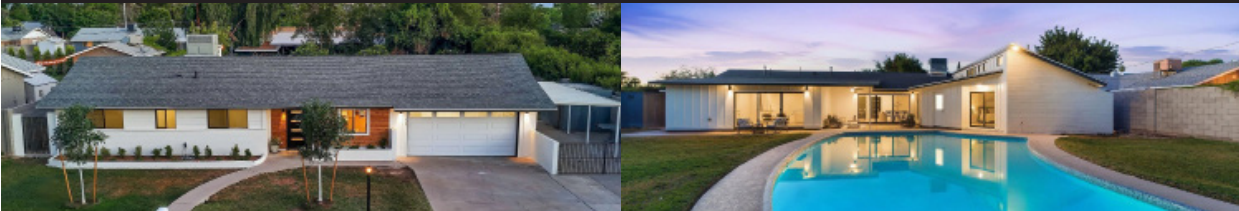
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The R H Crossland Foundation is a 501c3 and was founded in 1998 by Rusty Crossland in honor of his mom and dad. From its inception, the vision and mission have been to build a legacy of giving back to organizations, communities, and families that share our founding values. From aiding the people of the slums in the Dominican Republic to providing bionic walking devices for spinal cord injured men, women & children, supporting the Downs Syndrome community, women's shelters, floor victims, families in need and canine rescue, we have continued our philanthropic efforts.

COMMUNITY PETS

Pet of the Month

Teeny is a little fella with a big personality

In what seems to be an increase of not just homeless pets but also an increase of unwanted and unplanned litters for owned pets, the Arizona Humane Society (AHS) has unfortunately seen an uptick of the sheer number of animals in need of help. In addition to homeless dogs, cats and critters coming through the shelter, there has also been a huge increase in the number of owners in need of help, seeking resources or found to have pets in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, AHS said.

Teeny (pet number 861188), was surrendered to the Arizona Humane Society along with several other animals after their owner was evicted from their residence. Their story is a reminder that there are resources for pet owners in need of help through AHS' Pet Resource Center including pet-friendly housing, food pantries, domestic violence resources and more.

Although Teeny is small, the 10-week-old Chihuahua mix has a huge personality and absolutely loves everyone he meets, AHS said. With such an up and down start at life, this little pup is looking forward to a calm life full of cuddles, playtime and lots of snacks.

Teeny's adoption fee includes his neuter surgery, current vaccinations, a microchip and a follow-up wellness exam with a VCA Animal Hospital. Visit this handsome pup at the Arizona Humane Society's Papago Park Campus or learn more at www.azhumane.org/adopt to give him the loving forever home he deserves.



As part of its Strange Garden festivities, held Oct. 22-31, Desert Botanical Garden invites four-legged friends to stop by on Halloween for some seasonal spirit (photo courtesy of Desert Botanical Garden).

Have a howling good time

Pet parents will find two spooktacular ways to put their pooch in the picture this October at these seasonal celebrations.



He may be small, but Teeny the 10-week-old Chihuahua mix has a huge personality and absolutely loves everyone he meets (photo courtesy of Arizona Humane Society).

First, get ready for the Dog Costume Contest, held as part of the 2026 Festival in the Mountains, with a photo shoot with a professional photographer.

Pet parents who want to participate in the contest, sponsored by Pet Supplies Plus Moon Valley, will need to participate in a 20-minute photo shoot (\$5 suggested entry donation) in advance. Photo shoots will be held at the North Mountain Visitor Center, 12950 N. 7th St., between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Thursday, Friday or Saturday, Oct. 29-31. Contestants should arrive in costume. Email the photographer to set up a session: cheryltolo@gmail.com

Voting takes place on the first two days of the festival, held Nov. 6-8 at the Center – the winner will be announced on Sunday, Nov. 8 See “Celebrate preserve land at Festival in the Mountains” on page 19 for all of the event details.

Then, head over to Desert Botanical Garden on Saturday, Oct. 31 to get into the Howl-o-ween spirit as part of the Strange Garden festivities – a week-long event held Oct. 22-31.

During the Oct. 31 event, held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., guests are encouraged to bring their four-legged friends for a day of fun and photo-ops with fall décor. Of course, costumes are encouraged.

Desert Botanical Garden is located at 1201 N. Galvin Parkway. For information, visit <https://dbg.org/strange-garden> or call 480-941-1225.

Cross Roads hosts 'Blessing'

As part of its October community worship events, Cross Roads United Methodist Church, 7901 N. Central Ave., will host a Blessing of the Animals – Pet Sunday event, Sunday, Oct. 18, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

All pets and stuffies (and their

people) are invited to worship as the church celebrates and blesses the animals that make our world amazing.

As a reconciling inclusive community of faith, Cross Roads United Methodist Church is an open and affirming congregation, embracing diversity, service, unconditional acceptance and the care and support of all creation. Learn more by visiting <https://crossroads-phx.com>.

Trauma hospital reopens

With the reopening of its original Trauma Hospital at its Sunnyslope Campus, which has served the Valley's pets since 1957 at 1311 W. Hatcher Road, the Arizona Humane Society (AHS) will help approximately 3,000 more sick, injured and abused pets each year.

With more than 28,000 of the Valley's most vulnerable pets estimated to receive lifesaving care at the AHS this year alone, the state's largest animal welfare organization is on track to bring in more pets than it has in over

a decade. To accommodate that growth, the organization recently expanded its original Sunnyslope Trauma Hospital to help ease capacity at its Lazin Animal Foundation Trauma Hospital at its Rob & Melani Walton Papago Park Campus.

The modernized space doubles Sunnyslope's trauma hospital with two new surgery suites, updated medical equipment and isolation units to help mitigate disease. It also gives the Animal Rescue and Cruelty Team faster access to a trauma hospital when responding to calls in the West Valley, a fast-growing part of Phoenix and lets the organization treat cases closer to where pets are found.

“The need in our community keeps growing,” said Dr. Steven Hansen, Arizona Humane Society president and CEO. “Housing instability, rising costs and a lack of access to spay/neuter services are pushing more pets into our care every year, and with more than 28,000 expected through our doors in 2026 alone, reopening the Trauma Hospital at our Sunnyslope Campus is one way we can keep pace. It also means our rescue team no longer has to cross town to reach a trauma hospital when responding to calls in the growing West Valley.”

With the expansion of its Sunnyslope Campus, AHS is asking the community for support by adopting, fostering, donating and volunteering to help homeless pets in need. To learn more, visit www.azhumane.org.



The modernized space doubles Sunnyslope's trauma hospital with two new surgery suites, updated medical equipment and isolation units to help mitigate disease (photo courtesy of Arizona Humane Society).

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At a Sept. 9 surprise event, Earnhardt Auto Centers continued the celebration of 75 years in Arizona in a big way: with a \$75,000 donation to St. Vincent de Paul (submitted photo).

Earnhardt makes surprise donation

Earnhardt Auto Centers marked its 75-year anniversary by making what will be one of the biggest single charity donations of the year to St. Vincent de Paul on Wednesday, Sept. 9.

To celebrate 75 years in Arizona and in the same spirit the Earnhardt family has marked success for generations, the company made a surprise \$75,000 donation to the nonprofit to help continue its mission of helping people in need by feeding, clothing, housing and healing them.

“Our patriarch, my grandfather Tex, instilled a belief in our family and our company that you support the communities around you,” said Derby Earnhardt. “That is why we are marking our 75th anniversary by giving back to organizations that are doing important work every day throughout Arizona.”

The year of giving started in March when the family launched a series of surprise donations to Arizona nonprofits in honor of Earnhardt Auto Centers’ 75th anniversary and the legacy of its late founder, Hal “Tex” Earnhardt Jr. So far, the anniversary campaign has already provided more than \$155,000 in confirmed monetary donations to organizations serving children and families, first responders, animals, cancer patients and Arizonans facing food insecurity, with an additional over \$200,000 still being donated in the next few months.

These surprise donations are on top of the nearly \$90,000 Earnhardt

has already donated to other multiple charities, bringing the total for this campaign to nearly half a million dollars in donations.

The anniversary donations are the latest chapter in a philanthropic tradition that stretches back to 1951, when Tex Earnhardt opened his first dealership. What began with one dealership selling one car at a time has grown into one of Arizona’s best-known family-owned businesses, with 17 new car dealerships and more than 2,000 employees.

As the business has grown, so has the family’s community involvement.

“Dad knew that our company wouldn’t be here were it not for the support of our community,” said sons Hal Earnhardt III and Jim “Babe” Earnhardt. “He believed a company is only as strong as the community it serves. Giving back has always been our family’s way of showing our gratitude, and that is something we intend to continue.”

For the Earnhardt family, the anniversary campaign is also a deeply personal tribute to the man behind one of Arizona’s most recognizable automotive brands and its famous “No Bull” philosophy.

“When we talk about the ‘Spirit of Tex,’ we aren’t just talking about cars,” said Dodge Earnhardt. “We’re talking about doing what our founder would have done – showing our gratitude by helping people and organizations that make our communities stronger.”

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I've lived in North Central since 1978, so many of my memories of Phoenix are tied to the restaurants we grew up with and the places my dad loved to take my brother and me. Miracle Mile, Helsing's Coffee Shop, Rocky's Hideaway at the old Ambassador Hotel, Katz's Deli, the Old Spaghetti Factory, Beefeaters, Macayo's, Sing High Chop Suey House, Applegate's and Googie's were definitely favorites. Even the McDonald's at Central and Indian School was part of the neighborhood landscape.

But one of my dad, Herb's favorites was Smuggler's Inn at Park Central Mall. If you've been around Phoenix long enough, you may also remember the Sun Worshiper, the unmistakable steel sculpture that stood near the restaurant beginning in the late 1960s. It disappeared during a Park Central remodel in the 1980s, but decades later it came home. Today, the Sun Worshiper once again greets visitors on the west side of the revitalized Park Central property.

We had dinner at Durant's recently, and walking through that back door and right through the kitchen still gets me. Durant's opened in 1950, and while it has new ownership with the Mastro family and their business partner Scott Troilo, thankfully the red booths, the history and that famous entrance are still part of the experience.

Tratto | Phoenix, Richardson's and Dick's Hideaway, Tarbell's, Vincent on Camelback, Alexi's and Christo's are staples and when you want dinner with one of the best views in the Valley, Christopher's at Wrigley Mansion never disappoints.

Drive Central Avenue and you can grab coffee at LUX, stop at Pane Bianco, meet somebody at Clever Koi or head over to Chula Seafood. Sushi Friend has somehow become an almost weekly habit for us, and Otro on Seventh Street is another neighborhood favorite. Luci's has become one of those places where you always seem to run into somebody you know, much like LGO and Chelsea's Kitchen.

And Phoenix isn't just getting noticed by those of us who live here. Yotaka "Sunny" Martin of Lom Wong won the 2025 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southwest for the regional Thai food she and her family have brought to downtown Phoenix. This year, Tacos Chiwas, Little Miss BBQ and Chula Seafood were among Phoenix's James Beard semifinalists. Bacanora continues to draw national attention as well as our family's. And we must not forget Phoenix Coqui, for your Puerto Rican fix.

Then there are the little discoveries.

Nelson's Meat + Fish at 24th Street and Indian School is terrific for fresh seafood or a great sandwich. Logan Johnson, a young foodie and chef in her own right (@lolointhekitchen_), introduced MaryAnn to Nelson's Meat + Fish, Saturday Bagelfeld's sandwich collaboration. Phoenix has officially become a food town and I think we're just getting started.

If you have a neighborhood favorite we need to try, send it our way. @bobby.lieb or call me 602-376-1341

On my list to try next: Glai Baan on Osborn for Thai and Pa'La on 24th Street

Bon appétit!

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS



Herschede celebrates anniversary

A year ago, Herschede opened its doors at 5068 N. Central Ave. with a singular idea: create a men's clothing store that felt like much more than a place to shop. Since then, it has grown into a gathering place built around distinctive style, great music and the people who have brought the whole thing to life, says founder Eric Herschede.

"I'm humbled by this first year and incredibly grateful for the family and friends who believed in me and supported Herschede from the beginning," Herschede told us. "I've loved the people I've met, the relationships I've built and, quite honestly, how much fun it has all been. I can't wait to celebrate together and see what comes next."

On Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 4 to 8 p.m., the Uptown clothing store is celebrating its first anniversary – and the community is invited. Join neighbors for an evening in the lounge, along with a drawing for a \$1,000 store gift card.

Learn more by visiting www.herschede.shop.

engage with Fresh Start's services, the organization said.

In her new role, Finch will provide executive leadership for Fresh Start's programs, client engagement, and community partnership initiatives. She will guide teams responsible for delivering programs and connecting women with the organization's resources while cultivating partnerships that expand the organization's reach and impact.

Fresh Start's mission is to provide access and resources that help women achieve self-sufficiency and use their strength to thrive. The organization's ultimate vision is to create unlimited opportunities for women. For over three decades, the nonprofit has supported more than 65,000 Arizona women, serving more than 5,000 women each year who are 18 years and older. Sixty-two percent are single mothers, 67 percent make an annual income less than \$25K, and 68 percent are domestic violence survivors.

For additional information, visit www.freshstartwomen.org.

Employees support local school

Boxes of school supplies helped students at Maryland School begin the academic year prepared and confident, thanks to the generosity of employees at Abrazo Central Campus, who recently donated back-to-school necessities to support the school's K-8 students.

The annual school supply drive is a longstanding tradition for Abrazo Central employees and reflects their ongoing commitment to strengthening community partnerships and supporting educational success in the neighborhoods they serve, the company said.

"Every notebook, pencil and classroom supply represents encouragement, opportunity and support for a student," said LaQuelle Huff, an Abrazo Central Campus employee who

Fresh Start promotes Finch

In September, Fresh Start Women's Foundation announced the promotion of Central Phoenix resident Ashley Finch to vice president of Community and Client Engagement. Finch joined Fresh Start in 2019 as volunteer and outreach manager, and the promotion recognizes her leadership in strengthening programs, expanding community partnerships and improving how women access and

Ashley Finch



continued on next page

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Continued from last page

helped lead the effort and delivered the boxes to students in August. “Giving back is part of who we are, and this initiative reflects the compassion and commitment our employees bring to the community every day,” she said.

Gomez among ‘Achievers’

Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA) in September celebrated executive director Alejandra Gomez, who was named a 2026 Women Achievers of Arizona Award winner in the Nonprofit category by the *Arizona Capitol Times* and *State Affairs*. Gomez will be recognized alongside this year’s honorees at the awards luncheon on Oct. 8 at the Arizona Biltmore.



Alejandra Gomez

“For more than a decade, Alejandra has helped build LUCHA into one of Arizona’s most powerful grassroots organizations, standing alongside working-class, Latino and immigrant communities in fights for higher wages, immigrant rights, public education, voting rights, affordable housing, health care and a government that works for the people who power our state,” the organization said.

They added, “Her leadership has always been rooted in a simple belief: lasting change does not come from one person or one election. It comes from organized communities and power willing to fight together, build power and demand more from those who govern us.”

For her part, Gomez expressed gratitude to her predecessors and to the many individuals who show up to support the organization’s cause.

“I stand on the shoulders of the extraordinary women who came before me, whose leadership, courage, and commitment paved the way for all of us who continue this work today. This recognition also belongs to the thousands of LUCHA members, leaders and staff who have built this organization alongside me,” Gomez said. “Everything we have won in Arizona has come from ordinary people deciding that we deserve more and organizing together to make it possible.”

Learn more about LUCHA at www.luchaaz.org. Find information about the Women Achievers of Arizona Award at <https://azcapitoltimes.com/event/women-achievers-of-arizona-2026>.

Chamber announces Athena finalists

The Greater Phoenix Chamber invites members and residents at large to join them at JW Marriott Phoenix

Desert Ridge Resort & Spa, 5350 E. Marriott Dr., Thursday, Oct. 29, as the organization celebrates the Valley’s exceptional businesswomen during the 39th Annual Athena Awards.

For nearly four decades, the awards program has honored inspiring leaders who make a lasting impact through their professional achievements, community involvement and commitment to helping others succeed.

This year’s Private Sector finalists are Kathy Gallowitz, LtCol, USAF, retired, Vanguard Veteran, LLC; Ann Meyers Drysdale, broadcaster, Olympian and Hall of Famer, Phoenix Suns and Phoenix Mercury; Karrin Taylor Robson, Arizona Strategies; and Alexi Venneri, DAS Technology.

Public Sector finalists are Kim Depres, Circle the City; Fran Mallace, Make-A-Wish Arizona; Janice Palmer, Helios Education Foundation; and Donna Taylor, Beatitudes Campus.

Young Professional finalists are Nicole Campillo Penagos, Arizona Diamondbacks; Rachelle Giles, Goodman Schwartz Public Affairs; and Lauren Smith, Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC).

Find additional information at www.phoenixchamber.com.

Impact goes west

The North Central-based gym Impact Gymnastics is expanding into the West Valley. The company is taking over the Flames Gymnastics location at 8154 W. Bell Road, Suite A-2 in Glendale, rebranding it Impact Gymnastics – Arrowhead. Flames Gymnastics owner MeJa Lee is handing off the Bell Road location to focus her attention on her remaining Flames Gymnastics locations. She said she is glad to see the Arrowhead community land with a gym she trusts.

Impact Gymnastics is owned by Samantha and Ozzie Baltierrez, who built the brand’s Phoenix flagship, at 7812 N. 12th St., into a program serving more than 1,000 students ages 6 months to 18 years.

A soft opening introduced a limited class schedule, and will be followed by a full Monday-through-Saturday schedule starting the week of Oct. 5. A grand opening celebration is planned for Oct. 16, with more details to come.

The new location will offer recreational, Kinder and tumbling classes, along with Ninja Zone, camps and open gym. Cheer classes and Friday night open gyms will remain exclusive to the Phoenix location. Gabby Anderson, general manager of Impact Gymnastics, will oversee both the Phoenix and Arrowhead locations.

The expansion also brings up to 20 new jobs to the West Valley, including recreational, Kinder and tumbling coach positions. Learn more at www.impactgymnaz.com.

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SCHOOL DAYS



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Sunnyslope hosts homecoming tailgate

The Sunnyslope High School Viking Parent Club is hosting its annual homecoming tailgate party on Friday, Oct. 23. The event will kick off at 5 p.m. in the cafeteria and wrap up at 7 p.m. so that attendees can get to the homecoming football game.

The homecoming parade will start at 6 p.m. from the Sunnyslope Pool parking lot, head east on Dunlap, enter the east school parking lot and then do a lap around the football field.

Half-time performances will include the marching band, homecoming court and cheerleaders. Fireworks will be launched after each touchdown, and “S” mountain will be ablaze with road flairs at the end of the game.

“Sunnyslope High School is a staple and anchor to the Sunnyslope community,” said Sarah Fluke, Homecoming Tailgate chair. “Participating in this event helps continue to strengthen the students and teachers that give so much to our community. Living in Sunnyslope drives my passion to chair this event and make it successful so our community continues to thrive.”

The Viking Parent Club is an active parent group that works diligently throughout the year to raise money for



As part of the Oct. 23 Sunnyslope High School homecoming festivities, the Viking Parent Club’s annual tailgate party will include a fundraising raffle and other activities to raise funds to support school activities (submitted photo).

Sunnyslope High School and this event is no exception. As the group’s biggest fundraiser of the year, they raise money by selling tickets for the catered dinner (Miracle Mile Deli), selling raffle tickets and Sunnyslope spirit wear as well as a silent auction.

All money raised from the event

will go back to Sunnyslope High School through grants for teachers, student programs, and staff appreciation events. This year’s fundraising goal is \$25,000.

Visit www.vikingparentclub.com/homecoming-tailgate for additional event details, or reach out to Fluke at homecoming@vikingparentclub.com.

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Open House | Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026
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Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026 or
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High School

EXPO





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NOVEMBER 7, 2026
9:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

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Join us for the **PXU EXPO** at **Phoenix College** on **Saturday, November 7, from 9:00 AM–12:30 PM!** All PXU high schools will be showcasing their outstanding programs. From specialty and micro schools to large traditional campuses, PXU offers a wide range of options—come discover the right fit for you!

¡Acompáñanos en la **PXU EXPO** en **Phoenix College** el **sábado 7 de noviembre, de 9:00 a.m. a 12:30 p.m.!** Todas las preparatorias de PXU estarán presentando sus programas destacados. Tenemos de todo: escuelas especializadas y microescuelas, así como preparatorias grandes y tradicionales. PXU ofrece una amplia variedad de opciones — ¡ven y descubre la preparatoria ideal para ti!





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SCHOOL DAYS

Glendale Union High School District

Maddox named principal

Washington High School welcomed Jarred Maddox as its new principal. This year marks Maddox’s 25th year in education, beginning as an English teacher and including roles as a student council advisor, soccer coach and AP English Literature teacher. Passionate about engaging instruction and project-based learning, Maddox is committed to supporting teachers and students through meaningful professional development, mentorship, and growth opportunities, GUHSD said.



Jarred Maddox

Band exhibition scheduled

Glendale Union High School District will host its annual Marching Band Exhibition on Nov. 2, at Glendale Community College, 6000 W. Olive Ave., Glendale, starting at 6:30 p.m. This free, open-to-the-public event will showcase performances from student musicians representing Apollo, Cortez, Glendale, Greenway, Independence, Moon Valley, Sunnyslope, Thunderbird and Washington High Schools. Attendees will enjoy a night of music and school spirit as bands present their 2026 season shows.

Wabbington represents USA Basketball

Sunnyslope High School senior Darius Wabbington had a busy summer, competing with Compton Magic on the Adidas 3SSB circuit and representing USA Basketball at the 2026 FIBA U18 Men’s AmeriCup. The team earned a silver medal. During the tournament, Wabbington averaged 9.2 points, 4.2 rebounds, 2.2 assists and 1.2 steals across five games. As he continues through the college recruitment process, Wabbington is currently ranked as the No. 15



Kaytlin Garrow, Ryan Sutton and Gabriel Burroughs, all Sunnyslope High School seniors, have been named 2026 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists (photo courtesy of GUHSD).

national recruit in the NCAA. The district said, “Congratulations to Darius on an impressive summer and continued success on the court!”

Seniors are Merit semifinalists

Sunnyslope High School is proud to recognize seniors Kaytlin Garrow, Ryan Sutton and Gabriel Burroughs as 2026 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.

These Sunnyslope students are among the highest scorers in their respective state on the PSAT/NMSQT, representing less than one percent of high school seniors nationwide. More than 16,000 students were selected as semifinalists based on their exceptional Selection Index scores and state-based allocation.

Cross Country opens season

Washington High School Rams Cross Country teams opened the season at home, welcoming six visiting schools for a competitive meet that marked the first-ever cross country race for many Washington runners. The Rams made an immediate impact, with both the girls’ and boys’

teams earning first-place team finishes. Coach Swigert praised the team’s effort and determination, especially the new runners competing for the first time, and expressed excitement for the growth ahead. With a strong start to the season, the Washington Rams look forward to building on their momentum and seeing what this group can accomplish throughout the season, the school said.

GUHSD ranked among best

The Glendale Union High School District (GUHSD) announced that its schools ranked among the best in the 2026-2027 U.S. News and World Report rankings. The rankings evaluated data from more than 27,000 high schools nationwide and ranked them based on indicators such as college readiness, state assessment performance, and graduation rates. This achievement reflects the dedication of students, teachers, staff, families, and school communities, and GUHSD’s shared commitment to empowering all students for the choices and challenges of the 21st century, the district said.



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SCHOOL DAYS

Madison Elementary School District

Best Buddies Club earns top recognition

Out of nearly 50 participating schools, Madison Meadows Middle School's Best Buddies Club was recently named the Top School Fundraising Team for the 2026 Best Buddies Friendship Walk.

As a collaboration between the school's National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) and the Best Buddies Club, the students worked together to successfully raise funds and awareness for the organization. The Meadows Best Buddies Club has received multiple recognitions over the past several years from the Best Buddies Program, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to community and inclusion for all.

The Madison Meadows Best Buddies Club focuses on building understanding and empathy by teaching that everyone learns and experiences the world in their own way. Through these experiences, students gain a deeper appreciation for inclusion and acceptance of others.

Along with awareness activities, students of all abilities participate in fun, connection-building opportunities



The Meadows Best Buddies Club focuses on building understanding and empathy by teaching that everyone learns and experiences the world in their own way.

together such as arts and crafts, board games and other group activities that help build friendships among students and strengthen the school community.

Blood drive scheduled

Madison School District, in partnership with Vitalant Blood Donation, will host a blood drive on Friday, Oct. 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Madison District Office, 5601 N. 16th St.

Visit www.madisonaz.org/blood

drive for more information and to sign up to donate.

District hosts job fair

Madison School District will host a job fair on Wednesday, Oct. 28. Individuals have the opportunity to meet with school and district leaders to learn about available positions, benefits and more.

The district is hiring a variety of positions, including guest teachers, bus drivers, before and after school

program staff, custodians as well as other school and student support positions. The fair will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. on Oct. 28 at the Madison Center for the Arts, 5601 N. 16th St.

More information about available positions and the benefits of working for Madison School District are available at www.madisonaz.org/jobs.

Tour Madison in November

The Madison School District invites families interested in learning more about its schools and signature programs to attend the upcoming Discover Madison tour events.

For families with children entering kindergarten next fall, the Discover Madison Elementary Tour will be held on Nov. 6. For families with children entering fifth through eighth grade next fall, the Discover Madison Middle School Tour will be held Nov. 13.

During the tours, families will learn about the Madison School District, its signature programs and specialty classes, and take a school bus to visit and tour each of the elementary or middle school campuses.

The district will also host a Discover Madison Preschool tour on Jan. 21, 2027, for families with younger children.

Space is limited. To learn more and sign up, visit www.madisonaz.org/discover.

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SCHOOL DAYS



The Superintendent Student Advisory Council provides a new opportunity for Osborn School District students to have a meaningful voice in shaping their respective schools and the district more broadly (submitted photo).

Osborn School District

Osborn students join Advisory Council

In an effort to ensure student voices help shape decisions across the district, Osborn School District Superintendent Felipe Carranza has officially launched the Superintendent Student Advisory Council.

Bringing together student representatives in grades three to eight from all six Osborn schools, the council’s inaugural meeting gave students an opportunity to learn more about

how the district operates and to share their perspectives on their school experiences. Moving forward, the student leaders will meet quarterly with Superintendent Carranza to share feedback, bring forward ideas and concerns from their classmates, and help district leadership better understand the student experience across Osborn.

The council is one way the district said that it is creating opportunities for students to have a meaningful voice in shaping their schools and the future of Osborn. Learn more at www.osbornschools.org.



Bioscience High School’s unique approach to student learning and outcomes helped the school rank No. 19 among Arizona’s best schools in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings (photo courtesy of PXU).

Phoenix Union High School District

Central holds 50th reunion

The Central High School Class of 1976 is hosting a 50th Reunion Oct. 23-24 and the organizers are looking for fellow Bobcats. Alumni are invited to come together for a weekend of reconnecting and reminiscing with “old” friends.

Contact Lisa MacCollum at lisa@lisamacstudio.com for information.

Bioscience ranked ‘19’

Phoenix Union High School District (PXU) announced that Bioscience High School ranked No. 19 among Arizona’s best schools in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, placing it among a select group of schools that were recognized for their academic achievements across the state.

According to the publication, the rankings are determined through six factors of school quality: college readiness, state assessment performance, state assessment proficiency, college curriculum breadth, under-served student performance and

graduation rate.

Bioscience Principal Ulises Aragon said that while he believes that student success speaks for itself, formal recognition is always reaffirming.

“We were kind of happy that we made the list again, which is fantastic. Our teachers work incredibly hard, our staff does as well, and so it’s just another point of recognition that hey, you know we’re doing the right thing, and we’re moving in the right direction,” Aragon said.

He credits much of the student success at Bioscience to the high teacher-to-student ratio. The teachers and staff are a point of pride for Bioscience, Aragon said, praising their hard work and dedication.

Bioscience is unique in its approach to student learning and outcomes, PXU added. Students entering their junior year select one of two focus areas: engineering or biomedical. For Bioscience, the focus going forward is to continue building on its success and helping students reach their full potential.

Any prospective Bioscience High School students and families can learn more and enroll at www.pxu.org/enroll.



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WHAT TO EXPECT:

- ✓ Learn about Madison's Signature Programs
- ✓ Tour each Madison elementary or middle school
- ✓ Meet school principals
- ✓ Participate in a Q&A

WHEN:

Discover Kindergarten:
Friday, November 6
8:30am-12pm

Discover Middle School:
Friday, November 13
8:30am-12pm

RSVP:

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VIRTUAL TOUR
INTRODUCTION



FAITH TOUR



PRESCHOOL TOUR



K-5 TOUR



6-8 TOUR



EXTRACURRICULARS TOUR

SCHOOL DAYS

Washington Elementary School District

Students earn perfect scores

The Washington Elementary School District (WESD) announced that 12 students earned perfect scores on two of the three state assessments during the 2025-26 school year.

The district congratulated the students who had perfect scores on both their Math and ELA assessments, including Josie W. at Acacia Elementary School; Claire A., Torin R. and Elena T. at Lookout Mountain Elementary School; Ellis M. at Mountain Sky Junior High School; Gerardo M. P. at Ocotillo Elementary School; Bennett C. at Royal Palm Middle School; Hadassa D., Sophie D. and August P. at Sahuaro Elementary School; and Oscar B. C. at Shaw Butte Elementary School.

“We also want to give a big shout-out to Cambria N. at Lookout Mountain Elementary School who received perfect scores on both her Math and Science assessment!” the district said. “Additionally, nine students earned perfect scores in ELA, while 176 students had perfect scores in Math. All of these students received a certificate of achievement at their school sites. The WESD Family is so proud of the hard work and dedication of our students!”

Teacher named APS winner

WESD congratulated Kennedy Bullock at Moon Mountain Elementary School who was selected as a winner of the 2026-27 Arizona Public Service (APS) Supply My Class program. As part of the program, Kennedy was surprised with a \$500 prepaid card.

The APS Supply My Class program recognizes teachers for the important



A dozen students were recognized at a recent Washington Elementary School District Governing Board meeting for earning perfect scores on their state assessments during the last school year (photo courtesy of WESD).

work they do by providing 500 randomly selected K-12 teachers in the APS service territory with \$500 to use toward supplies, materials and other resources that can enhance their classrooms and support their students.

Campus improvements enhance WESD schools

During summer break, campus improvements were completed at several schools thanks to bond projects approved by WESD voters.

Lakeview Elementary School received renovations to its front office and entry area, while Alta Vista Elementary School added improved parking, emergency access and campus enhancements. New flooring was also installed at Palo Verde Middle School, Roadrunner Elementary School and Sweetwater School, giving learning spaces a fresh, updated look.

Desert View offers free preschool

WESD, in partnership with A Stepping Stone Foundation, will offer a free,



A refreshed front office and entry area welcomed students to a new school year at Lakeview Elementary, thanks to a bond funded project completed over summer break (photo courtesy of WESD).

full-day preschool program for children ages 3-5. Classes begin Monday, Oct. 19, and are held Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., with early release Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

The program includes free breakfast and lunch and high-quality early learning. There is no income requirement to enroll. Parents or grandparents who participate must commit to weekly adult education classes, with

free childcare provided during those classes.

The preschool program will be held at Desert View Elementary School, 8621 N. 3rd Street. Spaces are limited, so families are encouraged to enroll today. Visit Desert View to complete the registration information. For more information, call 602-347-4000. Visit www.wesdschools.org to learn more about the district.

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A Jesuit school forming Kids for Others
Preschool-8th Grade

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THE POSSIBILITIES

Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Jesuit School is a welcoming community dedicated to pursuing educational excellence, living our faith through action, and nurturing compassionate difference-makers while forming Kids for Others. From Preschool to 8th Grade, we provide opportunities for our students to cultivate excellence in mind, body and spirit.

applications

Applications for the 2027 - 2028 School Year open on November 1st. Please scan the QR code to learn more about our application process and timeline, including information on our Open House on Tuesday, October 27th.

LEARN MORE

school.sfxphx.org

SCHOOL DAYS

Charter and Public Schools

MHP ranked #22

In its September newsletter, Madison Highland Prep (MPH) announced that it was recognized as the #22 Best High School in Arizona in the 2026-2027 U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools rankings.

This places MHP among the top five percent of high schools nationwide, an achievement that reflects the

dedication and hard work of students, teachers and entire school community, the school said, adding that the ranking highlights the momentum and continued growth of MHP as it enters another school year.

The statement continued, “This recognition is a reflection of what we strive for every day at Madison Highland Prep: challenging our students, celebrating their accomplishments, and creating opportunities for them to succeed. We are incredibly proud of how far our school community has

come and grateful to everyone who has helped make this achievement possible. As we look ahead, we are excited to keep raising the bar and building on this success together.”

Madison Highland Prep is located at 1431 E. Campbell Ave. For additional information, call 602-745-3800 or visit <https://madisonhighlandprep.com>.

Remembering 9/11

At a Sept. 11 event, Madison Highland Prep staff and students came together to tie ribbons along the school’s fence and take a moment to pay their respects and honor the lives and memories forever impacted by 9/11.

In a social media post recognizing the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the school said, “We remember. We honor. We will never forget.”

Want to become a Bronco?

Area students who are interested in becoming a Bronco are invited to attend Brophy College Preparatory’s largest admissions event of the year. The annual Brophy Open House, is on Sunday, Nov. 1.

Prospective students can join campus tours and find information on academic programs, sports and co-curricular activities, as well as details about financial aid and the admissions process.

Registration for the event is now open. Visit www.brophyprep.org to fill out an inquiry form, or sign up through the Application Checklist if your student is already registered with Brophy.



Students at Madison Highland Prep tied ribbons to the school fence as they honored those killed and otherwise impacted by 9/11 (photo courtesy of Madison Highland Prep).



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SCHOOL DAYS



Members of Valley Lutheran High School's Hearts to Serve Club packed nutritious meals at Feed My Starving Children in Tempe as part of the school's service ethos (submitted photo).

Service day supports local nonprofit

Members of Valley Lutheran High School's Hearts to Serve Club recently gave up their Saturday morning to volunteer at Feed My Starving Children in Tempe.

Led by Valley Lutheran teacher Dave Meyer, the students measured ingredients, filled bags, weighed meals and prepared them for shipment. Together, they packed hundreds of nutritious meals that will be distributed to children in need around the world.

Why would teenagers spend a Saturday morning working on a meal-packing line? For these students, the answer is rooted in their faith, Meyer said.

"They understand that faith is not simply something we talk about. It is something we live out by recognizing the needs of others and choosing to serve," the teach said.

Feed My Starving Children relies on volunteers to hand-pack nutritious MannaPack meals designed to help prevent and reverse undernutrition. The meals are distributed by partner orga-

nizations through schools, orphanages, clinics and feeding programs worldwide. Learn more about Feed My Starving Children at www.fmsc.org.

The experience also benefits Valley Lutheran students, the school said. They experience the joy of knowing their work may help a child receive the food needed to survive, while strengthening friendships and learning the value of working together toward a shared purpose.

Students also build community service hours that can become an important part of their story during the college admissions process. More importantly, they discover that their time and talents can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

The school added that students experience more service time through hands-on opportunities to make a meaningful difference, and during its school-wide Day of Giving on Oct. 30, students can choose from more than 10 nonprofit organizations where they will volunteer their time and serve others.

Learn more about the school by visiting www.vlhs.org.

History teacher appointed to Holocaust committee

Xavier College Preparatory history teacher Gina Nunez has been appointed to the advisory committee of the new Hilton Family Holocaust Education Center in Phoenix, a state-of-the-art center dedicated to Holocaust education, remembrance and inspiring future generations to stand against antisemitism, hatred and bigotry.

Nunez teaches AP World History and Holocaust Studies at Xavier. The Holocaust Studies elective, offered to juniors and seniors, has become one of the school's most popular electives, the school said, reflecting strong student interest in understanding the history of the Holocaust and its continuing relevance.

As a member of the Center's advisory committee, Nunez will serve as an ambassador and provide an educator's perspective on curriculum and programming for high school students.

"I absolutely love teaching history," said Nunez. "But I have a passion for teaching about the Holocaust. It's important for me to remind my stu-

dents that they never forget; that they know what it means to be empathetic, speak out against dehumanization and challenge bigotry."

That approach is central to Nunez's Holocaust Studies course at Xavier, the school said. Students watch recorded survivor testimonies, read first-person accounts and examine individual experiences to understand the Holocaust not simply as a historical event, but through the lives of those who experienced it.

Scheduled to open in April 2027, the Hilton Family Holocaust Education Center will be a 31,000-square-foot facility built on the grounds of the Cutler-Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center, the site of Phoenix's first synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel. The center will feature immersive and interactive exhibits, survivor testimonies, educational programming and resources for teachers and students.

The Center grew out of a plan developed by the Arizona Jewish Historical Society. Its mission is to preserve the memory of Holocaust victims and survivors while encouraging visitors, particularly young people, to become "upstanders" who recognize and act against hatred, prejudice and injustice. Learn more at <https://azjhs.org>.



Gina Nunez, a world history and Holocaust Studies teacher at Xavier College Preparatory, has been appointed to the advisory committee of the new Hilton Family Holocaust Education Center (photo by Lisa Zuba).

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December 2

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GENERATIONS

Generations share stage at Legacy Concert

Singers spanning generations will share the stage on Saturday, Oct. 24, at 3 p.m., when the Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix and Phoenix Children's Chorus present their annual Legacy Concert at Phoenix Bible Church, 6060 N. 7th Ave.

This year's concert expands the intergenerational tradition with special guest performances by Sunnyslope High School's Vocal Ensemble and the Madison Simis Elementary School Fourth Grade Choir, bringing together elementary, high school, youth and adult singers for an afternoon celebrating the lifelong joy of singing.

"The Legacy Concert is really about what happens when generations come together through music," said Dr. Brook Larson, artistic director of Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix. "A fourth grader can look across the stage and see high school students, young singers and adults who have made music an important part of their lives. It reminds all of us that singing can be something we carry with us for a lifetime."

The annual collaboration between Orpheus and Phoenix Children's Chorus was created to celebrate the continuity of choral music across genera-



Multiple generations of singers will come together on stage for a night of choral music during the annual Legacy Concert, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 24 (photo courtesy of Orpheus Male Chorus/ Phoenix Children's Chorus).

tions while giving young singers the opportunity to perform alongside experienced musicians.

This year's addition of singers from two Phoenix public schools broadens that vision. Sunnyslope High School's Vocal Ensemble, directed by Tamara Krause, is the school's select vocal ensemble and has earned recognition at regional and national festi-

vals. The Madison Simis Elementary School Fourth Grade Choir, directed by Stephanie Brewer, brings some of the afternoon's youngest voices to the Legacy Concert stage.

Admission is free and open to the public. Advance tickets are required and should be reserved for each attendee. Visit <https://orpheus.org/performances>.

Join a local senior center

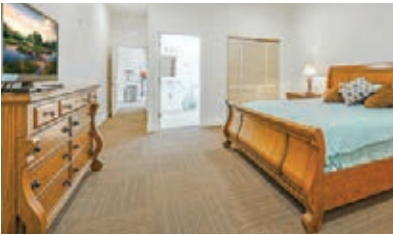
Older residents who are looking for a space to stay active and entertained, as well as find community with neighbors, are invited to check out one of the 15 city of Phoenix senior centers.

In North Central, the Devonshire Senior Center, 2802 E. Devonshire Ave., and the Sunnyslope Senior Center, 802 E. Vogel Ave., offer events, classes and trips each month that help keep older adults active and engaged. Both centers are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The annual membership fee is \$20 for Phoenix residents, and provides access to all city centers. Lunch is served Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Members 60 and older may give a recommended contribution of \$2.50 per meal; the cost of a meal for all others is \$5.

For additional information about Phoenix senior centers, as well as other city programs for seniors and older adults, visit www.phoenix.gov/humanservices/programs/older.

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GENERATIONS

Neighborhoods
celebrate the season

Neighborhood groups and churches across the North Central area are getting into the spirit of the season with family-friendly events throughout the month of October.

In Sunnyslope, the Norton Vista Neighborhood Association will host three events in October, beginning with its free Movie in the Park event, Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m. Head to Norton Park, 1224 E. Hatcher Road, for a screening of “Night at the Museum.” On Oct. 17, Sunnyslope Community Center will host the organization’s G.A.I.N. (Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods) event.

Then, on Saturday, Oct. 31, the 6th Annual G.A.I.N. Trick-O-Treat Block Party will take place along 13th Street between Dunlap Avenue and Hatcher Road. The free event begins at 6 p.m. and will include music, food, treats and plenty of community spirit to go around. Stay in touch with Norton Vista online at www.facebook.com/nortonvista85020.

Next up, Desert Christian Fellowship Church, located at 1445 W. Northern Ave., will host a community trunk-or-treat event on Friday, Oct. 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. The theme of the event is “Being a light in the darkness.”

Area families are invited to join neighbors as they enjoy candy, food, crafts, a bounce house and games, and participate in a raffle drawing. To learn more, visit www.desertchristian-fellowship.com.

Finally, Cross Roads United Methodist Church, in partnership with Accelerated Pathways Career College, Madrid Beauty Academy and other local community organizations, invites families to a festive and family-friendly Halloween Trunk-or-Treat and Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 4 to 6 p.m. at 7901 N. Central Ave.

This free event promises a fun early Halloween experience for children of all ages. Families can enjoy trick-or-treating from creatively decorated car trunks and are encouraged to dress up and join in the excitement. In addition to the Trunk-or-Treat fun, the event will feature community organizations offering free haircuts, glucose readings, blood pressure checks, nutrition/wellness resources and information on local services.

Learn more at www.crossroads-phx.com.

Program promotes
advance care planning

Each year at the end of October, Area Agency on Aging, Region One

brings together older adults, families and volunteer attorneys for its annual Night of the Living Will, a community event held in partnership with the State Bar of Arizona Elder Law, Mental Health & Special Needs Planning Committee. The event promotes advance care planning and helps participants prepare important healthcare documents.

Night of the Living Will empowers individuals to take control of their future healthcare decisions before a crisis occurs, the organization said. Participants can create advanced directives, living wills and healthcare powers of attorney that clearly document their wishes and identify someone they trust to speak for them if they cannot.

The event also provides one-on-one guidance from volunteer attorneys at no cost. Attorneys answer questions, explain legal options and help participants complete their documents. By making this essential planning accessible to older adults and their families, Night of the Living Will provides greater confidence, clarity and peace of mind when it matters most.

Contact the Area Agency on Aging, Region One at 602-264-2255 to make a reservation. Learn more about the organization at www.aaaphx.org.

Campus hosts
open house

Beatitudes Campus, a senior living community located at 1610 W. Glendale Ave., will host an open house and dinner event on Friday, Oct. 9. The tour will take place from 4 to 5 p.m.; dinner follows from 5 to 7 p.m.

After learning about the campus, attendees can sit back, relax and enjoy a refreshing cocktail, scrumptious dinner and get to know more from residents. RSVP by Oct. 6.

For additional information, call 602-995-6100 or visit www.beatitudes-campus.org/events.

Research program
seeks participants

EPIC Living Alone Virtual is currently seeking residents aged 60 and over who are living alone with early-stage memory loss or dementia to participate in the research program.

Through a free Zoom-delivered program, participants receive education, care planning and support sessions from experienced Arizona State University researchers. Interested individuals must live independently, reside in the U.S., speak English. They can receive up to \$90 in gift cards for their time in program interviews.

Contact agingsuccessfully@asu.edu or 602-496-1239 for details.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

On the Town

It is beginning to (almost) feel like fall in the Valley, and events are kicking into high gear. The Arizona State Fair returns Oct. 1, and the month also brings free First Friday events. Added to that are live music, ballet, theater and opera offerings, along with film screenings, art and cultural events and so much more. See you on the town in October!



Arizona State Fair
Oct. 1 – Nov. 1
Arizona State Fairgrounds
www.azstatefair.com

Jazz Casual Thursday with Charles Lewis & His Trio
Every Thursday
The Nash
www.thenash.org; 602-795-0464

Acoustic Open Stage
Every Thursday
Fiddler’s Dream Coffeehouse
www.fiddlersdream.org; 602-997-9795

Late Night, No Cover!
Every Friday
The Nash
www.thenash.org; 602-795-0464

‘Masque of the Red Death’
Oct. 2
Orpheum Theatre
www.orpheumphx.com/events



15th Anniversary Show
Oct. 3
Crescent Ballroom
www.crescentphx.com; 602-716-2222

Jimi Primetime Smith / Bob Corritore Blues Band
Oct. 3
The Rhythm Room
www.rhythmroom.com; 602-612-4981

Wilderness First Aid Training
Oct. 3-4
North Mountain Visitor Center
www.northmountainvisitorcenter.org; 602-343-5125

29th Annual Manhattan Short Film Festival
Oct. 4
Phoenix Art Museum
www.phxart.org; 602-257-1880



Julieta Venegas
Oct. 5
The Van Buren
www.thevanburenphx.com; 480-659-1641

Joyer
Oct. 7
Linger Longer Lounge
https://psykosteve.com

Paolo Conducts Rachmaninoff & Prokofiev
Oct. 9-11
The Phoenix Symphony
www.phoenixsymphony.org; 602-495-1999



‘The Secret Circus Musical’
Oct. 9-11
Great Arizona Puppet Theater
www.azpuppets.org; 602-262-2050

Great Fall Kickoff Festival
Oct. 9-18
Desert Botanical Garden
www.dbg.org; 480-941-1225

‘The Lightning Thief’
Oct. 9-25
Valley Youth Theatre
www.vyt.com; 602-253-8188

‘Life, Love, and Light’ Masterworks Series
Oct. 10
Phoenix Chorale @ Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
www.phoenixchorale.org; 602-253-2224



Indigenous Peoples Day
Oct. 11
Heard Museum
https://heard.org; 602-252-8840

Bad Indian – A Native American Comedy Show
Oct. 12
Valley Bar
www.valleybarphx.com

Studio Series
Oct. 13
Arizona Opera
www.azopera.org; 602-266-7464

Black Flag
Oct. 14
The Rebel Lounge
www.therebellounge.com

Ilana Glazer Live!
Oct. 14
Orpheum Theatre
www.orpheumphx.com/events

‘Suffs’
Oct. 14 – Nov. 29
The Phoenix Theatre Company
www.phoenixtheatre.com; 602-254-2151

Skyview Space Rock Band
Oct. 15-16
Arizona Science Center
www.azscience.org; 602-716-2000



The Black Hole
Oct. 18
The Rhythm Room
www.rhythmroom.com; 602-612-4981

‘Les Misérables’
Extended thru Oct. 18
The Phoenix Theatre Company
www.phoenixtheatre.com; 602-254-2151

‘Romeo & Juliet’
Oct. 22-25
Ballet Arizona at Symphony Hall
www.balletaz.org; 602-381-1096

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



(photo by Lauren Desberg)

Daley
Oct. 23
The Rebel Lounge
www.therebellounge.com

‘Man of La Mancha’
Oct. 23-25
Herberger Theater Center
www.herbergertheater.org;
602-252-8497

‘Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope’
Oct. 23 – Nov. 8
Black Theatre Troupe at
Helen K. Mason Performing
Arts Center
www.blacktheatretroupe.org;
602-258-8128



Xixa with Amor y Powers
Oct. 24
Valley Bar
www.valleybarphx.com

‘Proof’
Oct. 24 – Nov. 8
Arizona Theatre Company
www.arizonatheatre.org;
1-833-282-7328

‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’
Oct. 27
Orpheum Theatre
www.orpheumphx.com/events

‘Water for Elephants’
Oct. 27 – Nov. 1
ASU Gammage
www.asugammage.com; 480-965-3434

Films at PhxArt: ‘Amadeus’
Oct. 28
Phoenix Art Museum
www.phxart.org; 602-257-1880



"Water for Elephants"
(photo by
Matthew Murphy
for Murphy Made)

Jim Henson’s ‘Labyrinth’: In Concert – 40th Anniversary Tour
Oct. 29
Orpheum Theatre
www.orpheumphx.com/events

Soundcheck: MCRH
Oct. 30
Phoenix Art Museum
www.phxart.org; 602-257-1880

Orville Peck
Oct. 30
The Van Buren
www.thevanburenphx.com;
480-659-1641

Jaleo
Oct. 31
The Nash
www.thenash.org; 602-795-0464



Soundcheck: MCRH

All event dates are current at the time of publication. Check with individual venues for up-to-date show information. Find events throughout the month at www.northcentralnews.net/events.



Halloween Trunk-Or-Treat & Fall Festival

Saturday, Oct. 24

Cross Roads UMC
7901 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85020



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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Among other seasonal events taking place across the Valley, Yokai Night returns to the Japanese Friendship Garden on Oct. 30 (photo courtesy of Japanese Friendship Garden).

Spooky, scary goings-on

The days are getting (relatively) cooler, the nights are getting longer, and the veil, as they say, is growing thin. Spooky Season is upon us, and we have harvested an eclectic collection of Halloween-themed events brought to you by our favorite cultural institutions.

If you're looking for fun for the whole gang, the Arizona Science Center is hosting its annual Skele-bration from Oct. 24-31. Take part in fun activities, daring demonstrations and fun for the whole family. Costumes are encouraged, and all is available with the price of admission (www.azscience.org). But first, head over to the Desert Botanical Garden for Family Weekend at the Strange Garden Oct. 23 and 24. Encounter unicorns, propagate peculiar plants and visit the Witch's Library for a free book. Dance the night away to live music and enjoy a variety of food trucks. All the fun is included with admission to the Garden, and every child 12 and under gets a pumpkin to take home (<https://dbg.org>).

Visit another garden on the far side of the world for Yokai Night at the Japanese Friendship Garden on Oct. 30. Explore a garden transformed after nightfall and encounter yokai, the spirits of Japanese legend. Learn about these shapeshifters, ghosts, demons, and tricksters through themed displays, performances and food. These eerie events are suitable for all ages (www.japanesefriendshipgarden.org).

For the more discerning spooks and specters, the Haunted Castle has returned to the Irish Cultural Center and McClelland Library. On select nights between Oct. 21-30, stroll the haunted grounds and dare to witness six interwoven plays adapted from



Traveler World Music (photo courtesy of Desert Botanical Garden).

terrifying Irish legends, presented by the Ronin Theatre Collaborative (www.azirish.org). If it's 21 and over thrills and chills you crave, return to the (Desert Botanical) Strange Garden for Spirit Walk on Oct. 22 with SanTan Distillery. Sip cocktails, participate in the costume contest, and discover what spooky surprises are in store, all with the cost of a ticket. Music in the Garden kicks off their season on Oct. 30 with Traveler World Music, and costumes are encouraged.

And finally, on Oct. 23 the Arizona Science Center is hosting their monthly Science With a Twist. "The Paranormal Project: Where Science Meets Supernatural" explores the paranormal in pop culture and other strange phenomena with creepy activities and even creepy cocktails.

Find things to do in Phoenix throughout the month at www.northcentralnews.net/events.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



“Mikiztli” (photo courtesy of Cultural Coalition).

Gone but not forgotten

Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a holiday traditionally celebrated by indigenous communities of Mexico to pay respect to and remember friends and family members who have departed. Two Phoenix celebrations will invite families to explore this holiday and the culture surrounding it.

First up, save the date for the 15th Annual Mikiztli: Día de los Muertos Festival, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 24, 4-9 p.m. at downtown’s Arizona Center, 455 N. 3rd St. This free event is bigger and better than ever, with more cultural performances and art vendors, more food trucks and crafts activities and their largest community

altar, called an ofrenda, yet.

Enjoy an evening of mariachi music, ballet folklórico and explore the unique handmade goods and local food trucks as well as arts and crafts activities and face painting. Arrive early to witness the traditional Danza Mexica ceremony, and stay late to be part of the community procession led by “Las Flacas”, the 8-foot-tall animated skeleton puppets, which kicks off a celebratory dance party with live music.

Learn more at <https://culturalcoalition.com/events/mikiztli-dia-de-los-muertos-festival>.

Next, Desert Botanical Garden will transform into a vibrant celebration of memory and connection during its Dia de Muertos Festival, Nov. 7-8; with an altar on view Nov. 6-9.

Enjoy live performances, immersive installations, moments of reflection, family activities, La Procesión, dance performances and live music. A mercado bustling with folk art, handmade crafts, food and more will complement the festivities.

Visit <https://dbg.org/events/dia-de-muertos-festival>.

Beatitudes hosts photography exhibit

Connie Pilcher’s nature photography will be displayed Oct. 5 through

Nov. 29 at Church of the Beatitudes, 555 W. Glendale Ave. An opening reception will be held on Sunday, Oct. 11, at 11:30 a.m.

Hosted by the church’s Arts Council, the exhibit features photographs of birds, bees, butterflies and other wildlife. Prints will be available for sale, and a portion of the proceeds will support the Arts Council’s philanthropic

efforts, including scholarships for art students.

Pilcher has photographed for more than 45 years. She has been an avid birder for over 15 years and is a member of the National Audubon Society, the National Parks Foundation, and Questors. Her work reflects a deep commitment to protecting the environment and preserving wildlife habitat.

2026

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Café Chat

Find a taste of Egypt in the Uptown culinary core

By Marjorie Rice

Step into the patio at Urban Fraîche, under trellises dripping with vines, past sarcophagi, aged wooden gates, statuary, walls festooned with plaques and friezes, and colorful columns that look straight out of the movie Cleopatra, and you've entered the vision of owner/chef Dean Waziry.

If you're coming in at night, in addition to the Egyptian-themed décor and music, a belly dancer may be working her way among the tables.

The restaurant-cum-shop is festooned with papyrus, more sarcophagi – including a vivid life-size copy of King Tut's sarcophagus standing next to a gleaming statue of the jackal god Wepwawet – more friezes and pottery, jewelry and a myriad other examples of Egyptian art and culture.

Old Persian rugs cover the polished concrete floors, Egyptian music plays and a network of wire hovers over the downstairs dining area. Vines are being trained along the wires and eventually, guests will dine under a living green ceiling.

Look closely and there's a price tag on much of it. This is, after all, a shop as well as a place to dine. Even some of the tables are for sale. Many of them are covered in gleaming wood, crafted by Waziry.

A faint aroma of cinnamon is in the air, no surprise since the spice is a foundation flavor for much Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cooking.

The menu changes daily, based on what Waziry finds at the market. This day, the brunch fare includes an Alexandria-style fish sandwich served with Fattoush salad, pita, greens, a homemade pickle mix, hummus, tahini, tzatziki and harissa. There's also braised lamb shoulder with large penne pasta, tomato, peas, wild mushrooms, cheese and a cream sauce seasoned with complex layers of Mediterranean spices. Moroccan style braised curry goat is served with almond raisin couscous, roasted vegetables and pita.

"Our focus is on the countries on the Mediterranean, and anything that comes from those countries could be represented," he said.

"Normally midweek our menu is a little bit shorter than the weekend because we cook fresh every day and we base it on how many covers we expect. Today we have curry goat, which has become one of my signature dishes. People love that, they drive for hours now to get here and have it, so it's becoming a staple item for me."

His lamb dishes – a ragout with



Dean Waziry, owner/chef of Uptown's Urban Fraîche, serves up Moroccan-style braised curry goat with couscous, roasted vegetables and pita (photo by Darryl Webb for North Central News).

large penne, lamb shank slow-cooked – are other customer musts. "We use tons of lamb here," Waziry said.

Beef Wellington is on the dinner menu, with a ragout of up to 10 wild mushrooms, a slow-cooked demiglace and wine reduction, and a sauce with a base of dried porcini mushrooms. A drizzle of hibiscus Port wine sauce dresses the plate.

The techniques and ingredients reflect Waziry's background in traditional French cuisine. His career path included training in fine restaurants all around Manhattan, as well as the Culinary Institute of America. He spent about 20 years as a chef, then moved to the corporate hospitality industry, in hotel/resort management.

"I do all the cooking myself," Waziry said. "Everything that comes out of this kitchen – all the mother sauces, all the basic cooking, all the methods – that's me, then I let my team do the final touches and the plates. But all the depth of the restaurant, that's 100 percent me."

That goes for the décor, artwork, jewelry and the rest that fill the place, he said. "That's all me. I'm wearing it and I change it every day."

Waziry moved to Arizona three



Bringing vibrant Mediterranean-Egyptian flavors to the table is the Alexandria-style fish sandwich with Fattoush salad, pita, greens, pickle mix, hummus, tahini, tzatziki and harissa (photo by Darryl Webb for North Central News).

years ago, to manage a hotel here, but his dream was to open his own place, "About two years ago, I decided to do something that's focused on people, not on margin and percentage. I wanted to share all my research and knowledge with as many people as possible, so we decided to open Urban Fraîche. Everything we have in the company has the

same name because it's focused on the same concept, inspiring people to live better."

The gallery was first, then the spa, about 10 blocks east on Camelback. In addition to furniture, art, antiques, jewelry and other items for purchase,

continued on next page

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The lamb dishes at Urban Fraîche are a “must” for return diners. Shown here: grilled lamb chops with saffron rice, hummus and pomegranate salad (photo by Darryl Webb for North Central News).

Continued from last page

guests can dine at the café and bistro, or pamper themselves at the salon and massage spa.

They’re managed by Dean’s wife, Heba, while he puts much of his focus on the restaurant, which opened just over a year ago. They’re in negotiations to open two more locations in Scottsdale. “Our plan is to spread not just in Arizona, it’s to reach out to as many people as possible,” Waziry said.

“We live the life that we teach. I like to share a lot of my cooking philosophy with as many people as possible. Spiritually, mentally, your wellbeing, everything comes from what you’re feeding your organs. Giving them clean food with no chemicals, food coloring, they’re doing their job, and

you’re living healthy, you have a stronger immune system, you’re not eating food that’s loaded with chemicals and parasites.

“On top of that, our restaurant is not just focused on food, it’s focused on the experience, on hospitality. We have belly dancers because it makes people happy, and they experience that there’s culture outside this country.

“Life needs to be balanced. You cannot have a healthy life without having a healthy mind, a healthy lifestyle. People think it has to be something big, but a five-dollar plant can add to your happiness.”

Urban Fraîche, 111 E. Camelback Road, is open from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. For information, call 650-773-8135 or visit www.urbanfraiche.com.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



In addition to perennial seeds – like these flowers grown by a Yucca Library patron – up to four free fruit and vegetable seed packets can be “checked out” by patrons every three weeks (photo courtesy of Phoenix Public Library).

From garden to table:
healthy meals at home

With the arrival of October’s cooler weather, it is the perfect time to get outside and get growing. But where can newbie gardeners begin? One place is the Phoenix Public Library, where residents will find a wealth of free resources.

Beyond how-to books on a wide range of gardening techniques, library

patrons can visit the Seed Library kiosk at their local library where they will find a variety of fruit, vegetable and perennial seeds available for check out. Customers may check out up to four seed packets at one time per card, every three weeks. Visit www.phoenix-publiclibrary.org/services/unique/seed-library.

While you watch and wait to harvest your bounty, you may want to spend some time in the kitchen brush-

ing up on healthy cooking techniques. Patrons will find a broad variety of cookbooks and other informational books on the shelves, as well as access to digital resources.

One eResource available through the library is AtoZ World Food, which contains traditional recipes for 174 countries of the world and is the only database that covers food culture in six categories: National Cuisine, Regional Cuisine, Daily Meals, Dining Etiquette, Special Occasion Foods, and Food Trivia. In addition, online courses are offered through Universal Class. Log into your library account and search “Universal Class” to access the courses.

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program also offers recipes, cooking and food safety tips, and ways to use common ingredients to create new meals. Through video libraries and other resources, Phoenix families will be cooking healthy in no time. Visit <https://extension.arizona.edu/programs> and click on the “Expanded Food and Nutrition” link.

Market welcomes
fall season

As the calendar turns towards the fall, the Uptown Farmers Market will begin its Saturday Fall Season on Oct.

3. The whole market transitions back to the pavement layout, and returns to fall hours of 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition, after its annual summer closure, the mid-week Wednesday market reopens on Oct. 7; fall hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Residents can stop by for a little mid-week market fun and stock up on all their favorites.

The Uptown Farmers Market is hosted at North Phoenix Baptist Church, 5757 N. Central Ave., and features dozens of vendors offering everything from fresh cut flowers, artisan gifts, locally grown and raised food items, ready-made meals and so much more.

Visit www.uptownmarketaz.com for information.

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\$428.31

AVG SALE PRICE/SQFT

(+3.1% from last year)

\$720,000

MEDIAN SALE PRICE

(-2.4% from last year)

\$381.00

MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SQFT

(equal to last year)

1,426

SOLD HOMES

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mendocino opens third Valley location

California-born fast-casual concept Mendocino Farms continued its Arizona expansion with the opening of its third Arizona location on Sept. 1 at 4325 E. Indian School Road, Suite 150.

Following the debuts of its Valley restaurants in Gainey Ranch and North Scottsdale, the new Arcadia location marks another milestone in the brand's growth across the Valley as it brings its signature "Eat Happy" experience to the area.

The new location is designed as a vibrant neighborhood gathering place where guests can stop in for a quick midday break, meet friends for an easy dinner or coordinate catering for office meetings and celebrations nearby, the company said. The restaurant showcases Mendocino Farms' approach to elevated fast-casual dining, featuring chef-driven sandwiches and salads built on hyper-fresh, peak-season ingredients and served in a bright, welcoming setting.

The opening also kicked off the brand's ongoing giveback program, with the first three months offering 50 percent back on all in-store fundraiser events for local schools and organizations through the end of the year, helping the community raise funds while bringing people together.

Included among the fresh dining options is a dedicated kids' menu featuring approachable favorites like Crispy Chicken Tenders and Grilled Turkey & Cheddar Sandwich. In addition, debuting first at the new location, guests can enjoy the Fajita Steak Salad loaded with fajita steak, roasted peppers and onions, charred jalapeños, roasted corn, black beans, jicama, cherry tomatoes, avocado, pepita crunch, cilantro, kale, and romaine tossed in Jalapeño Ranch and served with chipotle salsa.

Mendocino Farms is open daily from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Learn more at www.mendocinofarms.com.

Find fall flavors at Valley spots

Regardless of the temperature outside and whether the leaves have begun to turn, when the calendar turns, Phoenix residents are ready to greet the fall season. With that in mind, two Valley spots are celebrating the season by bringing fall flavors to their menu for a limited time.

32 Shea kicked off pumpkin season in August weeks before the calendar caught up, inviting guests to trade triple-digit temperatures for cozy fall flavors. As October rolls around, guests



The bright and open atmosphere at the newly opened Mendocino Farms Arcadia location will serve up what the company calls its "Eat Happy" experience (photo courtesy of Mendocino Farms).

can continue to enjoy a rotating selection of pumpkin-inspired menu items designed to celebrate the flavors of fall.

Seasonal coffee drinks include the Pumpkin Loaf Latte, an espresso drink with pumpkin, white chocolate, toasted marshmallow sweet cream, honey and crunchy pumpkin wafers, and the Brown Butter Latte, made with house-made brown butter syrup, salted caramel sweet cream and Belvita cookie crumbles. Coffee drink prices vary by size.

Cocktails include the Spiced Pumpkin Espresso Martini, featuring reposado tequila, Borghetti coffee liqueur, spiced pumpkin syrup, Polynesian Kiss bitters and fresh espresso, finished with cinnamon and salt, and The Chai Tai, a tropical-inspired cocktail blending Bacardi rum, Zaya rum, triple sec, pineapple juice, lime juice and chai orgeat.

Pumpkin season continues at 32 Shea, 10626 N. 32nd St. through Oct. 31. For additional information, call 602-867-7432 or visit www.32shea.com.

Based in Inglewood, Randy's Donuts now has three locations in the Valley, including in North Central at 5709 N. 7th St. To celebrate the fall season, all three locations will offer fall donuts and drinks through Nov. 29.

On the menu patrons will find Pistachio Crumb Raised, Pumpkin Cream Cheese or Cinnamon Crumb Raised donuts. The fall drinks include Pumpkin Pie Latte and Cafe Pumpkin Pistachio Latte, available either iced or hot.

Learn more about Randy's by visiting www.randysdonuts.com.

Sánchez joins Taco Fest lineup

When the Arizona Taco Festival returns this month, the event will debut an all-new Main Stage experience at Salt River Fields at Talking Stick. Taking place Oct. 17-18, the new experience will bring celebrity chefs, live music, cooking and cocktail demonstrations and live culinary competition together as the centerpiece of the two-day festival.

Among the first names announced is James Beard Award-winning Chef Aarón Sánchez, who will join the festival on Sunday, Oct. 18, as a guest judge for the festival's taco competition. Known for his distinctive approach to contemporary Mexican cuisine and his work across television, restaurants and culinary education, Sánchez brings a nationally recognized perspective to one of the festival's signature competitions.

The Main Stage will serve as the festival's hub for live culinary entertainment, and chef Beau MacMillan will return to host the second annual Arizona Taco Fest Bar Brawl, bringing together top local mixologists for a spirited competition showcasing creativity behind the bar.

At the heart of Arizona Taco Fest are, of course, the tacos. Inventive creations from chefs, restaurants, and hand-picked street food vendors will keep the taco bar raised high, with offerings ranging from smoked tomahawk ribeye tacos and Asian-inspired creations to decadent dessert tacos. New for 2026, live taco judging will el-



James Beard Award-winning Chef Aarón Sánchez will join the Arizona Taco Festival on Sunday, Oct. 18, as a guest judge for the festival's taco competition (photo courtesy of Salt River Fields)

evate the competition and the People's Choice awards encourage attendee participation.

Beyond the culinary and beverage experiences, the event continues to expand into a multi-sensory festival environment with live art activations by XICO, a local Latino and Indigenous community arts organization; live cooking and cocktail demonstrations; curated vendor mercados; and family-friendly programming including carnival rides, lawn games, and bounce houses.

Find tickets and information at www.tacofestaz.com.



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